

## All Hail 671

### Chapter 671 - 671: Decapitated Arm

Realizing what he was thinking, Harmon's expression darkened.

He had already lost this deal by thinking that way.

Yin Huaixi did not argue with Harmon. He stroked the scimitar on his bracelet and said calmly, "Before we make a deal, let's resolve our personal grudges first. Under the condition that no lives shall be taken, there shouldn't be any complaints about losing an arm or a leg."

Harmon did not expect Yin Huaixi to be so straightforward. He laughed. "In the words of your Great Zhou Dynasty, it's better to be respectful than obedient. Harmon will accompany you to the end."

King Yue Fei did not say it explicitly, but he knew very well.

The Northern Barbarians had been at war with the North for many years, and it was already difficult to resolve their grudges. This was a national feud.

Back then, the Northern Barbarians and the Great Zhou officials had forged evidence of King You colluding with the enemy to betray the country. It had also caused the destruction of the family of King You's residence. This was a family grudge.

The Northern Barbarians had also suffered heavy casualties over the years.

The Great Zhou people hated the Di people, and the Di people also hated the Great Zhou people. This was the greatest obstacle to a smooth trade between the two sides.

Of course, these grudges could not be resolved with a fight.

However, Yin Huaixi's goal was not to vent his anger.

This battle between kings was equivalent to establishing rules. After the two sides fought, they would temporarily let go of their grudges. During the process of the discussion, they could not break the rules no matter what.

Whoever broke the rules would have to pay the corresponding price.

It was better than talking later and pestering those grudges. If there was a disagreement, they would fight.

In order to ensure that the subsequent talks would go smoothly, both sides would tacitly agree that if either side won, they would be able to obtain a

certain amount of initiative in the subsequent talks. The losing side would also tacitly agree to make concessions in the talks to prevent both sides from not giving in to each other and causing a violent conflict.

The fight was very fair. Winning or losing depended on one's own strength.

Both sides were leaders of an army. From the day they put on their battle robes, it was destined that they would either be in the army for the rest of their lives or return in a casket. If it was just a small

fight, it would not achieve the effect of establishing rules. Therefore, in this battle, without harming their lives, they would have to draw some blood.

A suggestion could avoid more trouble and hidden dangers in the future. Neither side could refuse.

Both sides reached a consensus and arrived at the martial arts arena.

Yin Huaixi's leg had just recovered, so he wasn't too confident in facing Harmon.

However, back in Youzhou, Yu Youyao had made a new incense medicine. It was paired with a small amount of the shell of a kind of flower. It could inspire people in a short period of time and allow them to unleash 120% of their strength.

The only drawback is after using it, his mind would also fall into a tired and weak state.

It's not something that would last long. He could recover after resting for a

However, Yu Youyao thought that this medicine should not be used often. She didn't even keep the incense recipe in case it was leaked. She only gave him three pills and asked him to keep them as a safety net.

This was also the reason behind his confidence in fighting Harmon.

Yin Huaixi did not think that there was anything wrong with this.

He had his methods, and so did Harmon. In terms of age alone, Harmon was much older than him. The difference in age meant that he lacked skills and fighting experience.

Harmon also knew this, so he agreed readily.

"Please—" Yin Huaixi drew his knife and charged forward like lightning.

Harmon welcomed the knife with unparalleled bravery.

The blades clashed and sparks flew in the air. The moment the two blades collided, Yin Huaixi made a judgment. Harmon had brute force, so it wasn't a wise move to fight head-on.

After more than ten moves, Harmon felt that Yin Huaixi's reaction speed was top-notch, and his saber technique was very strange. It was as if every time he struck, he had already foreseen his reaction, making it impossible to guard against. Wounds were left on his body.

At first, this small injury was neither painful nor itchy, and Harmon did not care.

As more and more wounds appeared on his body, Harmon's stamina drained quickly. He immediately realized that losing blood would lead to a loss of stamina, and the wounds were affecting his reaction speed.

Moreover, he could clearly sense that there was madness in Yin Huaixi's bones. The more he fought, the more excited he became. As if he did not know fatigue, he drew his knife faster and faster, and his movements became more and more treacherous.

"Ah—" A scream suddenly sounded.

Blood splattered on the ground, and a thick arm fell to the ground with a bang.

Harmon's face was pale as he took a few steps back.

Yin Huaixi also took a step back. There was a long cut on his left arm, and blood gushed out.

“Hah—

“Your Highness—”

Exclamations rose and fell on the arena.

The thousand elite soldiers that Harmon had brought rushed into the martial arts arena and stood behind him. They pulled their bows and drew their knives. They hated King Yue Fei of the Great Zhou Dynasty. As long as the order was given, they could charge forward.

The people on Yin Huaixi’s side were not slow.

Both sides immediately fell into a standstill.

Yin Huaixi said calmly, “Leave!”

His voice was neither loud nor soft, but he had a dignified aura. The soldiers only hesitated for a moment before retreating in unison. However, the bowstrings in their hands were still tightened, and their curved swords were still tightly clenched. Their sharp eyes landed on the Di Army warily.

Harmon had lost his right arm and was seriously injured. Seeing that the You army had already retreated, he raised his voice and said, “Move back!”

“Hah—

“Hah, we can’t let it go like this...”

“Hah, as long as you give the order, we...”

Harmon endured the pain in his arm, raised his voice, and shouted angrily, “Back off, all of you.”

Only then did the Di Army reluctantly retreat.

Seeing that they had listened, Harmon said, “Sabers and swords have no eyes on the battlefield. Before I attacked, I had already made an agreement with King Yue Fei to break my arms and legs. I have no grudge with anyone. You’re all brave warriors of the grassland. Our grassland respects the strong. Today, I, Harmon lost an arm. I was inferior.’

Upon hearing this, the Di Army finally calmed down a little.

Harmon said simply, “I lost.”

Yin Huaixi’s body swayed, and he knelt on the ground with his knife. “Thank you for letting me win!”

Harmon looked at King Yue Fei’s injured arm. If the knife had been a little deeper, it would have crippled his arm. What a pity. “Since we’re all injured, we’ll discuss the matter later.’

It wasn’t that he was inferior in strength in the battle just now, but that Yin Huaixi was too cunning.

From the beginning, Yin Huaixi had deliberately shown weakness to numb him, creating the illusion that he had good reaction speed but not enough strength.

He had fought with the Great Zhou for many years and knew that the soldiers of the Great Zhou were inferior to them in terms of strength, so he did not suspect anything.

It wasn't until later that he realized that the wounds on his body were hurting and bleeding more and more—

Every cut that Yin Huaixi made on his body seemed to be very messy and disorderly, but they were all on his arms, chest, legs, and back.

The wound was neither light nor heavy, and it did not seem to affect him much.

However, when he swung his saber, it would affect the injuries on his arms, chest, and back. It would accelerate the bleeding of his wounds. The more he bled, the more painful his injuries would be, causing him to move slowly and

be unable to deal with it. This explained Yin Huaixi's strange speed of swinging his saber..

Chapter 672 - 672: Isn't He Stupid?

Realizing that his defeat was obvious and that Yin Huaixi wouldn't let him off easily, he made up his mind. He wanted to kill 800 enemy soldiers but lose 1000 of his own. In the end, he didn't hesitate to exchange an arm for Yin Huaixi's arm.

At that time, he felt that Yin Huaixi was unfathomable. Now that his legs had recovered, he was a terrifying threat to the Northern Barbarians. Breaking his arm could also reduce his prestige.

He did not expect to fail.

Yin Huaixi nodded. "That's great!"

With Harmon's arm gone, the Di Army did not dare to delay and retreated like a tide.

The aura of the You army trembled violently, and the drumbeats shook the sky like thunder. The cheers of the soldiers almost drowned out the knocking.

Yin Qi hurriedly went forward to support Yin Huaixi. "Young Master, how are your injuries? The military doctor is already waiting..."

"It's nothing. Let's go back first!" Yin Huaixi looked at his arm helplessly. The long wound ran from under his shoulder to his elbow. If it was any deeper, his arm would probably be crippled.

This was troublesome.

He had originally wanted to win this battle at the lowest price, so as soon as he stepped onto the martial arts arena, he kept going through the schemes in his mind. However, he had still underestimated him. After Harmon, an old general who had been through hundreds of battles, sensed his scheme, he did not hesitate to injure 800 enemies and lose 1000 to cripple his arm.

His arm was not crippled, but it would take more than half a month to recover from such a serious injury.

If the little girl found out, she might even be angry and cry. Just thinking about it gave him a headache.

Yin Huaixi frowned and instructed Yin Qi, "Don't tell Yao Yao about my injuries for the time being. Just say that Harmon isn't feeling well and the trade talks will be postponed."

It was already mid-June. Harmon had lost an arm. It would take at least ten days to half a month. The discussions can only proceed when his injuries stabilized.

Since it was a matter of interest, the negotiations would not happen overnight. It would also take time for both sides to reach a consensus.

After the meeting ended, it was the first official transaction between the two sides. They had to be even more cautious about a large number of supplies. Both sides had to test their sincerity further and spend time to achieve common interests.

After this ordeal, he might not even be able to return in August, let alone July.

Yin Huaixi's face darkened.

Yin Qi prepared strips of cloth to tighten and bandage the wound.

Young Master defeating Harmon was not simple and could only be achieved with thorough planning.

The old king and Harmon had fought for many years. From a young age, Young Master had known the methods of the Northern Barbarians to deal with the enemy clearly. He had even thought of a way to defeat the enemy and win.

Be it the speed of the knife or the angle, it was strange and tricky. It was all aimed at the Di people's weakness.

On the other hand, the first time Harmon and Young Master met on a narrow path at the narrow Yu Pass, he was caught off guard by Young Master in one go. Not only was he unable to figure out Young Master's plans, but he also knew very little about him. For a moment, he was in a hurry and accidentally fell into the Young Master's trap.

The key to winning was to know oneself and the enemy.

In the past two years, Young Master's weak image had been too deeply rooted in people's hearts. Harmon's fear of Young Master was mostly expressed in

Young Master's lead, command, tactics, and schemes.

Although Young Master's leg had already recovered, the deep-rooted impression of him was not easy to change.

Moreover, Young Master had yet to reach his prime, and he was a far cry from

Harmon, who had been through hundreds of battles. In Harmon's eyes, Young Master was just a young man. Even if he had some talent in leading troops to war, his strength was definitely inferior to his skills, which had been honed over the years.

It was impossible for Harmon to imagine that some people fought with their brains. All their reactions, movements, speed, dodging, and so on, could be accurately calculated and predicted.

Harmon had underestimated his enemy.

For the sake of Young Master's safety, Young Miss had to prepare dozens or hundreds of incense medicines every time he went on a long journey. Among them, there was no lack of incense and poisonous incense. It was unpredictable and impossible to guard against.

In terms of methods, Harmon was inferior to Young Master.

After coming up with all kinds of meticulous schemes, the battle between Young Master and Harmon happened.

However, Harmon was also a ruthless person. He was harsh with himself and even more so to others. This was probably something the Young Master had not expected.

As soon as he returned to the tent, the military doctor immediately came over to help Yin Huaixi treat the wound on his arm.

The more Yin Huaixi thought about it, the more depressed he felt. He couldn't help but say, "The Di people respect the strong. I suggested fighting Harmon to avoid some hidden dangers and trouble in the negotiations. I wanted to facilitate a smooth discussion and accelerate the transaction process. Bloodshed is inevitable, but I can't be too heavy-handed."

Yin Qi did not say anything. He thought to himself, Young Master's leg has just recovered and his strength hasn't completely recovered. Harmon was born with brute force and has been on the battlefield for a long time. If it weren't for the fact that he wanted to return to the capital as soon as possible, Young Master wouldn't have taken the risk to propose a battle with Harmon.' It was right to win the competition.

In the subsequent discussions, they also had the upper hand, and it wasn't wrong.

It was not wrong to defeat Di army's morale and damage Harmon's vitality.

But!

Yin Qi silently glanced at Young Master, who was so angry that he wanted to kill someone. His goal had been achieved, but all of this was completely different from Young Master's plan.

They hunted wild geese all day, but were ultimately pecked by them.

This boat had capsized a little too badly.

Yin Huaixi gritted his teeth. "I want to take Harmon's dog life on the battlefield legitimately, not an insignificant arm. Sacrificing 1000 of his own to kill 100 enemies, don't you think Harmon is stupid?!"

Harmon wanted to trade an arm for an arm, so he hit hard.

Yin Qi thought for a moment. "Before the battle, Young Master mentioned that there shall not be any complaints even if someone were to lose an arm or a leg. Harmon knows that even if he loses, he can't take a bad loss."

Otherwise, where would the face and prestige of a dignified leader go?

How would he lead his subordinates?

Yin Huaixi was speechless. "Since swords have no eyes, it's better to make some things clear in advance. I only said it in case Harmon really loses a limb and the Di people would not let it go!"

Yin Qi shut up.

Yin Huaixi rubbed his eyebrows hard. “The Di people lack supplies, and their medical skills are not as good as the Great Zhou. Go to the storeroom and pick out some good medicinal herbs and supplements. Bring a military doctor with good medical skills to look for Harmon.”

Yu Youyao counted the days and finally made it to July. She began to look forward to her cousin’s return.

In less than two days, Yu Youyao received a letter from Yin Qi.

This letter was in her cousin’s usual concise style. He only mentioned that the return date would be delayed. He did not mention the reason, let alone the exact date. Yu Youyao’s expectations turned to disappointment. She took a deep breath and asked Yin Qi, “What happened?”

Yin Qi lowered his head and said, “Harmon is seriously injured.”

Yu Youyao’s heart skipped a beat. She quickly asked, “Where’s Cousin? Is he injured? Did the two sides have a conflict?”

The North and the Northern Barbarians had been at war for many years and hated each other. It was very difficult to let go of their hatred and grudges.

Harmon’s suggestion of a deal seemed to be showing weakness to the Great Zhou, but in fact, both sides were taking a lot of risks.

It was very likely that they would fight at the slightest disagreement..

Chapter 673 - 673: Pirates

Yin Qi braced himself and said, “Young Master is fine. Both sides took this transaction very seriously and there was no conflict.” The battle had been agreed by both sides, so it should not be considered a conflict. He continued, “The Northern Barbarians is a large tribe, but they are split into branches. In order to snatch resources, the branches often fight each other. The Northern Barbarians suffered a drought and are seriously short on supplies. The conflicts between the branches are deepening day by day. This is why Harmon is anxious to reach a deal with Young Master to ease the internal conflicts among the Northern Barbarians. At the same time, he has to take the opportunity to win people’s hearts and strengthen his standing.”

These words were only to explain that this transaction was imperative and nothing would happen. It was also to reassure Young Miss, in case she asks questions and he ends up exposing that Young Master was seriously injured.

In order to let Yu Youyao feel more at ease, they let her think that Harmon’s injuries were related to the conflicts between the various branches in the Northern Barbarians.

Yu Youyao wrote a reply for her cousin and rambled on in the letter.

First, she mentioned what had happened in the court during this period of time.

She also mentioned some trivial matters at home.

In the end, she said many caring words.

In the blink of an eye, it was August!

It had been almost three months since Yu Zongzheng had gone to Zhejiang to provide disaster relief. During this period, because of the water disaster, three small-scale riots had erupted in Zhejiang, but they were all suppressed by Ye Hanyuan.

Later on, as the Xie Residence and Yu Youyao in Quanzhou took the initiative to help the Imperial Court relief the refugees, they took the lead. Many benevolent merchants in the country also contributed money. With Ye Hanyuan stabilizing the overall situation in Zhejiang, the disaster in Zhejiang temporarily stabilized.

However, the riot in Zhejiang had caused many casualties. Even Yu Zongzheng was affected and slashed by the mob.

Before one wave was over, another rose.

On the sixth of August, an emergency report from Zhejiang came from the capital again. Pirates had invaded Taizhou on a large scale. Ye Hanyuan took the lead and killed the leader of the pirates, annihilating more than 2,000 people.

At the same time, the pirates of Funing, Lianjiang, and other places joined forces with the local water bandits to attack Ningde and other places.

This was not the end. The pirates in Guangdong had invaded Longyan, Songxi, Datian, Gutian, Putian, and other places.

There were pirates everywhere along the southeast coast.

Wherever the pirates went, they were like locusts crossing the border. They killed, burned, and plundered everything. They did not even let go of the infants in their swaddling clothes. The tragedies of families getting destroyed happened along the bloody southeast coast.

When the news reached the capital, the Emperor was furious. He immediately issued a holy decree and angrily reprimanded the Governor of Zhejiang for letting the pirates become a problem. He was ordered to be suspended for investigation.

He also promoted the Left Assistant Minister of the Ministry of War and the Governor of Zhejiang to handle the military affairs of Zhejiang, South Zhili, and Fujian. He was ordered to chase after the pirates and eliminate the bandit problem.

Ye Hanyuan was directly promoted from a fourth-grade general to a first-grade official.

At this moment, Elder Xia suddenly fainted during the morning court meeting.

When she woke up, he said that he was old and couldn't handle court matters, so he wanted to resign and return to his hometown.

The emperor accepted Elder Xia's resignation letter, but he did not allow him to return to his hometown. He asked him to stay in the capital and recuperate for a while.

Yu Zongshen officially took over as the Grand Secretary.

They cooperated with Zhejiang to help the refugees and eliminate the pirates.

Zhejiang was in chaos, but because of Ye Hanyuan, the situation was temporarily under control.

However, everyone knew that this was only the beginning.



Ye Hanyuan's promotion had also directly torn open the tip of the iceberg of the Zhe family.

Elder Xia's resignation had caused the Zhe family to lose their political cover.

Those with power in Zhejiang sensed that the time for the Zhejiang Family to fall had arrived, so they made their moves. They joined forces with the River Inspection Censor, the Left Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs cum 13th Imperial Censor, Yu Zongzheng, and the Governor of Zhejiang, Ye Hanyuan. The four forces investigated the corruption of the river, the loss of military funds, the annexation of the land of the commoners, and hundreds of other crimes.

The River Inspection Censor was investigating the corruption at the river. In addition, he had a good sword in his hand. In the end, all the officials who were related to the river were killed or detained.

Yu Zongzheng had monstrous power. He patrolled on behalf of the Emperor and investigated the governance of officials. He could investigate and manage everything.

With the methods of the palace guards, there was no one who couldn't be investigated, nor was there any dirty money that couldn't be found. They searched through all one by one.

After a thorough investigation, they could even find over a hundred thousand taels of silver in the house of a small seventh-grade official. It simply shocked the royal court.

During this period of time, Old Madam Yu's spirits had been deteriorating.

"Zhejiang is completely in chaos."

Yu Youyao said softly, "Second Uncle has succeeded as the Grand Secretary. The Imperial Court will cooperate fully with the disaster relief, governance, and extermination of the pirates. Sooner or later, the chaos in Zhejiang will stabilize. Don't let one's imagination run wild."

She knew that these words were just self-deception.

In fact, it wasn't just Zhejiang that was in chaos.

Instead, it was the entire Great Zhou.

With Ye Hanyuan in charge of Zhejiang, the chaos in Zhejiang would stabilize sooner or later, but not now.

In fact, they had to wait until the Great Zhou Dynasty was completely in chaos. Then, her cousin would use Zhejiang to gather people and control the southeast coast from the beginning.

However, recently, her grandmother's mental state had grown weaker. The imperial physicians and doctors often visited, but they couldn't find a serious illness. They only asked her to relax and recuperate carefully.

Her grandmother's situation was not optimistic. The rumors flying around in court were also warped by the time they reached her ears.

Old Madam Yu leaned against the pillow with a sallow face. "It has been three months since your father went to Zhejiang. I wonder when he'll be back?"

Now that the disaster in Zhejiang had stabilized, the Imperial Censor had to report to the Emperor. It would be a great merit. The longer it dragged on, the more matters there would be in Zhejiang, and the great merits would be greatly reduced.

Yu Youyao said, "The calamity in Zhejiang has just subsided and there's the pirate issue now. Father is a civil servant, but he can't interfere. I reckon he'll be back soon.'

It was almost the Mid-Autumn Festival. If he continued to delay, it would be difficult for him, the Imperial Censor, to answer to the Imperial Court.

Old Madam Yu frowned and moved on from mentioning this vexing person. "There's a water disaster in Zhejiang and a riot. Now, the pirates have become a problem along the southeast coast and invaded half of the Great Zhou. It's impossible for Elder Xia to escape unscathed."

At this point, her breathing weakened and she panted.

Nanny Liu quickly handed Yu Youyao a cup of tea. Yu Youyao reached out to take it and carefully fed her grandmother a few sips.

Old Madam Yu calmed down a little and continued, "I heard that Elder Xia is from Wenzhou, Zhejiang. A few years ago, his hometown made a few monuments for him." At this point, even her eyebrows revealed a hint of mockery. "I think Wenzhou has suffered a huge disaster. He can't even keep his honor.'

Yu Youyao agreed deeply. Xia Yansheng's Grand Secretary was obtained by searching from those truly talented and pure ministers in the cabinet.

He only received some of his political achievements by squabbling with his colleagues and snatching credit from them. Other than helping the Emperor earn money and satisfying his private needs, he actually did not have much merit..

Chapter 674 - 674: Illness

Old Madam Yu looked listless and asked, "I heard that someone in the south took the lead and inserted a type of root from overseas. It's called something..."

Yu Youyao smiled and said, "It's sweet potatoes."

"Yes, yes, sweet potatoes. I heard that they're resistant to drought and ridges. They can be planted into the ground and live easily. Moreover, they grow vines quickly. Their leaves, stems, and roots can be eaten. At this time, no matter what you plant, it's too late. There's only sweet potatoes. Even if they don't produce fruits and there are many vines, the leaves can still be eaten." At this point, a smile appeared on her face. "I seem to remember hearing you mention this.'

Yu Youyao nodded. "I knew that this plant wasn't picky with soil, and its production was good, so I tried planting it. I didn't expect it to succeed. The experienced old farmers in the manor said that sweet potatoes can be planted until June or July. It's just that it's best before and after the Dragon Boat Festival. If it's late, the production will be reduced. I even made sweet potato snacks earlier and gave them to Grandmother to try. You said it was delicious and filling."

During this period of time, Old Madam Yu had been forgetful. She couldn't remember anything nearby. On the contrary, the past was still vivid in her mind. As long as she had a little energy, she would hold her granddaughter's hand and nag non-stop, as if those were her last words.

At the mention of Yu Youyao, Old Madam Yu indeed thought of this. "The soft, glutinous, fragrant, and sweet kind of root." She widened her eyes and smiled so widely that her eyes couldn't be seen. "It's a good thing. It doesn't matter if it's planted late. As long as there's a harvest, the commoners will have something to live for. Good, good, good!"

This excitement made her feel a little breathless.

Yu Youyao quickly helped her grandmother calm down.

In June and July, the vines that had originally been planted also grew. The steward brought people to cut the vines and distributed them to the commoners. News spread like wildfire in Zhejiang. After the Dragon Boat Festival, there were many sweet potatoes and vines planted. They did not expect them to be widely ready for harvest in Zhejiang.

Of course, there was no lack of Ye Hanyuan's help.

After a while, Old Madam Yu came back to her senses, but her expression turned ashen. "When will Ling... Linghuai return?"

"He'll be back in September at the latest." Yu Youyao's heart ached. During this period of time, her grandmother had been asking about her cousin a few times a day.

Old Madam Yu suddenly held her granddaughter's hand and pinched it until it turned pale. She did not notice it. "Write a letter to Linghuai and ask him to come back immediately. Don't delay. He has to come back immediately." Yu Youyao's eyes turned red and she almost broke down on the spot.

Yesterday, her grandmother had also held her hand and asked her to write to her cousin and ask him to come back.

She took a deep breath and comforted her in a hoarse voice. "Okay, Grandmother, don't worry. I'll write to Cousin when I get back later and ask him to return immediately."

Old Madam Yu let go, still a little worried. "Go back and write to Linghuai now and ask him to come back."

Yu Youyao felt a lump in her throat, so she could only nod. "Okay, I'll go back and write immediately. Grandmother, don't worry. Cousin will be back soon."

Old Madam Yu nodded and finally closed her eyes in relief.

Yu Youyao was shocked. Her hands trembled as she gently checked her grandmother's breathing.

At this moment, Old Madam Yu suddenly opened her eyes again. "I almost forgot that I still have many valuable things in my storeroom. I'll get Nanny Liu to sort out the list later and count them. I'll send them to your house." Yu Youyao's throat was dry. She held back her tears and nodded.

In fact, during this period of time, her grandmother had often fallen asleep. When she woke up, she wanted to look for her and explain many things.

Many things in the storeroom had long been moved to the Jade Courtyard.

Old Madam Yu felt relieved and fell asleep again.

Yu Youyao tucked her grandmother in and quickly walked out of the room. Tears immediately streamed down her face. She covered her mouth with her handkerchief and cried silently.

She knew that her grandmother's day was coming.

Her grandmother had lost her husband in her early years. She was a widow who raised two sons and a concubine's daughter alone. Later, she heard that after her mother passed away and her grandmother fell seriously ill, her body completely collapsed.

It had nothing to do with the illness. It was just that time was up.

During this period of time, she had already moved into An Shou Hall and was attending to her illness. Second Aunt also came over every day, but not long after, her grandmother began to chase her away.

Second Aunt did not force it on her either.

Her grandmother pitied Yu Jianjia's weak body and did not let her take care of her illness. Yu Jianjia was also afraid that she would cause trouble for the family, so she came over every day to accompany her grandmother.

After Yu Qingning saw her grandmother, Yu Youyao ordered her not to enter An Shou Hall again.

The entire Yu Residence was shrouded in a haze.

Yu Youyao had just returned to her room and only had time to take a sip of hot water when Xia Tao came over to report, "Young Miss, Eldest Madam Yang from the Tranquil Heart Residence is in trouble."

Yu Youyao was stunned for a long time. After a while, she asked, "Have you asked a doctor to take a look?"

Xia Tao nodded. "Yes. Over the past few days, we've invited a doctor over every day. The doctor only said that she needed to eat some ginseng to recuperate and asked the family to be prepared."

To put it bluntly, she had to eat ginseng to stay alive and endure for as many days as possible.

After three years, Madam Yang was finally about to reach her limit. Yu Youyao was very calm. "Go get a hundred-year-old ginseng. I've been busy taking care of Grandmother recently and haven't visited her in a long time."

Xia Tao quickly agreed.

Yu Youyao asked Chun Xiao to prepare a brush and ink and wrote a letter to the Xie Residence. She only explained what had happened in the Yu Residence recently and her grandmother's health.

It seemed as if she had not written anything important, but when the Xie family saw this letter, they would understand what she was thinking.

After a while, Xia Tao took the ginseng and returned.

Yu Youyao stood up and adjusted her clothes. "I'll go to the Tranquil Heart Residence."

She went from An Shou Hall to Tranquil Heart Residence!

Yu Zongzheng had great authority, and the Yu Residence was prosperous. However, her grandmother was seriously ill, and Madam Yang was in critical condition too. She felt like the sun was setting on them.

All power, fame, and status were like dew and lightning. They were just illusions that were gone in an instant.

When the old woman guarding the door saw Eldest Miss coming over, she quickly came over and bowed. "Hello, Eldest Miss."

Yu Youyao nodded. "I came to see Madam."

The old woman quickly took the key from her waist and opened the door.

The Tranquil Heart Residence was still the same. There were some flowers and plants growing in the narrow courtyard. It was said that Yu Jianjia had personally planted them.

It was said that having more flowers and plants was beneficial to her mother's condition.

Yu Youyao did not know if there were any benefits, but Yu Jianjia had gained a lot of reputation for filial piety in the residence. Words had even spread outside.

Yu Youyao entered the house.

At this moment, Nanny Li rushed out of the inner room with a basin. When she saw Eldest Miss coming over, she did not even bother to put the basin down before quickly bowing. "Hello, Eldest Miss."

A sour smell rushed into her nose, making Yu Youyao's face turn pale. She gagged from it, but she hid it well.

Xia Tao frowned. "Hurry up and clean up the basin. Young Miss has been attending to Matriarch's illness these past few days and hasn't been sleeping well day and night. Her body isn't feeling well and she can't stand the smell.."

Chapter 675 - 675: Heartbreaking

"Yes, yes, yes. I was rash and offended Eldest Miss." Nanny Li did not dare to delay and quickly left with the basin. She went through Xia Tao's words in her mind.

First Madam was still her stepmother in name. When her stepmother fell sick, even if Eldest Miss didn't treat her, she could not despise her.

Just now, Eldest Miss had accidentally been hit by the smell of First Madam's vomit. This was nothing, but which young miss who had grown up could stand this?

However, Miss Xia Tao kept saying that Eldest Miss was not feeling well after tending to the Matriarch. She was afraid that others would misunderstand her reaction as the Eldest Miss despising her stepmother.

How cautious of her.

Madam Yang was sick and had to keep warm, so the windows in the room were closed.

As soon as Yu Youyao walked into the inner room, a strong medicinal smell mixed with the sour smell that had yet to dissipate rushed into her nose.

Fortunately, Yu Youyao was already mentally prepared. Although it was pungent, she could still tolerate it.

Yang Shuwan was the only one in the room.

Yu Youyao walked to the bed. The beautiful daughter of Madam Yang, who used to be dressed brightly, had been reduced to skin and bones.

During this period of time, Yu Youyao would occasionally have nightmares about many related things.

In the nightmare, Yu Jianjia fell down and had a high fever for three days and three nights after failing to get the jade pendant. However, after the older Yao Yao was punished by her grandmother for kneeling in the ancestral hall, she did not have a “nightmare” or fever.

Madam Yang had pushed all the blame to Big Yao Yao.

The older Yao Yao was furious. She said that she hadn’t pushed Yu Jianjia and that she had fallen herself. Grandmother did some investigation and realized then that she had wronged Yao Yao.

Madam Yang was unreasonable. When Yu Zongzheng left the government office, she would cause trouble in front of him.

Yu Zongzheng doted on Yu Jianjia. Seeing that Yu Jianjia had a high fever and almost lost her life while his eldest daughter was fine, he was furious.

Not only did he slap Yao Yao, but he had also ordered her to hand over the jade pendant and give it to Yu Jianjia to apologize.

Since Yao Yao did not have a fever or fall sick, it had become a heinous crime.

Yu Jianjia had a fever and was seriously ill, so she was seen as the victim.

When the older Yao Yao found out that she couldn’t protect her mother’s belongings, she shattered the jade pendant on the spot.

This was undoubtedly a provocation to Yu Zongzheng’s dignity.

Yu Zongzheng was furious on the spot and grounded her in the courtyard. Their father-daughter relationship only existed in name.

Later on, no matter how sensible and obedient Yao Yao was, Yu Zongzheng still criticized her in every way.

After this incident, her grandmother fell even more ill. The older Yao Yao had been attending to her grandmother’s illness all year round.

Yang Shuwan no longer had any scruples and became even more arrogant at home.

The older Yao Yao was alone and helpless in the Yu Residence.

This was what the Duke Rongs Residence had schemed.

A small jade pendant had ruined Yao Yao’s life. It was extremely ridiculous.

Yu Youyao asked herself honestly. If she hadn't had a high fever because of that nightmare like in real life and almost lost her life just like Yu Jianjia, could she have avoided Yu Zongzheng's punishment?

Yu Zongzheng would also have asked her for her mother's belongings like in her nightmare.

And her choice would be the same as the Yao Yao in her dream. She would rather die than be dishonored.

Without the jade pendant, her cousin would die as young as in the nightmare.

Was it because the Yao Yao in the nightmare was too stupid and naive?

NO!

Her grandmother was seriously ill, and the Yu Residence was surrounded by wolves. In addition, she had a coveted dowry. Be it that Yao Yao or Yu Youyao herself, they would not have a good ending.

The tragedy of the older Yao Yao originated from Yang Shuwan, Yu Jianjia, Yu Zongzheng, Song Mingzhao, and even everyone in the Yu Residence. They weren't the only ones as well.

The one who had destroyed that Yao Yao was this rotten Great Zhou Dynasty.

She now believed that this nightmare was an omen between illusion and reality.

Thinking back to her nightmare, the older Yao Yao looked like she was at the end of her rope, and how similar she was to the current Yang Shuwan. Perhaps this was the cycle of the heavens.

At this moment, Yang Shuwan, who was lying on the bed unaware, coughed and slowly opened her eyes. Her eyes were dark and sunken. Her eyes were turbid, and a bright and blurry figure was reflected in her empty and wooden eyes. Her mind was dull as she opened her eyes with all her might, and the blurry figure became clearer bit by bit.

Yang Shuwan asked weakly, "Jia, is it Jia Jia?"

"First Madam, you're wrong. I'm Yao Yao." Yu Youyao's voice was indifferent.

Not long after Yang Shuwan moved into the Tranquil Heart Residence, she became crazy.

In the first year, it was better. She was much more awake and less crazy. Later on, she often went hysterical. Even though she was given a lot of expensive medicinal herbs, the effect was minimal.

Perhaps because she was about to die, even her mind woke up.

"Jia, Jia Jia..." Yang Shuwan shouted her daughter's name. She tried her best to widen her eyes and see the person standing by the bed clearly. It was Yu Youyao, whom she hated.

Her eyes suddenly turned fierce, and her eyes almost cracked. "B\*tch, what are you doing here?"

After being scolded, Yu Youyao was not angry. She chuckled. "First Madam has woken up." She changed the topic. "In name, you're still Father's second wife. Although you're sick and can't manage the household, I still have to tell you about what has happened in the family in the past two years."

Yang Shuwan was stunned. Would Yu Youyao be so kind?

Without waiting for Yang Shuwan to react, Yu Youyao said, “Two years ago, Grandmother made the decision to take in a concubine for Father through proper means. She is the third daughter of Master Jiangs family in the Imperial Academy. Madam Jiang’s family is an aristocratic family of farmers and scholars, and her ancestors have a small fortune. Madam Jiangs father was also a scholar. Madam Jiang is generous and straightforward, and Father is very satisfied with her. The two of them have a good relationship.”

Yu Zongzheng thought highly of himself and looked down on his second wife.

Even though he had respected Yang Shuwan very much in the past, he couldn’t hide the fact that he looked down on Madam Yang who had a daughter as a concubine. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for her to grasp the fact that Madam Yang was disrespected and easily sow discord between them.

From the looks of it, only someone with Concubine Jiangs background was most in line with Yu Zongzhengs expectations for his wife.

Yang Shuwan’s turbid eyes turned red.

A family of farmers, scholars, and legitimate descendants... Every word and sentence was like a knife scraping against her body. There was nothing that Yang Shuwan did not understand.

She was waiting for her to die so that she could make room for Concubine Jiang.

Yu Youyao did not seem to notice Yang Shuwan’s emotions. “By the way, Concubine Qiu gave birth to a son for Father. Father invited the respected elders of the Yu Clan to name him Shanming.”

So, Brother Si was no longer the only son? He was even called the son of a concubine. Yang Shuwan was so angry that her eyes rolled back and she let out a terrifying sound from her throat.

Yu Youyao chuckled. “Father has also been promoted to the Left Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs. Some time ago, he even asked the Imperial Court for a title.” At this point, she paused!

Chapter 676 - 676: Flooding

“A title?!” Yang Shuwan’s turbid eyes lit up. Yu Zongzheng had been promoted and was conferred a title for his wife. It was also a glorious matter.

“A lady, I’m a third-grade lady now...” An excited flush appeared on her ashen face. Then, she heard Yu Youyao continue slowly, “The Emperor has conferred the title of third-grade lady on my mother.”

Yang Shuwan’s mind was a little slow. She was excited for a long time before she realized that Yu Youyao had said “my mother”, not “mother.”

Her eyes widened as she screamed in disbelief, “No, that’s impossible. That b\*tch, Xie Roujia, has been dead for so long. Even if Master wanted a title for his wife, he should have done it for me. How could it be Xie Roujia? Impossible, impossible...”



Yang Shuwan's screams rang in her ears. Yu Youyao's expression was indifferent. "Not only was my mother conferred the title of virtuous lady, but the Emperor also conferred the title of County Head of Shaoyi to me. He praised me for being filial, pure, and respectful."

County Head? A fifth-grade noble title? Yang Shuwan felt as if someone was choking her throat. She looked at Yu Youyao in a daze, and saliva flowed from the corner of her mouth.

Yu Youyao seemed to have thought of something and continued, "Some time ago, Father was promoted again. He is the third-grade Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs and also the 13th Imperial Censor. The Emperor has personally appointed him as an Imperial Censor, so his authority is powerful." At this point, she looked up at Yang Shuwan and smiled slightly. "However, all of this has nothing to do with you anymore." Just like that, she had managed to strike her where it hurt.

Yang Shuwan tried her best to widen her eyes and look at the window,

wanting to see the Yu Residence. However, she only saw the tightly shut lattice window and the dark and narrow room.

Only then did she truly feel that the wealth and glory of the Yu Residence really had nothing to do with her.

A wife's status depended on her husband. She was Yu Zongzhengs legitimate wife and the mistress of the first branch. Why would her husband's promotion and the family's prosperity have nothing to do with her?

'On what grounds?'

Yang Shuwan screamed and shouted crazily in her heart...

Yu Youyao walked out of the inner room. Behind her, Yang Shuwan screamed and cursed crazily.

Nanny Li cleaned up the basin and heard that First Madam had gone crazy again. Her expression was stiff. First Madam had been crazy for nearly three years, so she was not surprised.

Bi Tao was brewing medicine in the kitchen. When First Madam had gone crazy, she did not recognize anyone. Sometimes, she would even hurt someone.

After returning to An Shou Hall, Yu Youyao changed her clothes again.

At this moment, Yu Jianjia came over.

She was wearing a light purple dress with flowery makeup. Her figure was slender and delicate, and she was very beautiful. She bowed lightly to Yu Youyao. "Since my body isn't strong enough, Grandmother depends on Eldest Sister to take care of her alone. It's been hard on you."

If it weren't for the fact that Yu Jianjia was full of schemes, she would be willing to get close to such a polite and sensible person.

Yu Youyao said calmly, "Third Sister, you're too polite. Please sit down."

Only then did Yu Jianjia sit on a chair. Without beating around the bush, she said, "I came to find Eldest Sister today because of my maidservant, Bai Ye." Yu Youyao was a little surprised.

After Bai Ye entered the residence, Yu Youyao had asked Xia Tao to keep an eye on her for a while. Seeing that Bai Ye was quite smart and had done her best to serve Yu Jianjia, she put this matter aside for the time being.

At this moment, when Yu Jianjia mentioned Bai Ye again, Yu Youyao actually felt that it was as she had expected.

However, she did not know what Yu Jianjia was plotting, and what role Bai Ye and her grandmother played.

Yu Jianjia had always been meticulous and thoughtful. She never let anyone control her, let alone pick the wrong side. She made her feel like she had no idea what to do.

If there was a problem, they would just have to deal with it.

Putting aside the Yu Residence, there was nothing to be afraid of Yu Jianjia's inner residence tricks.

Yu Jianjia did not seem to notice Yu Youyao's strange expression. She smiled and said, "Bai Ye's grandmother's health isn't good. She and Bai Ye rely on each other and have a good relationship. Bai Ye has been in the residence for a few months, so she's a little worried about her grandmother. Eldest Sister also knows that my body is weak and I can't leave Bai Ye. The Yu Residence isn't such an unreasonable family. Bai Ye's grandmother used to serve Grandmother. Moreover, Bai Ye did her best to serve me. I made the decision and gave Bai Ye the grace to send a carriage for her grandmother to come to the residence for their reunion."

These words only expressed one thing: she wanted Bai Ye's grandmother to enter the residence.

Moreover, every word and sentence was reasonable, and no one could find anything wrong.

The capable servants by their master's side often received their master's grace. Every year, they would have a few chances to visit their relatives. However, Yu Jianjia's body was weak and she couldn't leave her personal servants, so she brought her into the residence. Although it was a little inappropriate, it was probably reasonable.

Not to mention that this person had served her grandmother in the past, so their relationship was a little different.

As the Second Miss of the Yu Residence, it was only logical for Yu Jianjia to want to show some respect to her maidservant. Moreover, Yu Jianjia had always been kind. It was expected and reasonable for her to make such a request.

Not to mention her, even her grandmother would not refute Yu Jianjia.

Indeed!

Without waiting for Yu Youyao to speak, Yu Jianjia continued, "Just now, when I went to Grandmother's house, I mentioned it to her, and she agreed. I shouldn't have troubled Eldest Sister with such a small matter. However, Eldest Sister is in charge of the family, so I thought I should mention this to you."

As expected, she did everything. Yu Youyao nodded. "I think you know your limits. Since she's from your house, you can arrange what to do with this matter yourself."

Yu Jianjia felt relieved. "Thank you, Big Sister!"

The sisters chatted for a while longer, mostly about Old Madam Yu e s health. Only then did Yu Jianjia return.

As soon as she left, Yu Youyao's expression turned serious. She called Xia Tao over. "Go and investigate carefully about Bai Ye e s grandmother, especially about now she served in the residence back then."

Xia Tao quickly agreed.

Previously, when Bai Ye mentioned the older maidservant, she had sent someone to investigate her carefully. Other than being a little suspicious of Yu Jianjia, she was also worried that Bai Ye would do something wrong.

She thought that since she was someone who served her personally, there was no harm in being cautious.

She hadn't found anything previously, so there probably wouldn't be any results this time. Since Yu Jianjia dared to openly discuss this matter with her, she wouldn't let her find anything suspicious.

No matter the results of the investigation, she would have a way to deal with it in the future if she knew more about Bai Ye's grandmother.

This investigation lasted for two days.

Xia Tao returned to the residence travel-worn and returned to her room to change her clothes. Then, she came over to report to Yu Youyao, "I looked for Nanny Liu and asked about Bai Ye's grandmother. Nanny Liu said that Bai Ye's grandmother's surname is Lai. She's rather smart and agile, so she did the cleaning in An Shou Hall. There's nothing suspicious with her.."

Chapter 677 - 677: Nowhere to Hide

"It sounds like Old Madam Lai is a capable person." Yu Youyao frowned, feeling that something was amiss. "Didn't you ask Nanny Liu why Old Madam Lai left the residence?"

Generally speaking, the servants who had their contracts terminated must have either made mistakes or not do their job well. It seemed a little unreasonable to let a capable old woman out of the residence for no reason.

Xia Tao nodded. "I asked. I heard that Old Madam Lai's sister-in-law passed away early. Her eldest Brother raised his son alone. Just as his son was about to get married and have children, Old Madam Lai's brother fell seriously ill. Old Madam Lai was worried about her nephew, so she took the initiative to break the contract and leave the residence. Less than two years after Old

Madam Lai's brother passed away, her nephew got married and had Bai Ye. However, her nephew and niece-in-law also had poor luck. One passed away after giving birth, while the other hit a rock in the mountains and lost his life on the spot."

Listening carefully, there was nothing wrong. Instead, everything made sense.

However, it was precisely because there was nothing wrong that it was strange. Yu Youyao frowned.

Xia Tao observed her expression and continued, "I've asked around about the people in the residence who knew Old Madam Lai. I've asked about her in the residence, and they all said that Old Madam Lai is smart and efficient. There's no other news about her."

The word "smart" bothered Yu Youyao a little. The smarter a person was, the more cautious they were. She thought that even if she did anything, no one would notice.

After so many years, it would probably be very difficult to find anything now.

Xia Tao continued, "I was worried, so I secretly went to the hot spring manor to find out more about Old Madam Lai..."

She told Eldest Miss what she had heard.

Yu Youyao listened for a while. They were all trivial matters, but they could roughly match the information she had obtained from the residence. She had really worked for two days in vain.

Even though Yu Youyao had expected this, she couldn't help but feel a little disappointed. "It's been two days. You must be tired. I'll give you a day off today to go back and rest."

Xia Tao quickly said, "Young Miss thinks highly of me, so you handed this matter to me. I'm honored, but I couldn't find any useful information. I made you wait for two days in vain..."

Eldest Miss must have sensed something amiss when she asked her to investigate Bai Ye's grandmother.

However, she did not find any useful information. She was useless.

Yu Youyao was used to this girl's glibness. "It's expected. No matter what schemes she has, she'll show her face sooner or later. Just wait and see!"

Only then did Xia Tao heave a sigh of relief. Young Miss had entered the palace and met the Empress Dowager. She had seen the world. How could Third Miss be a match for her?

She was living such a good life, but it was all for nothing.

This was such a struggle. Her body, which had finally recovered with great difficulty, would be damaged in a few days. They were all sisters in the family. There was a saying that if the lips die, the teeth would feel cold. If Young Miss doesn't do well, what good could Third Miss get? She did not know what she wanted.

The next day, Old Madam Lai entered the residence with the steward of the hot spring manor.

Old Madam Lai used to serve Old Madam. The first thing she did when she entered the residence was to visit her.

Yu Jianjia led Old Madam Lai into An Shou Hall.

Nanny Liu chatted with Old Madam Lai for a while before entering the inner room. "Matriarch, Old Madam Lai is here."

Yu Youyao quickly helped her grandmother put on her clothes.

Old Madam Yu was not in good spirits. "She's just a servant who worked in the residence. Is she worth spending so much effort on? Instead of staying in the courtyard to recuperate, she's been jumping up and down all day. I wonder what she's doing. In the past, when she was sick, she was

still a little obedient and could be thought highly of. Now that she's recovered, she's learning from her mother. Indeed, like mother, like daughter."

"Third Sister has always been kind-hearted. She can't bear to see Old Madam Lai and Bai Ye live apart." Yu Youyao agreed deeply. Even she felt that Yu

Jianjia had spent a lot of effort on Bai Ye. How could Grandmother not notice?

However, Yu Jianjia was used to pretending to be polite, so no one could find fault with her. As an elder, her grandmother could not embarrass her granddaughter over such a small matter, so it was not appropriate for her to refuse.

Old Madam Yu waved her hand. "Forget it. Madam Yang has been sick for nearly three years. In the past, her body was weak, so it wasn't good for her to treat her illness in front of her. Now that her body has recovered a lot, she's still her biological mother after all. She should go over every now and then to serve her. However, she didn't see her mother and only planted a courtyard of flowers and plants in Tranquil Heart Residence. She said that it was good for Madam Yang's health to have more flowers and plants. These words are just to fool outsiders who don't know better. What's the flowers and plants going to do to treat her? It's just for show."

There was one thing that she was slightly better at than Madam Yang. Her mother could only force out a few tears and pretended to be pitiful. Meanwhile, she was willing to spend time and effort to pretend to be powerful.

Yu Youyao couldn't say anything, so she helped her grandmother to the dressing table. Nanny Liu quickly helped Matriarch comb her hair.

Recently, Matriarch has been nagging a lot. As soon as she was energetic, she would talk to her granddaughter. She would also nag endlessly about things that she did not care about in the past.

She had to take the opportunity to guide and teach her granddaughter. It was as if she would not have a chance in the future if she did not do so now. She was worried that her granddaughter would not understand some things and suffer in the future.

Old Madam Yu held her granddaughter's hand and reminded her, "You have to carefully peel off the mask of some people to take a closer look. You can't have the intention to harm others, but you have to be wary of others. You have to be more careful in the future."

In the past, she had not been able to see through Yu Jianjia's cold personality. It wasn't that Yu Jianjia hid it too well, but that Yang Shuwan and her daughter had gained power in the residence and covered it up layer by layer.

Since Yu Jianjia was willing to work hard on the surface, she was able to fool everybody.

However, appearances were always superficial.

Once one looked deeper, it was easy to see through it.

Yu Youyao's heart ached, and she almost cried on the spot. "Grandmother, don't worry."

Her grandmother had schemed and planned for the Yu Residence all her life, but had never done it for herself. However, the meaning between the lines was reminding her and warning her to distance herself from the Yu Residence,

Old Madam Yu was worried that she did not understand, so she said, “Your third sister is arrogant. She looks gentle, kind, and polite, but her bones are colder than anyone else’s. Stay away from her in the future.”

This was also something she had only realized after she suddenly had the illness.

She and Madam Yang were both sick, but comparing Yao Yao’s filial piety to her and Yu Jianjia’s attitude towards Madam Yang, how could she not have understood the truth?

Once people are put together for comparison, there is nowhere to hide.

Yu Youyao nodded. Her grandmother had seen through Yu Jianjia.

There was a saying that the most brilliant deception in the world was to deceive even oneself.

Yu Jianjia always appeared weak and kind. Her every move, word, and action was generous and polite. No one could find anything wrong with her..

Chapter 678 - 678: Embarrassed

Yu Jianjia had really put herself in the shoes of her role as a gentle and polite person. Her behavior was based on a script. She placed herself in an innocent and weak position so that no matter what happened, others would always be in the wrong.

She was narrow-minded and selfish, but she did not have any self awareness.

After washing up, Yu Youyao helped her grandmother to the living room. Yu Jianjia quickly stood up and went forward to help Old Madam Yu.

“Grandmother, have a seat.”

The sisters helped Old Madam Yu sit on the couch. Yu Youyao adjusted the soft cushion on her grandmother’s back, and Yu Jianjia had already poured a cup of warm tea and handed it over.

Old Madam Yu took the teacup and lowered her head to take a sip.

Only then did Yu Jianjia say, “Old Madam Lai entered the residence with the people from the manor, so I specially brought her over to visit Grandmother.” She bit her lip lightly, feeling guilty and uneasy. “It’s also because I’m insensible. I’ve troubled Grandmother with such a small matter.”

Old Madam Yu looked at her steadily. “Your words are always louder than your actions. You know that it’s inappropriate to do this, but you still want to do it. After that, when you open your mouth and talk, you’ll show how polite you are. If you’re really polite, you shouldn’t have done anything inappropriate. After doing something inappropriate, you still want to sugarcoat with your words. You have to know that you can’t rely on your mouth alone. You have to match your words and actions. You’re inferior to your big sister in this.”

Yu Jianjia’s face turned pale. She really did not expect the Matriarch to embarrass her on the spot.

Her eyelashes trembled slightly. She bit her lip and lowered her head gently. “I’ll follow Grandmother’s instructions.”

Old Madam Yu waved her hand. “From tomorrow onwards, you don’t have to come to my house to show your filial piety. Make a few more trips to the

Tranquil Heart Residence. Your mother doesn't have much time left."

With that, she ignored her.

Yu Jianjia's weak body couldn't help but tremble slightly after being taught a lesson. A surge of resentment rose in her heart.

In the past, she was not allowed to go to Tranquil Heart Residence, but now, she was despised for going too little.

At this moment, Qing Xiu led Old Madam Lai and Bai Ye into the house.

Old Madam Lai was dressed in gray clothes with patches on them, but they were still considered neat. When she saw Matriarch, she quickly knelt on the ground. "Greetings, Matriarch and Eldest Miss."

Bai Ye quickly knelt down with her.

Old Madam Yu said calmly, "Rise!"

Old Madam Lai quickly thanked Matriarch Lai for her kindness before getting up.

However, Yu Youyao noticed that Old Madam Lai's eyebrows were lowered and she did not raise them at all. She was so respectful that she did not look like she was a good citizen who had left the residence. Instead, she looked like a servant who had served the residence for most of her life.

The etiquette was unexpected.

Bai Ye also stood up with her grandmother and consciously looked at Young Miss. Seeing that Young Miss' eyes were red and she looked like she was about to cry, but she was forcing a smile, she guessed that her grandmother had caused trouble for Young Miss after entering the residence. Perhaps Young

Miss had been taught a lesson by the Matriarch and quickly stood behind her.

She was grateful to her young miss again.

Old Madam Yu asked Old Madam Lai about some family matters and sent her away with the excuse that she was tired.

Madam Yu turned to look at her granddaughter. "Did you notice anything?"

Yu Youyao shook her head. "Old Madam Lai is very cautious. Her words and actions are appropriate and there are no flaws." At this point, she hesitated for a moment before saying, "There's generally no problem, but I feel that those who are being too cautious would definitely be problematic."

She had a vague feeling that Old Madam Lai's entry into the residence was very likely related to her grandmother. Otherwise, she wouldn't have looked like she was facing "a great enemy".

If she was not wrong, Old Madam Lai's request to leave the residence back then was not as simple as it seemed.

However, her grandmother was also very puzzled about Old Madam Lai entering the residence. This was a little strange.

Old Madam Yu frowned. "Since she has the intention to cause trouble, I'm afraid she won't be able to live in peace if she doesn't succeed. Let her be." As she spoke, she sneered. "No matter what trouble she brings, it's useless with me here."

After leaving the north courtyard, Yu Jianjia stood on the white stone bridge and looked at the towering tree in the Jade Courtyard. Her pink and white lips curled up slightly, revealing a faint smile.

Bai Ye and Old Madam Lai followed behind her obediently.

After returning to the courtyard, Yu Jianjia smiled and said to Bai Ye, "Let Ai Ye work harder these few days. You can also accompany your grandmother properly."

Bai Ye knelt on the ground with a thud. "I'm willing to do anything to repay

Young Miss' kindness."

Yu Jianjia quickly helped Bai Ye up. "Serve me well in the future. Don't say such silly things again."

Bai Ye brought Old Madam Lai back to her room to settle down.

She shared a room with Ai Ye. As her grandmother wanted to enter the residence, she had a discussion with Ai Ye and asked her to squeeze into the room with the second-in-charge maidservants in the courtyard.

Ai Ye agreed obediently.

As soon as the door closed, Old Madam Lai's expression relaxed. She quickly held her granddaughter's hand and asked her softly if she was doing well in the residence.

Bai Ye said truthfully, "...Third Miss is gentle and kind, and has never criticized the servants. She's also very understanding of the people around her. It's also my blessing from three lifetimes that I can serve Third Miss..." She rambled on and said a lot of grateful words.

Old Madam Lai finally felt a little relieved and asked about the residence.

Bai Ye did not hide anything and said, "... Matriarch dotes on Eldest Miss. She treats Third Miss very coldly and doesn't let her serve her. Even so, Third Miss still keeps saying that the Matriarch is good and Eldest Miss is kind."

"But I have eyes. The things in the Matriarch's house are moving into Eldest Miss's house day by day, but I don't see the Matriarch giving Third Miss anything. They're both her granddaughters, but she favors one over the other."

"Poor Third Miss. Her biological mother is sick, her younger brother is young, and the Master is busy with the government office. As the Second Miss of the residence, she still has to live according to others' wishes. Even Fourth Miss, the daughter of a concubine, dares to climb over Third Miss' head and abuse her power."

On the day Eldest Miss was conferred the title of County Head of Shaoyi, she had followed behind Third Miss from afar and watched helplessly as Fourth Miss stomped her feet angrily at Third Miss.

At this point, Third Miss still had to endure it.



Old Madam Lai's eyes flashed when she heard this.

When she greeted Old Madam Yu, she hurriedly glanced at Eldest Miss, who was sitting beside her. She was wearing a beautiful silver dress with a pomegranate flower design. It was made with the best exquisite cloud silk.

The surface of the fabric was woven with silver thread that was as thin as a needle. The green leaves of the pomegranate flower were woven with peacock feathers. Thin copper threads were woven into patterns that were like fire and pomegranate flowers. Even the branches on it were woven with gold. At a glance, they looked beautiful, making one unable to take their eyes off them.

Such clothes were what Eldest Miss Yu usually wore.

She could imagine just how luxurious her life in the residence was.

The bereaved eldest daughter of a widow was still superior to Third Miss Yu..

#### Chapter 679 - 679: Taking Advantage

At this point, Bai Ye's eyes couldn't help but turn red. "Eldest Niiss looks gentle and magnanimous, but she has a sharp personality. She suppresses Third Miss in every way. She was conferred the title of County Head of Shaoyi herself and even instigated the Master to ask for a title for her deceased mother. First Madam is sick, not dead. Even if Madam Xie was the first wife, she shouldn't surpass the wife who is still alive. To ask for a title for the dead first wife...

She knew that on the day that Master Yu had requested for a title for Madam Xie, Eldest Miss had specially gone to the main study to look for him. Later, Master Yu went to Matriarch's house.

It must be Eldest Miss who wanted Master Yu to ask for a title for her biological mother. Master Yu couldn't make up his mind, so he went to look for the Matriarch. However, Matriarch would have said the same thing as Eldest Miss. She must be biased towards Eldest Madam.

Old Madam Lai had worked in the Yu Residence in the past and had seen the infighting of wealthy families, but she firmly believed these words.

It's not as if they were born from the same womb, how could they have the same mind?

As she spoke, Bai Ye couldn't help but feel sorrow from the bottom of her heart. "Third Miss has been giving in to them in every way and even went to hide in the manor. What else is Eldest Miss dissatisfied with? If it weren't for the fact that Third Miss is of age and it's not good for her to continue living in the manor, Third Miss wouldn't have been forced to return to the residence.

Ever since Third Miss returned to the residence, she's been a little depressed. First Madam is still alive, but... If First Madam... how can Third Miss survive in this residence? Third Miss is such a good person. How can Eldest Miss be a b\*tch...

Old Madam Lai thought that the Third Miss of the residence had done them a favor and was indeed a kind person. She was old, and her granddaughter had no other relatives. In the future, she could only rely on Third Miss to give her a meal. Only when Third Miss lives well could her granddaughter do the same.

At the thought of this, she asked about Madam Yang.

Bai Ye did not hide anything and chatted about First Madam's situation. ' First Madam has been much more awake recently. The doctor requested for her to eat more ginseng. I'm afraid...' "

Old Madam Lai's eyes flashed when she heard this. She patted her granddaughter's hand. "Let Third Miss know this another day. Back then, when I broke the contract with the residence, our family wasn't doing well either. It was only because I was taken care of by Madam Yang that I had a way out. It's rare for me to enter the residence, so I want to kowtow to Madam

Yang."

This request was reasonable.

Old Madam Lai stayed obediently in the courtyard. Yu Jianjia also took Matriarch's words to heart and visited Madam Yang every day.

The residence was also peaceful.

On this day, Yu Youyao received a reply from her cousin. In the letter, he only mentioned that he would return to the residence at the end of the month.

Yu Youyao was also used to it. Her cousin would not mention anything more sensitive in his letters. The information she wanted to know was all from Yin Qi, who had sent the letter.

The courier station was not safe. It was common for letters to be checked. Even if this letter did not go through the courier station, the letter itself was a weakness.

Once there were any changes in the Imperial Court, the first thing to be investigated would be the letters.

No matter how tightly they try to hide it, there will still be times when they miss out on something.

One can never be too careful.

Yin Qi had always told Yu Youyao everything he knew. "The North and the Northern Barbarians have already successfully reached a trade negotiation. At the price of 300 taels of silver per warhorse and 1,800 copper coins per bag of rice, both sides will trade horses for food. The first trade was completed at the end of July. The Northern Barbarians traded 100 warhorses and 100 sheeps."

The first transaction could be considered a test of sincerity by both sides. The number of transactions was not high. Only when the first transaction was completed could the two sides establish a preliminary trust, which would lead to a second and third time...

"300 taels!" Yu Youyao instantly calculated in her heart, and her eyes lit up.

The most ordinary old horse in the Great Zhou Dynasty cost more than 30 taels of silver, and the better ones cost 60 to 70 taels of silver. A good warhorse cost more than 300 taels of silver.

Yu Youyao had come into contact with horse merchants and horse traders. A warhorse from the Northern Barbarians could be sold for seven to eight hundred taels of silver or even a thousand taels of silver in the hands of the Great Zhou Dynasty's horse traders.

The ridiculous price was because on top of the warhorses of the Northern Barbarians being rare and valuable, the trade between the horse vendors and the Northern Barbarians was also a huge risk.

The price definitely couldn't be calculated like this when dealing with the Northern Barbarians.

Even so, Yu Youyao still slapped the plate and sent a letter to her cousin. As long as the price of a warhorse did not exceed 500 taels, this deal would be worth it.

She did not expect her cousin to be so capable as to trade a warhorse of the Northern Barbarians for the price of a warhorse of the Great Zhou Dynasty.

How could the warhorses of the Great Zhou Dynasty be compared to the warhorses of the Northern Barbarians?

Absolutely not!

The current price of a liter of rice in the Great Zhou Dynasty was 180 copper coins, and the price of a bag of rice was 1,800 copper coins. Her cousin did not take advantage of the situation. He was already very "sincere" to trade with the Northern Barbarians at the market price.

They bought and sold at the market price. When comparing them, neither side seemed to have suffered a loss.

That was not the way to settle the score.

How could the market price of a bowl of grain be compared to the market price of a warhorse?

The two were not on the same level at all.

Her cousin took a huge advantage.

However, food was also urgently needed in the Northern Barbarians. In short, both sides had achieved their goal at a "market price". The first transaction could be considered satisfactory.

Her cousin was simply too impressive. He could lower the price of a warhorse to such a good deal.

Yu Youyao had an idea. "How many deals have both sides agreed on?"

Yin Qi said, "There would be a total of three times. The second trade will take place in early August. The Northern Barbarians will trade 100 warhorses, 100 cows, and 300 sheep. The third trade will take place in the middle of the month. The Northern Barbarians will trade another 500 warhorses, 100 cows, and 1,000 sheep."

Harmon had originally only wanted to trade 500 warhorses at most, and a large number of cows and sheep.

The people of the Northern Barbarians did not even have enough food, so how could they afford to feed a large number of cows and sheep?

While the cows and sheep were still alive, he could quickly exchange meat for grains.

700 warhorses was already the largest number that Harmon could trade after a long tug of war between the two sides. He couldn't take out any more and wasn't willing to.

After all, 500 warhorses could already form an elite cavalry.

If there were any more, it would be a terrifying threat to the Northern Barbarians.

Yu Youyao felt relieved and asked, "How's Cousin's health? What about the drought in the North?"

Yin Qi's heart skipped a beat, but he was still the most outstanding secret guard by Young Master's side after all. He panicked, but his expression was calm. "Young Master is fine." The injury on his arm had almost recovered, and he was really fine. "The drought in the North is very serious. The Yue Fei Residence is taking the lead and encouraging the commoners to plant sweet potatoes. More than half of the commoners have vines planted in their houses. The people who planted them earlier can already harvest the sweet potato leaves to fill their stomachs. The situation is still manageable."

In June, the sweet potatoes planted in the ground grew vines again. The stewards of the manor then arranged for the commoners to plant another batch..

## Chapter 680 - 680: Long-term Plans

Until now, there were still commoners planting sweet potatoes. They did not expect to harvest anything but only hoped to water and grow them a little. Hopefully, they could even survive on the leaves when it comes to it.

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief. She hoped that the sweet potatoes could be planted on every inch of the Great Zhou Dynasty.

Yu Zongzheng had used Ye Hanyuan's power to settle the disaster relief in Zhejiang. He had also helped the River Censor and Ye Hanyuan investigate the corruption case.

After the Imperial Court obtained the dirty money, the Emperor should be very satisfied with Yu Zongzheng's performance.

If she's right, after Yu Zongzheng returns to the capital to make his report, it wouldn't be long before he had to lead more work on drought relief. There was nothing to worry about. Since he had done it once, he would definitely be more proficient the second time.

Of course, the premise was that Yu Zongzheng could return to the capital as soon as possible.

Yu Zongzheng's trip had clashed with the interests of the Xia Party, so they would not let it go easily. They were enduring it now because Yu Zongzheng had made a contribution, so it was not appropriate to target him.

If Yu Zongzheng did not return to the capital to report as soon as possible, impeachment would be inevitable.

Although Xia Yansheng had fallen, a starving camel was still bigger than a horse.

The longer this dragged on, the more disadvantageous it would be for Yu Zongzheng.

She hoped that Yu Zongzheng could go and help with the drought. That person has a strong desire for power, so he would strive to perform well. Even if he did not have the principles of governance and could not be an excellent minister like Second Uncle, he was not careless with his work.

Yu Youyao picked up her brush and wrote to her cousin. She chatted a lot. In the end, she mentioned at the end of the letter that her grandmother was sick. It was only one sentence and she did not dwell on it.

After writing the letter, Yu Youyao instructed Yin Qi, "If Cousin asks, tell him that everything is fine in the residence and ask him to settle the matters in Youzhou as soon as possible."

Yu Youyao prepared some incense, medicinal cuisine, snacks, and so on for Yin Qi to bring along.

Yu Youyao left the room.

At this moment, Qing Xiu came over. "Matriarch is awake and wants to see Young Miss."

During this period of time, her grandmother would be unconscious for longer and longer durations.

Every time she was falling asleep, she had to talk to her. Every word and sentence was a reminder and a lesson. She seemed to be worried that if she did not say more, her granddaughter would suffer in the future.

Yu Youyao's heart ached, and she quickly went to her grandmother's house.

Nanny Liu wanted to feed Matriarch Yu some medicine.

Yu Youyao quickly said, "I'm here to serve Grandmother."

Nanny Liu's eyes were red as she handed the medicine bowl to Eldest Miss. She turned her face away and hurriedly wiped her tears.

Old Madam Yu had just woken up and had no energy. "Has Linghuai's reply arrived? The North is only a thousand miles away from the capital. It can be delivered within three to five days."

Yu Youyao took a sip of the medicine. The temperature was just right, but she felt bitter.

As she fed her grandmother a spoonful of medicine, she said, "I just received a reply from Cousin. In his letter, he said that he would be back at the end of this month at the latest. Grandmother was sleeping at the time so I didn't mention this."

Old Madam Yu coughed hard and vomited all the medicine she had just taken. She collapsed on the pillow, her eyes rolled back and she couldn't even breathe.

"Grandmother..." Yu Youyao panicked. She quickly handed the medicine to Nanny Liu and quickly grabbed her grandmother's hand, pressing the acupuncture points on her hand hard.

Nanny Liu placed the medicine on the small table by the bed and helped Matriarch smoothen her chest.

After being flustered for a while, Old Madam Yu finally stopped panting, but her face was terrifyingly pale.

Old Madam Yu stared at her granddaughter and said forcefully, "W-Write to Linghuai again and tell him that I'm seriously ill. Tell him to come back as soon as possible..."

Ever since Old Madam Lai entered the residence, her right eyelid had been twitching non-stop. Even though Old Madam Yu had been through many storms and did not take Yu Jianjia's insignificant old main seriously, she still had a bad feeling.

"Grandmother, don't talk. Finish the medicine first." Yu Youyao held back her tears and picked up the medicine again, carefully feeding it to her grandmother.

This time, Old Madam Yu finally did not spit out the medicine.

Yu Youyao finally heaved a sigh of relief. No matter what, it was good so long as she could swallow the medicine.

Finally, Yu Youyao finished feeding this bowl of medicine. Yu Youyao's heart relaxed, and her body went limp. Even her head felt a little dizzy.

Old Madam Yu felt suffocated. "Get Linghuai to come back..."

"Grandmother, don't worry. I mentioned in my letter just now that I wanted Cousin to come back as soon as possible. When he sees the letter, he'll definitely come back early." Yu Youyao felt terrible seeing her grandmother's weak appearance.

Recently, her grandmother had been subtly telling her to distance herself from the Yu Residence.

However, she kept asking her cousin to come back.

Parents will make long-term plans for their children out of love.

How could she not know what her grandmother was thinking?

Old Madam Yu was a little relieved, so she mentioned Yu Zongzheng again.

"Where's your father? Did he send a letter to the family? It's already August.

No matter what job he's on, he should be back by now."

Yu Youyao shook her head. "Father hasn't sent a letter home in over a month. I don't know when he'll be back."

Old Madam Yu's breathing became heavier. "Send another letter to your father later. Tell him that I'm critically ill and ask him to come back immediately."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Don't worry, Grandmother."

From July until now, she had already sent three letters to Yu Zongzheng. In the letters, she had also said that her grandmother was seriously ill and asked him to return to the residence early.

Old Madam Yu did not want to mention him anymore. She turned around and asked about Old Madam Lai, "There's no movement from her at all?"

Yu Youyao shook her head. "She's been staying obediently and doesn't look like she's going to cause trouble. Perhaps Grandmother is thinking too much." She knew in her heart that even if she lied to her grandmother, she might not believe her. She advised, "Grandmother, recuperate well. No matter what schemes Old Madam Lai has, she can't surpass Grandmother."

Old Madam Yu shook her head. "I'm afraid..." The words were about to come out of her mouth, but she was afraid that her granddaughter would worry, so she swallowed them. "I'm worried that you'll suffer."

Her body was hers. How could she not know if she would be able to recuperate or not?

Yu Youyao smiled. "I'm not someone who will suffer a loss. Grandmother, don't worry."

Old Madam Yu wanted to reach out her finger and poke her forehead, but she did not have the strength. "Your third sister is all talk and no action. As for you, you're all action and no talk. As if

you won't suffer at the hands of others. You were bullied by Madam Yang at a young age of three and you've even learned to endure it.'

At this point, her eyes turned red and filled with tears. "How could I not know that you've been bullied since you were young? It's not that I didn't want to stand up for you, but I was worried that if I do, Madam Yang's supporters will become worse. So I indulged Madam He and pampered her..."

Which old lady didn't hope for peace at home? She was the one who had spoiled Eldest Son and favored Concubine He. She had also spoiled Concubine He, causing trouble for Madam Yang day by day which led to infighting. In the end, she did not have the time to care about Yao Yao.

It was also because Concubine He had provoked Yao Yao that she had dealt with her.

After that, she helped Concubine Qiu up who continued to cause trouble for Madam Yang..