

All Hail 771

Chapter 771 - 771: Arrogant and Domineering

Before the people from the Jiazhou Residence could reach the Xie Residence, they received the news.

It was obvious that he had come with great fanfare.

“Go and look for Grandfather first. Tell him to wait in the residence in peace. Before the Jiazhou Residence comes, don’t make a move. When they reach, don’t let them into the residence. I’ll go over later.”

As soon as Chun Xiao left, Yu Youyao immediately returned to her room and changed her makeup. Only then did she bring Yin Shi and a few maidservants to the front.

There was a commotion outside the Xie Residence. The Jiazhou Residence had already arrived and started a commotion with the Xie Residence.

The Jiazhou Residence wanted to humbly apologise, making it hard for the Xie Residence to respond.

The situation was clearly disadvantageous to the Xie family.

When Old Madam Xie saw her coming over, she quickly lowered her voice and said, “Go back quickly. The Jiazhou Residence doesn’t have good intentions. Once you come out, won’t you be adding fuel to the fire? You don’t have to step in for this matter. Your grandfather knows how to deal with it. He definitely won’t let you suffer.”

However, Yu Youyao said, “Although Jia Changfeng brought what happened today on himself, if I break his limbs and poison him until he’s mute, it will make those who don’t know the truth think that I’m so cruel as a woman.’

“Besides, the Jiazhou Residence has made a big fuss along the way and everyone knows about it. They were announcing that I’m bullying others with my strength and being arrogant. If the Xie Residence protects me and ignores him privately, it’ll be justifiable for them to attack the Xie Residence.”

Jia Changfeng was indeed detestable.

However, how much better was Yu Youyao than Jia Changfeng?

In comparison, Jia Changfeng had his legs broken and was poisoned until he was mute. Meanwhile, she was still perfectly fine. Jia Changfeng failed to tease her. However, he who had been crippled, became the victim, and Yu Youyao had become the perpetrator.

What would others think?

Old Madam Xie was suddenly shocked. “The Jiazhou Residence reacted so quickly and brought Jia Changfeng to the Xie Residence, They wanted to push you and the Xie Residence to the forefront.”

Yu Youyao nodded.

Once Jia Changfeng succeeded, what she had reported to the Imperial Court would be considered deceiving the Emperor.

Old Madam Xie's face turned pale. She held Yu Youyao's hand. "In that case, you shouldn't have come out even more. Listen to Grandmother and go back and stay first. Jia Changfeng has done many evil things. If the Jiazhou Residence doesn't give the Xie Residence a way out, don't blame us for being merciless and digging out everything one by one."

Once the matter was exposed, the Jiazhou Residence would be in trouble.

Jia Changfeng was repaid with evil.

Yu Youyao was enforcing justice on behalf of the heavens.

Yu Youyao comforted her. "Don't alert the enemy yet. If we force the Jiazhou Residence too much, it'll be disadvantageous to us. I'll handle this matter."

The most important thing now was not how to deal with them.

Instead, it was how to secretly evacuate Quanzhou under the nose of the Jiazhou Residence.

Old Madam Xie was a little worried, so Yu Youyao advised, "I'll give it a try first. If I can't send them away, it's not too late to follow your method."

In fact, such a matter could not be completely handled by the Xie Residence. Commoners are not able to fight officials. The scholars, farmers, merchants were the lowest ranks. The Xie Residence had been weak from the beginning, so things would instead go according to the Jiazhou Residence's plan.

Only if she stepped in herself would there be a chance.

Only then did Old Madam Xie feel a little relieved.

Yu Youyao stepped out of the threshold and stood under the plaque of the Xie Residence. She stood quietly at the bottom of the steps of the Jiazhou Residence with an overbearing and arrogant posture.

The Jiazhou Prefecture's governor was in his forties. He had raised a body of wealth, making him look big and round. He was wearing a dark purple official uniform and had a big belly. He was fat but not obese. He had a kind appearance and a pair of swollen eyes. When he narrowed them slightly, they became a crack. There was a glint in his eyes, making him look a little sinister.

He had a few servants behind him carrying a stretcher.

The person leaning against the stretcher was Jia Changfeng. At this moment, his face was pale and he looked pitiful. He was no longer as arrogant and domineering as before on the streets.

Many people gathered in front of the Xie Residence and pointed and discussed.

The noisy scene gradually quietened down when Yu Youyao appeared at the door all dressed up.

The County Head of Shaoyi was wearing a large pearl-green crown with gold and jade inlaid on it. Her head was covered in pearl-green jade, and she was wearing a large red sleeved dress. She looked graceful and noble. She had a purple embroidered phoenix robe with golden patterns on top of her dress. At her waist, there was a large red satin with phoenix embroidery that symbolized a noble family member. She exuded a noble and dignified aura.

This made all the commoners, who had never seen such a scene far away from the capital, speechless. The person in front of them was a true noble lady of the imperial family, so they could not comment.

For a moment, they all shut up.

They did not dare to say anything else.

The Jiazhou Residence head's eyes flickered. He did not expect Yu Youyao to step in. He quickly said, "Greetings, County Head of Shaoyi. My son offended you in the restaurant. When I found out, I was uneasy, so I specially brought my son personally to apologize to you. I hope you can forgive me. On account that my son has already been punished, please forgive me this time."

Yu Youyao said calmly, "Lord Jia, you're too polite. Lord Jia is an official of a prefecture. When I arrive in Quanzhou, I naturally have to do as the Romans do. I have to respect your hard work in managing the place and treat you with respect. Lord Jia, you're flattering me by coming here personally."

The Jiazhou Residence head hurriedly said, "Yes, it was my son's inappropriate words that made the County Head unhappy. The County Head of Shaoyi was personally conferred the title by the Emperor and has repeatedly been praised by the Empress Dowager and the Emperor. I admire the County Head's talent and reputation. Please forgive us for any disrespect."

He looked like she was pretending to be humble, as if he, an official of a prefecture, would be afraid of her false reputation as the County Head.

He also mentioned that the Emperor and the Empress Dowager treated her very highly. In the ears of others, they thought that just because the Emperor and the Empress Dowager valued her, she was pampered, domineering, and bullied others. Even the dignified officials were afraid of her.

In the meaning between the lines, they were painting her to be arrogant and domineering.

The Jiazhou Residence head was really something!

Yu Youyao did not say anything else and only said, "Lord Jia is magnanimous.

I have to express my gratitude for coming over personally to apologize. Since I've hurt his beloved son, I have to give him an explanation." At this point, she turned to look at Xia Tao and instructed, "Xia Tao, tell me everything that happened at that time, in case Lord Jia and all the commoners present think that I'm arrogant and domineering."

The most direct way to deal with such a person who had taken a detour and set a trap for others was to do it openly.

Xia Tao was proficient in ventriloquism and immediately explained everything that had happened after Young Miss left the Immortal Pavilion and met Jia Changfeng.

Including Jia Changfeng's obscene words.

Lin Ruoru pointed out the identity of the County Head of Shaoyi and warned Jia Changfeng.

Yu Youyao was polite and introduced her family, but Jia Changfeng still pretended to be crazy with alcohol..

Chapter 772 - 772: Etiquette Towards Higher Ranks

After saying this, it was obvious who was right and who was wrong. The Jiazhou Residence's expressions turned ugly.

At the entrance of the restaurant, a girl had been insulted with dirty words. Her reputation was damaged. Even if she was not really harmed, her reputation took a hit.

Even though she was as deviant as Lin Ruoru, after being openly teased by Jia Changfeng, she was too embarrassed to say it and endured it.

The County Head of Shaoyi was from a noble family, so her reputation should be valued more, right?

The Jiazhou Residence had a bad feeling.

After explaining what had happened, Xia Tao lowered her head and bowed. "Everything I said is true. At that time, there were many commoners at the entrance of the Immortal Pavilion. They can all testify."

Everyone present understood the situation and couldn't help but point at Jia Changfeng and whisper.

As expected of a wily old fox of the officialdom, the head of Jiazhou Residence quickly reacted. "County Head, you've misunderstood. My son has always had a grudge with Miss Lin. Every time they meet, he has to say something. This is something that everyone in Quanzhou is aware of. The Lin Residence also knows about this. They feel that it's just a show of tongue among the younger generation. In addition, Quanzhou is an open-minded place, so they ignored it. His words were not directed at the County Head, but it's also a fact that my son offended you. The County Head has also beaten and punished him. Please calm down your anger."

As soon as these words were spoken, Yu Youyao realized that Jia Changfeng had indeed not insulted her by name at the entrance of the Immortal Pavilion. Instead, he had targeted Lin Ruoru, allowing this sly old fox to take advantage of the situation.

The Lin family did not pursue the matter of Jia Changfeng often "teasing" Lin Ruoru. Just as the Jiazhou Residence had said, it was just a small matter, which made her seem like she was making a mountain out of a molehill.

This further confirmed her reputation as arrogant and domineering.

Yu Youyao chuckled. "Lord Jia, you're being too serious. Your young master has offended and provoked me time and time again, disregarding my status and disdaining my family background. That's why I was so embarrassed and angry that I broke your young master's leg. This leg can recover after recuperating for a few months. It's a small punishment."

The eyelids of the Jiazhou Residence twitched. The Great Zhou Dynasty valued the eldest child of the first wife, and there was a law. There was a difference between the first wife and the second

wife. Changfeng had teased the County Head on the streets and had his legs broken. No matter how angry he was, it was useless.

Therefore, the first thing he thought of was how to use Changfeng's "painful state" to make a big fuss. That was why he had brought Changfeng over to apologize.

He had clearly underestimated the County Head of Shaoyi.

"However, your young master doesn't know how to repent. He even insulted me on the spot. There's a difference between the first and second wives, and there's a law. I couldn't let him use such filthy words to tarnish my reputation anymore."

She held the title as County Head of Shaoyi.

Furthermore, she was from a noble family.

The concubine's son had no standing to provoke her.

Head of Jiazhou Residence opened his mouth, but Yu Youyao changed the topic. "Lord Jia is here sincerely to apologize and ask for my forgiveness. However, you didn't bring a gift or send a greeting card to visit. Why did you have to make such a big fuss and make it known to everyone? Do you think that I haven't embarrassed myself enough just now? Do you want to humiliate me more?"

The County Head of Shaoyi was a woman. It was already damaging to her reputation to let Jia Changfeng say such dirty words in public. If he really wanted to apologize, he should have been more low-key about it.

Jiazhou Residence groaned inwardly and hurriedly said, "County Head, please calm down. This...

Yu Youyao said angrily, 'Although I'm the daughter of an external minister, my name is also on the imperial family's jade plate. In terms of respect and etiquette, we can't be so impudent.'

As soon as the imperial family's jade plate was brought out, the Jiazhou

Residence knew that they had kicked an iron plate. "Th-this is my negligence. When I heard that my son had offended the County Head, I hurriedly brought him over to apologize. I was afraid that I would be a little late and offend the

County Head. It was my fault for acting improperly and being rude..."

Initially, he was pretending to apologize, but now, he was really doing it.

Yu Youyao sneered. "In my opinion, it's a lie that you rushed over to apologize.

I think that you want to frame me. You have the authority of an official. Compared to the Xie family who are the lowest-ranking merchants, how can we be worthy of Lord Jia's etiquette? If others see this, won't they say that the Xie family has messed up the rules?"

"If I hadn't appeared today and allowed you to do as you please, I'm afraid my reputation would have spread throughout Quanzhou and even the entire world.'

“The Jiazhou Residence has been an official family for decades. It’s impossible that they haven’t even thought of this.”

“Although I’m not talented, I’m still remembered as the goddaughter of the Duke of Ying. Under the name of the General of Huai En, I’m a legitimate noble daughter.”

The Great Zhou Dynasty had strict etiquette.

The eldest son of the Emperor’s first wife could inherit the throne. The other sons had to be demoted and conferred the title of Duke.

The eldest son of the first wife of a duke could inherit the position of Emperor. The other sons would be demoted to the rank of general. If they were the children of concubines, they would be demoted to a second-rank general of a supporting country.

Emperor Mingzong had a younger brother and was given the title of Prince.

The second son of King Rui’s first wife was conferred the title of Duke of Ying. This lineage was an upright direct descendant of the Yin family and the orthodox lineage of the royal family.

From Emperor Xianzong to Emperor Cheng (the first emperor), the Duke of Yings title had been passed down for two generations. In this dynasty, it was already the third generation. There was only one descendant left in the Duke of Yings Residence. He had been stripped of his title by the current Emperor and conferred the title of General of “Huai En”.

The General of Huai En had just reached the age of maturity and had yet to have a biological child. He accompanied the Emperor on an expedition and died in the North. He had no children and lost his family.

At this point, the Jiazhou Residence was already drenched in sweat. “This... we definitely did not have any intention of being disrespectful to the County Head. I came to apologize today with sincerity. It’s my fault for any inappropriate action and causing a misunderstanding. I’ll send over a greeting card to your residence another day and prepare a generous gift to apologize to the County Head.”

Yu Youyao glanced at the Jiazhou Residence and said calmly, “The law states that etiquette towards higher ranks can’t be crossed. Your young master’s dirty words were disrespectful. I’m the one who’s been humiliated, but the one who’s been disrespected is the dignity of the imperial family. There’s no need to apologize. In the future, the Jiazhou Residence has to teach your young master well.’

Cold sweat kept breaking out on Jiazhou Residence’s forehead. He did not have to take a small County Head seriously. Quanzhou was under his rule. After dealing with the Xie Residence, no matter how important her status was, she was still alone. No matter who she calls for, they would not respond. She would still be under his control.

However, the County Head of Shaoyi directly mentioned her connections to the imperial family.

Naturally, the name of the daughter of an external minister was to be conferred the title of nobility on a jade plate. The status of the person did not depend on their rank. Instead, it depended on who their name was put under.

The lineage of the General of Huai En was the legitimate lineage of the Yin family. This already indirectly showed that Yu Youyao was really valued by the current Emperor and the Empress Dowager.

If he dared to twist his words, it would be disrespectful to the imperial family..

Chapter 773 - 773: Court Rules

This involved the dignity of the imperial family. Jia Changfeng, the son of a concubine, was dealt with. Could this be considered as bullying? Was she considered as being arrogant?!

At this point, the Jiazhou Residence had already lost all their face. How could they stay any longer? They quickly bade Old Master Xie farewell and were about to leave.

At this moment, Lin Ruoru rushed over and stopped the Jiazhou Residence.

Yu Youyao's lips curled up slightly. She was not surprised by Lin Ruoru's arrival at all.

She planned to buy a batch of medicinal herbs from the Lin and Yan families to use for disaster relief. She was expressing goodwill to the Lin and Yan families. As long as they did not openly offend the Jiazhou Residence, the Lin and Yan families would definitely appreciate it.

It was even more logical to send Lin Ruoru over.

Lin Ruoru was one of the people involved, so it was impossible for her to stay completely out of it. Moreover, she had been teased by Jia Changfeng many times in the past. Thanks to Jia Changfeng, Lin Ruoru's reputation in Quanzhou was completely ruined.

The Jiazhou Residence was trying to show off their glib tongue, turning a big matter into a small one and a small matter into nothing.

In front of Lin Ruoru, this was also applicable. This way, the Lin family would not offend the Jiazhou Residence.

Most importantly, the Lin and Xie families were on good terms. The scholars, farmers, businessmen, and merchants were at the bottom. If merchants wanted to strive to develop under the government's rule and protect themselves, they could only team up and form a force that could resist the government.

What force would this be?

The economic development of the land governed by officials.

If local officials wanted to be evaluated and promoted, they needed political achievements. Where their political achievements came from naturally came from agriculture, business, and law enforcement.

The examination was held every three years. Officials who failed the examination would be demoted or even fired.

The court officials also needed to develop a good relationship with the local scholars, agriculture, industry, and business. They also needed the support of the local large families.

A single tree did not make a forest.

It takes two hands to clap.

The impact of the merchants teaming up was huge.

Other than official and business collusion, there was a balance between officials and business.

Balancing relations could only maintain peaceful coexistence on the surface.

In fact, checks and balances were the product of “interest.” If there were benefits, there would be competition. When one side was not satisfied and wanted more, they would try to break this balance. Once the balance was broken, the checks and balances that tied the interests of both sides would lose their binding power.

What the Jiazhou Residence was doing now was trying to break the balance and benefit from all the merchants in the Xie Residence and even Quanzhou.

The Xie Residence was the richest family in Quanzhou, so it was considered the first barrier to dealing with the government.

If the lips were gone, the teeth would be cold. If the Jiazhou Residence attacked the Xie Residence and made a move, the other merchants in Quanzhou would also feel threatened. If they could interfere and not cause too much damage to the Lin family, the Lin Residence would not stand by and do nothing.

Therefore!

From the beginning, she had instructed Chun Xiao not to bring the Jiazhou Residence into the residence. If they had anything to say, they would say it outside.

The matter of bringing up the imperial jade plate was just to intimidate the Jiazhou Residence.

Lin Ruoru was her last move.

The Jiazhou Residence also recognized Lin Ruoru and looked displeased. “What else do you want?”

Lin Ruoru stepped forward and bowed to the Jiazhou Residence. She was neither servile nor overbearing and said, “When I returned home from the Immortal Pavilion, I heard the servants gossip that the County Head of Shaoyi was too cruel, vicious, and arrogant. Not only did she break someone’s legs, but she also poisoned them until they were mute. Even Lord Jia was afraid of the County Head of Shaoyi and personally went to apologize. What kindness and virtue? It’s all fake.’

The head of Jiazhou Residence’s expression turned ugly. Before coming to the Xie Residence, he had arranged for many people to spread rumors and create public opinion around restaurants, streets, and brothels.

Quanzhou was under his rule, and the County Head of Shaoyi had a reputation for benevolence. How could she win against everyone’s opinions?

Lin Ruoru said angrily, “I was also furious. It was also the County Head of Shaoyi who had arranged to meet me at the Immortal Pavilion to discuss buying a batch of medicinal herbs from the Lin family to help the refugees in the north. She even paid a deposit. The County Head of Shaoyi is righteous, benevolent and virtuous, but she was offended and provoked by Jia Changfeng’s dirty

words. The County Head only dealt with a scoundrel who had no respect for the rules. How did the rumors become of her being arrogant and bullying others?”

As soon as these words were spoken, there was silence.

Everyone looked at Yu Youyao with respect.

Although Quanzhou was far from the capital, everyone had heard a little about the benevolence of the County Head of Shaoyi. However, everything was just hearsay.

But now, seeing was better than hearing.

The Great Zhou Dynasty’s times were not good, and prices were high. Although Quanzhou was not affected, the commoners were not having a good time either, so it was inevitable that they would feel a little sad.

The reputation of the County Head of Shaoyi being kind was really well-deserved.

Lin Ruoru continued, “Lord Jia is a court official. The country has the law of the country and the court has its rules. Although the County Head has a noble status, she’s still a woman. In front of Lord Jia, she can’t overstep the rules of the court.’

“You’re apologizing to the County Head with such great fanfare because you respect the County Head’s benevolence, so you treat her with courtesy.

However, those who don’t know the truth will feel that she’s a woman who doesn’t even take the orders of the Imperial Court seriously. Wouldn’t the

County Head be thought of as disrespectful and condemned by everyone?”

At this point, the Jiazhou Residence bowed deeply to Yu Youyao. “County Head, I’m humbled. It’s all my fault for not teaching my son well today and causing your reputation to be damaged. It’s also my fault for almost tarnishing your reputation. I’m here to apologize to you.”

Yu Youyao said calmly, “I accept Lord Jia’s sincerity. However, these are separate matters. Your young master’s treatment can’t be delayed because of me. Lord Jia, please arrange for a doctor to treat your young master as soon as possible to prevent him from falling ill in the future.”

The head of Jiazhou Residence’s face turned red as he hurriedly said, “County

Head is right.”

After this incident, the reputation of the County Head of Shaoyi’s benevolence spread throughout Quanzhou, so it was not good to attack the Xie family. Their original plan was completely ruined.

After sending away the troublesome Jiazhou Residence, the Xie family heaved a sigh of relief.

Yu Youyao thanked Lin Ruoru.

Lin Ruoru hurriedly said, “I’m also involved in today’s matter, so I naturally can’t stand by and do nothing. Also, it’s because you have good karma for helping the citizens.”

Yu Youyao smiled.

Lin Ruoru changed the topic and did not mention this anymore. “Speaking of which, I still have to thank the County Head for the ointment. As soon as I returned home, I followed the method you had

mentioned and massaged my mother. In less than fifteen minutes, my mother was covered in sweat and said that the pain had eased a lot.”

Yu Youyao nodded. “The ointment will promote blood circulation and reduce the swelling and pain. Since it’s very effective on your mother, I’ll prepare a few more medicinal cuisine recipes and some Tianze Incense Pills to relieve the symptoms..”

Chapter 774 - 774 – Danger of the Xie Residence

The Tianze Incense Pill was an incense recipe that Yu Youyao had researched and created on the basis of an ointment.

“If it’s used for a long time, can it cure the illness completely?”

The medicinal cuisine and incense pills were both for consumption. The County Head of Shaoyi did not take them out at first because she was cautious. When she found out that her mother had used ointment and the effect was very good, she confirmed the state of her health.

Yu Youyao did not finish her sentence. “Your mother is in her prime. Her muscles and bones are still strong. If she uses it for a long time, the possibility of complete treatment is very high.”

Her words made Lin Ruoru very excited so she moved on to the topic of disaster relief. “When the elders in the family found out that you were mainly buying medicine from the Lin and Yan families to relieve the disaster, they decided to reduce their supplies to the other merchants and fully support you. They also took the initiative to reduce the price by 15%. It can be considered as doing their best for the affected commoners in the north.”

Medicinal herbs were rare resources, and the price had always been high. The Lin family had already taken the initiative to reduce the price by 15%. Yu Youyao immediately expressed her gratitude.

Lin Ruoru continued, “If you have no objections, please go to the government office tomorrow to discuss and implement the cooperation and establish a contract. The Lin family will prepare as fast as possible. The medicinal herbs that the County Head needs can also be used by the affected people in the north as soon as possible.”

Yu Youyao nodded. “Okay, let’s set it at nine tomorrow.”

Lin Ruoru continued, “The Yan family also has someone in charge in Quanzhou, but it will take time to send the news to the Yan family. At that time, the Yan family will prepare the medicinal herbs that you need. If it’s convenient for you, send someone who can be in charge over to the Yan Residence. The medicinal herbs will be transported directly from Shuzhou to avoid back and forth. It will also be faster.”

Yu Youyao nodded. “No problem.”

Zhou Yonghe was the most suitable person to handle such a matter.

Lin Ruoru mentioned again that after the preparations for the collaboration disaster relief were completed, they could discuss the exchange of medicinal herbs in the Daoist area. It could be considered as expressing their willingness to cooperate.

After that, Lin Ruoru left with the medicinal cuisine recipe that Yu Youyao had prepared and the Tianze Incense Pill.

Yu Youyao returned to the Yi Water Garden, changed into her usual clothes, and went to the front hall.

The entire Xie family was talking in the hall, and the atmosphere was a little heavy.

Yu Youyao had to explain the reason for her personal appearance today. Although the Xie family could guess it, there were definitely some things that had to be explained clearly.

“Quanzhou is under the rule of the Jiazhou Residence. Their control over Quanzhou can’t be underestimated. Since he has the intention to roast me over the fire, other than coming to apologize humbly, he definitely has a backup plan. It’s not difficult to guess that he wants to create public opinion. Under such circumstances, we definitely can’t bring him into the residence and close the door to talk. Otherwise, the Xie Residence won’t be able to clear our name even if we jump into the Yellow River.”

“She used the identity of the County Head of Shaoyi to intimidate the Jiazhou Residence, but the rumors have already been spread. Many people know about this matter, and everyone will have their own thoughts. No matter how much she explains later, it will all become excuses.”

“This is also a good solution. If we expose the matter of me buying medicine from the Lin family in public, not only will the Jiazhou Residence not dare to continue spreading rumors, but they will even take the initiative to help me clarify the rumors.”

Jiazhou Residence was caught off guard by her wanting to help the Imperial Court relief the disaster, so they lowered their status and retreated.

Yu Youyao put down her teacup. “At most, the Jiazhou Residence’s actions against the Xie Residence have changed from being blatant to being secretive. They’re determined to get the Xie Residence. According to our original plan, how long will it take for the Xie Residence to evacuate completely?”

Xie Xun said, “It’ll take at least three to four months.”

Yu Youyao frowned. “That’s too slow. The actions of the Jiazhou Residence today are already part of King Liang’s plan. He doesn’t need to wait for the news of the Emperor’s critical illness to spread before attacking the Xie Residence. He only needs to bring hundreds or thousands of elite troops and disguise themselves as a caravan. They’ll cooperate with the Jiazhou Residence and enter the city in batches. Then, they can control the entire Quanzhou. At times, they’ll kill a few people and create public opinion. They’ll announce to the public that vicious bandits have entered the city. The government office of the state capital will cordon off Quanzhou, and we’ll be trapped.”

Yin Huaixi could even arrange for a hundred elite troops to enter Quanzhou.

Why couldn't King Liang?

Old Master Xie's expression changed drastically. It was already obvious that the Jiazhou Residence was colluding with King Liang. Yu Youyao's words were simply too possible.

The others did not look too good.

Yu Youyao asked, "How's the plan to evacuate Quanzhou arranged?"

Xie Liao said, "Some of the Xie family's assets have been transferred to the North, and another batch has been transferred to the Huai River area."

The eggs could not be placed in the same basket. No matter how good King Yue Fei's promise was, it was impossible for the Xie family to bet all their assets on him.

Yu Youyao understood the rationale, but the situation did not allow it. "Transfer all the businesses that were originally going to the Huai River area to the North. We can leave Quanzhou in two months at the latest."

Xie Tiao said, "According to you, King Liang can make a move at any time. The North is even further from Quanzhou than the Huai River. Why should we give up on the near and seek the far? Besides, the Huai River is a Min people's settlement. We'll have an advantage when we reach the Huai River. The Xie family has been doing business for generations. The North is more barren, and it's not good for business."

The Xie family had decided to go to the North to surrender to King Yue Fei.

However, the current situation was disadvantageous to the Xie Residence. The Xie Residence could temporarily head to Huai River to plan for their funeral.

Yu Youyao said, "I've made two arrangements. I'll send a letter to the Empress Dowager and report that the Jiazhou Residence has become vicious and harmed the commoners. I'll also send a letter to the Yu Clan. At that time, the Yu Clan will mobilize their connections in the court and vigorously impeach the Jiazhou Residence. We can temporarily delay the Jiazhou Residence."

"Tomorrow, I'll go to the government office and negotiate a contract with the Lin Residence. The matter of purchasing medicine for disaster relief will spread throughout Quanzhou. At the same time, I've also arranged for people to spread this matter to the entire Great Zhou as soon as possible. Disaster relief is a huge matter for the country. The Jiazhou Residence can't attack the Xie Residence at this juncture."

"It will take at least a month to collect the medicinal herbs and transport them to the North. During this period of time, the Xie family's situation is quite safe. We can use the carriages and boats to transport the medicinal herbs and transfer some of our most important manpower and assets to the North first."

"The medicinal herbs for the disaster relief have left the port of Quanzhou, and the commotion in the capital has also spread to Quanzhou. The Jiazhou Residence has to deal with the Imperial Court, so they won't be able to do anything for a while. They'll be delayed for at least half a month."

Xie Jingliu nodded. “Little Yao’er’s arrangements are the safest method for the Xie family. There’s a huge advantage in choosing the North. It’s a little far along the coast of Liaodong in the North, but it’s very convenient to travel by sea. When the merchant ship arrives in Liaodong, it’s in the North under King Yue Fei’s jurisdiction. It’s safe, convenient, and fast.”

“The area around Liaodong Province is also a place with few resources in the North. It’s very beneficial to the development of the Xie family. On the other hand, it’s not easy to move to the Huai River area. As long as the merchant ship doesn’t leave Fujian, it’ll be easier to be exposed under King Liang’s watch.”

Chapter 775 - 775: Watching from the Other Side

That was exactly Yu Youyao’s intention. “King Liang is going to raise an army and rebel. The world will be in turmoil. The first to be in chaos is the hinterland of the Central Plains with weak military but is rich. The Huai River area is where the Min people live. The news of the Xie Residence’s withdrawal from Quanzhou will be exposed sooner or later. King Liang will definitely be able to guess that the Xie Residence is going to the Huai River. As long as they set up checkpoints along the way, the Xie Residence will become meat on the chopping block.”

The maritime transport was in the hands of the Imperial Court, so it was very easy to make mistakes.

The Imperial Court’s control over maritime transport was extremely weak. The Xie family’s merchant ships had always been operating along the southeast coast. They were well-prepared and had wider connections. When King Liang realizes that the Xie family has fled, he can only watch helplessly.

Old Master Xie nodded in relief. “Little Yao’er has thought it through. We’ll do as she wants. When we go to the Huai River area, we need a travel pass issued by the Quanzhou government office. The Xie family is a huge taxpayer, and the government is keeping a close eye on us. It’s absolutely impossible to let the Xie family leave Quanzhou. It’s also very risky to process fake customs documents and identity documents. If we’re not careful, we can be exposed. Moreover, there are checks along the way. There are too many variables.”

“Due to King Li of Zhou’s previous example, Youzhou is in a bitterly cold place at the border, and there are often external enemies disturbing it. There are too many variables waiting for the Imperial Court to send an army. If we’re not careful, it will cause another disaster like King Li of Zhou’s. Therefore, the current Emperor has given the North the privilege of not paying taxes on salt to buy supplies that the Imperial Court can’t distribute in time. We just have to disguise ourselves as merchants from Youzhou and it’s very easy for us to leave Quanzhou.”

Neither the Jiazhou Residence nor King Liang would have expected that they had King Yue Fei’s token and clearance document.

From the looks of it, going to the North was far safer than going to the Huai River.

Hence, this matter was settled.

Yu Youyao calmed down.

The next day, Yu Youyao went to the government office with her Eldest Aunt and Third Cousin.

Old Master Lin, Madam Yan, and Lin Ruoru had also arrived.

Under the witness of the officials of the Jiazhou Residence and the government office, they agreed on the details of buying medicine and disaster relief with the Lin family. After confirming that there were no mistakes, the two sides formed a contract.

Under Yu Youyao's strong request, it was decided that Lin Ruoru would be in charge of the cooperation.

Old Master Lin was a little unwilling, but Yu Youyao used the excuse that she was a woman and it was not good for her to interact too much with other men. Old Master Lin also knew that she was a daughter of an official and was particular about many things and had strict rules, so it was not appropriate for him to refuse.

When she left the government office, it was already afternoon.

Old Master Lin had invited everyone from the Xie Residence to eat at the Guiyuan Temple on Earth Gate Street. He also knew that it was not appropriate for Yu Youyao to go to a place like a restaurant during her mourning period.

Yu Youyao declined politely as it was inconvenient for her to stay outside for long because she was filial.

Before leaving, Yu Youyao said casually, "I heard that Master Lin's ancestral hometown is in Zhejiang. Later on, his family's business expanded, so his entire family moved to Quanzhou in Fujian. However, Master Lin has access to the medicinal herbs in Jiangnan and often travels back and forth to Zhejiang. My cousin is an old friend of the Governor of Zhejiang, Lord Ye. Old Master Lin is from a big family in Zhejiang, so I think he knows Lord Ye. In the future, when Master Lin goes to Zhejiang, I'll have to trouble you to greet Lord Ye on behalf of my cousin and me."

The Lin family had moved to Quanzhou only to develop the family's foundation.

However, in fact, the Lin family's foundation had always been in Zhejiang.

Old Master Lin's eyes flickered as he quickly nodded in agreement.

After Yu Youyao left, Master Lin and Madam Yan got into the carriage.

In the sealed carriage, Madam Yan immediately lowered her voice and asked, "What did the County Head of Shaoyi mean? It doesn't sound like she's really asking you to greet Lord Ye for her."

If she wanted to greet him, she could just send you a letter. Why would she need others to do it for her?

The Lin family was only a merchant family and had a selfless relationship with Lord Ye. They had no interactions with each other. No matter how she looked at it, it was not appropriate to hand over greetings to the Lin family!

Old Master Lin looked thoughtful. "The County Head of Shaoyi is from the Yu Clan, and their descendants are all over the court. In recent years, the Emperor has wanted to put the Yu Clan in an important position. Many of the Yu Clan members are in important positions in the court. The Jiazhou Residence must be crazy to go against the County Head of Shaoyi."

Madam Yan frowned. "The Jiazhou Residence clearly has ill intentions towards the County Head of Shaoyi."

It looked like a farce.

It was a dangerous conspiracy.

The commoners are not able to fight with the officials. Usually, when the merchants gathered together, they could still keep the local officials in check. However, once they were in the hands of the government, they were almost meat on the chopping block.

The ones who resolved this crisis were the County Head of Shaoyi and the Lin and Yan families.

Old Master Lin gently twirled the green jade tablet in his hand. After a while, he said, "Tell me, why did the County Head of Shaoyi, a dignified daughter of an official, come to Quanzhou?"

Madam Yan shook her head. "I heard that because her grandmother passed away, she fell sick from worry so she came to Quanzhou to recuperate."

Old Master Lin scoffed. "If a family member passed away, you should not travel for three years."

Madam Yan also felt that there was something hidden behind this. Then, she heard Old Master Lin say, "Is it possible that Eldest Miss Yu knew in advance that Lord Jia was going to harm the Xie family, so she specially came to Quanzhou?" At this point, the more she thought about it, the more she felt that this was very likely. "As soon as the County Head of Shaoyi settled down in Quanzhou, she bought medicine from the Lin and Yan families to relieve the disaster. If not for this, the Xie family would have already been in the limelight."

Madam Yan's heart skipped a beat. "The Xie family is the richest family in Quanzhou. If anything happens to the Xie family, Quanzhou will definitely be in turmoil. Merchants like us who are led by the Xie family..."

Old Master Lin's expression gradually turned solemn. "The County Head of Shaoyi is reminding me and warning me at the same time."

The Lin family's foundation was in Zhejiang. The Lin family could give up on their operations in Quanzhou, but not their roots. As long as their foundation was still there, the Lin family would not fall.

Zhejiang was under Lord Ye's rule. If the County Head of Shaoyi and Lord Ye had any relations, it would be as good as holding the Lin family by the throat.

She could only choose to cooperate with the County Head of Shaoyi.

What a shrewd person.

No wonder it was said that the County Head of Shaoyi was a chess player. We were all chess pieces on her chessboard. We had to be obedient and useful chess pieces so that we wouldn't be eaten.

Old Master Lin thought about it. “Use the matter of the County Head of Shaoyi’s disaster relief to transfer our family’s operations in Quanzhou back to Zhejiang. We have to do it secretly and not let anyone discover it. Leave some businesses to someone we trust to slowly sell.”

Madam Yan felt a little uneasy. “Just based on the words of the County Head of Shaoyi... Isn’t that a little too rash?”

However, Old Master Lin did not think so. “The Jiazhou Residence has ill intentions towards the Xie Residence. If one move doesn’t work, they definitely have a backup plan. Our family has always followed the Xie Residence’s lead, and our situation in Quanzhou won’t be good in the future. In any case, our family’s foundation is in Zhejiang. It won’t affect much even if we give up on operating in Quanzhou. Quanzhou isn’t far from Zhejiang. We’ll watch from the side and see the situation. When the time is right, we’ll return to Quanzhou. Our previous business will still be here.”

The Lin family controlled almost 70% of the medicinal herbs in the Jiangnan area. Their business in Quanzhou was irreplaceable.

At this moment, the court was unstable. Self-preservation was the best strategy.

Chapter 776 - 776: Palace Examination

Old Master Lin lowered his voice. “The County Head of Shaoyi has already pointed out a clear path for us. When we return to Zhejiang, with a big backer like Lord Ye, it won’t be a pity to give up on managing Quanzhou.”

That was the governor of the entire southeast coast. With such a big relationship, what business could he not do?

Madam Yan agreed deeply. “I heard that Lord Ye is on good terms with Yue Fei from the North...”

Old Master Lin’s heart skipped a beat as he thought of something. “Cousin Zhou of the County Head of Shaoyi is also an aide to the King of the North. He’s very valued by him.”

The two of them looked at each other and saw the fire in each other’s eyes.

Logically speaking, the Lin family’s medicinal herb business was ranked among the top in the country. They had a close relationship with the Imperial Court and had a lot of connections.

However, who knew that the Lin family was in the vortex of business and political struggle? How could they have a good life?

Who in the palace or the government could they afford to offend?

Wouldn’t they all have to welcome them with a smile!

However, the court was in turmoil at all times, and the higher-ups were fighting to the death. The ones who suffered the most were the people below. How to make the next move depended on whether their connections were strong enough!

After all, one had no choice in the martial world!

Ye Hanyuan and King Yue Fei were both important figures with military power.

Yu Youyao got into the carriage.

Xie Jingliu took out a bag of green fruits from somewhere, opened the oil paper bag outside, and poured it into a plate. "All merchants know how to follow the trend. First, they send themselves to the Lin family, then they hang a piece of meat like Ye Hanyuan in front of the Lin family. Behind Ye Hanyuan, the person standing is King Yue Fei. You lured the Lin family into King Yue Fei's pirate ship step by step. If the Lin family is like this, the Yan family must be the same. Without any effort, you found two strong supporters for King Yue Fei."

Yu Youyao picked up a piece of green fruit and ate it with relish. "Businessmen value profit over righteousness. We have to let them know who's behind me before they'll be determined to cooperate with me. I've made money, and King Yue Fei has obtained a huge supply of medicinal herbs. Not only have the Lin and Yan families benefited, but they also have a strong backing. This is a good situation of killing three birds with one stone. It's a win-win situation for the businessmen."

Xie Jingliu chuckled. "You're clearly the young miss of an official, but you're becoming more and more like a shrewd businessman."

Not only was she shrewd, but she also had a broad perspective.

Yu Youyao pouted. "Who said that the young miss of an official can't do business?"

Xie Jingliu thought about it. Although there were many restrictions on women, there was indeed no explicit rule that women could not do business. "I think you're doing great."

Before the troops moved, the rations went first.

Zhejiang was near the sea, so it was very convenient to travel by sea. Shuchuan was connected to Shaanxi, and it was close to the North. King Yue Fei already had the advantage.

After returning to the residence, Yu Youyao looked for Zhou Yonghe and asked him to handle all the matters related to the Yan family in Shuchuan.

In the next few days, the benevolent act of the County Head of Shaoyi buying medicinal herbs to relieve the disaster spread like wildfire. The Lin family also reduced the supply of medicinal herbs to other merchants and tried their best to gather them.

The entire Quanzhou was paying attention to this matter. The Xie family was slacking off and quietly transferring their assets to buy businesses. They were busy.

When the news reached the capital, the palace examination rankings were also released.

As expected, Song Mingzhao was appointed as the top scholar of this subject, and his reputation soared.

This should have been a happy day, but the entire Zhenguo Marquis Residence was shrouded in a terrifying gloom.

The atmosphere in the Glorious Fortune Residence was even more intense.

The Marquis of Zhenguo, Song Xiuqi, looked at Song Mingzhao in disbelief, his round eyes filled with anger. "Unfilial son, what did you say just now? Say it again!"

Old Madam Song slammed her teacup on the tea table. "If you have anything to say, say it properly. Don't make a fuss in my room."

However, the Marquis of Zhenguo was still angry. He pointed at Song Mingzhao and trembled. “Mother, didn’t you hear what he said just now? He said that he won’t be entering Hanlin and had already handed a memorial to the Imperial Court.”

Old Madam Song looked at Song Mingzhao in silence.

Song Mingzhao lowered his head, straightened his back, and knelt on the ground in silence. The young man who used to listen to his family suddenly revealed his unruly side.

The Marquis of Zhenguo was flustered and exasperated. He kept scolding Song Mingzhao, “Unless he enters Hanlin, he won’t be able to enter the cabinet. Mother, he is cutting off his own future.”

Seeing that his finger was about to poke Song Mingzhao’s forehead, Old Madam Song frowned. “Alright, calm down too.”

The Marquis of Zhenguo’s eyes turned red with anger. He raised his voice and said, “Calm down. How can I calm down? The Zhenguo Marquis Residence has nurtured him for 18 years. Now that his wings have hardened, he’s starting to learn that disobedient and unfilial behavior. What future can he have if he’s released? Many people want to enter the cabinet but don’t have a chance. But what about him?!”

Old Madam Song said angrily, “Shut up.”

The Marquis of Zhen held his breath and clenched his fists tightly. Only then could he barely suppress his anger.

The room was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop.

After a while, Old Madam Song looked at Song Mingzhao. “Get up and talk. How can a family kneel on the ground at the drop of a hat?”

Song Mingzhao knelt on the ground and did not move.

Old Madam Song sighed and did not insist. “Why don’t you want to be in the Hanlin Academy? What were you thinking?”

Song Mingzhao lowered his head and said hoarsely, “Grandmother has also heard the news. Eldest Miss Yu has gone to Quanzhou to recuperate. A concubine’s son of Lord Jia of the prefecture actually disregarded Eldest Miss Yu’s identity and family background and openly teased Eldest Miss Yu on the streets. Eldest Miss Yu’s memorial has already been sent to the Empress Dowager. When Lord Yu found out about this, he was even more furious and wanted to join forces with the Imperial Court to impeach Lord Jia for more than ten crimes.”

Old Madam Song suddenly had a feeling that she was right.

Song Mingzhao was extremely indifferent and distant from others. Only Yu Youyao could affect his mind and make him irrational.

Eldest Miss Yu’s memorial had been sent to the capital a few days ago.

Along with her memorial, there was also news that Eldest Miss Yu and the Lin family had bought a batch of medicinal herbs and were preparing to send them to the North to support the imperial court in disaster relief.

This action affected the hearts of everyone in the court.

The Marquis of Zhen questioned angrily, "What has this got to do with you asking to be released?"

Song Mingzhao said, "As soon as the news of Quanzhou reached the capital, I looked for Lord Yu and borrowed the files about Lord Jia from the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs."

The Marquis of Zhen couldn't help but ask, "What's wrong with his files?"

Song Mingzhao shook his head. "Lord Jia is a scholar on two lists. His ranking in the palace examination isn't high. As he's a scholar from a poor family, he doesn't have any connections or money. He was placed in a small county office in Fujian and worked hard until he became an official in Quanzhou. There's no especially outstanding talent in his files. He's mostly evaluated as diligent. He's been an official for more than 20 years. It's not a problem for him to survive until he reaches the government office of the prefecture."

Chapter 777 - 777: Release

On the surface, there was no problem, but this made it even more problematic!

The Marquis of Zhenguo was deep in thought. "Quanzhou is rich. The natural advantage of maritime trade makes all the officials outside Quanzhou fat. Not only is it easy for them to achieve political achievements, but it's also easy to accumulate connections. It's a good place for promotion. Logically speaking, such a good position is almost always in the hands of high-ranking officials from the aristocratic families who are deeply rooted in the Imperial Court."

How did Lord Jia, who had no money or connections, end up with such a lucrative job?

This was unless he had someone to rely on.

Song Mingzhao said, "There are differences between the various state capitals, be it in terms of size of wealth. Furthermore, because of Quanzhou's unique geographical location, before the Imperial Court lifted the sea ban, trade was very convenient as sea transport was connected to river transport in the country. It has always been a place that collects heavy taxes for the Imperial Court. Thirty percent of the Great Zhou Dynasty's taxes come from Quanzhou. In order to stabilize the tax income, the Imperial Court also controls Quanzhou very strictly."

The Marquis of Zhenguo's expression became even more solemn. There was most likely a problem with Lord Jia's transfer order back then.

Indeed!

Song Mingzhao continued, "I've secretly investigated all the officials who were transferred by Lord Jia back then. I discovered that there was a transfer order for the former Marquis of Weining. Now, Ning Yuanbo's residence is interfering."

After all, the Marquis of Zhenguo had been in the government for many years, so he immediately understood the crux of the matter. "Do you suspect that the Jiazhou Residence is under the Second Prince's wing and that the Second Prince's wing wants to attack the Xie family?"

His scalp tingled.

The emperor had not been to court for a long time. The Second Prince gradually headed from the imperial study to the previous court. According to the secret information from the palace, the Third Prince's grounding was also useless. The external Xu family's Duke's Residence had wantonly nurtured his henchmen. The Fourth Prince was low-key, but he seemed to have caught the Empress's eye. The situation in the palace was very complicated.

If the Second Prince dragged in the Jiazhou Residence, then it was worth thinking deeply about how a mere son of a concubine from the Jiazhou Residence dared to publicly tease the daughter of a superior.

Song Mingzhao nodded. "Although the Zhenguo Marquis Residence is a royalist party, it's inevitable that they'll be implicated in the struggle for the throne. The capital has become a troublesome place. We can't beat all the eggs in one basket."

The logic was clear, but it couldn't convince the Marquis of Zhenguo. If he wasn't from the Hanlin Academy, he couldn't enter the cabinet.

If Song Mingzhao wanted to be released, he would have to resign from his position as an editor of the Hanlin Academy.

Song Mingzhao held his breath. "Back then, Second Master Yu went to Quanzhou while holding a position in the Hanlin Academy. With the power of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence, it's not impossible for me to hold a position in the Hanlin Academy."

Old Madam Song understood that Song Mingzhao had schemed against her father.

Back then, it was because of Elder Xia's strong support that Second Master Yu could go to Quanzhou. The Zhenguo Marquis Residence was an old noble. Song Mingzhao was talented, so it was effortless for him to imitate Second Master Yu.

Song Mingzhao was giving them a choice between not entering the Hanlin Academy and taking on a position in the Hanlin Academy.

Compared to not entering the Hanlin Academy, the latter was more acceptable.

In the end, he was determined to be released.

Clearly, this move was very useful to the Marquis of Zhenguo. As long as he did not enter the Hanlin, everything else could be discussed. He was a little hesitant. "Where do you want to go?"

Old Madam Song's eyelids twitched. Indeed, she heard Song Mingzhao say in a low voice, "To Quanzhou!"

The Marquis of Zhenguo did not think too much about it. "You have to think carefully. Once you're released, you can only be a seventh-grade county official. Even if you take on a position in the Hanlin Academy, you won't be able to return without spending three to five years. The local supplies have decreased, and your days will be tough. The Zhenguo Marquis Residence is far away, so the help it can give you is limited. You've been living in luxury in the capital for many years, so you might not be able to survive. Moreover, you have to make political achievements. Otherwise, even if you return to the capital, it will affect your future. You..."

He admitted that Song Mingzhao's words made sense. He also knew that once Song Mingzhao made political achievements in the local area, he would be able to rise rapidly when he returned to the capital in the future.

However, deep down, he did not want Song Mingzhao to be released.

The benefits of staying in the capital were obvious.

The benefits of being released would only take effect after three to five years. Who knew what variables there were?

Song Mingzhao said in a low voice, "I've made up my mind. Father, please fulfill my wish."

The Marquis of Zhenguo was still unwilling. "Think about it carefully. The memorial you requested is still in the Imperial Court. I'll help you set it aside for the time being."

"Father..." Song Mingzhao called out.

The Marquis of Zhenguo flicked his sleeves and left. After delaying for a while, when the scholars for this examination were arranged and there were no vacancies everywhere, Song Mingzhao would be obedient.

There was a moment of silence in the reception pavilion.

Old Madam Song looked at him steadily. "Tell me honestly. You suddenly requested to be released and even want to work in Quanzhou. Is this for Yu Youyao?"

She did not believe a word about Lord Jia being involved with the Second Prince's faction.

The more Song Mingzhao wanted to do something and achieve his goal, the more he would take action and scheme. He was worried that there would be additional complications, so he would not let anyone know easily.

Regardless of whether Lord Jia was a member of the Second Prince's faction or not, Song Mingzhao had been paying attention to Yu Youyao since she went to Quanzhou. Therefore, as soon as news of Yu Youyao spread to the capital, even though no one reacted, he had already investigated the sect and done so much. This was abnormal.

Song Mingzhao felt a sense of panic as if his thoughts had been exposed, but he quickly calmed down. "Grandmother, Second Master Yu has lost his position. The cabinet is fighting for power, and there are demons dancing wildly. The situation in the palace is complicated. The emperor is obsessed with alchemy and hasn't been in the court for a long time. He doesn't want to assist with politics or manage the people. Even if I enter the Hanlin Academy, I'll still be restricted by many henchmen. I might as well go somewhere to train and accumulate experience. I can even do something for the people..."

Even the excuse was perfect. Old Madam Song raised her voice. "Song Mingzhao, aren't you going to tell me the truth in front of me?"

Without his grandmother's help, it was almost impossible for his father to agree to let him out. Song Mingzhao's straight back slowly collapsed. "Grandmother, please help me this time."

Old Madam Song clutched her chest and panted. "I originally thought that you had let go of your feelings for Yao Yao for the time being. I didn't expect that when Yao Yao went to Quanzhou, even your soul would leave with her. Why are you so anxious? Yaoyao has to observe mourning for her Grandmother for three years. Now isn't the time to discuss marriage..."

Ever since she had failed to find Matriarch Yu in the Yu Residence, Song Mingzhao seemed to have restrained his thoughts and was focused on preparing for the next examination. She did not expect him to hide his thoughts even more deeply.

For Yu Youyao, she even had to gamble her future.

Song Mingzhao raised his head. "Grandmother, you know that Eldest Miss Yu won't return easily after leaving the capital this time. Perhaps it's not up to Lord Yu to decide her marriage. I like her and have considered it for a long time. I'm willing to give it my all for her, so I can't sit back and do nothing."

Old Madam Song closed her eyes. "Then what can you do in Quanzhou? Quanzhou is so big. You're just a seventh-grade county officer. You can't stay far away from the government."

Chapter 778 - 778: Overwrought

This was the first time she had heard Song Mingzhao clearly express his feelings for Yu Youyao.

"I like her!"

These three words revealed a sense of certainty.

Him taking a gamble was like a moth flying into a fire.

Song Mingzhao lowered his head. "Previously, the pirates had invaded the southeast coast on a large scale and Dehua County had suffered a calamity. Originally, the position of county magistrate had to be revoked much earlier, but because of the delay in the imperial examination, it was delayed until now. The porcelain produced by Dehua County is an indispensable item for maritime trade. It has always been sold overseas. The various porcelain shops in Dehua County have close ties with the Xie family."

Old Madam Song sighed softly. Song Mingzhao had planned everything out clearly, so it was obvious how determined he was. "If you want to strive to befriend the Xie family and get to know Yu Youyao through the Xie family, with the approval of your elders, it'll be logical to discuss the marriage in the future."

Song Mingzhao did not deny that marriage was a matter of parents' orders and matchmaking. Since men and women could not cross the line, he would start with the elders.

Old Madam Song sighed. "I actually didn't know that the Zhenguo Marquis Residence would have such a devoted person like you. Forget it, forget it. In the end, we, as relatives, owe you. I'll talk to your father."

Song Mingzhao was overjoyed. "Thank you, Grandmother."

In the blink of an eye, it was already Laba.

The medicinal herbs for disaster relief were already prepared and sent to the merchant ship along with the resources that the Xie family had evacuated.

After that, the Xie Residence clearly felt that the atmosphere in Quanzhou had become tense. The various ports began to increase their troops and cordon off the area, investigating the merchant ships and merchants coming and going.

The investigation was only a little stricter than usual, and it did not cause much dissatisfaction and suspicion.

However, Yu Youyao guessed that this investigation would gradually intensify.

This further confirmed that the Jiazhou Residence had already sided with King Liang and had been secretly paying attention to the movements of the Xie Residence.

It was very likely that a portion of King Liang's people had already entered Quanzhou without anyone noticing. After everyone entered the city in batches, they would control the entire Quanzhou City.

Regarding this, the Xie family was very glad that they had listened to Yu Youyao's suggestion and given up on evacuating to the Huai River area. They accelerated the evacuation process and transferred most of their manpower and businesses to the North in advance. The remaining small number of businesses mostly sold antiques, jade artifacts, calligraphy, paintings, and so on. As there were not many of them, they would not attract much attention if they were carried on merchant ships.

Otherwise, before the people from the Xie family could leave Quanzhou, they would probably have already been noticed by the Jiazhou Residence.

After that, Yu Youyao arranged to meet the directors of the Lin and Yan families. They would go to the Guiyuan Temple to discuss the cooperation of the medicinal herbs.

All three sides were sincere. The "Happy Heart" escort business had become famous in the underworld and the underworld. Yu Youyao's financial resources were in place, so the benefits were also satisfying. There were almost no twists and turns in the cooperation.

Yu Youyao said, "The first trade will be arranged after the Lantern Festival. Your two families will try your best to gather medicinal herbs and collect as many as you can. At that time, I'll arrange for the steward to come over and contact you."

The Lin and Yan families had no objections.

Old Master Lin probed, "The amount of medicinal herbs that County Head needs are very large. I'm going back to Zhejiang to make some preparations. I'll definitely send your greetings to Lord Ye."

Yu Youyao smiled. "That's good."

Old Master Lin calmed down.

Due to the reminder from the County Head of Shaoyi, he had been secretly observing the movements in Quanzhou. He had also vaguely sensed the recent changes in Quanzhou and strengthened his plan to return to Zhejiang.

However, he still needed to plan carefully how to leave Quanzhou.

After the business discussion, Yu Youyao ate vegetarian food at the Guiyuan Temple. On the way back to the residence, she passed by the Jade Pavilion. Yu Youyao got out of the carriage, planning to see how business was going.

The layout of the Jade Pavilion had already been changed. The glass was made into a rectangular transparent counter. Samples of various products were displayed inside, and the functions and effects of the products were roughly introduced.

Some special products were marked with basic combinations of spices and medicinal herbs that were easy to sensitize. They would also be marked in the introduction. It was dazzling to look at, causing one to linger.

There were more than a hundred types of products in Jade Pavilion now, almost 50% as many as before. Many incense medicines had been added, and every one of them had their own uses. They had even specially invited a doctor to sit in the hall.

After customers entered the shop, they could choose the goods they were interested in according to their needs and preferences. They could also achieve the effect of stimulating consumption.

There were a total of twelve cubicles on the first and second floors. They were separated into small rooms by exquisite partition screens. There were tables, chairs, tea, and snacks to receive guests.

If one did not know the effect of the makeup, they could try it in the cubicle.

If one did not know the function of the incense and medicine, they could also ask the doctor in the hall.

The management was more humane and thorough.

It was already afternoon, and there were still many people in the shop. Manager Ren was also so busy that his feet did not touch the ground. When he saw Yu Youyao coming over, he quickly brought her to the room on the second floor.

Before Yu Youyao could ask, Manager Ren had already said non-stop, "It's been less than a month, and many products are already in short supply. From next month, the incense shop will increase production..."

Yu Youyao already had an idea of the situation at the Jade Pavilion.

Manager Ren had broken his contract with the Xie Residence and was free. After a while, Yu Youyao would be leaving Quanzhou. She did not plan to transfer the Jade Pavilion to someone else, so she would let Manager Ren manage it on her behalf.

Manager Ren was quite capable. He had run Zhiyu Pavilion for so many years and had never made a mistake. There was no doubt about his loyalty.

The core ingredients of the incense medicine were always in her hands. They could be sent to Quanzhou through a merchant ship.

After the Xie Residence left Quanzhou, the Jiazhou Residence would not do anything unnecessary to make things difficult for those who had once been related to the Xie Residence. Since they had already left, it was useless to cause trouble.

After Yu Youyao arrived in the North, the Jiazhou Residence could guess that the backer of the Xie family was Yue Fei, the King of the North. They would not make things difficult for her for a few commoners.

Business still had to be done.

Not only did business have to be done, but the Jade Pavilion in Quanzhou would also be used as a bridge for her to communicate with the entire country's trade. In the future, the goods under her name would be sold far away from the country and overseas through trade routes. Spices from overseas were in high demand in the Great Zhou Dynasty. Many rouge, powder, and incense medicine from the country were also in high demand overseas.

Through her understanding of the incense business during this period of time, Yu Youyao finally had a precise understanding of what kind of treasure mountain with unlimited potential she had.

... .

Just as the Xie Residence was preparing to leave Quanzhou, the Imperial Court sent over an urgent document from the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs and the Imperial Court. They impeached the Jiazhou Residence for more than ten crimes, and ordered them to settle their matters within three days.

The Jiazhou Residence immediately fell into an overwrought state.

Immediately, they couldn't care less about the Xie Residence.

However, just as the Jiazhou Residence was sending the memorial into the capital.

Another shocking news came from the capital.

Far away in the North, Yue Fei, the King of the North, joined forces with the officials who had gone to the North to seek credit from the Imperial Court for the County Head of Shaoyi.

Chapter 779 - 779: Princess Shaoyi

The County Head of Shaoyi tried to plant a crop called sweet potatoes that had been imported into the country from overseas. This crop was drought-resistant, durable, produced a high yield, and filled the stomach. Its leaves, vines, and roots were all edible.

King Yue Fei helped the various farmsteads under the County Head of Shaoyi to promote this crop. The sweet potatoes actually survived the drought and even grew pear-sized roots.

The affected people relied on sweet potato leaves in summer, ate sweet potato vines in autumn, and ate sweet potato pieces in winter to greatly alleviate the disaster.

At the same time, Ye Hanyuan, who was far away in Zhejiang, had also neglected the Imperial Court. After the water disaster in Zhejiang, the County Head of Shaoyi promoted the planting of sweet potatoes in Zhejiang, and there was still a harvest in December.

As soon as the news spread, not only did it shock the Imperial Court, but even the thousands of commoners were shocked.

Then, the Imperial Court found out that sweet potatoes had also been planted in the suburbs of the capital.

They specially sent someone to Little Zhouzhuang, Rogue Manor, and the nearby villages to investigate. He confirmed that King Yue Fei and Lord Ye were not lying and brought back sweet potatoes.

The next day, the Empress Dowager went to the golden hall and ordered someone to distribute the sweet potatoes to the court officials to taste.

No matter how they cooked it, it was delicious. They ate it raw to quench her thirst. When it was cooked, they could eat a small piece to fill their stomachs. The entire royal court was shocked.

Immediately, an old minister knelt in the golden hall and shouted with tears streaming down his face, "Heaven blesses our Great Zhou."

There were also old officials who were so excited that tears welled up in their eyes. "The County Head of Shaoyi's actions are beneficial now. It's His Majesty's blessing, the blessing of all the people, and the prosperity of the country!"

"County Head of Shaoyi is righteous. I beg Your Majesty and the Empress Dowager to reward him handsomely."

"I agree. The County Head of Shaoyi is brilliant. Her entire family is benevolent and loyal. For many years, she has organized charity halls, provided porridge stalls, and donated good money to help the refugees. Although she's a woman, she's benevolent and kind. She's even better than a man."

"..."

Ever since the Great Zhou Dynasty was established, it had placed emphasis on farming and suppressing trade. Every year, the Imperial Court would distribute new seeds and encourage the commoners to try them. The Imperial Court would reward anyone who planted them successfully.

Yu Youyao tried to plant a new seed to relieve the drought and benefit thousands of people in the world. If it were any other man, he would have been conferred the title of Marquis.

The reward for the County Head of Shaoyi had almost become everyone's hope.

That day, the cabinet held an emergency meeting and wanted to invite the County Head of Shaoyi to be conferred the title of Princess.

The invitation was presented to the Empress Dowager. The Empress Dowager took a red brush and circled it around the character "Yi". She said, "The character 'Yi' isn't glorious. Rewrite it."

The cabinet discussed this matter overnight. In the end, a Minister of Revenue suggested that the original character for "Yi" be changed to the character for "Yi" that meant "exemplary." He said bluntly, "The contributions of the County Head of Shaoyi must be recorded in history. The original character for "Yi" represents a small appearance and small virtue, so it doesn't show any merit or

virtue. The deep appearance, great looks, and great virtue of the new character “Yi” are meant to be praised. It shares the same pronunciation as the character for “Yi” which is used to show surprise. It’s an exclamation and a praise.”

The Minister of War also agreed. “The posthumous law of the Book of Zhou says that gentleness subdues kindness, and gentleness is kindness. Only the new character for ‘Yi’ can show the benevolence and kindness of the County Head of Shaoyi.”

The Ministry of Rites also agreed. “The new character for ‘Yi’ contains the characters for ‘heart’ and ‘owing’. As the saying goes, one should hold on to their ambition and not let anger out. Beauty is within her and spreads out to her four limbs. The County Head of Shaoyi deserves it.”

The next day, the memorial with the new title was handed over to the Empress Dowager again.

The Empress Dowager looked at the memorial. “Yes!”

At the same time, the imperial edict that had taken three days to complete was officially completed. The next day, the emperor’s carriage arrived at the Yu Residence. Yu Youyao was not around, so Yu Zongzheng and Madam Jiang received the imperial edict on her behalf.

The Internal Affairs Department was also stepping up their supervision of Princess Shaoyi’s imperial order.

When the order was completed and sent to Quanzhou at full speed, it was already the 27th of December, and the new year was approaching.

Under the lead of the Jiazhou Residence, the accompanying eunuchs arrived at the Xie Residence. Old Master Xie immediately led the entire Xie Residence to kneel and thank the emperor and the Empress Dowager for their grace.

The eunuchs also brought rewards from the Imperial Court. There was good farmland, cloth, gold, jade, antiques, spices, medicinal herbs, and so on. They were very generous.

The eunuch handed the jade plate representing the princess to Yu Youyao and passed on the Empress Dowager’s words. “... According to the etiquette, Princess Shaoyi should immediately set off for the capital and enter the palace to thank the Empress Dowager. It’s only in the middle of winter, so it’s not suitable for the princess to travel arduously. The Empress Dowager has helped the princess and allowed her to return to the capital after the new year.”

Yu Youyao immediately knelt down to thank him.

This trip was very tiring. The Xie family had prepared a lot of gifts and politely sent the eunuch and the others out of the residence.

When the eunuch saw the carriage full of generous gifts, he immediately felt that this trip was too worth it.

The group went to the courier station to rest for the night.

The next day, they were going to set off for the capital.

Yu Youyao brought over the incense medicine she had personally made.

The incense medicine was for the Empress Dowager. Whether she used it or not was secondary. However, after receiving the Empress Dowager's kindness and becoming a noble lady of the imperial family, she had to show some filial piety.

Yu Youyao returned to the Xie Residence and discussed this matter with her grandfather. "Take advantage of the fact that Quanzhou's defenses are loose today. Let's prepare to leave Quanzhou at midnight."

Worried that it would arouse suspicion, everything in the Xie Residence went on as usual during the day, as if nothing was amiss. However, as soon as night fell, the residence began to move.

Yu Youyao instructed Yin San to arrange for a portion of the 100 elite troops guarding the Shaoyuan to go to the dock to receive them, and a portion to escort them out of the city.

At this moment, after sending off the people from the palace, Yin San finally heaved a sigh of relief. He planned to dote on his concubine and have fun. Just as the Jiazhou Residence was in a good mood, they were woken up by the butler.

The head of Jiazhou Residence was exasperated, but there was nothing he could do. He cursed and got up from his concubine. He hurriedly put on his clothes and went to the study.

The head of the Jiazhou Residence took the note from the spy and frowned. "The Xie Residence is leaving? I've been sending people to keep an eye on the Xie Residence these past few days, but I didn't notice anything amiss."

The spy said respectfully, "The news was spread by the spy we arranged in the Xie Residence. The Xie Residence should be wary of the government office, so they arranged it very carefully. They also planned to escape with the entire family, so it was inevitable that there would be a commotion in the family. That's why the spy noticed something amiss and quickly reported it."

The head of the Jiazhou Residence stared at the note for a long time. "Perhaps it's because Changfeng's teasing of Princess Shaoyi on the streets last time aroused the suspicion of the Xie family. During this period of time, Quanzhou has begun to be under martial law, and the Xie family has noticed something amiss." He pondered for a while before saying, "Bring 500 elite troops to the Xie family immediately."

"Lord." The spy was originally someone beside King Liang, so he was a little hesitant. "There's still no news from the King. If we go over rashly, won't we alert the enemy?"

Jiazhou Residence immediately said, "There's been a lot of commotion in Quanzhou recently. Princess Shaoyi is the eldest daughter of the first wife nurtured by an aristocratic family. She's also seen the world in the capital. Perhaps she has sensed something, but she's been holding it in because she doesn't have any evidence and because the Xie family is controlled by the government for self-protection."

Chapter 780 - 780: Escape

"Princess Shaoyi first used the matter of buying medicine to relieve the disaster to make me hold back. Then, she reported me to the Imperial Court, making me

overwrought and unable to take care of myself. She bought time for the Xie Residence and secretly planned to escape. If Princess Shaoyi escaped from Quanzhou, it would be called alerting the enemy and really ruining His Highness's plan."

The spy's expression immediately turned solemn. "After we reach the Xie Residence..."

The eyes of the head of the Jiazhou Residence narrowed into slits. "You should disguise yourselves as bandits. If the Xie Residence is sensible, capture them alive and lock them in the dungeon first. With their family's connections, they can also be used by His Highness to earn endless money for him."

The spy quickly asked, "What if they don't know what's good for them?"

The head of the Jiazhou Residence narrowed his eyes and revealed a cruel expression. "Then kill them on the spot to prevent future trouble."

The spy hesitated again. "The Xie Residence is the richest family in Quanzhou, and they have a lot of connections. Princess Shaoyi has just been conferred the title of princess not long ago, and she's in the limelight. I heard that there are many commoners who have been affected by the disaster in Zhejiang and the north. They only survived because they planted sweet potatoes. There are many rumors about Princess Shaoyi among the commoners. Many people say that she's a living Bodhisattva. They have established a shrine for Princess Shaoyi and offered incense. The Imperial Court has also issued a document to promote the planting of sweet potatoes throughout the country at the beginning of spring next year."

In the past few years, there had been natural and man-made disasters in the Great Zhou Dynasty. There had been frequent riots everywhere, and the Imperial Court had not done anything. As a result, the government had been corrupted and bullied the commoners, causing them to suffer unspeakably.

The sweet potatoes promoted by Princess Shaoyi were the hope of the commoners to save their lives.

Therefore, Princess Shaoyi's reputation among the commoners was extremely high.

The Jiazhou Residence sneered. "If it were any other time, I would still be a little afraid of the Xie Residence and be polite to Princess Shaoyi. However, when His Highness enters Quanzhou, what's a mere merchant? The palace can't even take care of itself, so how can they control Princess Shaoyi, who's far away in Quanzhou?"

The spy felt that his words made sense, but he still had some scruples. "Princess Shaoyi's Cousin Zhou seems to be related to King Yue Fei. King Yue Fei even asked for credit for Princess Shaoyi previously..."

The head of the Jiazhou Residence was a little disapproving. If it weren't for the fact that this spy was King Liang's man, he wouldn't have wasted his breath. "The North is located in the extreme north, and Quanzhou is on the southeast coast. The two places are poles apart and are thousands of mountains and rivers apart. King Yue Fei is too far away. Could it be that King Yue Fei will make things difficult for a dignified vassal lord for the sake of a woman?"

The spy thought about it carefully and gradually dispelled his worries.

After His Highness took control of Quanzhou, he would only wait for the three princes to fight for the throne. At that time, there would be no world. Who would care about the princess and the Xie family?

After convincing the spy, the head of the Jiazhou Residence said, "Let's do as I said."

When the Xie Residence suffered a calamity, the government would release news that a group of pirates had infiltrated Quanzhou. In order to not alert the enemy and cause unnecessary panic among the commoners, the government would begin to cordon off Quanzhou during this period of time. They did not expect this group of pirates to be so vicious as to attack the Xie Residence.

At that time, he would use this as an excuse to seal Quanzhou and help His Highness control it. Even if the Imperial Court wanted to send officials over to investigate, it would take time.

His Highness would have taken the initiative.

"Lord, you're right." The spy calmed down. "We can't let the Xie Residence leave Quanzhou. Otherwise, not only will we alert the enemy, but they'll also leave with money. Wouldn't we have worked for nothing?"

Unknowingly, it was midnight.

During this period of time, the Xie Residence had already evacuated Quanzhou one after another under various pretexts.

The Xie Residence was a large family and had many businesses along the southeast coast. Furthermore, as the year was approaching, businesses everywhere needed to be checked. The government would not deliberately make things difficult for them and not let them do business. In addition, the key figures of the Xie Residence, such as Old Master Xie and the people from the main family, were still in Quanzhou, so it did not arouse any suspicion.

In order to avoid causing any commotion, the Xie Residence did not even light a lamp. There was only a small lighter that flickered in the darkness.

In Old Master Xie's study, there was a secret passage that led straight to the outside of Quanzhou City. The Xie Residence had arranged for a carriage to receive them outside the city. At that time, they would take a carriage to the dock and leave by sea.

They were worried that if they left the city together, it would be too eye-catching if there were too many people. There was still a long way to go from the outside of the city to the dock. Thus, at midnight, Old Master Xie brought the women and children of the family and made them leave first.

Old Master Xie, Xie Xun, and Yu Youyao left an hour later.

Old Master Xie had originally planned to let Yu Youyao leave with him, but Yu Youyao felt a little uneasy. She was worried about the 50 elite troops guarding the residence and some guards, who refused to leave.

Thinking that she had Yin San, Yin Shi, and Chun Xiao by her side, Old Master Xie did not force her.

Halfway through the night, Old Master Xie finally heaved a sigh of relief. "It's time. We should leave."

At this moment, Yu Youyao heard the sound of swords clashing outside and was shocked.

Yin Shi immediately raised his knife and stood in front of her to block her.

Even Yin San, who was hiding in the dark, appeared.

A guard rushed into the courtyard. "Princess, a team of black-clothed and masked people forced their way into the Xie Residence..."

Yu Youyao's face turned pale. She turned to her maternal grandfather and said, "The news that we're leaving Quanzhou has already been leaked. The Jiazhou Residence might as well do it in for a penny in for a pound and attack the Xie Residence directly. This group of men in black should be the Liangzhou army disguised as bandits. It seems that they're going to kill us all."

Old Master Xie's expression was very ugly. "Little Yao'er, leave through the secret passage quickly with your eldest uncle. After leaving Quanzhou City, go straight to the coast. Wait for me there for 15 minutes. If I don't arrive in 15 minutes, set sail for the North immediately."

Yu Youyao remained calm and gave Yin Shi a look. Yin Shi understood and ran behind Old Master Xie. He slashed the back of Old Master Xie's neck, knocking him out and sending him into the secret room.

Xie Xun asked anxiously, "Little Yao'er, what are you doing?"

Yu Youyao said calmly, "Eldest Uncle, bring Grandfather away first. I'll stay behind to take care of him."

"What about you?" Xie Xun grabbed Yu Youyao's hand. His grip was strong, as if he was afraid that she would break free. "No, you can't stay."

Her wrist hurt from being grabbed, so Yu Youyao couldn't care less. She said anxiously, "Leave now. If we delay any longer, no one will be able to leave."

Xie Xun's eyes were red. "Even if we want to leave, you should go first. I'll stay behind to cover you."

Yu Youyao explained anxiously and quickly, "I have Yin Shi, Yin San, and Chun Xiao by my side. They're not bad. It won't be a problem for them to protect me and allow me to escape alone. Even if I'm unfortunately captured, I'm the Princess Shaoyi conferred by the Imperial Court. Before King Liang completely controls Quanzhou, they can at most lock me up and won't harm my life. If you're captured, you'll only die. If it doesn't work, I still have the token from King Yue Fei. They won't dare to touch me. Leave quickly..."