

All Hail 641

Chapter 641 - 641: Trust

On the first day her cousin entered the residence, the scripture invitation that he had given her was also this scripture.

On the seventh of the second month, she was in Grandmaster Hui Neng's meditation room and had also heard him recite this scripture to her. Therefore, she had a deep impression of this passage.

The little girl tilted her head to look at him. The lapel of her inner shirt was a little lower, and her thin and beautiful clothes were delicate and smooth.

When she looked up, one could vaguely see her collarbone hidden in the lapel.

Zhou Linghuai reluctantly looked away. "Chun Xiao is waiting outside. I'll get her to come in and help you wash up."

Before Yu Youyao could answer, he had already turned around and strode out of the door.

Yu Youyao did not think too much about it. She played with the new bracelet on her wrist and could not bear to part with it.

After a while, Chun Xiao brought the copper basin into the house.

Last night, Young Miss was sleepwalking and ran to The Green House. In the middle of the night, she stayed alone with Young Master for most of the night.

If word got out...

Chun Xiao was a little distracted as she handed over a Five Fragrance Pill.

Yu Youyao took the Five Fragrance Pill and held it in her mouth, slowly sucking it in her mouth.

The Five Fragrance Pill was grounded with more than ten types of incense medicine, such as cardamom, cloves, patchouli, and Bai Zhi. Coupled with a little honey, it was the size of a bean. Yu Youyao improved the formula and added in incense, musk, and other incense medicine. The Five Fragrance Pill was made every morning and night, and the effect of cleaning the mouth and teeth was very good.

After three minutes, Yu Youyao spat the chewed Five Fragrance Pill into a box.

Chun Xiao handed her another cup of warm salt water. Yu Youyao rinsed her mouth for a while and spat out the water.

Yu Youyao made the apricot flowers into peanut-sized beans. Every morning and night, when she was washing her face, she would take one and melt it in her palm. She applied it on her face and massaged it gently for a moment. It was clean and hygienic.

After washing her face and moisturizing it, Yu Youyao sat down on the dressing table.

After the copper was polished, the bronze mirror was made. The mirror was reflective and bright. It was as clear as a glass mirror, and looked beautiful and generous.

Yu Youyao saw the dark circles under Chun Xiao's eyes in the bronze mirror.

“You didn’t sleep well last night?”

Young Miss had not returned all night. How could she sleep?

Chun Xiao hesitated. “Young Miss, last night, you...”

Yu Youyao’s expression darkened a little. “I was affected by a nightmare last night. I’m fine now.” She looked at Chun Xiao through the bright bronze mirror. “I didn’t alarm anyone else, right?”

Her indifferent gaze reminded Chun Xiao of—

Early this morning, when the sky was still gray, she was ordered by Nanny Xu to secretly send the clothes, jewelry, shoes, socks, and toiletries that Young Miss needed to The Green House.

At that time, Young Master looked at her like this and did not say anything.

However, the warmth in her entire body instantly turned cold. It was as if she had become a cold corpse. Even her mind was frozen.

Although Young Miss’s gaze was not as scary as Young Master Zhou’s, it still made Chun Xiao’s heart turn cold. “Young Miss was sleepwalking yesterday. I was afraid that something bad would happen, so I didn’t wake you up and looked for Nanny Xu to make a decision. No one in the courtyard knows that Young Miss is here.” When the words reached her lips, she suddenly swallowed the words “The Green House” and continued, “Nanny Xu said that Young Miss had a nightmare yesterday and went to her room in the middle of the night.”

Eldest Miss had not returned all night. Even if she did not alarm anyone yesterday, she needed to deliberately hide it. It was inevitable that a smart maidservant would notice some clues.

Although the Jade Courtyard was the main courtyard, the large and small courtyards were all built around it. In addition to the room in the south courtyard where Young Miss lived, there were small courtyards in the east and west. There were also side courtyards in the small courtyard.

There were more than ten big and small courtyards in total.

Nanny Xu lived alone in a quiet small courtyard in the east. There was a maidservant and an old woman serving her in the courtyard. There were few people and it was quiet.

Since Young Miss had a good relationship with Nanny Xu, it made sense for her to go to Nanny Xu’s room.

There were not many people in Nanny Xu’s courtyard, so no one would notice.

“When you return to the Jade Courtyard later, go back and rest. Get Xia Tao to serve you.” Yu Youyao trusted Nanny Xu very much. She did not tell her many things openly, but she did not deliberately hide them from her.

Nanny Xu could guess a little, but she had never taken the initiative to mention it. She had even taken the initiative to cover up for her. She and Nanny Xu had always maintained this subtle trust.

After interacting with her for three years, Yu Youyao was glad more than once that she had such a powerful person by her side.

Chun Xiao heaved a sigh of relief, but when she thought of Young Miss and Young Master yesterday...

Her eyelids twitched violently.

As Young Miss's personal maidservant, it wasn't that she hadn't noticed that Young Miss and Young Master were getting along too well. They had even crossed the line between men and women.

However, after Young Master entered the residence, he was really good to Young Miss. He taught her her studies, calligraphy, zither skills, and so on, making her become a completely different person.

Even the Matriarch had tacitly agreed and even allowed Young Miss to get close to Young Master.

To Young Miss, Young Master was a good teacher, friend, and family member. No matter what, if Young Miss interacted more with Young Master, it wouldn't be bad for her.

Matriarch knew that she wouldn't be able to protect Young Miss for many years. In the future, the only things that could protect her were the skills that Young Master had taught her and Young Master!

Since even the Matriarch had turned a blind eye, the servants in the residence naturally did not dare to say anything.

Young Miss was also benevolent and treated the servants in the residence well. If the servants did not find anything too amiss, they would not gossip. They would only think that the cousins were on good terms.

As time passed, Chun Xiao saw them getting closer. She became used to it and was not surprised.

Thinking of the scene of Young Master carrying Young Miss horizontally last night, no matter how stupid she was, she understood that this was not the behavior of "cousins" at all.

Last night, after returning to the Jade Courtyard, Chun Xiao kept thinking about what Nanny Xu had said. She thought about it for most of the night, but she still couldn't understand what Nanny Xu meant.

Chun Xiao lowered her eyes and hesitated. "Young Miss, you..."

Yu Youyao asked calmly, "Do you think Cousin treats me well?" Chun Xiao nodded without hesitation. "Of course!"

Yu Youyao asked again, "Then do you think Cousin will harm me?"

Chun Xiao subconsciously shook her head. "Of course not."

"I know that you're worried about me." Yu Youyao gently fiddled with the bracelet on her wrist. The shiny black agate was pure, heavy, and gave people the power of stability. It was because she had a nightmare and was afraid and uneasy, so her cousin had specially made a bracelet for her. "You're my personal maidservant and the person I trust the most. Just do as Nanny Xu told you yesterday. There are some things that you'll understand sooner or later."

Chun Xiao was honest. After being comforted by Young Miss, she felt much more at ease. She did not ask anything more..

Chapter 642 - 642: Imperial Edict

After washing up, Yu Youyao brought Chun Xiao back to the Jade Courtyard.

Nanny Xu asked the servants to prepare breakfast. "Everyone in the residence knows that you were quite frightened in Duke Rongs Residence. You had a nightmare at night."

The incident at the Flower Festival caused a commotion in the city after the Duke Rongs Residence was stripped of its title.

Fortunately, this matter had happened in public. Almost all the Madams and Madams who had participated in the Flower Festival knew what had happened. In addition, the outcome of the Duke Rongs Residence was too tragic and Yu Youyao's reputation was not damaged.

Only some people who had heard rumors would inevitably gossip.

It was still not good for Yu Youyao's reputation.

Yu Youyao threw herself into Nanny Xu's arms and smiled. "Thank you, Auntie."

"I've already said it. We have to put on a full show." Nanny Xu stroked her hair. In the past, she used to like to throw herself into her arms and wheedle. She was already so old, but her delicate habits could not be changed.

When she first entered the Yu Residence, she was worried that since she was from the palace, it would be difficult for Yu Youyao to get close to her if she called her Auntie. That was why she asked Yu Youyao to call her Nanny.

In the past two years, the servants of the Yu Residence had also gotten used to calling her "Nanny." On the other hand, Yu Youyao was getting more and more used to calling her "Auntie."

Yu Youyao nodded obediently.

Nanny Xu looked at her obedient expression. "At this point, the capital and even the Yu Residence have become troublesome places for you. You..." She sighed slightly and reminded her, "It's better to make plans early."

Even Imperial Consort Xu coveted Yu Youyao's money. It seemed that the others in the harem had also targeted her.

What about the Yu Residence?

Yu Zongzheng had the heart of a dragon. What exactly gave him such confidence?

Yu Youyao pursed her lips. "I know. The Flower Festival at Duke Rongs Residence is just the beginning."

The dowry that her mother had left her was already very large.

A few years ago, her grandmother had returned the 20% of the profits that her mother had given to the Yu Residence before she died with interest.

Although she couldn't get back 30% of the profits that she had given to the clan, her grandmother didn't let her suffer. Last year, she had gone to the clan to discuss with the elders and picked out

some calligraphy, paintings, ancient books, and so on that the clan had accumulated and gave them to her.

Yu Youyao could understand the elders' decision.

The Yu Clan was a large clan. The clan needed a huge amount of resources to rise through the ranks and become officials. Money was indispensable.

A good son did not seek ancestral property!

Since ancient times, only unfilial descendants who had fallen from grace would be calculative with the ancestors of the family. The families valued relationships and inheritance, so this was especially important.

These antiques had been left behind by their ancestor. Unless it was absolutely necessary, it was not good to give them up.

Even if they gave it up in exchange for money, how were they going to split it?

They were all descendants of their ancestors. It was difficult for anyone to allocate the resources.

It was better to give it to the juniors who had contributed to the family to encourage them. Not only would their reputation be good, but they would also look outstanding.

Madam Xie's contribution to the clan was unquestionable.

Moreover, Madam Xie's 30 0/0 profit was clearly given to the clan. It could be completely in the hands of the elders as a resource to nurture future descendants, and there would not be any unreasonable disputes.

Back then, after Madam Xie passed away, Old Madam Yu had personally gone to the clan. She had already made it clear that the money was not given to the clan for nothing. Not only did the clan have to owe Madam Xie a favor and take care of Madam Xie's daughter, but they also had to acknowledge Madam Xie's contribution to the clan. They could not take advantage of the clan and juniors for nothing.

This was written in the contract. As long as the clan still cared about their reputation, they would not deny it.

The Yu Clan was also a clan that had lasted for a thousand years. Although the clan was down and out, its foundation was still there. Most of these calligraphy, paintings, and ancient books were antiques that were difficult to measure in value. She had benefited greatly from them.

Previously, her grandmother had even transferred most of her assets to her name. In order to avoid being unclear with the Yu Residence, she had even gone to the government to make it official. It was enough to prove that these assets belonged to her grandmother and did not belong to the Yu Residence, let alone the clan. Old Madam Yu had the right to deal with them.

Perhaps because she wasn't by their side to take care of, the Xie family always felt a little guilty towards her. They couldn't help but be generous to her in terms of money, and they were always worried that she would suffer.

After more than ten years, the Xie family had given Yu Youyao a lot of assets. They had even given her a merchant ship without blinking. In total, they were no less than her mother's dowry assets.

This was on the surface.

In secret, the “Happy Heart” escort business under her name had already become famous with legitimate and underground businesses. The escort business had also expanded in scale. It sold goods from the south to the north.

After that, after establishing the foundation of land transportation, she started river transportation. She also began to move private goods such as salt, tea, cloth, and porcelain that were banned by the Imperial Court. It could be said that she had made a lot of money.

Fortunately, when she was establishing the escort business, she had been more careful and asked the Xie family to help create an identity as a side family member. Otherwise, if someone found out that she was the owner of the escort business, it would be even more eye-catching.

In recent years, her cousin had been secretly hoarding supplies through the escort business. Due to the special nature of the escort business, it was very convenient to transport goods without attracting the attention of the Imperial Court.

In addition, the maritime trade she and her cousin were working on was also very smooth because of the Xie family’s involvement.

Yu Youyao did not dare to say that she was as rich as a country, but she was definitely richer than the dog emperor. The dog emperor even cared about the Duke Rongs Residence, so there was no reason for him not to care about her and the Xie Residence.

Drought was everywhere, and the country was in trouble. The hunter would shoot the bird that sticks out.

Not long after breakfast, Qing Xiu rushed over. “Young Miss, Eldest Master has returned to the residence. He said that an imperial edict has been issued by the Imperial Court and asked the family to prepare to welcome him.”

Yu Youyao held her breath. The Duke Rongs Residence had just been stripped of its title yesterday, and the imperial edict from the palace had arrived at the Yu Residence the next day. It was obvious that it was directed at her.

She was the daughter of an external minister and had almost been schemed against by her relatives. After suffering grievances, the palace would definitely reward her to appease her.

Usually, the Empress Dowager and the Empress Dowager would step in to reward the women of the officials. If it was personally given by the emperor, it would not be just a reward.

An imperial edict came from the palace, and Yu Youyao’s room was in chaos.

The maidservants in the room dug out Yu Youyao’s best clothes, jewelry, and so on. However, they did not know what to do.

In the end, Nanny Xu rushed over and helped Yu Youyao pick out a yellow dress with pomegranate flowers. She personally helped to comb her hair into a single bun and even opened the cosmetics box. She picked out a layer of nude make up and applied a thin layer on her face. She added lip powder made of pomegranate flowers.

Dong Mei watched from the side. The young miss, who looked rosy just a moment ago, had now become a weak and pitiful little girl after Nanny Xu’s torture. Her fresh clothes made her look even

more haggard. The key was that Nanny Xu's makeup skills were too good. When she leaned closer, it was difficult to tell that she had applied makeup.

The imperial edict from the palace could not be neglected. Nanny Xu had also chosen silver flowers, making her look exquisite and expensive..

Chapter 643: County Mistress

This dressing up took more than an hour.

Yu Youvao was worried that she would miss the time, so she quickly went to An Shou Hall.

Old Madam Yu was also wearing heavy makeup. When she saw Yu Youyao coming over, she quickly said, "I was just about to go to the Jade Courtyard to take a look. I didn't expect you to come over." As she spoke, she sized up Yu Youyao's outfit. It was solemn, exquisite, and grand. It was appropriate for her to welcome the imperial edict. However, she said, "You look so pale. Did you really have a nightmare last night? Are you feeling unwell? Get an imperial physician over to take a look later."

Yu Youyao quickly said, "Grandmother, with Nanny Xu accompanying me, I'm fine now. I just didn't sleep well yesterday. I'll be fine after taking a nap when I return to my room."

She had indeed had a nightmare yesterday. Although she was fine, she had to put on a show!

Old Madam Yu pulled her granddaughter into her arms and said with tears in her eyes, "Good girl, I was too careless and didn't protect you. You've really suffered this time.'

Although no one had schemed against her reputation, this grievance was not trivial. The gossip about a young lady who had yet to marry would definitely be discussed.

Yu Youyao shook her head. "Grandmother, don't think too much about it. When you're in someone else's house, you have to abide by their rules. It's impossible to guard against it. Besides, I didn't suffer this time. I know very well what happened in public. It won't damage my reputation if others discuss it." At this point, her eyes turned red. "I was the one who was shocked because Grandmother suffered.'

Old Madam Yu wiped her tears and took off the prayer beads that were wrapped around her wrist. She wrapped them around her wrist. "These are the prayer beads that Grandmother has been wearing for many years. They're used in Buddhism. When you sleep, put them by your pillow so that you won't have nightmares. By the way, I still have calming medicine in my house. Bring a few packets back later and have a bowl before bed."

Yu Youyao quickly nodded. "Grandmother, you have to live well in the future. Don't scare me anymore. Otherwise, I might have nightmares again."

Old Madam Yu patted her hand. "I'll live a few more years just for you."

She finally understood that Yao Yao had almost lost her innocence in the Duke Rongs Residence. As the first aunt and half a mother, Madam Yao had never stood up for Yao Yao.

Although with an elder like her present, it wasn't her place to stand up for her, she was a little cold as a family member.

On the surface, Eldest Son was still passable, but he was too greedy.

At the thought of what he had said yesterday, her heart skipped a beat.

The seed of the dragon's heart had been extinguished, but his ambition to take another step forward was obvious.

If one did not enter the cabinet, they would not be considered a true powerful minister. With Eldest Son's talent, he could be considered the Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs. If he wanted to rise further, he would need to have major political achievements and be promoted by the emperor.

Now, even the consorts in the palace were eyeing Yao Yao's money.

Eldest Son might have such thoughts.

Previously, Eldest Son had even schemed to adopt the son of a concubine under Madam Xie's name. What else could he not do?

Yao Yao had become a "fat piece of meat" in the eyes of others. Everyone wanted to take a bite out of her. If anything happened to her, who would protect her?

Old Madam Yu was worried.

At this moment, Yu Jianjia brought Bai Ye over.

She was wearing a pink and purple dress with a hundred butterflies. It was exquisite and generous. She had combed her hair into a bun, and there was a large golden flower on the side, making her look delicate and beautiful.

The immortal hair bun was similar to a high bun.

However, the high bun was a little more solemn. Her hair would be tied up high on the top of her head, making her look dignified. The immortal bun was tied up diagonally, and the hair at the back of her head was tied into a bundle and placed over her shoulders.

This was one of the favorite hairstyles of the noble ladies of the Great Zhou Dynasty.

After greeting her, Yu Jianjia quickly asked with concern, "Is Grandmother feeling better?"

Old Madam Yu smiled. "I'm old and my body is useless. After taking a walk outside, my body can't take it anymore. I've rested for two days and I'm fine." Yu Jianjia looked relieved. "It's good that Grandmother is fine."

She lowered her eyes. At that time, in the Duke Rongs Residence, she only knew that Matriarch Rong had fainted. As for why she had fainted, she did not know anything. After that, the family rushed back to the residence.

Yu Youyao kept her mouth shut and did not say anything. Matriarch Yu also warned the servants who knew about it to keep this matter a secret.

It was only yesterday that she found out that Yu Youyao had almost ruined her reputation at the Flower Festival in Duke Rongs Residence.

This was the reason for Yin Jinrou and Xu Linlangs inexplicable hospitality to her.

However, she felt sick of it.

Since there was an imperial edict in the palace, it was only right for the entire family to welcome it. Even Yu Qingning, who was locked up in the courtyard, was released. She was wearing a green dress embroidered with hibiscus that was bright and ostentatious.

Seeing that there was nothing wrong with her, Old Madam Yu waved her hand.

Yu Qingning greeted Yu Youyao obediently. "Hello, Big Sister!"

After being locked in the courtyard and disciplined by the nanny of the Education Department for three years, there were still some changes. At the very least, in terms of etiquette and rules, she was already a qualified young lady. She was not as noisy as before.

Yu Youyao nodded. "Greetings, Fourth Sister."

Since everyone was present, Old Madam Yu instructed them to accept the decree with proper etiquette. In order to prevent any mistakes, she emphasized them a few more times.

It wasn't until Yu Youyao and the others understood the rules that Old Madam Yu brought the entire family to the front hall.

Yu Zongzheng went to the door to wait. Zhou Linghuai and Yu Shansi were both waiting in the front hall.

It wasn't until they reached the center that Yu Zongshen brought the imperial carriage ceremonial guard from the palace to the entrance of the Yu Residence with ceremonial guards. There were three types of carriages: grand carriage, legal carriage and imperial carriage.

The grand carriage was considered the most opulent and was used to offer sacrifices to the gods. Accompanying it were the palace guards, the imperial guards, a hundred officials, etiquette, music, carriages, and so on. The legal carriage was used for the court assembly and the Imperial Temple to worship the ancestors. It was on a smaller scale and was mostly used for ordinary travel.

The emperor's carriage entered and left different places, and the specifications were also different.

The emperor did not appear when an imperial decree was issued, but when one saw an imperial decree, it was as if he had come personally. Therefore, he would also arrange for an imperial carriage to show his respect. It was only a formality and could not be compared to the emperor's travels.

Yu Zongzheng did not dare to be negligent. He quickly went down the stone steps, lifted his clothes, and knelt down to welcome him. "I, Yu Zongzheng, the Left Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, am here to receive the Imperial Decree. Long live our emperor!"

The person who had come to issue the decree was Eunuch Zhu. He was dressed in a vermilion eunuch's uniform, and he exuded an arrogant aura.

Behind him were the emperor's ceremonial guards. Eunuchs and palace maids stood in two rows. There were 32 people in one row, making a total of 64 people. The two people in the front held up a yellow banner that said, "It's as if I've arrived personally." The eunuchs and palace maids behind him all carried gilded trays with some reward items placed on them. Finally, the eunuchs carried over ten boxes tied with yellow silk.

From the looks of it, it was quite a huge commotion..

Chapter 644: Reward

Eunuch Zhu said politely, “Lord Yu, get up!”

Yu Zongzheng quickly stood up and respectfully led Eunuch Zhu and the others through the door. Eunuch Zhu carried the imperial edict and a few guards of honor to the front hall.

Old Madam Yu, who was waiting in the front hall, also received the news.

As soon as Eunuch Zhu entered the house, the family knelt neatly in the hall and waited. Yu Zongzheng and Yu Zongshen quickly knelt behind Old Madam Yu.

Old Madam Yu hurriedly said, “I’ll bring the entire Yu Residence’s main branch and follow His Majesty’s orders.”

Eunuch Zhu glanced over. Old Madam Yu was dressed in heavy makeup and kneeling respectfully at the front. Behind her were the two elders of the Yu Residence, followed by the legitimate son, Yu Shansi, and the young master from Youzhou, Zhou Linghuai. At the back were three young misses in a row.

The group also followed the rules.

Madam Yang, the first wife, had been sick for a few years. She was afraid that she would offend the Holy Decree, so she did not come over. There was also Yu Shanming, the son of a concubine. He looked to be a year or two old, so it was not appropriate for him to come out.

From the looks of it, the first branch of the Yu Residence was complete.

Eunuch Zhu nodded to himself. He raised the imperial edict in his hand and raised his voice. “You Yao of the Yu Clan, come forward and listen to the seal!”

Yu Youyao quickly stood up and lowered her eyes. She walked to the front and knelt down. “I, Youyao of the Yu Clan, will follow His Majesty’s orders.” Eunuch Zhu unfolded a bright yellow imperial decree that was more than three feet long. He read, “By the heavens, the emperor’s imperial decree—”

“You are a loyal family that shows filial piety with kindness and virtue. How can I be stingy with praise? Today, the Yu Clan has a daughter called Youyao. She’s unique and beautiful. She has a beautiful aura and is elegant. Her character is pure, quiet, loyal, and respectful. I hereby give her the title of County Lord of Shaoyi. She has received high evaluation and recognition from the imperial court! ”

Yu Youyao held her breath.

The county lord was the daughter of a prince. Only the daughter of a princess could be bestowed the title of county lord.

What right did she have to be bestowed the title of the imperial family by the emperor?

Even though the Duke Rongs Residence had almost ruined her reputation and made her suffer, her relatives could not represent the royal family. This matter had nothing to do with the emperor.

The palace would at most reward them with some things to comfort them. It would also be considered a considerate way of being a ruler and minister. There was no need to give her a title.

In the past dynasties, there had also been precedents of the imperial family conferring titles to the daughters of external vassals. However, it was rare. Usually, it was for special reasons such as for the Imperial Court's important political achievements or marriage.

Emperor Xianzong had once graced a loyal orphan with the title of County Lord of Yuyu.

Thinking of what had happened to the Duke Rongs Residence, Yu Youyao couldn't help but feel a chill run down her spine. The position of county lord seemed to be reminding her to remember the emperor's kindness and serve the Imperial Court. Otherwise, she wouldn't be worthy of her position.

Yu Youyao suddenly recalled that two years ago, the dog emperor had posthumously given King You the title of "King Li of Zhou". Then, he was conferred the title of "King Yue Fei". How similar was this situation to back then? As the county lord of Shaoyi, it was a benevolent gesture and a warning.

After the imperial edict was read, Eunuch Zhu carefully closed it and smiled at Yu Youyao. He said kindly, "County Head Shaoyi, accept the imperial edict!"

Yu Youyao raised her hands flat and high.

Eunuch Zhu placed the imperial edict in Yu Youyao's hand.

Yu Youyao held the imperial edict with both hands and pressed the back of her hands against the ground. She gently touched the imperial edict with her forehead and bowed. "I, Young Yao of the Yu Clan, thank the emperor for his grace. Long live the emperor!"

As her father, Yu Zongzheng also thanked the emperor.

Old Madam Yu led the others in the hall to thank the emperor again.

Only then did Eunuch Zhu smile and say, "The emperor already knows about what happened at the Flower Festival. The emperor is grateful for the loyalty of the Yu Residence and is very angry with the actions of the King Rongs

Residence. Yesterday, he had already dealt with the King Rongs Residence.

County Head Shaoyi has suffered."

These words also represented the emperor's intentions.

Yu Youyao quickly said, "I was terrified. I don't dare to accept his thoughtfulness."

These seemingly casual words were said very brilliantly. Firstly, she expressed that the emperor's recognition and protection of the Yu Residence was pointed out to every person in the Yu Residence. Those who were officials in the court and her grandmother were loyal and righteous, including her. The emperor felt that after the matter was settled, no one would dare to talk about her anymore.

He even mentioned that she had suffered. It was as if the emperor had dealt with the Duke Rong's Residence heavily for her. As the daughter of an external minister, she had to remember the emperor's kindness even more.

Eunuch Zhu smiled. “The materials for the county lord’s memorial and a set of gowns are all ready-made, but they have to be made on the spot. It will take a few days. In about five days, the Internal Affairs Department will send someone to your residence.”

It was easier to issue an imperial order, and it was rare for clothes to be sent over. There were a total of two sets of gowns and common clothes. The materials were ready-made, but it was meticulous work. The entire Internal Affairs Department had to hurry up to get it done. Five days was already the fastest time.

Yu Youyao said gently, “Thank you, Eunuch.”

Eunuch Zhu changed the topic and said, “The Empress Dowager heard that County Head Shaoyi was shocked at the flower festival, so she specially rewarded him with some things to calm him down.”

As soon as he finished speaking, a young eunuch beside him bent down and handed over a golden book.

Eunuch Zhu reached out to take it, opened the book, and began to list out the rewards. “A pair of jade ruyi for the County head of Shaoyi. There’s a gold-plated and red-embroidered phoenix crown. There’s two rolls of snow silk and satin, two rolls of heavenly green muslin, four rolls of soft smoke colored cloth, and four rolls of ten-colored cloud brocade...”

The Empress Dowager’s rewards were very generous. There were headgear, accessories, literary artifacts, jade artifacts, famous porcelain, and so on. In addition, there was silk, spices, makeup, and so on.

As Eunuch Zhu recited, the corresponding items were sent into the front hall by palace maids or eunuchs. The most expensive items were given to the palace maids and eunuchs, who carried them in order. The second-best items were placed in boxes and were carried in by the eunuchs.

After a long while, Eunuch Zhu finished speaking and handed the reward list to Yu Youyao. “County Head Shaoyi, take a look!”

Yu Youyao quickly took the list. How could she dare to really take a look? “I thank the Empress Dowager for her grace. Long live the Empress Dowager.”

Satisfied, Eunuch Zhu smiled and said, “Get up!”

Old Madam Yu finally heaved a sigh of relief and immediately stood up to greet Eunuch Zhu. “Thank you for specially coming to issue the decree. It’s a long journey from the palace to the outside world. Eunuch Zhu, sit down and rest.”

The decree carriage stopped on Chang An Street. It took more than an hour to reach the Yu Residence. Thinking about it, Eunuch Zhu had already set off before dawn.

Wasn’t it difficult?!

Eunuch Zhu was really polite to Old Madam Yu. “Old Madam, quickly sit down. There’s no need for you to greet me. I was ordered to come to the Yu Residence to announce a decree. It’s an official mission. I naturally don’t deserve it.”

Old Madam Yu quickly agreed. The servants cleverly served tea, snacks, fruits, and so on. They also prepared soup and snacks. They were very meticulous.

After walking all the way, Eunuch Zhu was indeed tired and hungry. He did not stand on ceremony and ate some blood swallows and snacks. He also felt that the taste was not bad and not inferior to the imperial food in the palace..

Chapter 645 - 645: Collecting Silver for Disaster Relief

After Eunuch Zhu finished eating and finished his tea.

Old Madam Yu frowned and said, "What right does our Yao Yao have to receive so much love from the emperor and the Empress Dowager? 1 1 m both happy and terrified!"

She was trying to find out more about the Holy Decree from him.

After the imperial edict was announced, he was not in a hurry to leave. Instead, he sat here and ate the snacks that the Yu Residence had meticulously prepared. It was said that a person's mouth was soft after eating. Wasn't he just deliberately waiting for the Yu Residence to ask him questions?

Not only was Old Madam Yu capable, but she was also discerning.

Eunuch Zhu lowered his eyes and smiled. "The Yu Residence is loyal and righteous. The emperor saw it all. When he found out about the disgraceful and ridiculous actions of Duke Rongs Residence, the emperor was furious and asked the Empress Dowager how to deal with it."

Old Madam Yu's heart skipped a beat, and she had a bad feeling.

However, Yu Youyao was deep in thought.

The Empress and the Empress Dowager were in charge of the internal affairs. Whenever family members were involved, the emperor had to ask them first before making a decision.

The male lead controlled external affairs, and the female lead controlled internal affairs. The emperor was the ruler of a country, so it was not appropriate for him to interfere directly in the matters of women and children.

Eunuch Zhu continued, "The Empress Dowager praised County Head Shaoyi. Yao Yao is kind-hearted and virtuous. At such a young age, she opened the Graceful Heart Hall and took in and rescued many young children, as well as women and children who were alone. Although she's a woman, she's still benevolent. Her heart is so beautiful that even many men can't compare to her.'

Old Madam Yu clenched her fists tightly, but she looked terrified. "This, this Yao Yao, how could she receive so much praise from the Empress Dowager..."

Yu Youyao felt like there was a stone in her heart. It was heavy and she felt suffocated.

After Eunuch Zhu entered the Yu Residence, he repeatedly emphasized the words "good", "virtue", "loyalty", "filial piety", and "strength." Usually, this was the highest praise.

However, at this moment, Yu Youyao felt like she had been accused of something.

It was said that the bigger the head, the bigger the hat. However, her head was small, and this hat did not match. If she wore it, it would also press against her neck, making her look like she was being suffocated. It would only make people panic.

Eunuch Zhu smiled. "You're too humble. The Empress Dowager is an old lady. Not everyone can receive such praise from her." At this point, his expression was a little strange. "The Empress Dowager said that the virtue of County Head Shaoyi is the emperor's benevolence and merit. It's the blessing of the country. She needs praise and encouragement and shouldn't suffer such grievances. "

In other words, Yu Zongzheng was the emperor's official, and Yu Youyao was his daughter. It was also the emperor's virtue for her to be so benevolent and virtuous.

Yu Youyao was one of the commoners of the Great Zhou. The people she saved were also people under the emperor's rule.

It was also the blessing of the country.

Logically speaking, these words were indeed not wrong.

However, these words were too serious. Old Madam Yu looked terrified and opened her mouth, not even daring to say anything else,

With the Empress Dowager's words, the Duke Rongs Residence was stripped of its title and its reward today.

The Yu Residence had to thank the Empress Dowager and the emperor for their kindness.

How should she feel about this "sentiment"?

What price would the Yu Residence and even her granddaughter have to pay?

Yu Youyao lowered her head. She had not expected that the Graceful Heart Hall could rise to receive the emperor's benevolence and merit. Was he not done with praise? He even wanted to roast her over the fire?!

They said many polite words but seemed to express something indirectly. It seemed that the palace was up to something big.

Yu Youyao could roughly guess what he was after, but she knew nothing about the palace's schemes.

At this point, Eunuch Zhu paused for a moment. He glanced at the terrified Old Madam Yu, then at Yu Youyao, who was standing at the side with her head lowered.

A 13 or 14-year-old girl was just a sprouted flower bud. She was really soft and delicate.

Even with her head lowered, she could be envisioned with her eyebrows slightly furrowed, and her face was pale and haggard.

It seemed that Duke Rongs Residence had also been shocked that day.

The room suddenly fell silent.

A disturbing aura slowly flowed...

Yu Zongshen's expression was calm as he held his teacup. No one knew what he was thinking.

On the other hand, Yu Zongzheng had been listening intently just now. When Eunuch Zhu suddenly paused, he couldn't help but feel a little anxious.

He opened his mouth, wanting to continue asking, but he remembered that Eunuch Zhu was a favorite of the emperor. He was willing to give his mother face, but he might not give him face.

After Eunuch Zhu put down his teacup and looked up, he said, “Ever since

March, various degrees of drought have entered the palace from all over the

country. The Empress Dowager is worried about the drought and pity the suffering of the commoners. Although the harem is not allowed to do political work, she also wants to share the emperor’s burden, do her best for the country, and do her best for the commoners.”

Here it comes! Yu Youyao pursed her lips.

Old Madam Yu hurriedly said, “The Empress Dowager is kind.”

Eunuch Zhu smiled. “In terms of charity, you’re not inferior either. It’s precisely because you’re a charitable grandmother that you’ve raised County

Head Shaoyi to do good deeds.” At this point, his smile deepened and he said, “The Empress Dowager is prepared to raise donations between the internal and external mingfu to raise disaster relief silver. Even if it’s just a drop in the bucket, it’s still a rare kindness.’

At this point, what else did Yu Youyao not understand?

It was not a new thing to raise money. The Empress Dowager paid respects to Buddha. In the early years, the internal and external mingfu had already raised silver taels to pray for the Empress Dowager to repair the pagoda.

Wherever there was a flood or a drought, it was inevitable to raise money. There were no hard rules about donating more or less. It all depended on how much one could take out.

If the Empress Dowager wanted to raise the money, be it a palace concubine or the internal or external mingfu, they would naturally respond.

However, the treasury was empty. The Empress Dowager had mobilized donations to raise disaster relief silver. It was not a small matter. She was really sharing the burden of the Imperial Court, so the more, the better.

No matter how much money they had, it was all in the hands of others. It was impossible for the Empress Dowager to stipulate how much the mingfu wanted to donate. Who would want to donate a large sum of money to others on a random day?

In that case, they needed someone to step forward and support them.

They were all families of officials, so there were also comparisons. If the first person donated too much, it wouldn’t be good for the others to donate too little.

Now, she intended for the Yu Residence to be the first to stand up.

As the county head of Shaoyi, who had been praised by the Empress Dowager and the emperor, she still had to thank the emperor for his vast kindness. She had to be “filial” to the emperor and the Empress Dowager and share their burdens.

Not only did she have to donate, but she also had to donate a lot!

Therefore, as the county lord of Shaoyi, she actually needed money to “buy” her title.

Old Madam Yu had long expected this. She hurriedly said, "The Empress Dowager cares about the people, and it's the blessing of the world. As the saying goes, it's a responsibility to protect the world. The Empress Dowager is the first mingfu in the world. Although I don't have the Empress Dowager's honor, I still have the heart to follow virtue..

Chapter 646 - 646: The Might of the Tian Family

When Eunuch Zhu heard this, his smile deepened and he stood up. "In that case, I'll return to the palace first to report to the emperor and the Empress

Dowager."

Old Madam Yu quickly sent someone to hand over the generous gift prepared by the Yu Residence. Eunuch Zhu accepted it with a smile.

Not everyone could get information from him.

The eunuch following in front of Eunuch Zhu cleverly picked it up and weighed it in his hand. It was not light, and it should be a rare item. Yu Zongzheng quickly stood up and said politely, "I'll send you off."

Yu Zongshen also said, "Thank you for your hard work, Eunuch."

The two of them politely sent Eunuch Zhu off.

In the front hall, after dealing with Eunuch Zhu, Old Madam Yu felt as if she had just finished a tough battle. Even her back was drenched in sweat, and she leaned against a chair with a tired expression.

Yu Youyao handed her a cup of tea.

Old Madam Yu took a sip and regained some strength. She looked at her granddaughters, who were still standing in the front hall, and waved her hand. "You've been busy all morning. I think you're tired. Go back and rest!"

It had been many years since she had seen such a big scene. The most recent time was when Second Brother had gotten into the rankings.

This was the first time her granddaughter had done this.

Yu Jianjia took a look at the bright yellow imperial edict on the table.

Just now, when Eunuch Zhu was reading the imperial edict, she had lowered her head, not even daring to move her eyes. Eunuch Zhu's sharp and feminine voice pierced into her ears like a thin needle, making her dizzy and short of breath. For a moment, she even thought that her old illness had relapsed after three years of meticulous recuperation.

Yu Youyao had been conferred the title of County Head of Shaoyi.

The imperial edict was folded and placed in a gilded gold tray. It was unknown if the nine dragon patterns on it were woven, embroidered, or drawn. Even the dragon whiskers were visible. No matter which corner she looked at, she would always be stared at by a pair of dignified and divine

dragon eyes. It was as if these two dragon eyes could move according to her gaze and were alive, making her legs go weak for no reason. The prestige of the imperial family.

All of this belonged to Yu Youyao.

Previously, at the Flower Festival in the Duke Rongs Residence, she had seen

Xu Linlang from the Duke Xu's Residence and Yin Jinrou from the Duke Rongs Residence. She had even sighed with emotion. They were the "real noble ladies" compared to Yu Youyao who was a "fake noble lady."

How many days had it been?

The court seized the title and removed the plate of the Duke Rongs Residence, Third Miss Yin became a commoner.

Consort Xu was imprisoned, and Xu Linlangs reputation as a noble lady was greatly reduced.

On the other hand, Yu Youyao had been conferred the title of county lord and had become a true noble lady.

Even Second Miss Xu, who was a relative of the emperor, had to bow respectfully and say, "Greetings, County Head Shaoyi!"

Was there anything more ironic in the world?

How could an eldest daughter with no mother have such glory?!

She did not know what material the bright yellow imperial edict on the table was made of, but the golden light was so dazzling that her eyes hurt.

Unknowingly, her eyes welled up with tears and she felt a lump in her throat.

Yu Jianjia slowly lowered her eyes, her eyelashes trembling slightly. After a while, when she looked up again, her eyes were already moist and gentle.

She smiled and stepped forward, saying gently to Yu Youyao,

"Congratulations, Big Sister, for being conferred the title of County Head of Shaoyi by the emperor."

She tightened her grip on the handkerchief in her hand, and her fair fingers trembled slightly, but a sincere smile appeared on her face, as if she was sincerely happy for Yu Youyao.

"Thank you, Third Sister." Yu Youyao did not think that there was anything to congratulate her for after being schemed against by the palace.

However, no matter what, this was a great honor.

The lightning and rain were all bestowed by the emperor!

It was not easy for women to be conferred titles. Most of them gained titles after they were married. A woman relied on her husband's status. Her husband had a high status and his respected wife was conferred a title for the family. Only after the Imperial Court's examination would they be conferred titles.

As the original wife, her mother was only a sixth-grade peacekeeper. This was also because the emperor noted that her father contributed greatly to helping the Imperial Court open the sea ban with the Xie Residence.

As the second wife, Yang Shuwan did not even get a seventh-grade title. She only got the lowest ninth-grade title.

When Yu Zongzheng entered the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, logically speaking, Yang Shuwan's rank would increase. However, Yang Shuwan's reputation was not very good after the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxings Residence. Even if Yu Zongzheng wanted to apply for a conferment for her, he could not, let alone the fact that he hated Yang Shuwan. Naturally, he could not trouble himself to apply for a conferment for her.

As an unmarried girl, it was rare for her to obtain the position of county lord in the entire history of the Great Zhou Dynasty. It was because the emperor and the Empress Dowager doted on her.

Therefore, even if she was schemed against by the emperor, it was still her honor.

Even if she had to "buy" this county lord position with a large sum of money, she still had to appear happy.

Yu Jianjia's congratulations made Yu Qingning react. She gritted her teeth hatefully and lowered her head reluctantly. "Big Sister, congratulations."

Her mother, who was doted on in the past, become a concubine that was sent to a secluded manor. It was unknown if she was dead or alive. Her father, who had doted on her in the past, now felt annoyed even to look at her.

She had lost all her backing and was locked up in the courtyard by Matriarch Jin. She had been tortured by Nanny Jin from the Education Department for three years.

All of this was enough for Yu Qingning to recognize reality.

No matter how stupid she was, she did not dare to go against Yu Youyao openly anymore.

However, even so, when she thought about how the stupid Yu Youyao had actually become a county lord, she still felt indignant and resentful.

Yu Youyao nodded. "Thank you, Fourth Sister."

Yu Jianjia and Yu Qingning stepped forward and bowed before leaving the front hall one after another.

Although Yu Shansi was young, he could tell that the atmosphere in the front hall was a little heavy. His grandmother was not happy that Eldest Miss had been conferred the title of county head.

On the other hand, Big Sister did not feel honored.

He hesitated for a moment before stepping forward. "Big Sister has become the county head. In the future, no one will harm her when she goes out."

No matter what, this was a good thing.

Yu Youyao could also hear the concern and worry in it. She smiled. "Brother Si is right. This is a relief after a long time. You should also go back and rest early!"

After Yu Shansi left, Nanny Liu dismissed the servants. Qing Xiu and Bai Kui stood guard outside. Everyone knew that the palace had just given Eldest Miss an imperial edict and reward, so they did not dare to approach the front hall.

Old Madam Yu sighed slightly. "I'm afraid it's inevitable!"

Yu Youyao held her hand. "As long as it's a problem that money can solve, it's not a problem. The rare thing is how to fill the palace's appetite to satisfy the higher-ups."

Old Madam Yu turned to look at Zhou Linghuai. "What do you think?"

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, "The Empress Dowager has mobilized a donation drive aimed at cousin, the Xie Residence in Quanzhou, and even all the merchants in the Great Zhou Dynasty!"

There was a limit to what officials could donate. Businessmen were the ones who were really rich..

Chapter 647 - 647: Throwing Bricks to Attract Jade

The emperor was just throwing bricks to attract jade. His cousin was this "brick", and the Xie Residence was the "jade"! behind it.

Yu Youyao had been conferred the title of county lord, and the Xie family was the first to bear the brunt. On the other hand, the Xie family had a rich foundation and was very prestigious in the business world. If the Xie family generously contributed, would the other businesses dare to cover up?

The rankings from highest to lowest included scholars, farmers, businessmen, and merchants. Once they angered the Imperial Court, they could casually pick on a mistake in tax evasion and smuggling. It would be easy to confiscate their houses and exterminate their families.

Even if they had money, they had to live to enjoy it.

Old Madam Yu glanced at the bright yellow imperial decree with a mocking expression. "Every imperial decree issued by the emperor has to go through a complicated process. There are dozens or even hundreds of steps. In each step, there will be relevant people who will carry out the craftsmanship, supervision, and inspection. After confirming that there are no mistakes, they will be secretly sent to the next step. Every imperial decree will take at least three to five days, and at most more than ten days to complete." At this point, even her voice was filled with sarcasm. "It's only been a few days since the Flower Festival at Duke Rongs Residence, but the imperial decree has already arrived at our house.'

In order to prevent anyone from falsely passing down an imperial edict, there was a complicated craftsmanship segment. The segments were multiplied, refined, and differentiated, preventing the possibility of exploiting loopholes.

If someone wanted to forge something, it was impossible for them to forge dozens or hundreds at the same time. If they wanted to bribe people, it was impossible for them to buy over hundreds at the same time.

The first word of the imperial edict had to be investigated for its auspiciousness a day in advance before it was confirmed.

As there were so many segments, an imperial edict would take a lot of time.

Therefore, the emperor's imperial decree was issued after careful consideration. If there was an emergency, it would be oral first and the imperial decree would definitely not be prepared in advance.

It was obvious that the emperor had been coveting Yao Yao's money for a long time. The imperial edict had been prepared long ago and would be issued when the time was right. The Flower Festival at Duke Rongs Residence was a good reason.

Yu Youyao had also thought of this, so she said, "County Lord Shaoyi. The word 'yi' was derived from a similar word that means exemplary. According to Zhou Shu's posthumous law, 'softness is exemplary, gentleness and kindness is exemplary. Being an exemplar means to follow the virtues for a long time. If you're dedicated to it, you can last for a long time. If you're dedicated to it, you can be beautiful after a long time. Therefore, the person who is an exemplar is pure and virtuous. Regardless of whether you are poor or rich, you'll definitely be able to reach it. It means virtue, kindness, and beauty."

However, being called an exemplar carried too much weight. She shouldn't be given a name with that meaning, so it should be changed to "yi" which means being gracious. Although the words were different, the meaning was similar. Not only was she rich in good karma, but she also had a good etiquette!

It was beautiful!

Even if the dog emperor was scheming against someone, he would still do his best.

The atmosphere was a little heavy...

Zhou Linghuai glanced at Yu Youyao. "According to the Five Grains, the winter wheat that has suffered a drought would not become food. At this time, there's no harvest. The commoners can still fill their stomachs with wild vegetables."

As soon as he spoke, Yu Youyao and Old Madam Yu's expressions turned very solemn.

Zhou Linghuai continued, "The rice and millet are all planted in March and April. The heavens have never rained. In two days, it will be the summer solstice. When the rice reaches the summer solstice, even if it's forced to be planted, it won't grow. Now, we've already missed the planting season. Although the commoners have changed to plant drought-resistant beans, they also need rain to ensure their harvest. The commoners are all counting on the food harvest in the second half of the year to survive, but in the second half, the food production will decrease on a large scale. There will definitely be a famine all over the country."

Every time there was a famine, there would be starved people everywhere and sorrow everywhere. Nine out of ten storage rooms would be empty.

The tragedy of eating one's son would also happen.

Just thinking about that scene made Yu Youyao's heart skip a beat. "It's already so serious?"

Being in the capital, she couldn't help but be bewitched by the illusion of peace and prosperity. She didn't expect that there were already many places so seriously affected that there was going to be a famine.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. “The Imperial Court doesn’t release monetary relief and doesn’t show that it values the drought. It’s already normal for officials everywhere to report falsely, hide, lie, or not report. Even if there are some people who report serious disasters, they’re only from individual areas and can’t attract the attention of the Imperial Court. You have to know that a small scale disaster is all settled by the refugees in the state and county offices. After that, they report to the Imperial Court and the court officials will reward them. Only serious disasters require the Imperial Court to provide relief. In fact, last autumn and winter, many people had already starved to death all over the country. It’s April and May now, and winter wheat is harvested, but winter wheat has suffered a disaster...

Yu Youyao’s heart turned cold. “The winter wheat harvest was gone, and the disaster was uncontrollable. It even expanded further. The officials everywhere couldn’t hide it and had no choice but to report it to the Imperial Court. That’s why the Empress Dowager is raising money for disaster relief.” The Great Zhou Dynasty was really rotten to the core.

As officials, they were greedy for superiority and did not seek benefits for the As a ruler, he played with power and did not want to govern the court. He only wanted to live forever.

As officials, they fought internally and externally. They only cared about fighting for power and did not care about the lives of the commoners.

They did not do their part for the citizens.

This drought was a natural disaster and a man-made disaster. It was even more infuriating.

Old Madam Yu also felt sad. “Amitabha. The Imperial Court’s expenses are inexhaustible. The officials are greedy and domineering, causing natural and man-made disasters and the people to live in misery.” At this point, she couldn’t help but feel angry at the scheme against her granddaughter. “Those who are rulers are heartless. They harm the world and the commoners. They incur the wrath of the heavens and the resentment of the people!”

Yu Youyao’s heart was heavy. “The emperor and the Empress Dowager have accused me of good karma so that I would righteously raise donations for disaster relief. Not only do I have to donate, but I have to donate more. It’s just that...

Would this money really be used to help the refugees?

Zhou Linghuai understood what she meant. “The Empress Dowager pays respects to Buddha all year round. Whether she’s really charitable or not is still up for debate. However, this isn’t important. What’s important is that everyone in the world knows that the Empress Dowager pays respects to Buddha and is benevolent. The donation is in the name of providing relief to the refugees. Since this matter is led by the Empress Dowager, it won’t be fake.”

However, how much of it was used on the refugees was still debatable.

However, no matter how much would be deployed to help the refugees, it was good to save as many as possible.

Yu Youyao understood immediately. “Therefore, for the sake of the thousands of refugees in the Great Zhou Dynasty, I have to donate this money.”

On the way back to the backyard, Yu Jianjia felt stifled when she thought about how Yu Youyao had been conferred the title of County Head of Shaoyi. For a moment, she felt suffocated.

Her gentle eyes subconsciously darkened, and tears welled in her eyes.

Yu Jianjia could not help but cough.

Bai Ye quickly went forward to help her up. "Are you feeling unwell?"

"Don't worry." Yu Jianjia shook her head. Seeing that there was no one around, she couldn't help but look behind her. Yu Qingning, who had fallen behind her, said gently, "Big Sister has been conferred the title of County Head of Shaoyi. This is the first time I've experienced such a big announcement. I'm probably too nervous and a little weak.."

Chapter 648 - 648: Infuriated

Behind her, Yu Qingning tugged at her handkerchief.

Wasn't the scene of the residence kneeling to welcome the eunuch a huge scene?!

Yu Jianjia was a little emotional, and even her voice rose a little. "The emperor and the Empress Dowager really dote on Eldest Sister. Eunuch Zhu, who came to our house to read the imperial decree, is a very popular person in front of the emperor. The jade ruyi rewarded by the Empress Dowager is green and white. It's top-grade Hetian jade. The headgear was all made by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The red treasures on it are like fire and sand. There's also snow satin. That's woven from the best snow silkworms. It's different from the snow satin we use...

As she spoke, she couldn't help but feel envious.

Even Yu Jianjia, the daughter of the first wife, was "envious." How could Yu Qingning, who was following behind, not take it seriously?

She had hated Yu Youyao in the past and thought that she was as stupid as a pig. She couldn't compare to her in anything. Other than her status as the daughter of the first wife, she was simply useless.

Yu Qingning was envious of Yu Youyao's status as the daughter of the first wife, but she was also jealous that Yu Youyao had a rich external family and often relied on herself to gain favor. She had to compete with Yu Youyao in every way.

Ever since she was young, she had been raised as the daughter of a concubine. Her character was shaped by Madam Yang. It was easy to change a country, but it was difficult to change her nature!

Yu Qingning had become obedient, but her jealousy of Yu Youyao increased day by day.

She believed that Yu Youyao was the one who had caused her mother to become a concubine and be chased out of the residence.

It was Yu Youyao who had snatched away her father's love for her.

It was also Yu Youyao who had caused her to be locked up in the courtyard and tortured by Nanny for three years!

Hearing Yu Jianjia's sometimes envious and sometimes emotional words, Yu

Qingning's thin and beautiful face twisted. "Hmph, perhaps it's because the Third Prince has damaged her reputation that the emperor has compensated her with the position of county lord. Otherwise, she's just a eldest daughter who lost her mother and the daughter of a foreign minister. How can she be conferred the title of county lord!"

It was very rare for the daughter of an external minister to be conferred the title of an imperial family member.

Yu Youyao was not worthy!

Yu Jianjia was shocked and quickly said, "Fourth Sister, this concerns the Third Prince and the dignity of the royal family. You can't spout nonsense. Previously, in the Duke Rong's Residence, Eldest Sister sensed that something was amiss and returned to the reception pavilion in advance. Everyone knows

Her gentle words seemed to be absolving Yu Youyao, but after thinking about it carefully, it seemed to be...

Yu Youyao's reputation might have really been damaged by the Third Prince.

However, as this concerned the Third Prince, they had to cover it up because of the dignity of the royal family. They had to say that Yu Youyao had discovered that something was amiss and returned to the reception pavilion in advance to protect Yu Youyao's clean reputation, the Third Prince's reputation, and the dignity of the royal family.

Yu Qingning clearly thought that way. "Heh, isn't it all based on Yu Youyao's words? Yu Youyao brought her maidservant back to the hall alone. The crepe myrtle garden has been cleared all the way. Who can prove that Yu Youyao didn't enter the crepe myrtle garden and didn't meet the Third Prince? The relatives in the imperial family are all descendants of the dragon. They are all lined up to be conferred titles by the emperor, but they didn't get their turn. Who is Yu Youyao? Why is it her turn to be conferred the title?! Don't treat them as fools."

Yu Jianjia's face turned pale as she said anxiously, "You can eat whatever you want, but you can't spout nonsense. This concerns Eldest Sister's reputation. If Grandmother and Father find out, they'll definitely reprimand you again. You can't say that again..."

There was concern and worry in the meaning between the lines, but Yu

Qingning was furious. "Didn't Yu Youyao rely on Grandmother's support and Father's doting on her to cause me to be in such a sorry state? What else does she want?"

Yu Jianjia looked helpless. "Fourth Sister, don't misunderstand Eldest Sister. I know that in the past three years, you've been locked up in the courtyard and learned the rules from the nanny in the Education Department. You've suffered a lot, but Eldest Sister's original intention is for you to learn more rules and etiquette. It's also for your own good."

Although Yu Qingning was locked up in the courtyard, she had never lacked food and clothes. In fact, because she had learned the rules from Nanny, Matriarch had specially given her an extra portion.

Yu Qingning clearly didn't appreciate it.

It would have been better if she hadn't mentioned this. At the mention of this, Yu Qingning's anger rushed to her face, and her face turned red. "Locking me up in the courtyard like a dog is for my own good? Letting me be tortured by the nanny in the Education Department is for my own good? I've bullied Yu Youyao in the past. Who knows how much she hates me in her heart? Why would she be so kind?"

Yu Jianjia couldn't persuade her anymore and didn't know what to do. "I know that you've been locked up in the courtyard all these years and it's been hard on you." At this point, she bit her lip lightly, feeling a little sorry for her.

"Mother's health hasn't been good recently. She's treated you well in the past. If you feel uncomfortable in the courtyard, get the old maid guarding the door to pass on a message. Go to the Tranquil Heart Residence to visit Mother from time to time. This is a filial thing. I don't think Grandmother will stop you. This way, you can go out a little."

Her mother's health was deteriorating, and she was also enduring it day by day. Matriarch had already removed the restriction on the Tranquil Heart Residence and did not restrict them from entering and leaving.

If Yu Qingning wanted to be filial to her mother, there was no reason for Matriarch to stop her.

Yu Qingning's eyes turned red as she said hoarsely, "Only Third Sister is willing to treat me well. In the past few years, I've been locked up in the courtyard. It's only because Third Sister often sends people over to take care of Nanny Jin that Nanny Jin doesn't dare to be too harsh on me. Even though Third Sister is recuperating in the manor, she's always remembered me. Every time she sends something to the residence, she doesn't forget to include me. Everyone in the residence says that Yu Youyao is kind, but that's all an act. A friend in need is a friend. Third Sister is really gentle and kind."

She was really fed up with being locked up in the courtyard and not being able to go anywhere. She was forced to learn the rules every day.

As long as she could go out often, she would be grateful.

Yu Jianjia held her hand and said gently, "We're all sisters. We should take care of each other."

Yu Qingning was extremely grateful. She held Yu Jianjia's hand and was reluctant to leave. However, she had been out for a long time. The Matriarch did not say anything, but she did not dare to stay outside for long.

After Yu Qingning had walked far away, Yu Jianjia turned to look at Bai Ye. "Is your grandmother feeling better?"

Bai Ye said gratefully, "Thank you, Young Miss, for hiring a doctor with brilliant medical skills to treat Grandmother. Previously, Grandmother entrusted someone from the manor to send me a letter saying that she had recovered for a long time and asked me not to worry. She wanted me to serve Young Miss well and repay her kindness."

Every month, someone would enter the residence to deliver something.

Yu Jianjia chuckled and said, “Your grandmother has served Matriarch in the past, so her relationship with our family is different. You and I are master and servant, and it’s an even rarer fate. We can’t stand by and do nothing.”

Bai Ye quickly said, “It’s also because Young Miss is kind.”

Yu Jianjia frowned and sighed softly. “Logically speaking, your grandmother’s health has improved a little. As her granddaughter, you are her only family.

You have to return home to visit her and show your filial piety. It’s also because my body is weak that I can’t leave you for a while..”

Chapter 649 - 649: Honor

When Bai Ye heard this, she was so touched that her eyes welled up with tears.

“It’s my blessing to be able to serve Young Miss. I’m not going anywhere. I’ll just serve you.”

Yu Jianjia was also extremely touched. She held Bai Ye’s hand and said gently, “You and Grandmother have relied on each other for many years and have always had a deep relationship. Back then, I pitied the two of you for living such a difficult life, so I brought you in to serve you. How could I let your flesh and blood be separated and make it be difficult for you to be close? In that case, wouldn’t my good intentions have done something bad?”

Her sincere words made Bai Ye wish she could die for Young Miss.

At this point, Yu Jianjia was also a little vexed. She hesitated for a moment before saying, “Why don’t we do this? After a while, bring your grandmother over and let her stay in the residence for a few days. The two of you can have a good gathering.”

Bai Ye was naturally excited and happy, but she did not want Young Miss to be in a difficult position. “Young Miss, my grandmother isn’t serving in the residence. I’m afraid it’s a little inappropriate to move into the residence rashly. You don’t have to...” She might have to deal with Eldest Miss!

Although Young Miss always said that Eldest Miss was kind-hearted, her grandmother also said that this was all on the surface.

If Eldest Miss was really kind-hearted, why would she let her younger sister, who was so young, stay in the manor alone to recuperate after her stepmother fell sick?

They did not have the same mother, and it was impossible for them to be united.

Hui Xiang, who was a maidservant in the outer courtyard, had been serving Young Miss since she was young.

When she first came to Young Miss, she was afraid that she wouldn’t serve her well, so she often went to ask Hui Xiang for guidance. She had heard that Hui Xiang had almost been sold because she had offended Eldest Miss.

Yu Jianjia thought for a moment and said, “It’s not that serious. No matter what, you’re still my personal maidservant. You’re your grandmother’s only relative, so she can come to visit you.” At

this point, she pursed her lips slightly, her eyes looking a little troubled, but she still said, "This is reasonable." In order to prevent her from letting her imagination run wild, she comforted her. "You don't have to think too much. I'll personally mention this to Matriarch. There shouldn't be a problem."

Although it was a little against the rules, it was not difficult.

The Yu Residence was not such an unreasonable family. Bai Ye had only become her maidservant with her grandmother's approval.

Bai Ye's situation was special, and her grandmother had long known that she was weak and could not do without her personal maidservant. Her grandmother would probably think of these problems.

Bai Ye was her personal maidservant. If she was willing to give her face, no one else could stop her.

As the Second Miss of the Yu Residence, could it be that she couldn't even make such a small decision?

Matriarch wouldn't refute her over such a small matter.

Yu Youyao would not make things difficult for her over such a small matter.

As long as she asked, it would be logical.

Of course, she naturally wouldn't tell Bai Ye about this.

Eunuch Zhu held a bright yellow imperial edict and led the carriage that was "personally" driven to the Yu Residence. He led the way as the 64 people transported rewards from the palace.

Before the imperial edict arrived at the Yu Residence, the news of the emperor conferring Yu Youyao the title of County Head had already spread throughout the capital.

For a moment, there was an uproar.

As soon as Eunuch Zhu's carriage left, the Marquis of Zhen's wife visited.

Clearly, she had come specially to ask about the news.

Old Madam Yu did not hide anything and repeated what Eunuch Zhu had said previously. She did not say anything else. "The emperor and the Empress Dowager dote on our Yao Yao so much. After Yao Yao's order was sent over, I naturally have to bring Yao Yao into the palace to thank them with my sincerity."

The Marquis of Zhen sighed softly. "The Empress Dowager is benevolent and charitable, and her heart is for the commoners. We naturally have to follow the Empress Dowager's lead and do our best for the commoners."

The Yu Residence now stood out. Those with higher official statuses than the Yu Residence would definitely donate more than the Yu Residence. Otherwise, they would easily be exposed.

Before leaving, the Marquis of Zhenguo's wife held Yu Youyao's hand. "I heard that your family is going to the moat to watch the dragon boat race this year. When the time comes, it'll be more lively with more people from our family." Yu Youyao smiled and agreed.

After the Marquis of Zhen's wife left, Eldest Madam Qi, Eldest Madam Tang, and the other families who had reconciled with the Yu Residence also came to congratulate her.

She would leave the rest to Madam Yao and Concubine Jiang.

The entire day, the Yu Residence was bustling with activity.

It only stopped after the trial.

It seemed that this commotion was what the palace was most happy to see.

After borrowing the Yu Residence to convey the Empress Dowager's intention to raise money for disaster relief, the various families should also understand the importance the palace placed on raising money for disaster relief.

Naturally, they would not be as careless as before.

Concubine Jiang politely sent the guests out before returning to An Shou Hall. After working for most of the day, she did not feel tired at all. Her face was rosy, and even her eyebrows looked glorious.

In the eyes of those who did not know the truth, this was indeed a great honor!

Old Madam Yu looked exhausted. "Go prepare a few tables. We have to celebrate at home tonight. The servants also have to add a few more dishes.

The money will be paid from my account."

No matter what intentions and schemes were hidden behind this warning, on the surface, it was indeed the emperor's grace. The Yu Residence had to remember the emperor's grace, be grateful, and happily accept it.

Concubine Jiang was not a fool.

It was a great thing that Eldest Miss had been conferred the title of county lord. However, the Matriarch did not seem happy, but she still wanted to hold a banquet to celebrate. Her attitude was too strange.

Could it be that Eldest Miss had really damaged the Third Prince's reputation?

The position of county lord was the emperor's compensation to Eldest Miss?

That was not right either!

If Eldest Miss's reputation was damaged, it was impossible for Eldest Master not to have any reaction.

Concubine Jiang sighed helplessly. As a concubine, even if she was the household manager, many things in the family were hidden from her, so she had no way of knowing.

At night, the family banquet was sumptuous.

The servants also set up banquets in their respective courtyards to celebrate.

From the outside, the lights in the Yu Residence looked like daytime, and it was lively. Passers-by could even hear laughter through the heavy courtyard doors.

However, in reality!

As soon as it was nine o'clock, Old Madam Yu used the excuse that she was not feeling well and ended the banquet.

Zhou Linghuai sent Yu Youyao to the entrance of the Jade Courtyard. "Go back and rest early. You still have a lot to do tomorrow."

Yu Youyao smiled. "Cousin, sweet dreams!"

The little girl stood under the dim lights. The sparse lights made her look hazy and delicate. When she smiled, her eyes curved, bright and beautiful.

Zhou Linghuai smiled. "Sweet dreams!"

The next day, just as dawn arrived, Yu Youyao was woken up by Nanny Xu.

Ever since she stopped going to school and finished learning etiquette, Yu Youyao had rarely woken up so early. She was still in a daze when Nanny Xu pulled her into the bathroom..

Chapter 650 - 650: Evil Dog

After a tedious bath and a cleansing, Yu Youyao changed into a green seven-layered dress with silk pomegranate flowers. She combed her hair into Feixian buns and wore a small crown with gold and other treasures. The long tassels hung from her hair to her shoulders. The rubies were striking as they hung on the tassels of different lengths.

The women of the Great Zhou Dynasty had a variety of clothes. They wore ruqun, yaoqun, liuxianqun, beizi and so on. The quju was considered formal. When attending some solemn events, they had to wear it. This ordeal lasted for two hours.

After everything was settled, Yu Youyao went to An Shou Hall.

When Old Madam Yu saw her granddaughter's solemn and beautiful face, her turbid eyes couldn't help but light up. "If you wear the county lord's grand makeup, you'll definitely look grand and beautiful."

After a night, Old Madam Yu felt a little more relaxed.

Although the position of county lord was filled with schemes, from another perspective, there was a drought in the north. The Imperial Court was willing to help the refugees. No matter what, this was a good thing.

At this point, the Yu Residence naturally had to take on the responsibility.

At the very least, on the surface, it was a rare honor for Yao Yao to be conferred the title of County Head of Shaoyi. In the future, she would also be protected by the imperial family's title. This was also a form of protection.

After a while, Zhou Linghuai also arrived. His gaze paused on Yu Youyao.

The material of the quju was a little heavier, making her look dignified and grand. The collar of the robe was layered three times, from the inside out. There were white, red, and green layers.

When the lapels reached her waist, they were suddenly tied up by a finger-wide belt. The heavy material of the clothes could not hide her slender figure. Her waist was delicate, and when the solemn clothes landed on her, there was an indescribable luxury.

Due to Old Madam Yu's presence, his gaze narrowed slightly as he asked, "Was everything stable yesterday?"

Yu Youyao blinked and smiled. "I didn't have another nightmare. Thank you for your concern, Cousin."

Old Madam Yu was very gratified to see the scene of brother and sister being respectful.

When the entire family was present, Yu Zongzheng brought the entire family to the ancestral hall. After kowtowing to their ancestors, he brought the imperial edict to the ancestral hall.

After leaving the ancestral hall, Old Madam Yu held her granddaughter's hand. "In a few days, when your seal is issued, you still have to wear your mingfu. After going through it again, send the seal into the ancestral hall." Today was destined not to be a day of peace.

In the harem, the Empress Dowager was respected. In addition to the Empress

Dowager, there were four other concubines. In addition to Consort Xu, after Consort Xian was accused for murdering the Eldest Prince, she was removed from her position as concubine. Behind her were Consort Shu and Consort De.

Imperial Consort Lu had been demoted and conferred the title of Concubine Lan. According to her rank, she was considered a second-grade concubine, but her title was that of a concubine, even if she was one of the four concubines.

Of the nine concubines, only six were conferred titles, and the remaining three did not have them.

Not long after, Concubine Lan of the Lanyi Palace sent over a reward.

Right on the heels of that, Consort Shu and Consort De also gave out rewards.

The six concubines sent rewards one after another.

The rewards from the palace concubines were only symbolic. They would give her some top-notch headgear, cloth, spices, and so on.

Even so, the front hall was still full.

It was also a rare sight. It was enough for the capital to create a grand scene for a while.

Yu Youyao sighed softly. "To be able to survive in the palace, you cannot be simple-minded. How can a fifth-grade county lord be worthy of being the concubines of the harem? He's just trying to wear down the Emperor and the Empress Dowager's intention to build momentum so that others can know that the emperor and the Empress Dowager dote on me."

It was just to take them a step further and heat her up on the fire.

The more dignity the palace gave her, the more she had to pay.

Old Madam Yu shook her head. "That's not all."

As soon as she finished speaking, Qing Xiu came over to report, "Matriarch, Madam Xu is here."

Only then did Yu Youyao remember that Imperial Concubine Xu had not sent a reward from the Forbidden Palace.

The Princess Consort of Rong County had taken responsibility for all her mistakes. No one dared to implicate the Third Prince. However, it was also a fact that she had almost lost her reputation because of the Third Prince in King Rongs Residence previously.

Since Imperial Concubine Xu couldn't appear, the Xu family had to come over and comfort her on behalf of the Third Prince.

Old Madam Yu had already expected this. She said calmly, "Please come in!"

Qing Xiu received her orders and left. Not long after, she brought Madam Xu, who had her hair combed into a high bun and was wearing a pure gold peony, into the house. She looked luxurious and solemn.

Behind her were a few maidservants, all of whom were carrying gifts.

As soon as they entered the house, Madam Xu smiled and stepped forward to greet Old Madam Yu. "I'm relieved to see that Old Madam is much better."

Only when Old Madam Yu's health recovered could she say her sentence.

How could Old Madam Yu not understand? She only nodded. "Other people have had Yang issues and fallen to the ground. They're most likely either dead or paralyzed. Fortunately, I have a filial granddaughter who learned some tricks from a doctor. Otherwise, you wouldn't have come today to pay respects to me, but to my coffin."

Consort Xu had many schemes outside the palace, but it was impossible for her to surpass the Xu Residence.

It was time to play with what needed to be played.

Madam Xu's smile was a little forced. "Matriarch, you've been eating vegetarian food and chanting Buddhist scriptures for many years. With Bodhisattva taking care of you, you're a good person. You're blessed. You can't say such inauspicious words."

Old Madam Yu waved her hand. "I don't eat vegetarian food and pray to Buddha for myself. It's all for the family to accumulate good karma. I hope that they're doing well." After saying that, she looked at Yu Youyao, who was standing at the side, and her smile deepened. "Especially the one beside me. I'm always worried that she'll be bullied. I always want to protect her more and let her live well."

She was still pretending to be innocent after taking advantage of her! Madam Xu was embarrassed and forced herself to maintain her smile. "The county lord of Shaoyi is filial, pure, kind, and respectful. Even the emperor and the

Empress Dowager praise her. Everyone else would want to praise her in time. How can they bully her?" No matter how beautifully she said it, she was implying that since Yu Youyao had obtained the title of county lord, it was time for the matter of the Duke Rongs Residence to pass. "You should relax and recuperate carefully."

After recuperating, she shouldn't faint and scare others.

Old Madam Yu's expression darkened, and even her voice turned cold. "I was chased and bitten by a vicious dog, but instead of being bitten, I fell and picked up a piece of gold. Do I have to thank that vicious dog for almost biting me? Do I have to be grateful to that vicious dog?"

At this point, it could be said that they had fallen out.

She was just short of naming Consort Xu as that vicious dog.

The Duke Xu's Residence had not come over sincerely to send an apology.

They were here as a distant relative high up in the air to put on an act for the Emperor and the Empress Dowager in the palace..