

## All Hail 61

### Chapter 61: That Wretch Will Naturally Receive Her Retribution

Old Madam Yu slowly opened her eyes. “She’s copying Buddhist scriptures at the Temple Hall. It’ll be the Spring Buddhist Festival in April. I plan to prepare more Buddhist scriptures to worship Buddha, so I had her help to copy them.”

Yu Zongzheng’s expression softened. After a moment’s hesitation, he decided to say a few words for Madam Yang, so that his mother wouldn’t be too hard on her.

It was a good thing that his mother was setting stricter rules for Madam Yang, but they had been married for many years after all, so he couldn’t simply watch her suffer.

When Old Madam Yu saw his expression, her voice also became several tones calmer. “Although I don’t like Madam Yang’s pettiness and incompetence in managing the household, I’m not that kind of wicked mother-in-law who will torture her daughter-in-law. I only called Madam Yang over to set the rules and have her observe them so that everyone else in the household will learn and follow, and the servants will not dare to misbehave anymore.”

“Mother, you’re so thoughtful.” Yu Zongzheng was filled with shame. His mother had never liked Madam Yang, but she had never treated her harshly in the nine years that she had been in the Yu Residence.

Old Madam Yu glanced at Yu Zongzheng evenly. “I heard that Concubine He stayed over in the study yesterday?”

As soon as Yu Zongzheng listened, his old face immediately twisted into panic. He finally understood why his mother had grounded Concubine He. “Yes. It was terrible of me.”

“You behaved terribly indeed, and she also acted improperly. Yesterday, I said that I wanted to set and enforce stricter rules for the First Madam. Everyone in the residence knew about it, yet she still deliberately broke the rules, disrespecting me completely.” Old Madam Yu said coldly.

Yu Zongzheng broke out in cold sweat. He did not dare to utter a single word.

Old Madam Yu said calmly, “This morning, Fourth Miss went to the Jade Courtyard and made Yao Yao so angry that she hugged her mother’s portrait and cried. How do you think she knew that Yao Yao had been beaten by you?”

Yu Zongzheng gasped inwardly and lowered his head, not daring to make a sound.

He had only mentioned it casually in front of Concubine He yesterday, but he hadn’t expected her to be so disrespectful of the rules and actually tell Fourth Miss about it!

He was furious, and the remaining pity he had for Concubine He dissipated completely.

Old Madam Yu said, “It’s time you cultivated your character. Don’t seek women’s company all the time. As a respectable man, it’s improper for you to hang out and fool around with women in the backyard.”

Yu Zongzheng did not dare to say anything else and only hurriedly agreed.

At night, Yang Shuwan came out of Temple Hall and returned to the main courtyard feeling exhausted. Nanny Li came over to report on Concubine He.

Yang Shuwan sneered. “That b\*tch is naturally being punished by the heavens. She’d failed to even think—Old Madam is setting rules for me, so it’s obvious that the rules are also for the whole residence. That Concubine He is just a man’s plaything who only knows how to wiggle her butt for him, yet she had the audacity to disobey Old Madam, so she has been reduced to such a plight. Serves her right.”

Yang Shuwan had originally been worried that lowly woman would take advantage of the fact that she had to observe the rules by Old Madam’s side and try to seduce Master to dote on her more. She didn’t expect her to shoot herself in the foot.

After a long day of exhausting chores, Yang Shuwan finally felt a little happier.

However, when she thought about how she had to do the same thing again tomorrow morning, her expression turned back to looking dreadful.

The Nine Flowers Jade Dew Cream was extremely effective. The next day, Yu Youyao’s face had mostly recovered. It was no longer obvious that she had been slapped.

Yu Youyao was very happy and headed to An Shou Hall to greet her grandmother.

When Old Madam Yu saw this, a smile appeared on her face. “It was still swollen yesterday, but it seems to have mostly recovered today. Does it still hurt?”

Yu Youyao’s eyes curved as she smiled, and they sparkled. “It stopped hurting yesterday after I applied the ointment Cousin gave me. It’s completely fine now after just a night.”

Upon hearing that it was Zhou Linghuai who had given her the ointment, Old Madam Yu’s smile deepened.

The two of them had breakfast as Madam Yang served them. Then, Madam Yao brought her children over to greet them.

Since she hadn’t seen her grandchildren for a few days, Old Madam Yu was delighted by this. She immediately asked Yu Shanyan and Yu Shanxin about their studies.

Looking proper and respectful, Yu Shanyan answered clearly and eloquently, with the dignified aura of an eldest male legitimate offspring. When Old Madam Yu heard his reply, she nodded repeatedly and even praised him quite a bit.

When it was Yu Shanxin’s turn, he only chose certain things to elaborate and said, “Grandmother, Mentor taught me horsemanship and archery a few days ago. I’m better at it than Eldest Brother. I can ride horses faster than him, and I’m also better at archery. Mentor praised me for having a good foundation and strong basics. Father plans to find me a martial arts master who will specially teach me martial arts.”

When Yu Shanyan heard this, the corners of his mouth twitched. Seeing his brother's smug expression, he didn't have the heart to point out that out of the Six Arts of a Gentleman, he was only good at riding and archery.

Her second grandson had been an outgoing child since he was young. Old Madam Yu knew very well that he was a mischievous and cheeky one. However, when she heard that he, who wasn't good at studying, had also been praised by his teacher, she was overjoyed. "Good, good, good. If you cultivate some martial arts skills, you can use it to work for the royal family. You two brothers will complement each other—one specializing in brains while the other in brawn."

Yu Shanxin had managed to brag about himself and get praised. But just as he was feeling smug, he heard his mother say, "Old Madam, you can't praise him or his head will grow so big that it'll hit the ceiling."

As she spoke, she glanced at Yang Shuwan, who was standing politely behind Old Madam.

Previously, Madam Yao had already heard that Old Madam Yu was going to set stricter rules for Madam Yang, and immediately guessed that Madam Yang had done something stupid, completely angering Old Madam and caused her to be taught a lesson.

They were both daughters-in-law, and although her family was separated into another branch of the family, she still had to show her filial piety. Madam Yao had been getting anxious and worried, but it also wasn't appropriate for her to rush to Old Madam Yu's place on the first day.

Now seeing that Old Madam Yu was treating her the same as before, she understood that the Old Madam's anger was directed at Madam Yang and not her. She heaved a sigh of relief.

However, Old Madam had laid down stricter rules for her eldest daughter-in-law. As her second daughter-in-law, she should also be coming over more often to serve Old Madam.

After saying that, Old Madam Yu felt a little thirsty and reached out to gesture to Yang Shuwan.

Yang Shuwan was stunned, not reacting for a moment.

Nanny Liu frowned when she saw this. Just as she was about to serve the tea herself, Madam Yao stood up and quickly took it from Nanny Liu. She bowed and handed it to Old Madam Yu. "Old Madam, have some tea."

All daughters-in-law were compared against each other. Old Madam Yu shot a glance at Yang Shuwan then took the tea. No matter how thick-skinned Yang Shuwan was, she couldn't help but turn crimson. She tugged at her handkerchief and couldn't help but hate Madam Yao for being so meddlesome. She glared at Madam Yao, whose gaze was fixed on Old Madam Yu.

After a while, Old Madam finished her tea. Yang Shuwan quickly reached out to take the teacup, but she was too anxious and accidentally hit the teacup over. Alas, although she managed to catch hold of the teacup before it fell and hit Old Madam Yu, the tea and tea leaves had spilled all over her.

Old Madam Yu was shocked and cried out, "Ai-yo!"

Madam Yao was also startled and quickly asked, "Old Madam, did the tea scald you?"

The servants always had to make sure that the tea was very hot when it was brought out, to ensure that it wouldn't be served cold even if it was left sitting for a while. No one knew whether this cup

of tea was from a batch that was freshly brought out—it was so dangerous to have spilled it on Old Madam Yu.

Yang Shuwan's face turned pale with fright. She frantically wiped the tea leaves off Old Madam's body with her handkerchief and apologized profusely, "Old Madam, I'm sorry. I was careless..."

## Chapter 62: Suffered a Calamity

Old Madam Yu stared at Yang Shuwan sharply and said sternly, "You're so clumsy. You can't even do such a simple thing well. Get off me this instant."

Her harsh words made Yang Shuwan shiver as if someone had poured a bucket of cold water on her. She could only hang her head low and take a step back, not daring to say another word.

Nanny Liu stepped forward. "Old Madam, did you get scalded?"

Old Madam Yu shook her head. "I'm not hurt. Help me back to my room to change."

Nanny Liu quickly agreed and helped Old Madam Yu into the inner room. Madam Yao followed behind. When Yang Shuwan saw this, she also wanted to follow, but Old Madam Yu's stern glare when turning to look back stopped her in her tracks.

Yang Shuwan was so embarrassed that her face turned pale.

In her heart, she was furious that Madam Yao had deliberately come to the main house to gloat at her misery and even caused her to spill the tea, upsetting Old Madam. She was also jealous that Madam Yao had gained points in front of Old Madam. Even the children of Madam Yao were nothing good—only knowing how to get on Old Madam's good side.

Yu Youyao and the other grandchildren were relieved when they saw that their grandmother was really fine.

Yu Shuangbai hadn't seen Yu Youyao for a few days and wanted to drag her to feed the fish at the lotus pond. Yu Youyao rolled her eyes and brought Yu Shuangbai back to the Jade Courtyard. She then asked Chun Xiao to bring some fish food, and they climbed onto the wooden railing to sprinkle it into the pond. Nanny Xu instructed two old maids to keep watch so that they wouldn't fall into the water.

A large group of koi fish were fighting over the fish food. Seeing how lively it was, Yu Shuangbai clapped her hands. "I know that Grandmother asked you to learn the rules from Nanny Xu, but I can't believe you really did so obediently? Now, my mother can't stand it when I play all day, and she keeps nagging at me to learn the rules as well. I've really suffered a calamity because of you."

Yu Youyao was speechless. "What else could I do? You don't know how formidable Nanny Xu is."

Yu Shuangbai looked at her sympathetically. She looked around and whispered into Yu Youyao's ear, "I heard that the palace is a dog-eat-dog place. Those who come out of the palace are all very bad people."

Yu Youyao glared at her. "Don't talk nonsense. Nanny Xu is great."

Yu Shuangbai rolled her eyes and changed the topic. "A few days ago, my mother asked Nanny Qian to teach me needlework. Look at my fingers, you can even see the needle marks."

As she spoke, she spread her hands in front of Yu Youyao.

Yu Youyao took a closer look and indeed saw two needle marks. Recalling that her fingers had also been pricked by many needles, she smiled and gloated. “You’ve been pricked so many times and yet you still haven’t mastered needlework.”

Yu Shuangbai’s eyes widened. “You make it sound like you’re an expert now.” It was so difficult to learn needlework—how could she have mastered it in just ten days?

Yu Youyao was smug. “Of course. I’ll take you to have a look so that you won’t think I’m just bragging.”

Yu Shuangbai was in a daze as she followed Yu Youyao into the Embroidery Pavilion. She watched as Yu Youyao picked up her half-embroidered pattern from the basket, then worked the needle and thread in front of her. Her eyes widened in shock, and she clutched her chest with an expression that said, “We agreed to only eat, drink, and play together, but you secretly worked hard behind my back.”

Seeing that Yu Shuangbai was so taken aback and had such an expression of disbelief, Yu Youyao felt bad and asked Chun Xiao to bring two boxes of apricot flower cream that she had made herself. “I’m learning how to concoct perfume from Nanny Xu. This is apricot flower paste that I made myself. When you wash your face in the morning, apply it evenly on your face and wash it off after a short while. Not only will you look better, but your face won’t be dry as well. Nanny Xu said that all the nobles in the palace also use apricot flowers to make creams and wash their faces with it. You and Auntie can each have a box. Ask me for more when you’ve finished using it.”

“You know how to make perfume?!” Yu Shuangbai was first shocked by Yu Youyao’s ability to concoct perfume. Then, she happily held the box and opened it on the spot. The light red flower cream was delicate and smooth, emitting a fresh fragrance which wasn’t too rich nor too light. It smelled very good.

Yu Shuangbai’s eyes lit up. “You’re really impressive. Nanny Xu has only been in the residence for a short time, but you’ve already learned needlework and perfume.”

Seeing Yu Youyao’s clear and calm eyes, Yu Shuangbai felt that her big sister really looked different from before.

Yu Youyao flashed a smile.

Yu Shuangbai sighed and changed the topic. “By the way, Grandmother has always been magnanimous and understanding. Why did she suddenly want to set rules for your mother?”

Yu Youyao did not mention that she had been slapped, and only talked about Imperial Physician Hu visiting to take Old Madam’s pulse. “Grandmother thinks that Mother didn’t behave with propriety. She was hopping mad at Mother.”

Yu Shuangbai puckered her lips. “Serves her right! You’re really pitiful to have such a wicked stepmother.”

Yu Youyao hit her playfully. “How daring of you to insult even your elders. You’ve really grown some guts. Be careful not to let Second Aunt find out or she’ll definitely teach you a lesson.”

Yu Shuangbai begged for mercy.

Then, Yu Youyao thought about how the rankings had not been released yet and felt a little uneasy. “Did Second Uncle say when the rankings would be released? In the past, it would always be out ten days after the examination.”

Logically speaking, the results of the Imperial Examination should have been released on February 19th. It was already the 21st today, yet the results still hadn’t been released.

These days, the students who had taken the examination did not even socialize much. They waited all day for news of the rankings to be released.

Yu Shuangbai did not answer. Instead, she looked at Yu Youyao curiously and asked, “Since when did you start caring about such things?”

Yu Youyao laughed a little. “I just found it a little strange. It was a casual question.”

If there were any issues at the Imperial Court, Second Uncle would need to inform Second Aunt about it first and foremost, in case their family was implicated in the matters of the Imperial Court and created trouble. Hence, Yu Shuangbai would definitely have received some information from Second Aunt.

Yu Shuangbai pursed her lips. “Father said that there were some differences in opinions towards answers of a few students in this examination. Those grading the papers couldn’t come to an agreement, and there was also a dispute about the rankings, so the results will be a little delayed. There have been similar precedents like this in the past, so it’s not a big deal, and he has instructed Mother to just focus on the household matters.”

Yu Youyao seemed to be in deep thought as she nodded. She did not ask any further.

But!

Recently, she had often heard Nanny Xu mention things that she had seen and heard while working in the palace, and she had also gained some understanding of the various residences in the capital. In addition, with the whole matter of the “Mentor-disciple deal”, she had become especially sensitive in picking up on certain things.

She was sure that the Imperial Court’s delay in releasing the rankings definitely had something to do with that matter of the examiner accepting disciples.

The so-called “disagreements” and “disputes” over the selection of the best answers and examinees might also be an internal struggle between the different factions of the Imperial Court.

Second Uncle and the Marquis of Weining’s Residence belonged to different factions. The two factions fought both openly and secretly for their own interests. The “mentor-disciple deal” was clearly a case of cheating in the imperial examination, to help or even pull strings for those from the Marquis of Weining’s Residence. Second Uncle must have learned about this “deal” from Grandmother, and it was impossible for his faction to allow it to happen.

The best way was to maintain a poker face during the grading process and eliminate the disciples from the Marquis of Weining’s faction one by one. If they did not manage to eliminate all of these disciples, they had to then at least curb them on the rankings and compete for the higher spots.

Since this would mean a tug of war between both sides, it would naturally cause the situation to become a stalemate.

When it came to the interests of the factions, no one would back down, so it would probably take quite some time more before the rankings were released.

### Chapter 63: Attending Classes at Home

After figuring all this out, Yu Youyao felt relieved that the matter of the “mentor-disciple deal” was unlikely to be exposed.

Yu Shuangbai changed the topic and asked, “Since you’re learning the rules from Nanny Xu, does it mean that you won’t have to attend home school classes anymore? Yesterday, Ms. Ye asked about you too.”

Yu Youyao pursed her lips. “I’ll be attending tomorrow. Father wants me to attend classes every morning and learn from Nanny Xu in the afternoons.”

Previously, the teacher’s lessons were all about rules and principles, which she didn’t have the patience to listen or learn. Her grandmother felt that Nanny Xu could also teach her these instead, so she allowed her to stop attending those classes at home.

Yu Shuangbai looked surprised and nodded. “Eldest Uncle is being reasonable for once.”

Seeing how she spoke so bluntly without thinking, Yu Youyao was a little speechless, but she did not say anything. After all, it was true that her father had always been very harsh and unkind towards her. Everyone in the Yu Residence knew that.

At this moment, Xia Tao brought over a small porcelain bowl. Yu Shuangbai received it and ate a mouthful. There was a faint milky taste, along with the fragrance of roasted almonds, and the sweetness of papaya. It was a fresh and sweet sensation in her mouth. “What’s this?”

Yu Youyao put down her bowl. “Almond papaya milk, made by Nanny Xu.”

“No wonder you say that Nanny Xu is great. I’d gladly have even ten of such a nanny.” Yu Shuangbai glanced at Yu Youyao enviously and couldn’t help eating another bowl of the dessert.

Yu Youyao instructed Xia Tao to go and learn how to make almond papaya milk from Nanny Xu, and to bring Zhen Zhu along.

All of a sudden, Yu Shuangbai smiled with glee. “Ms. Ye has always been very strict. Since you haven’t been to her classes for so long, you better hope that she won’t make things difficult for you tomorrow.”

The next morning, Yu Youyao woke up an hour earlier than usual.

Chun Xiao’s heart ached for her young mistress who had to wake up that early. “Young Mistress, you’ve been waking up earlier and earlier these past two days. Why don’t you sleep a little longer?”

Yu Youyao yawned, feeling a little sleepy. "I have to go for the home classes later. I want to get up early and finish my etiquette session with Nanny so that I can go over for classes earlier."

Chun Xiao had no choice but to help her up.

In about the time it took to burn an incense stick, Yu Youyao had finished washing and combing. She was wearing an elaborate and exquisite nine-layer outfit as she practiced etiquette with Nanny Xu.

The number of books placed on Yu Youyao's head had increased from one to three. With each step, her movements looked gentle and elegant.

Neither coy nor coquettish, but she had a supple posture which accentuated her grace. Nanny Xu nodded in satisfaction. Before two hours was even up, she called for a stop. "Young Mistress, you have to go to class. From tomorrow onwards, the duration for etiquette learning and practice will be reduced to an hour. From now on, you need to pay more attention and be more conscious of your posture and manners wherever you go."

In the past few days, Yu Youyao had changed from her usual lazy self to being proactive in learning. Every morning, she could get up on her own without needing constant urging. A few days ago, she had still looked a little stiff when practicing, but today, she was already moving naturally and flexibly. Clearly, she had put in a lot of effort.

This made Nanny Xu feel very heartened, but she felt that waking up before dawn was indeed a little too early. Yao Yao was still growing, so she had to get enough sleep.

Yu Youyao threw herself into Nanny Xu's arms and cooed, "Nanny dotes on me the most!"

Nanny Xu smiled and stroked her hair. Her tone became much gentler. "The medicinal bath is ready. You're drenched in sweat. Hurry, go and wash up."

After taking a shower, Yu Youyao returned to her room. Nanny Xu personally picked out a snow-green dress with dark patterns and matched it with a light green outer shirt patterned with green willow branches.

Yu Youyao recognized it at a glance. Dong Mei had previously helped her pick out this outfit when she was preparing to head to the Precious Peace Temple. However, Nanny Xu had found the material too thin and the outfit too dull, so she had picked out a new outfit.

Thinking about how Ms. Ye usually dressed in green too, Yu Youyao understood Nanny Xu's efforts and good intentions.

Chun Xiao helped Yu Youyao change her clothes while Dong Mei picked out some jewelry. Nanny Xu took the opportunity to teach the two maidservants. "Ms. Ye is from a scholarly family in the Linjiang Prefecture. She's good at chess, calligraphy, painting, and playing the zither. She's also great at poetry and singing. She's an extremely renowned talented woman. She had been married to the second son of the first wife of the Earl of Changning's Residence, but because he favored his concubine over her—his wife—they ended up agreeing to have a divorce. Divorced daughters were supposed to return to their maiden homes, but Ms. Ye adopted a distant orphaned nephew from the Ye family clan instead. Then, she started teaching young mistresses of big, prominent families, and has established a good reputation for herself in the capital."

Yu Youyao also knew a little about all of this.



Nanny Xu continued, "Ms. Ye is a woman who values literature and talent, and is also a divorcée, having a calm and refined disposition. This green dress has a more elegant style, so it's likely that she'll be pleased with the outfit."

Chun Xiao and Dong Mei were enlightened.

Nanny Xu turned to look at Yu Youyao. "You haven't been attending these classes for a long time. When you're there, apologize to Ms. Ye first. As a disciple, you should show respect to your teacher."

Yu Youyao nodded to show agreement.

At this moment, Xia Tao and Qiu Xing brought breakfast over.

In addition to the shrimp dumplings and crystal dumplings that Yu Youyao liked, there was also a small bowl of medicinal cuisine that Nanny Xu had personally cooked, some simple porridge, sweet and sour pickled plum meat, and a dozen other dishes. Each and every dish was exquisite.

When Yu Youyao saw the food, her eyes lit up.

Spring was a good season for cleansing and nourishing the lungs. Yu Youyao asked Xia Tao to send a stack of pear juice dessert that had her spiritual dew to The Green House, and Qiu Xing to send a bowl to An Shou Hall. "Tell Grandmother that from today onwards, I'll be going to my home classes, so I won't be able to have breakfast with her. But I'll have dinner with her every night."

Nanny Xu nodded with approval.

It was no wonder that the Old Madam favored her. Ever since she moved into the Jade Courtyard, she accompanied the Old Madam for breakfast every morning, and even made arrangements to visit at night now that she no longer had the time to go over in the mornings.

No one in the Yu Residence could match her sense of filial piety.

As for Young Master Zhou from The Green House, a flash flickered across Nanny Xu's eyes.

She had seen all kinds of nobles in the palace.

However, Young Master Zhou's elegance and air of nobility was extraordinary, and in no way inferior to even the most blue-blooded descendants of the palace. His aura was truly intense and unfathomable.

In the past, when seeing how close Yu Youyao was to her cousin, Nanny Xu had always maintained a wary and vigilant attitude of observation.

However, over the past few days, she could tell that Young Master Zhou was also becoming quite thoughtful of Yu Youyao, so she gradually let down her guard.

She thought about how Yu Youyao seemed to have it all in the Yu Residence, but actually had no brothers she could rely on, and no fatherly love from her cold and biased father. Meanwhile, her stepmother was scheming, and Concubine He was also often stirring up trouble. Furthermore, her sisters were all ambitious and only wanted to defeat her.

Young Master Zhou did not seem like an ordinary person. If she developed a close relationship with him, she would at least have someone to rely on in the future, no matter what happened.

Old Madam Yu must have thought the same, which was why she valued Young Master Zhou so much.

Meanwhile, at the An Shou Hall, Old Madam Yu's expression did not look too good when she heard that Yu Youyao was going to attend her home classes today. "Yao Yao's face hasn't even recovered completely yet, so why is she in a hurry to attend classes again? I'm afraid her father has really shaken her up with his slap this time."

Nanny Liu agreed, but she couldn't say anything. She only said, "It's a good thing too. Reading and studying more will increase knowledge and understanding."

Yao Yao was learning from Nanny Xu, which was as good as attending her home classes. Old Madam Yu didn't have much expectations for Yao Yao regarding her academic studies.

Of course, she was happy that Yao Yao was willing to take the initiative to study hard, but she couldn't help feeling a little upset as well, as she still had an inkling that Yao Yao's decision had been forced by her father.

Chapter 64: Ms. Ye

Nanny Liu continued to say, "It's rare that Eldest Miss is so motivated. Old Madam, you should be supportive."

Old Madam Yu sighed. "Yao Yao hasn't been to her home school classes for so long. I'm sure Ms. Ye will have a lot to say about her, and she'll definitely suffer."

Ms. Ye had her own rules and principles when it came to teaching. Although she was hired by the Yu Residence, it wasn't exactly appropriate for them to make comments or interfere with the way she taught. If Yao Yao didn't learn well, she had to suffer the punishment herself.

Nanny Liu smiled. "Old Madam, you're worrying too much. Eldest Miss's illness was also a blessing in disguise as it has enlightened her. She has also been learning from Nanny Xu for a while now, and is indeed no longer the same as before."

Old Madam Yu narrowed her eyes but said nothing else.

In The Green House, Chang An went to send Qiu Xing off. Zhou Linghuai looked at the pear juice dessert that Yu Youyao had just sent over and thought about how she had woken up even before the crack of dawn today, to get herself ready to attend her classes. His lips pursed slightly and he called out, "Yin San!"

The leaves in the courtyard rustled and Yin San appeared standing respectfully in the room. "Young Lord."

Zhou Linghuai gently rubbed the sachet at his waist. The rough and uneven sensation between his fingers touched his heart deeply. "Do you still remember what I did when Big Sis was verbally taunted in the middle of the streets, which caused rumors to spread and made her furious?"

"Yes!" Yin San's face was covered with a black cloth, so his expression couldn't be seen, and only his slightly moving eyebrows revealed a hint of emotion.

“Go on then,” Zhou Linghuai instructed. Almost immediately, he frowned and added, “Be careful.”

Without a single sound or trace, Yin San disappeared on the spot. Zhou Linghuai picked up a small spoon and started enjoying the pear juice dessert. The familiar fragrant taste helped to soothe his furrowed brows out bit by bit.

The classroom was not far from the Jade Courtyard, so Yu Youyao walked along the corridor with Chun Xiao and Xia Tao. After passing through a limestone path in the Xiaoxiang Forest, they arrived at the Xiaoxiang Pavilion.

There was still an hour before dawn, and the other sisters had yet to arrive.

There were a few long benches in the room, which were covered with soft cushions. There was a calligraphy of “Diligent Study” hanging on the wall, while “Filial Piety” and “Wise Virtue” hung on the left and right sides of the wall respectively. Faint green smoke rose in spirals, emitting a refreshing fragrance, making the room seem quiet and peaceful.

Ms. Ye was quite a beautiful woman. Her hair was combed into a bun, and she was wearing a simple but lovely green jade pendant on her forehead scarf. She was wearing a dark green dress with brown patterns and a dark brown outer sleeve. This was the style that had been popular in the capital a few years ago, so it looked a little old-fashioned, but when matched with her green jade jewelry and accessories, she still looked rather elegant.

Seeing that Yu Youyao was attending the class today, Ms. Ye was a little surprised, and she placed her book down.

Yu Youyao stepped forward and bowed respectfully. “Good morning, teacher.”

Ms. Ye did not speak, but looked Yu Youyao up and down indifferently.

Her once chubby body was now slender and delicate. She was dressed in a green dress, looking simple and elegant, beautiful and charming. As she stood quietly in the hall, she exuded a graceful aura. There was a faint sense of wisdom and calmness in her eyes, and she looked as precious as a jade bead.

In the past, Eldest Miss Yu was impetuous and unwilling to study hard, but she’d heard that Old Madam Yu had hired a palace nanny to teach her etiquette and guide her in following the proper rules and practices. In just a month, she had changed so much.

Ms. Ye hid her surprise and only asked sternly, “Why haven’t you come for classes recently?”

The explanation given by the Yu Residence was that Yu Youyao had fallen seriously ill recently and was still weak. They planned to let her recuperate fully before resuming her home school classes.

Later on, when Eldest Miss Yu had recovered, the Yu Residence then said that Eldest Miss Yu was learning the rules and etiquette, so she did not have time to attend academic classes. She had thought that Eldest Miss Yu would never come for her classes again.

As a teacher who felt a sense of responsibility towards her students, she had briefly asked Third Miss Yu Jianjia about it a few days ago in class, but had only received a vague and perfunctory, “I don’t know.” At this, she couldn’t help but feel angry.

Yu Youyao lowered her head and retracted her gaze. “When Grandmother and Father found out that I had been impetuous, having made no progress in my studies at home and often disrupting your lessons, they found me a nanny to teach me to behave properly according to the rules, so that I could learn how to respect my teachers and learn diligently. That’s why I’ve delayed returning to your classes. I seek your forgiveness.”

Chun Xiao brought forward the snacks prepared by Nanny Xu and a premium Four Treasures of the Study set, placing them on the long table in front of Ms. Ye.

Ms. Ye took a look. The snacks were exquisite and looked delectable. She could sense Yu Youyao’s effort and sincerity.

The Four Treasures of the Study was also a perfectly suitable set—It wasn’t too expensive nor too shabby, so it wouldn’t make the other party feel bad about receiving the gift.

Only when the gift was prepared with a suitable value could it be accepted by the receiver comfortably and with pleasure.

She then looked up at Yu Youyao, who was still in a deep bow. Be it her polite words or her proper etiquette, they were all extremely sincere.

From the looks of it, Eldest Miss Yu was indeed vastly different from before. It was obvious that her words and manners were from the heart.

Ms. Ye said calmly, “Come forward.”

Yu Youyao did not understand. She took a step forward and saw that Ms. Ye was holding a long, shiny black ruler in her hand. “Hold out your left hand.”

Seeing this scared Yu Youyao so much that she panicked, but she swallowed and carefully extended her left hand. When she saw Ms. Ye raise the ruler, her face immediately turned pale with fright and in an instant, she closed her eyes and retracted her hand with a whoosh, causing Ms. Ye’s ruler to miss.

For some reason, Ms. Ye felt a little amused by this. She held back her smile and stared at Yu Youyao.

Yu Youyao knew that she was in the wrong. She lowered her head and very slowly stretched out her left hand in front of Ms. Ye again, while looking at her pitifully, almost as if she was saying, “Please hit me gently~”

Seeing her expression, Ms. Ye paused in the middle of raising her ruler. “You haven’t attended classes for more than a month, so I’ll punish you with ten strokes. Do you accept my punishment?”

“I-I accept!” Yu Youyao stammered. She clenched her teeth, closed her eyes, and put on an expression as if she was ready to die. “Teacher, hit me. I promise I won’t move.”

Ms. Ye’s hand, which had just gathered momentum and power, seemed to have suddenly lost all its strength. With a “Slap,” sound, it landed on Eldest Miss Yu’s palm, with less than 30% of its usual strength.

Yu Youyao's hands trembled, but she resisted the urge to retract her hand. When the ruler landed—"Eh?" It didn't seem to hurt too much?

She quietly opened her eyes and looked at her slightly red palm. Then, she looked at Ms. Ye, who was still frowning as she held the ruler. She couldn't help but jump in shock and quickly closed her eyes again.

Ms. Ye composed herself and hit her nine more times, causing Yu Youyao's face to turn white. She looked at her teacher with teary eyes, but still, she endured it all and kept her back straightened, not shedding a single tear.

After the beating, Yu Youyao's left palm was red, numb, and in pain. Chun Xiao and Xia Tao, who had been watching from the side, felt their hearts ache.

#### Chapter 65: Seat Was Snatched

Ms. Ye said calmly, "Since you're studying at home again, it's time to change those bad habits of yours. You have to catch up on the lessons that you've missed in the past. Don't drop out of class so easily in the future."

Yu Youyao lowered her head and agreed.

Ms. Ye nodded and continued, "Yesterday, your father sent someone over to inform me that you were going to learn the rules from Nanny and that you would only be studying in the morning." At this point, she paused for a moment. "I won't force you if you don't come to the talent class in the afternoon, but I hope you'll pay more attention to the language class. As the saying goes, it's good if a woman isn't talented, but it's bad if she isn't. If she's stupid, she won't be smart. If she's not smart, she'll be blind. She will be like a puppet. As a woman of the governing family, you should understand that a woman who knows how to read and write is virtuous."

These words were a little heartfelt. Yu Youyao felt something and looked up at Ms. Ye. She said solemnly, "Thank you for your guidance."

Seeing that she seemed to have really taken his advice, Ms. Ye's expression softened a little. "Go to your seat."

Ms. Ye took the snacks and the Four Treasures of the Study set into the room at the side.

There were three long rows of tables in the room, with three tables in each row. Yu Youyao's seat was in the middle of the first row. Yu Youyao had not been to school for more than a month. On the long table that should have been empty, there was a blue-and-white brush washer, a rosewood room treasure box, and other items. Every item was either carved or printed with exquisite pomegranate patterns.

Chun Xiao said, "It belongs to Fourth Miss." Pomegranate flowers were Yu Qingning's favorite flowers.

As soon as she finished speaking, she saw Yu Jianjia and Yu Qingning enter the house with their maidservants. Seeing that Yu Youyao was also there, the two of them were clearly surprised.

"I didn't know that Big Sister was also here. Otherwise, I would have come with her." Yu Jianjia was also wearing a green dress, but their styles were very different, and she looked more refined.

Yu Youyao glanced at her but said nothing.

Yu Jianjia felt her heart ache at this calm gaze. Thinking of what had happened in the past two days, she turned around and sat down in her seat. She opened the treasure box on the long table and took out pens, ink, paper, inkstone, paperweights, books, and other items.

The long, empty table was full, but not messy at all.

Yu Qingning, who had been forced by Yu Youyao to kowtow to the first wife yesterday and was punished by Old Madam to copy "Female Virtue" a hundred times, was wearing a rather gorgeous pomegranate dress. Her expression was not too good. When she saw Yu Youyao, she could not help but glare at her. Then, she snorted coldly and turned to sit down.

However, Chun Xiao stopped her. "Fourth Miss, have you forgotten that this is Young Miss's seat?"

Yu Qingning's expression couldn't help but stiffen. Then, she said angrily, "Big Sister hasn't been to school for a month. I only changed seats because I saw that your seat was empty. I didn't mean to snatch your seat."

Yu Youyao ignored her and turned to look at Jin Ju, who was following behind Yu Qingning. She instructed, "Pack Fourth Miss's things."

Jin Ju's face turned pale. Ignoring her young miss's pale face, she hurriedly went forward to put away Yu Qingning's study treasure box, as well as the pen holder, pen holder, and other items.

Yu Qingning gritted her teeth in anger. "Yu Youyao, what do you mean?"

Seeing that Jin Ju had quickly packed Yu Qingning's things and placed them in the middle of the second row, Yu Youyao finally gave Yu Qingning a look.

"What belongs to me belongs to me even if I'm not around. Since you've privately occupied my position, I won't hold it against you. After all, I'm the eldest sister, so I naturally have to tolerate my younger sister. However, Father said that since I'm the eldest sister of the first wife, I should take on the responsibility of teaching my younger siblings in the family. Therefore, I have to teach you the principle of stealing without asking. I hope that in the future, Fourth Sister, you will be polite and not overstep your boundaries."

Yu Qingning's face turned red with anger.

But that wasn't all. Yu Youyao chuckled. "In the future, you have to remember to call me Big Sister. There's order in seniority. If outsiders hear you calling me by my full name, they'll say that you're unruly and ill-mannered, and you won't want to implicate the reputation of the residence."

Her gentle and smiling voice revealed the gentleness of a kind heart. However, the faint warning in her words was filled with a mellow and deep aura.

Yu Qingning was filled with anger. It was as if someone had poured a bucket of cold water on her on the spot. All of her fire was wiped out in an instant, leaving only sparks behind. She felt indignant in her heart.

At this moment, Ms. Ye walked out of the side room with a dark expression. He held the ruler that he had just used on Yu Youyao and walked up to Yu Qingning. "Give me your hand."

Yu Qingning's face turned pale. "Mentor, what did I do wrong?"

Ms. Ye's expression was serious. "A long time ago, Eldest Miss didn't come to school. If you were in her position, I would have asked you if you had gotten her approval. How did you answer?"

A position could not be changed just like that. It had to be approved by the other party first.

"I..." Yu Qingning's heart skipped a beat, and she reluctantly reached out her hand.

After the first strike, Yu Qingning's tears fell and her body trembled like a leaf in the wind.

Ms. Ye did not seem to notice Yu Qingning's aggrieved tears. The ruler continued to fall heavily, making loud slapping sounds. "You're full of lies. You're saying that you're not smart and don't believe me. You're secretly snatching someone else's seat because you're rude and heartless. The three principles and five rules are the benchmark for the world. However, you've violated the four rules of kindness, etiquette, wisdom, and trust. I'll punish you ten times using the ruler."

Not only was Yu Qingning beaten up, but she was also taught a lesson by the teacher on the spot. Her tears fell even more fiercely. Halfway through, she retracted her hand.

Yu Qingning had been pampered since she was a young child by her father. Although she was the daughter of a concubine, she was not inferior to Yu Youyao, who was the daughter of the first wife. She was also competitive and liked to compete with others. After school, with Yu Jianjia's wisdom, she naturally did not want to fall behind. She worked hard. Not to mention being slapped on the palm of the hand with a ruler in front of all the sisters in the residence, even a slight bump was rare.

Ms. Ye looked at her calmly. "Give me your hand."

Her palm was burning with pain. Yu Qingning was afraid of being beaten and was unwilling to extend her hand again. Usually, people were willing to learn from and respected Ms. Ye because of her talent.

However, in Yu Qingning's heart, Ms. Ye was just a divorcee who was living peacefully in the Yu Residence. She was certain that Ms. Ye wouldn't dare to do anything to her.

After all, Yu Youyao had not gone to school for a month. Wouldn't Ms. Ye say something?

Could she be more overboard than Yu Youyao?

## Chapter 66: An Easily-won Battle

At the thought of this, Yu Qingning felt even more aggrieved. Yesterday, she had been taught a lesson by Yu Youyao. She had been punished to copy "Female Virtue" a hundred times, and her mother had also been banned from copying Buddhist scriptures. The main door of the Clear Autumn Courtyard had been locked, and two old maids had been guarding it all day.

In the morning, when she came to school, she had to shout for the old maid to open the door. She could only leave the house with the old maid's permission.

She was so angry that her eyes turned red and she almost cried. Now, even Ms. Ye was punishing her, and everyone was going against her.

Seeing that she did not reach out her hand, Ms. Ye's face turned cold. "Get out!"

Yu Qingning was stunned for a moment and did not move.

However, Ms. Ye did not show any mercy. "If you don't get out, I'll get the servants to drag you out."

These words were a little serious. Yu Qingning was so angry that she cried. She pointed at Yu Youyao indignantly. "What about her? She hasn't been to school for a month. Why didn't you drag her out?"

Just as Yu Youyao was about to take out her swollen left hand, she heard Ms. Ye say calmly, "You don't even know the most basic respect for your teacher. I don't want to teach someone like you, who has no character and doesn't know how to repent. Go back. I'll tell Old Madam Yu later."

Although Yu Youyao had often made mistakes in the past, she had always been obediently punished, and she had never contradicted her teacher. She had not gone to school for a month, and the Yu Residence had also sent word, so it was not Yu Qingning's place to criticize her.

Besides, Yu Qingning did not have any sisterly ties at all. She had criticized her sister on the spot. In the five basic elements of relationships, there was also injustice. Such an inhumane, disrespectful, and unwise person was indeed not worth teaching.

Yu Qingning stomped her feet and ran out, covering her face. She almost bumped into Yu Shuangbai, who was at the door.

With tears in her eyes, she saw that the few daughters of concubines in the second house were also following behind Yu Shuangbai. There was a group of young masters and maidservants, who had obviously arrived long ago and were standing outside to watch her make a fool of herself.

At the thought of this, Yu Qingning glared at Yu Shuangbai, covered her face, and ran away.

Yu Shuangbai pursed her lips. She had indeed come long ago, but because Ms. Ye was lecturing Yu Qingning, it wasn't appropriate for her to enter rashly, so she waited outside.

It wasn't that she wasn't a daughter of the first wife in the first household and a concubine's status was lower. This was all the result of Madam Yang's lack of discipline and Eldest Uncle's indulgence.

It was no wonder that her grandmother had suppressed her uncle and forbade him from taking in concubines.

Eldest Uncle was muddle-headed in front of Madam Yang and could not control himself in front of the concubines. It was better to be a concubine's child than to be a legitimate daughter. Madam Yang was too selfish, and she was not someone who could manage the family. If he really took in a few more concubines, the residence would probably catch fire.



In the Clear Autumn Courtyard, Concubine He, who was copying Buddhist scriptures, was shocked when she saw Yu Qingning running back with tears all over her face. She quickly put down the pen in her hand. "What happened?"

Yu Qingning threw herself into her mother's arms and cried, refusing to speak.

Concubine He's face darkened as she looked at Jin Ju. "Fourth Miss has just gone to school. Why did you come back crying?"

Jin Ju knelt on the ground and recounted everything that had happened.

When Concubine He heard that her daughter was being bullied by Yu Youyao, she was furious.

However, when she heard that Yu Qingning was actually chased out of the school by Ms. Ye, she felt even more dizzy. "How dare you disobey and contradict Ms. Ye? Why don't you think about it? The reason why Yu Youyao was beaten up by your father previously was none other than because she didn't respect her teacher. If Old Madam finds out that you've offended Ms. Ye today, she'll definitely make a fuss in front of your father. How can he let you off?"

At the thought of Yu Youyao's swollen cheek, Yu Qingning's eyes widened in shock, and she forgot to cry for a moment.

Concubine He was furious. She poked Yu Qingning's forehead with her finger, wishing she could wake her up. "You, how could I have given birth to such a stupid child like you? Yu Youyao was clearly plotting against you, and using Ms. Ye to teach you a lesson. Instead of being punished obediently and settling the matter, you even took the initiative to fall into the trap. You..."

Changing seats was not a big deal. As long as Yu Youyao did not mind, it was fine.

However, although Yu Youyao pretended not to care, she was making a fuss out of it. Not only did she deliberately anger Qingning, but she also pushed the blame onto Qingning for being over-the-top, rude, and ill-mannered.

When Ms. Ye heard this, her dissatisfaction with Qingning also increased by ten times but her punishment was still light.

However, after being bullied by Yu Youyao, Qingning was furious and her mind was not calm. How could she tolerate being punished by her teacher? Wouldn't she offend her?

Yu Youyao was really impressive. She had planned everything out step by step, causing Qingning to fall into her trap unknowingly.

This method was simply terrifying.

If it weren't for the fact that she was trained to be a concubine in the past, she would not have realized that all of this was planned by Yu Youyao.

Concubine He recalled that yesterday, Yu Youyao had asked Yu Qingning to kneel before Madam Xie's portrait. Then, Old Madam had asked Nanny Liu to send a portrait to the Clear Autumn Courtyard, so that she could offer it three incense sticks a day and three times a day. Initially, she had thought that Old Madam was annoyed with her, so she did not think too much about it. However, now that she thought about it, a chill ran down her spine.

In the main house, anyone who schemed against others could always be found. However, Eldest Miss's method of not killing anyone made one's scalp tingle.

Yu Qingning was reprimanded by Concubine He, and tears streamed down her face. "Mother, I..."

Seeing that her daughter was still in a daze, Concubine He was so angry that she almost vomited blood. "Ms. Ye is from a scholarly family in the Linjiang Prefecture. Many people in the family are officials in the court. The most famous Wu Mountain Academy in the Great Zhou Dynasty was organized by the Ye family. The reason why the residence invited Ms. Ye is firstly to borrow the reputation of the Ye family and help you gain a good reputation. In the future, others will also think highly of you. Secondly, it's because Ms. Ye is indeed talented. Countless families in the capital wanted to invite her into the residence, but she was a divorcee. She picked the Yu Residence precisely because she thinks it's simple and proper."

At this point, Concubine He looked disappointed. "Instead of learning from her, you're learning from Yu Youyao. Yu Youyao has Old Madam to support her, so she won't be too far off in the future. But what about you? Madam Yang isn't someone who's easy to get along with. Your future depends on yourself. You're already an adult. Why don't you plan for your future?"

Hearing this, Yu Qingning was furious. She waved her hand and swept it across the table. Immediately, the pens, ink, paper, inkstone, cups, bowls, plates, and other items on the table shattered into pieces. She was furious. "I'm the daughter of a concubine. I was born inferior to them. I'm my father's daughter. Why should I be distinguished?"

Concubine He was shocked by her daughter's anger. She quickly pulled her daughter over to sit beside her. "Keep your voice down. Don't let others hear you. Although you're the daughter of a concubine, your father dotes on you more than Yu Youyao, and you're no worse than her. But the more this is the case, the more you should use your father to seek a better future for yourself."

## Chapter 67: Deliberately Making Things Difficult

After losing her temper, Yu Qingning had also calmed down. She had always been competitive just to please her father and make him dote on her more.

Concubine He said in a low voice, "Go back and apologize to Ms. Ye now."

Yu Qingning was a little unwilling. "But, if Ms. Ye doesn't forgive me, then wouldn't I..."

Concubine He quickly said, "You've always performed well at home and haven't done anything wrong. As long as your attitude is good, Ms. Ye won't be too harsh on you."

Yu Qingning was still a little reluctant, but when she thought of what Concubine Yu had said just now, how Yu Youyao had not gone to school for more than a month, and how Ms. Ye had not chased her away, she nodded reluctantly.

Concubine He finally nodded in relief. "I embroidered a hibiscus screen a few days ago. Bring it with you and apologize to Ms. Ye properly. You can't do this again in the future."

It had taken her three months to embroider the hibiscus embroidery. She had originally planned to give it to Old Madam, but it was more important for her to apologize to Ms. Ye now.

In the family study, Ms. Ye was teaching the Four Books and Five Classics. Among them, the first chapter of The Book of Rites, Curiosity, was divided into two parts. Most of the books were about etiquette, such as speech, food, cleaning, responding, and the way to advance and retreat. They included the contents of the Five Rites, such as auspicious rituals, fierce rituals, military rituals, guest rituals, and honorable rituals.

They were all small details, but were extremely broad and deep.

In addition to learning 'Female Virtue', 'Internal Training', and 'Biographies of outstanding women', the young mistresses of wealthy families also had to learn some of the 'Four Books and Five Classics', poems and songs. However, young mistresses did not need to take the imperial examination, so the teachers would pick some important lessons.

There wasn't much content in The Book of Rites, but Ms. Ye explained it in simple terms. She explained it quickly and thoroughly. If one could keep up with her thoughts, they would be able to learn the book completely. If they couldn't, they would be able to learn the basics very well.

In the past, Yu Youyao had not been enlightened and could not listen to lectures, but now, she had unknowingly picked up her pen and started to write notes.

After finishing The Book of Rites, Ms. Ye felt a little thirsty, so she picked up her tea and took a few sips. Then, she looked up at Yu Jianjia first. Seeing her writing with one hand holding a brush and the other holding up her long sleeve, she couldn't help but nod.

Third Miss Yu was quite intelligent. She learned everything faster and more diligently than the average person.

Then, she looked at Yu Shuangbai and Yu Lianyu, who were also working hard.

Finally, she turned to look at Yu Youyao.

At this moment, Yu Youyao was biting the tip of her brush lightly. Her head was tilted to the side, and no one knew what she was thinking. Ms. Ye frowned and walked silently to her side. However, Yu Youyao did not notice at all. Her expression darkened. Just as she was about to speak, she saw that the paper in front of her was filled with words.

Ms. Ye was stunned. She looked at it word by word, but her heart was in turmoil. It was not because of anything else, but because Yu Youyao had actually written down everything that she had taught previously without missing a single word. There were even some of her own insights mixed in. Although it was a little crude, one could already vaguely see the wisdom of her personality.

Ms. Ye held her breath. This was a photographic memory!

She had originally thought that Yu Jianjia was the most intelligent young mistress in the Yu Residence. Could it be that she had misjudged her?

In the past, Yu Youyao hadn't been enlightened and wasn't willing to learn seriously, so she seemed a little stupid?

At this thought, she couldn't help but compare the two of them.

Yu Jianjia's article was rather literary, and she admired it quite a bit. However, it inevitably exuded a sense of sophistication. This was a common problem for most young ladies from wealthy families.

However, when she read Yu Youyao's article today, although it wasn't as sophisticated as Yu Jianjia's words, her words were clear and knowledgeable, making her eyes light up.

Although...

Ms. Ye took another look. The rice paper was strewn all over the place, and there were all sorts of messy words. The corners of her mouth twitched. The words "a flaw does not overshadow a jade" ran through her mind again and again. In the end, she still could not go against her conscience and make such an evaluation of Yu Youyao.

The words were just like her!

If her handwriting was bad, what was there to talk about?

If word got out that she was the one who had taught her this, her reputation as a teacher would be ruined.

Yu Youyao did not know that Ms. Ye had a thousand thoughts running through her mind. She recalled everything that Ms. Ye had taught previously. When she realized that there were no mistakes, she put down her brush and looked up to meet Ms. Ye's cold gaze. She was immediately shocked. She quickly stood up from her chair and shouted in a panic, "Ms. Ye."

When Yu Jianjia, who was waving her ink brush at the side, saw this, she put down the brush in her hand and smiled faintly.

Usually, Yu Youyao couldn't sit still during class and would often be absent-minded. It was common for her to be punished with a ruler if it was serious, but if it was light, she would have to be taught a lesson.

She had seen this situation many times in the past.

Seeing Yu Youyao's pale face, Ms. Ye felt a little uneasy. She said calmly, "Recite the 'The Book of Rites' you just learned."

As soon as these words were spoken, there was a slight gasp in the classroom.

Chun Xiao and Xia Tao, who were guarding the side room, couldn't sit still anymore. They quietly walked to the partition door and looked out.

When Ms. Ye taught, she would only ask students to memorize the essays that she had learned on the first day. This was the first time she had asked to memorize an essay in class.

It seemed that she was upset that Eldest Miss had not come to school for more than a month and was deliberately making things difficult for her.

Yu Jianjia bit her lip and tilted her head to glance at Yu Youyao. Her eyes flashed with worry, and her fair face was covered with a layer of concern.

Yu Shuangbai secretly gave Yu Youyao a helpless look.

Ms. Ye had always been strict. In the past, Yu Youyao had refused to work hard and was often punished. She would not scold her loudly, but when she looked at her with a calm expression, she had an imposing aura. Her cold voice had no fluctuations in her emotions, making people feel even more afraid.

Therefore, Yu Youyao had always been afraid of Ms. Ye. In the past, she often found excuses to avoid studying at home.

At this moment, seeing Ms. Ye standing beside her, Yu Youyao panicked for a moment, but after hearing Ms. Ye's words, she heaved a sigh of relief.

If it had been in the past, she definitely wouldn't have been able to memorize it well if Ms. Ye had asked her to memorize it. She would definitely have been punished again. However, ever since she had this dream and consumed the spiritual dew every day, she was like a pearl covered in dust. She was no longer ignorant or muddle-headed. Now, she was bright from the inside out.

Under Ms. Ye's calm gaze, Yu Youyao composed herself and began to recite, "As the saying goes, there is no need to be disrespectful. If you are serious, you can write calmly and peacefully. You can't be arrogant for long, you can't always follow your desires, you can't be too satisfied, you can't be overly happy..."

Under everyone's incredulous gazes, Yu Youyao's voice rose and fell with a clear rhythm as she finished reciting the entire "The Book of Rites".

#### Chapter 68: Losing Control on the Spot

Ms. Ye nodded in satisfaction and was about to praise her!

In the quiet hall, there was a sudden clank. Ms. Ye tilted his head to look and saw Yu Jianjia bending down in panic. She was about to pick up the jade carving bird paperweight that had fallen to the ground and broken into three pieces. However, in her panic, the sharp corners of the jade piece accidentally cut her finger, and blood gushed out.

"Ah!" Yu Jianjia let out a low cry, and her pale little face turned even paler. Just based on her white lips and smokey eyebrows, it was hard not to feel pity for her.

Yu Youyao only took one look before looking away.

Ms. Ye asked calmly, "What happened?"

Yu Jianjia stood up respectfully. "I accidentally dropped the paperweight and disturbed your lesson. Please punish me."

After saying that, she lowered her head, revealing a slender neck that was as fair as jade. Her slender neck revealed a hint of weakness.

Her finger was still bleeding from the cut, but Yu Jianjia pretended not to notice.

She and her mother had suffered setbacks because of Yu Youyao.

Initially, she had been waiting for Yu Youyao to make a fool of herself in front of everyone so that her father would realize that Yu Youyao was stupid and useless. In that case, the trace of guilt and kindness her father had for her would probably completely dissipate.

Even she couldn't memorize the The Book of Rites that she had just learned, but Yu Youyao had actually memorized it from beginning to end without making any mistakes. As she was too shocked, she had accidentally become overwhelmed with emotions and swept the paperweight to the ground.

Fortunately, everyone's attention was on Yu Youyao, so no one noticed her rude behavior.

Ms. Ye was silent for a moment. She glanced at her bleeding fingers and said calmly, "Go to the side room and bandage your wound. We'll continue with the next class."

Yu Jianjia lowered her head and agreed. Although the cut on her finger wasn't serious, the wound hurt badly. She didn't know if it was because her fingers were connected to her heart or something else.

Why did it seem like everything had changed since Yu Youyao fell seriously ill?

In the past, she and her mother had always been successful in the residence, but recently, they had suffered setbacks everywhere. On the other hand, Yu Youyao was successful in everything. All of this made Yu Jianjia feel a sense of panic, as if she was out of control.

Not to mention how shocked Yu Jianjia was, even Yu Shuangbai looked surprised.

Ms. Ye turned around and said to Yu Youyao, "When your heart is set, your words will be stable and comfortable. When you speak respectfully, your words will be stable. It can be seen that not only have you memorized this 'The Book of Rites', but you've also really learned it. Since you have intelligence, you have to work hard. Don't let down your talent. If you don't use it, you'll regret it."

The first line of The Book of Rites was to teach people how to speak. It emphasized order, rhythm, stability, and respect. Yu Youyao did it all.

—If you don't use it, you'll regret it!

Yu Youyao tasted these words carefully in her heart. If she didn't accept what was given to her by the heavens and didn't improve, she would be punished instead. This was a warning from Ms. Ye.

Yu Youyao smiled and raised her eyebrows. "Thank you."

Seeing that she was in high spirits, Ms. Ye paused for a moment, and even her voice became a little fainter. "Your handwriting is messy. When you go back, practice writing five hundred words a day."

This was like giving her a sweet date and a big kiss before the criticism. The joy on Yu Youyao's face instantly disappeared. She lowered her head and looked at herself, feeling embarrassed.

Her grandmother had said that her handwriting was bad, and Nanny Xu had also told her to practice more. Now, even she had said that her handwriting was too sloppy. It seemed like it was indeed time for her to practice.

Hence, Yu Youyao couldn't help but ask, "Mentor, is there any way to practice my handwriting as soon as possible?"

It was good that she was willing to be taught. A faint smile appeared in Ms. Ye's eyes. "There are no shortcuts to writing. You can only rely on more practice. If you want to master your handwriting as soon as possible, you can practice your arm strength and wrist strength."

Yu Youyao nodded thoughtfully.

Next, Ms. Ye explained the more difficult parts of the ‘The Book of Rites’ again, then explained them to Yu Shuangbai one by one. The lesson was finally over.

Yu Youyao and the others went to the side room to rest. Chun Xiao cleverly brought her a bowl of ginseng tea. Xia Tao also took out exquisite snacks from her food box and placed them on the table.

Yu Shuangbai looked at the snacks that had been meticulously prepared on her table, then at the sesame oil dumplings, the cream pine dumplings, the sugared steamed cheese, the custard, and so on. Even her eyes widened. She suddenly felt that the snacks that her mother had asked the kitchen maid to meticulously prepare had become very ordinary.

Nanny Xu had prepared a lot of snacks, clearly considering that she would share them with her sisters.

Yu Shuangbai did not stand on ceremony and sat down beside Yu Youyao. “Nanny Xu is indeed from the palace. The food she cooks is much more meticulous than the chefs in the residence.”

Seeing Yu Shuangbai’s greedy expression, Yu Youyao suppressed her laughter. “We’re all sisters. If you like it, feel free to eat it.”

After saying that, she asked Chun Xiao to take some small plates and fill each with some snacks. She gave them to Yu Jianjia, as well as Yu Lianyu and the others from the second house. There wasn’t much, but everyone could have a bite.

Yu Jianjia looked at the small plate of snacks in front of her. They were different from the ones made in the kitchen in the residence. She could tell at a glance that they were extraordinary. Her throat couldn’t help but itch, and she couldn’t help but cover her mouth with her handkerchief and cough lightly.

Now that she had a capable nanny by her side, even Yu Youyao, who had always been stupid, revealed that she was not ordinary.

She had Nanny Qin by her side to take care of her. She had been transferred from the Yu Residence’s manor because she knew some medical skills and could take better care of her. She had always been very satisfied with Nanny Qin.

For the past few days, her mother had been setting rules in her grandmother’s room. She couldn’t take care of Jia Jia all the time, so she had planned to make Nanny Qin her housekeeper and there were no objections.

However, after this comparison, she actually felt that Nanny Qin was not very useful.

She had the intention of asking her mother to help her find a palace nanny, but if that happened, it would inevitably be exposed and people would think that she was competing with Yu Youyao.

Yu Jianjia thought about how Yu Youyao had memorized an entire section of the “The Book of Rites” just now and couldn’t help but ask. “Big Sister, you memorized the “The Book of Rites” so well just now. Could it be that you’ve learned the essays as well?”

Other than this, she couldn’t think of any other reason why Yu Youyao could memorize the “The Book of Rites” that even she hadn’t been able to. Her emotions calmed down a little.

Yu Youyao had learned it in advance. After receiving Ms. Ye’s praise, her true colors would be revealed over time, including her own stupidity.

She was still the most intelligent young mistress in the Yu Residence.

She was also Ms. Ye's most worthy disciple.

Yu Shuangbai also felt that this made sense and looked at Yu Youyao.

## Chapter 69: Embarrassed

Yu Youyao glanced at Yu Jianjia indifferently and said, "Grandmother felt that I wasn't following the rules at home and often disturbed Ms. Ye's lessons. There was no improvement in my studies at home, so she asked Nanny Xu to take care of me. This way, I can learn the rules well and put in more effort"

Her words, which seemed to be both true and false, made everyone believe her. There seemed to be a hint of vitality on Yu Jianjia's pale face, revealing her delicate beauty.

At this moment, Yu Qingning, who had been kicked out of school by Ms. Ye in the morning, entered with her maidservant.

Her expression was unnatural, as if she was trying her best to pretend that nothing had happened. However, her slightly stiff expression made her face twist.

When Yu Qingning returned to school, everyone had understanding expressions on their faces. They weren't surprised at all. As long as Yu Qingning wasn't too stupid, she should understand that if she was really chased out of school, not only would it ruin her reputation, but it would also cause her grandmother to hate her and be displeased with her father.

No one in the room spoke up to provoke Yu Qingning.

Seeing that everyone was ignoring her, Yu Qingning became even angrier and glared at Yu Youyao.

However, Yu Youyao was holding a cup of tea and talking to Yu Shuangbai in a low voice. She did not even look at her.

Yu Qingning's punch landed on cotton. She felt stifled and uncomfortable. She sat on the table angrily and asked the maidservant to serve her tea and food.

After ten minutes, Yu Youyao and the others returned to class.

In this class, Ms. Ye was teaching the first of the four books, "University." A few young mistresses were kneeling in their seats and listening attentively. Only Yu Qingning was standing outside the door, feeling tormented.

Upon hearing her mother's words, she returned to her studies and went to apologize to Ms. Ye, but was stopped by Old Madam Su.

She asked Jin Ju to give Ms. Ye the hibiscus screen that her mother had prepared. Old Madam Su had confiscated it.

When it was time for class, Yu Qingning wanted to enter the room to listen, but Old Madam Su still stopped her.



Yu Qingning stood outside the door and waited for a while before she couldn't help but feel embarrassed. Just as she was about to leave, Jin Ju hurriedly stopped her and said, "Young Lady, if you leave now, you won't have the chance to go home and learn anymore. At that time, you'll really become a person who doesn't know how to respect your teachers. Think about what Concubine said."

Yu Qingning stomped her feet in grievance and anger. "But, if Ms. Ye doesn't forgive me, why should I stay here? I won't be laughed at by others, but I've never been so embarrassed before."

Jin Ju recalled that before coming to school, Concubine He had called her over and specially reminded her, "Perhaps it's because Ms. Ye wants to see your sincerity, so she's deliberately testing you. Since you're here to apologize, you naturally have to be more sincere and show respect for your teacher."

Yu Qingning reluctantly retracted her foot. "But I'm just going to stand outside?"

Jin Ju said, "Ms. Ye has always been strict. Other than Third Miss, no one in the residence has never been punished. You can't take it too seriously." At this point, she glanced into the room and quietly leaned close to Yu Qingning. She lowered her voice and said, "I was in the side room earlier and accidentally saw that Eldest Miss's left hand was also swollen. I believe she must have been disciplined by a ruler."

Yu Qingning's eyes widened and her breathing quickened. "Really?"

"I can't be mistaken." Jin Ju looked certain.

The anger in Yu Qingning's heart finally dissipated a little. Now that she was standing outside the classroom, she could finally tolerate it. "I was wondering why Yu Youyao didn't go to school for a month, and why Ms. Ye didn't chase her out. It turns out that she was slapped and punished. No wonder Yu Youyao came so early today. Hmph!"

Seeing that Miss did not say that she was leaving, Jin Ju finally heaved a sigh of relief.

The class lasted for about an hour. Yu Qingning was not a patient person to begin with, and she had been pampered all this time. After standing for a while, she felt her feet hurt and her legs go numb, so her expression became uglier and uglier.

In the past, when she saw that Yu Youyao was often punished to stand, she couldn't help but mock her. However, when it was her turn, she realized that it was really torturous. Even her breathing had slowed down. Every time she breathed, it was torture for her. She even felt that the maidservants who occasionally passed by were all secretly laughing at her.

Ms. Ye, who was lecturing, took a sip of tea and glanced out of the window. She frowned but did not say anything.

Finally, the class ended. Yu Qingning quickly went to look for Ms. Ye, but was once again blocked by Old Madam Su. "Ms. Ye has instructed that Fourth Miss can't stand properly. It's better for her to continue standing outside."

At this moment, Yu Qingning finally understood that Ms. Ye was a man of her word. However, she had been angered and had been wronged. She had no choice but to admit that it was her fault for not

respecting her teacher. Instantly, her face turned red with anger, but she couldn't flare up on the spot. She was afraid that she would anger Ms. Ye further and really alarm her grandmother and father. In this case, she wouldn't have a good time either.

Unwilling to accept this, Yu Qingning led Jin Ju outside, only to see Yu Youyao packing up her desk. Thinking of how everything she had suffered today was all because of Yu Youyao, she suddenly felt a sense of disgust. She sneered, "Big Sister, why are you only using one hand to pack your things? You should have been taught a lesson by Mentor this morning!"

Yu Youyao pretended as if nothing had happened, but she insisted on letting everyone know.

As soon as she said this, Yu Jianjia's hand, which was tidying up the pen holder, paused. Her gaze involuntarily drifted to Yu Youyao's left hand. Even Yu Shuangbai and the others looked at Yu Youyao curiously.

She was being punished fair and square, just like Yu Qingning, who was disobedient and embarrassed by contradicting her teacher. Yu Youyao did not want to hide it from her, so she simply stretched out her hand generously, revealing her slightly swollen palm. "Well, I haven't been to school for more than a month. I've been punished so that I can learn a lesson."

Her frank attitude made Yu Jianjia feel bored, so she turned to continue packing her desk. Yu Lianyu and the others, who wanted to laugh, also looked away awkwardly.

Yu Shuangbai clicked her tongue. "Ms. Ye is really fair and impartial. If you refuse to be disciplined, you'll be kicked out of the school."

These words were clearly meant to mock Yu Qingning. Yu Qingning, who was originally feeling a little smug, immediately felt embarrassed.

Immediately, she realized that she had been kicked out of the school by her teacher. As a comparison, Yu Youyao's punishment of being hit ten times by a ruler seemed to make Yu Youyao seem even more respectful and obedient. It also made her seem even more unbearable.

The shameless one had become her.

She shouldn't have made a fuss about Yu Youyao being punished by Mentor.

Yu Qingning regretted it so much that she no longer had the face to stay. She hurriedly led Jin Ju outside. Thinking that Ms. Ye had yet to forgive her, she cried in grievance. "Ms. Ye, what do you mean by this? You punished me to stand outside for a lesson, but you don't even forgive me. How long do I have to stand outside?"

She wanted to just shake her head and leave.

Chapter 70: Cousin, It Hurts!

Jin Ju hurriedly said, "Miss, don't worry. At least, just now, Ms. Ye asked Old Madam Su to pass on a message. If you endure it a little longer, perhaps Ms. Ye will forgive you later."

Yu Qingning did not dare to mention leaving again. She could only endure the pain in her legs and stand outside obediently.

There were a total of three classes in the morning. Yu Qingning endured it until after school in the morning. Only then did she receive Old Madam Su's permission to enter the classroom.

Yu Jianjia and Yu Shuangbai still had talent classes in the afternoon, so they didn't go back. Instead, they went to the side room to eat and rest.

Yu Youyao only attended literary classes. As soon as the class ended, she was called by Ms. Ye to go to the side room. She pointed at a stack of books on the table and said, "This is a part of the class you missed. There are notes and explanations by me in it. Find time to learn it yourself."

Yu Youyao had a photographic memory and could recite well. These should not be difficult for her.

Looking at the stack of books in front of her, there were at least ten of them. Yu Youyao secretly swallowed her saliva. Under Ms. Ye's calm gaze, she braced herself and nodded. "I-I understand."

Ms. Ye retracted her gaze. "I didn't prepare the 'Lessons for Women', 'The Legend of the Fierce Maiden', and 'Internal Training'. Learn some from Nanny yourself." At this point, she was silent for a moment before reminding her, "Daughters are just like men. They have to follow the three principles and five rules as a benchmark for their behavior. They have to be benevolent, righteous, polite, wise, and trustworthy. It's easy to restrain actions, but not temperament."

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat. What Ms. Ye meant was that she only needed to learn a little from books like 'Lessons for Women'. She could restrain her actions, but she couldn't restrain her temperament. She could use different methods to teach her, but not everything.

She was the same as Nanny Xu!

These were sincere words. Yu Youyao's eyes were clear. "Thank you for your advice, mentor."

Seeing that she really understood, Ms. Ye nodded. "Go back!"

Yu Youyao bowed and left the side room. Coincidentally, she bumped into Old Madam Su leading Yu Qingning into the room. The moment their eyes met, Yu Qingning's eyes widened in anger, while Yu Youyao looked at her indifferently.

Old Madam Su reminded, "Fourth Miss, Mentor is still waiting for you."

Yu Qingning snorted, then reluctantly turned to the side and gave way.

Yu Youyao walked past her with a stack of books in her arms.

Yu Qingning was furious. She turned around and continued to glare at her, but all she saw was Yu Youyao's slender and beautiful figure.

She suddenly realized that after learning from Nanny Xu for a while, not only had Yu Youyao become more careful, but her actions had also become more elegant and beautiful. She also felt a strong sense of jealousy.

Yu Youyao brought Chun Xiao and Xia Tao back to the Jade Courtyard.

Dong Mei welcomed her. "Young Master is here. He's waiting for you in the reception pavilion."

When Yu Youyao heard this, her eyes lit up. She quickly picked up her skirt and quickened her pace, quickly leaving Chun Xiao and Xia Tao behind.

Zhou Linghuai was reading when he suddenly heard footsteps. His pale lips curved into a faint smile, and he closed the book.

He saw the little girl walk in quickly, her light green dress fluttered in the wind. She looked as delicate as a baby in early spring, and it was a refreshing sight.

“Cousin, why are you here? Didn’t you go to the West Mansion to study today?”

Her delicate voice was crisp and cheerful, like a magpie climbing a branch. Just hearing it made one happy.

A smile appeared in Zhou Linghuai’s dark eyes. “I came over to take a look during my lunch break.”

Although there was only a door wall between the West Mansion and the East Mansion, it was still troublesome to travel between them, especially since her cousin was in a wheelchair.

Her cousin’s studies were very heavy. Usually, after school, he would directly finish his meal at the school and discuss his studies with his brothers or take a nap before returning to The Green House at night.

Yu Youyao squatted in front of her cousin and immediately saw the sachet on his waist. She immediately smiled.

Her cousin didn’t mind that her skills were crude and not presentable at all. He even carried a sachet to school. Wasn’t he afraid that others would laugh at him?

Seeing that the red mark on her face had already disappeared, Zhou Linghuai smirked. “Are you used to learning at home today? Did Mentor make things difficult for you?”

Before Yu Youyao could say anything, Chun Xiao had already entered the room and continued, “Young Miss has been punished by being hit with a ruler ten times. Her palm was swollen, but she didn’t let me apply the medicine.”

Yu Youyao glared at Chun Xiao in embarrassment and anger, blaming her for talking too much. Although she was often punished by her teacher, she didn’t want to be so shameless in front of her cousin.

She blinked her eyes pitifully, and her eyes instantly turned red. She handed her left hand to her cousin and said pitifully, “Cousin, it hurts!”

Seeing that her palm was red and slightly swollen, Zhou Linghuai was in no mood to care about her punishment. He took out a box of Nine Flowers Dew Cream from his sleeve and opened it. Then, he used a small jade spoon to pick out some medicinal cream and gently applied it onto her palm.

This wasn’t his first time, and he was familiar with it. With his previous experience, Zhou Linghuai was much better at helping her apply the medicine, so he did not bother about Tang Buyao’s question.

“She’ll be fine tomorrow after the medicine is applied.”

With a sly look in her eyes, Yu Youyao said sweetly, “Thank you, Cousin.”

How could Zhou Linghuai not know what she was thinking? He only deliberately played along and looked at her with a faint smile. “What did your teacher teach? Is there anything you don’t understand?”

Yu Youyao’s eyes lit up, and there was a different look on her face. “Mentor taught me the Five Classics, the first chapter of the Book of Rites, and even asked me to recite an essay. She praised me for learning it well.”

Then, she briefly explained what had happened in class.

The little girl’s eyes sparkled brightly, catching Zhou Linghuai off guard and almost making him dizzy.

Zhou Linghuai’s lips curled up slightly. “Taking notes!”

“Ah?!” Yu Youyao pouted slightly and hung her head low. There was no longer any trace of the smug expression on her face. “Cousin, you really want to see it!”

She blinked and looked at her cousin with puppy eyes.

Zhou Linghuai asked, “Can’t I see it?”

“No, no, no, it’s just that,” Yu Youyao stammered, her fair face turning red with embarrassment. “Mentor said that my handwriting was a little... bad, and wanted me to practice a little more.”

At this point, her gaze, which had been fixed on her cousin, began to waver. She did not dare to meet her cousin’s gaze.

Zhou Linghuai recalled the day before when he had come to the Yu Residence. The young lady had treated him like a treasure and had given him a gift. Her bright little face had been filled with envy and admiration, saying that his handwriting was good and that Old Madam Yu had teased her by saying her handwriting was like a dog’s. The young lady had stomped her feet in embarrassment.