

## All Hail 801

Chapter 801 - 801: Secret

“How can I scare you?” Auntie Shen smiled and hurriedly went forward to help the Empress Dowager up. She added a pillow behind her back to make her feel more comfortable. “Are you feeling better?”

The Empress Dowager sighed softly. “In the end, I lost my health when I was young. Now that I’m old, no matter how much medicine I take, I’ll only be like that.”

Auntie Shen recalled that the Empress Dowager was already 69 years old.

The Empress Dowager couldn’t help but think of Old Madam Yu. “Compared to Old Madam Yu, I’m still alright. I have people who are proficient in nourishing my body by my side and have started recuperating early on. I’m much older than her, but I’ve lived longer than her.”

Auntie Shen smiled and said nothing. She turned around and poured a cup of hot tea, handing it over.

After saying a few words, the Empress Dowager felt a little listless. After drinking the tea and recuperating, she saw the memorial on the small table. “What is this?”

Auntie Shen hurriedly said, “Princess Shaoyi sent a memorial into the palace from Liancheng. There’s also some incense medicine personally made by Princess Shaoyi. Among them, there’s a Musk Medicinal Fragrance Pill. I’ve already sent it to the Imperial Hospital for Imperial Physician Hu to check.”

Previously, when Princess Shaoyi was conferred the title of County Head, she often sent things to the palace. Most of them were incense medicine that she had made herself.

The Empress Dowager liked Princess Shaoyi. After the Imperial Physician’s examination, there was no problem, so she did not avoid using the medicine.

After using more of her medicine, she was better.

Princess Shaoyi was talented, and the things she made were a little better than others.

“She’s quite considerate. It’s a pity that she didn’t have a child to support the royal family. Otherwise, I would be willing to dote on her like Old Madam Yu.” There were a few princesses in the palace, and none of them were considerate people. The Empress Dowager felt a little regretful. As she took the memorial, she asked, “Isn’t she recuperating in Quanzhou? Why did she go to the North?”

As she spoke, she had already opened the memorial.

Auntie Shen turned around and went to the incense table. She changed the calming incense in the incense burner to an incense pill.

A moment later, the Empress Dowager finished reading the memorial. “Shaoyi mentioned in the memorial that King Yue Fei has set up a refugee camp in an area where the drought is lighter and the supplies are more abundant. He plans to promote the planting of sweet potatoes to relieve the drought, so he specially invited her to the North.”

Auntie Shen was also stunned. After a while, she said, “The North is a bitterly cold place. Princess Shaoyi...”

The Empress Dowager sighed again. “Since she was conferred the title of Princess Shaoyi, she has to carry out her virtue. She’s worthy.”

Auntie Shen lowered her head and listened without saying anything.

However, the Empress Dowager’s heart skipped a beat. “The auspicious snow indicates a prosperous year. Last winter, there wasn’t much snow in the entire north. It’s already February, but the weather is still as cold as an ice cellar. It seems that this year is another year of disaster.”

Auntie Shen said softly, “You’ve done your best.”

The emperor had taken a medicinal pill and it had poisoned his body. He was sick in the palace and had been ignoring the court for a long time. In order to prevent the news from being leaked and causing the court to be unstable, the Empress Dowager had ordered someone to seal the hall door. Concubine Lan wanted the Second Prince to walk from the imperial study to the previous court to support the government and take the opportunity to take over the power. She had reached a consensus with the Empress Dowager and kept this matter a secret.

Now, Concubine Lan was in charge of the emperor’s palace.

She had been in charge of the harem for many years and had deep-rooted power in the palace. Even Imperial Concubine Xu did not notice anything amiss. She only cared about joining forces with the Xu family and forming cliques in the court.

The Empress Dowager looked at the memorial and pondered for a long time before asking, “Is the emperor’s health better?”

Auntie Shen’s heart tightened. “Concubine Lan’s people said that it’s still the same.”

That was, there was no improvement. The Empress Dowager’s eyes flickered. After a while, she said, “Send Shaoyi’s memorial to the cabinet.”

Princess Shaoyi’s memorial was just a request for a casual chat, so no one could find anything wrong with it. However, if someone saw it, they would inevitably have other thoughts.

There were frequent riots among the refugees in the three provinces of the capital. Even the government could not suppress them.

If the Imperial Court did not think of a countermeasure as soon as possible, more and more refugees would gather together. The situation would become more and more serious, and it might even cause a large-scale riot and endanger the country.

However, the treasury was empty, and the court officials were helpless.

Now that the North still had the strength to accommodate the refugees, how could the cabinet sit still? They immediately gathered the ministers for a meeting.

The cabinet had caused a huge commotion because of Yu Zongshen's resignation, but the Ministry of Revenue was still in Yu Zongshen's hands.

In order to consolidate the right of the royalists to speak in the cabinet, the royalists mobilized their connections and sent an old minister of the Yu Clan's legitimate lineage into the cabinet.

The status of the Yu Clan in the cabinet was unshakable.

Elder Yu was listening calmly as the court officials argued about the resettlement of the refugees.

When both sides were talking so much that their faces flushed with agitation, neither of them could convince the other. Everyone looked at Elder Yu in unison. "Elder Yu, what do you think?"

After receiving Yu Youyao's letter, Elder Yu knew more about the situation in the North than others. He had a plan and was naturally calm in the face of many questions.

He asked, "Why is Princess Shaoyi going to the North?"

Seeing that he looked so confident, Lord Qi, the Imperial Censor of the Imperial Court, had a guess in his heart. "The memorial mentioned that King Yue Fei wanted to promote the planting of sweet potatoes in the areas that were less affected by the disaster in the North to relieve the drought. As the sweet potatoes were successfully planted by Princess Shaoyi, and it concerns the survival of the tens of millions of commoners in the North, King Yue Fei asked Princess Shaoyi for help."

Old Yu asked again, "Why did King Yue Fei dare to take in a large number of refugees?"

Lord Qi looked enlightened. "That's because the drought in the three northeastern provinces is relatively light, so it doesn't affect the planting of sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes are cheap, durable, and full. As long as we promote planting in the three northeastern provinces, with the sweet potatoes, King Yue Fei naturally won't be worried about whether the refugees have food."

The two of them cooperated well.

Elder Yu smiled. "Isn't that settled?"

"Settled?" The court officials looked at one another.

Elder Yu simply made it clear. "Most of the north is drought-stricken, and the fields are drought-stricken, so we can't plant crops. The disaster in the three northeastern provinces is light. Coincidentally, King Yue Fei wants to promote the planting of sweet potatoes, so we'll move the refugees to plant sweet potatoes. King Yue Fei has a large army, and the refugees won't dare to act rashly with him around."

The court officials were immediately speechless. They were a little tempted, but they were also afraid of King Yue Fei's authority. They were worried that King Yue Fei would be unhappy if they threw this huge problem to him.

"This— This isn't good. The North is under King Yue Fei's rule. It's understandable that he's taking in the refugees from the North. If we send the refugees from other areas over too, millions of them will be waiting to eat."

There's still no sign of the sweet potatoes. I'm afraid that they'll eat all the military food."

"King Yue Fei has no obligation to accept refugees from places other than the North. If he refuses, there's nothing we can do."

"That's right. King Yue Fei isn't easy to get along with either. It's better not to provoke him..."

"This, if we anger King Yue Fei, it won't be easy to clean up..."

"..."

Chapter 802 - 802: A Dragon Swimming in the Sea

Moving the refugees to the three northeastern provinces was a good idea. Not only could they settle the refugees and give them a way out, but they could also resolve a disaster and throw the refugees to King Yue Fei.

However, the problem was!

King Yue Fei was not stupid.

After the rebellion in Shandong and the case of King Li of Zhou, Yue Fei had already established his authority in the court. In particular, the cabinet was especially afraid of him.

Elder Yu looked expectant of them. "All of you usually look quite smart, but when it comes to big matters, why did you make a mistake? Think about it. When the Great Zhou Dynasty was first established, Emperor Gaozu set up an army town in the Liaodong area. The sea was in the east, and Liao was at the border. Since China was peaceful, they definitely had to guard it. He also issued a series of national policies to ensure strong borders and external defense. He even moved a large number of refugees who had been displaced by the war to the North."

The court officials gradually came to a realization.

Lord Qi was even more excited and slapped his thigh. "That's right. The North is vast and sparsely populated. Migrating refugees and developing the population to increase productivity is also in line with the national policy of the strong borders. Since it's a national policy, King Yue Fei can't refuse."

A "national policy" had resolved the worries of the court officials. The court officials immediately became happy.

"Elder Yu, that's a brilliant idea..."

"As expected, the older the wiser..."

"Elder Yu's plan is very high..."

"..."

Elder Yu had a calm expression. "King Yue Fei is a vassal lord, so it's not appropriate for him to interfere in the government's matters. However, it's not easy for the government to control a large

number of refugees who have moved to the North. We still need King Yue Fei to step in and intimidate them. We can't let him use his status as a vassal lord to wash his hands of it. If anything happens, no one can take responsibility."

Lord Qi's eyelids twitched. Was he asking King Yue Fei to interfere in the government's matters?

The court officials were also stunned and couldn't help but think carefully about these words.

Elder Yu saw the expressions of the court officials. This was because after reading the contents of the national policies issued by Emperor Gaozu and talking about such sensitive words, he did not panic or panic.

"Since it's a national policy, everyone should follow it. King Yue Fei can't stay out of it. Back then, Emperor Gaozu advocated the relocation of the refugees with the help of the Liaodong capital."

Immediately, an eunuch left the hall.

Not long after, he brought over a stack of books that were all about the national policies issued by Emperor Gaozu.

The court officials immediately began to flip through it.

Elder Yu picked up his teacup and leaned back in his chair to drink his tea.

About 15 minutes later, a court official said, "Elder Yu, you're right. Since it's a national policy, everyone should follow it. The North is under King Yue Fei's rule, and there are often external enemies at the border. Only by dealing with the internal and external problems can we be at ease. Although it's the responsibility of the government to settle the refugees, King Yue Fei also has to do it. You have to know that in extraordinary times, you have to do things very differently."

It was a little inappropriate for King Yue Fei to interfere in the settlement of the refugees.

However, compared to the hidden dangers brought about by the frequent riots of the refugees, this outcome seemed to be more acceptable.

Moreover, with Emperor Gaozu's example, it made sense.

At the thought of this, the court officials quickly reached a consensus.

Elder Yu continued, "When refugees first enter the North, they will also need the acceptance and relief of the North's nobles. We have to give an order for them to fully support the government and King Yue Fei's arrangements for the refugees. Those who disobey the order will be severely punished."

Immediately, many court officials chimed in. "Elder Yu, you've thought it through. Since it's a national policy, if everyone in the North follows it, the nobles are no exception."

Military officials couldn't do political work other than those involving war. At this moment, the Marquis of Zhen said, "The Di people have also suffered from a drought. Last year, more than ten small-scale battles had already erupted in the North in succession. I think after spring, the Di people won't stop and will continue to disturb the North frequently. King Yue Fei wants to lead the war in the North and also take into account the resettlement of the refugees. We can't lose too much

because of a small matter. The nobles have to cooperate. Those who disobey will be killed for undermining politics.”

As soon as these words were spoken, the court officials instantly realized the severity of the matter. Only when the border was stable would they have a peaceful life.

On this matter, the court officials quickly reached a consensus.

Most of the nobles in the North had a lot of connections in the court, but refugees were indeed a big problem for them. Since they could throw out the hot potato, no matter who it was, at least they would be safe.

The most important thing now was to deal with the refugees first.

As for the rest, it wouldn't be too late to talk about it later.

There was a place for millions of refugees without the Imperial Court providing any money. Not only did it resolve a huge problem, but it also did not make things difficult for them. The court officials, who had always delayed serious matters and were proactive in scheming for personal gain, displayed a rare swift and decisive side. They immediately drafted a memorial and handed it to the Longevity Palace.

The emperor was obsessed with alchemy and had been ignoring political matters for a long time.

After not going to court for four to five months in a row, the court officials felt that it was strange and secretly inquired about the news in the palace.

However, the harem was controlled by the Empress Dowager and Concubine Lan together, so it was not easy to investigate. However, the more they could not find out, the more the court officials felt that there was something wrong, and the more unwilling they were to give up. After taking many turns to investigate, they finally found out that the emperor had a fire boil on his face because he had been eating medicinal pills for a long time and had lost his face. He had even sealed the palace gate.

As it was not a glorious matter, the Empress Dowager ordered the palace servants not to spread it.

The court officials felt that it was ridiculous.

However, under the absurdity of it, they felt that it was only right.

The emperor was the Son of Heaven. His sovereign authority was divinely bestowed. How dignified was that? How could he accept the Heavenly Enlightenment if his face was harmed? Why did he not go to court for a long time? He even had to hide the news tightly.

They did not even choose people with damaged faces and crippled bodies in the imperial examination to prevent them from losing their dignity.

How could he be the ruler of a country?

This was the only reason that could explain the recent commotion in the palace.

Therefore, just like the Empress Dowager, the court officials kept this matter a secret. All the matters in the court were discussed by the cabinet and decided by the Empress Dowager.

The Empress Dowager looked at the memorial in the cabinet and stared at the words “national policy” for a long time. “Yin Huaixi’s leg has recovered. He’s like a dragon swimming in the sea, in the sky, in the ground, in the rain, and in the clouds.” The brush dipped in cinnabar hung above the memorial for a long time. The high-grade cinnabar ink of the Dragon Spring was wet but not condensed. It had been sitting there for a long time and did not dry. She sighed softly, and her expression became very complicated. Finally, she signed. “Forget it. I have to rely on him in the future.”

Eunuch Zhu lowered his head and bowed to the side. He held the golden plate, which had a carving of nine dragons playing with pearls, with both hands. There was mud on it, as well as the heirloom seal, brush, and other imperial items.

The Empress Dowager placed the red brush on the pen holder, which was on the golden plate. She took the jade seal and gently stamped it. “Give it to Eunuch He!”

Eunuch Zhu quickly bowed and left.

The Empress Dowager leaned against the large pillow in low spirits and looked at the smoke rising from the incense burner on the incense table. Her eyes were a little blurry, and for some reason, she thought of King Li of Zhou’s biological mother, Concubine Hui.

#### Chapter 803 - 803: Calming the Chaos

The previous emperor valued agriculture very much. In the second year of his ascension to the throne, he issued an edict to the entire country. “Farmers are the most fated people in the world. When the fields are opened, I will personally lead the farming. The officials and everyone below will follow.”

The emperor personally farmed in the field, and there were many commoners watching.

King Li of Zhou’s mother, Concubine Hui, was the woman that the previous emperor had brought back to the palace from the commoners during the farming ceremony.

After Concubine Hui entered the palace, she opened a few acres of land in her own palace. She farmed in spring, brewed in summer, harvested in autumn, and hid in winter. She lived like an ordinary farm girl.

The previous emperor’s heart ached for Concubine Hui.

Concubine Hui said bluntly, “Your Majesty, you’re the emperor, but you still plow and personally farm to persuade the commoners. You said that farmers are the most fated people in the world. However, I’m just a farmer’s daughter to begin with, and I don’t even know many words. I don’t know anything about the zither, chess, calligraphy, painting, and poetry. I only know how to manage the crops and plant some vegetables and fruits to respect Your Majesty’s importance in agriculture and show Your Majesty’s benevolence.”

However, the previous emperor liked this very much and doted on Concubine Hui very much. “You farm in spring, brew in summer, harvest in autumn, and hide in winter. All four of them have not been lost. There are endless grains. My beloved concubine, you have contributed.”

Most of the men in the Yin family had the problem of being sentimental. As the Empress of the Central Palace, she naturally knew how to weigh the pros and cons.

The emperor did not dote on the daughter of a powerful minister, but an insignificant farm girl. The Empress was happy to see that she could not threaten her status.

Therefore, she had a good relationship with Concubine Hui and had also blocked many open and secret attacks for her.

Concubine Hui had raised a son for the previous emperor. The previous emperor liked him very much and included the character “Li” in his name.

Others felt that this word was unclear, but the Empress and the previous emperor were husband and wife. How could she not know that the emperor only had high hopes for this son?

The word “Li” could mean “encouragement.”

It could also mean to sharpen armor.

It could also have the meaning of desolation, violence, and evil.

The deeper the love, the deeper the plan. The previous emperor had high hopes for his son, but he was worried that he would cause trouble for his son and hid his deep love.

Yin Lixing did not let the previous emperor down. He was very talented.

The Empress summoned Concubine Hui. “Xing’er is five years old. The teacher from the Zhan Residence who enlightened him said that Xing’er is talented and smart. He advised the emperor to invite a great teacher and teach him carefully. Recently, the emperor has been lingering about this matter.”

Concubine Hui was not stupid. A five-year-old prince had many great teachers in the court who could raise him. The only thing that could make the emperor hesitate was something deeper.

Concubine Hui immediately knelt on the ground with a thud. “I’m a farmer’s daughter. After entering the palace, I received the Empress’s blessing to accompany the emperor and successfully give birth to a prince to help the imperial family. Although I don’t know much, I know that a drop of water should be returned with a spring. I naturally remember the Empress’s kindness to me. I don’t dare to ask for anything else.”

When the Empress was young, she had a miscarriage secretly caused by a concubine in the palace and injured her body. She had not been pregnant for many years.

She had a good relationship with Concubine Hui, and Yin Lixing was also close to her. She had originally understood the emperor’s thoughts and wanted to take Yin Lixing under her name.

With the emperor’s favor, the status of the legitimate son, and the Empress’s support, the position of the crown prince would definitely be his.

In the future, when Yin Lixing inherited the throne, he would respect her as the Empress Dowager and Concubine Hui as the Imperial Concubine.

However, Concubine Hui was unwilling, so the Empress gave up.



However, after this incident, it was impossible for her to let Yin Lixing sit in that position.

Later on, the emperor gave up on choosing another master for Yin Lixing.

After Concubine Hui passed away due to illness, the previous emperor was extremely sad and gradually became desolate in the court. As there was no one to control him, Yin Lixing gradually became ridiculous.

The Empress took the opportunity to take over.

She had chosen the current emperor, who was the Fourth Prince, and stood against everyone's opinion. After the previous emperor passed away, she had supported him to ascend the throne and become the Empress Dowager as she wished.

As a result, it attracted a lot of criticism.

The court officials privately felt that the current emperor's throne came from an illegitimate source.

It was indeed improper.

The previous emperor's favorite candidate for the throne had never been the current emperor.

Before the previous emperor passed away, he only thought about Yin Lixing.

However, the previous emperor valued literature over martial arts and suppressed the generals and the imperial family, causing the imperial family and military officials to have a deep grudge against the previous emperor. She had long reached an agreement with the imperial family that after the Fourth Prince ascended the throne, he would recover the title of the imperial family.

With the support of the imperial family, the previous emperor also knew that even if he left behind a will, Yin Lixing would not be able to successfully ascend the throne without the support of his mother.

It was only after the Empress had promised the previous emperor to protect Yin Lixing's life that the emperor relented and made the Fourth Prince the crown prince.

In the blink of an eye, the previous emperor had also passed away many years ago. Every time it was late at night, she couldn't help but think about this.

The emperors of the Great Zhou Dynasty all had the habit of killing. Nine out of ten emperors were warlike. Meanwhile, the last one was a foreign species who was not warlike. This was the previous emperor.

They fought all year round, so the treasury was not rich. Ever since the previous emperor ascended the throne, he had suppressed the generals and the imperial family, and focused on agriculture to stabilize the foundation. He recuperated and started a prosperous situation.

Could she really threaten such a scholarly and benevolent emperor?

The previous emperor would not believe her so easily. Perhaps he had a backup plan before he died?

However, all of this was just her guess. However, looking at the situation in the court in the past two years, she actually felt that it was finally here.

The Empress Dowager twirled her prayer beads and sighed softly. “You’re not like a ruler, a servant, a husband, a father, or a son. This isn’t something that can be done in a day. It’s gradually coming to an end! To turn the chaotic world upside down is the path of a king.”

With that, she gently closed her eyes.

Auntie Shen tiptoed forward. Her fingers trembled as she gently checked the Empress Dowager’s breathing. She suddenly heaved a sigh of relief.

... .

The capital had long closed the city gate and did not allow refugees to enter. However, a large number of refugees still surged into the capital and gathered outside the city. They were tortured by hunger and cold and allowed despair to swallow them bit by bit.

“Give it to me, give me the child...” Suddenly, a man’s angry roar sounded outside the city.

“No, you can’t. This is our child. You can’t, you can’t...” The woman in ragged clothes hugged the child tightly. The girl in her arms was as thin as a stick, and there was an almost numb confusion on her dirty face.

The people around them looked at them blankly, while some stared at the little girl, their eyes clearly filled with greed.

“Give me the child...” The man roared crazily and pulled the child over.

The woman wailed, but she held the child’s hand tightly and refused to let go no matter what.

“Don’t be like this. You promised me, no... You, wait a little longer. The city gate will definitely open tomorrow. At that time, the government will release food. I beg you, wait a little longer. Our family of 11 escaped, but there are only three left...”

“The city gate won’t open anymore!” The man roared and looked at the woman numbly. “Those officials in the capital closed the city gate themselves and are living well at home. They can’t care about the lives of us refugees at all. They just want us to die...”

Chapter 804 - 804: Hanlin Steward

Towards the end, the man finally couldn’t help but hug his head and squat on the ground to cry.

“Why don’t you open the city gate...”

“If they don’t open the city, what should we do?!”

“Does the Imperial Court really not care about us anymore?”

“...”

The surroundings were in chaos. In the end, the man’s words had pierced through the refugees’ only hope of despair.

It was chaos. Complete chaos.

A tall and strong man rushed over desperately and snatched the little girl from the woman's arms.

The woman screamed and cried crazily, "Child, my child, stop. Please, no..." The woman wanted to snatch her child back, but she was mercilessly pushed to the ground by the tall and strong man.

The outside of the city was filled with people. This barbaric scene stimulated the starving refugees. Some went up to help the women snatch the child, while others went over to snatch the child from the tall and strong man.

Screams and curses mixed together.

First, someone stepped on her hand, then more and more people stepped on her. The woman screamed and cried as if no one had heard her.

At this moment, a sharp and ear-piercing gong sounded from the city gate.

The refugees stopped the riot. The woman lying on the ground, who managed to dodge the bullet, shouted numbly, "Ya'er, my little Ya'er, child..."

The refugees looked at the majestic city wall in a daze. Hope intertwined in their eyes as they rushed crazily to the bottom of the city gate and pushed it open.

Yu Shande stood on the city wall and looked down at the densely packed refugees. He suddenly understood what it meant by the saying, "Meat and wine go to waste behind the red doors, while the frozen bones of the poor lie on the road."

Feeling sad, he tightened his grip on the notice in his hand. "...Last year, there was a flood in Zhejiang. The Japanese pirates colluded with pirates and wantonly invaded all over the southeast coast of our country, causing a serious reduction in food production in the south. As a result, the north suffered a hundred-year drought. The Imperial Court tried their best to provide relief, but it was still insufficient."

Was that really the truth?

Wasn't it because the Imperial Court's expenditure was insufficient and the government was greedy, causing the treasury to be deficient? In order to fill the deficit, they increased the collection of taxes. During the good years, the commoners couldn't eat their fill, let alone after a natural disaster.

The Imperial Court's disaster relief was not good, so tens of millions of people in the west and north were affected. More than a million refugees starved to death, and many areas were filled with starved people.

This was a natural disaster and a man-made disaster.

However, the notice that he had read out now still had to whitewash the peace and push all the crimes to the natural disasters, as well as the pirates and Japanese pirates. He also had to try his best to glorify the Imperial Court.

This was ridiculous, too ridiculous!

Yu Shande's expression was wooden. "...There is always a way out. Princess Shaoyi tried to plant a type of sweet potato that was imported into the country from overseas. According to the Imperial

Court, this sweet potato is resistant to dry weather, durable, has high yield, and is filling. It's suitable for the soil in the north."

The refugees gradually quietened down, their dirty faces filled with hope.

They had fled all the way to many places and had been helped by others. Some people had eaten the sweet potatoes that Princess Shaoyi had tried to plant and said that sweet potatoes could allow them to survive. They had also heard many people say that Princess Shaoyi was a living Bodhisattva.

The refugees did not trust the Imperial Court.

They believed in Princess Shaoyi.

"King Yue Fei, who's guarding Liaodong, has set up a refugee camp in the North. He also wants to promote the planting of sweet potatoes in the less affected area of Liaodong in the North to alleviate the famine in the North and even the entire country. When Princess Shaoyi found out about this, she went to Liaodong to help King Yue Fei plant sweet potatoes."

In the eyes of the world, Princess Shaoyi represented the Imperial Court and the Yin Imperial Family. The Imperial Court publicized Princess Shaoyi's benevolence and virtue to calm the hearts of the people.

Indeed!

The numb refugees looked moved.

However, following that, it was replaced by deeper despair and stupefaction. No matter how good the sweet potatoes were, there was no way to stop them from starving and let them live!

"Liaodong is vast and sparsely populated. If we want to promote the planting of sweet potatoes, we need a large number of people. The Imperial Court has decided to relocate a portion of the refugees to the North to settle down."

Immediately, there were refugees who admired King Yue Fei's wisdom. They couldn't help but hold a trace of hope and ask, "May I ask who you are?"

Yu Shande said, "I'm the Hanlin Academy's Steward and Princess Shaoyi's brother."

He had been taught by the Yu Clan since he was young and had learned from scholars, agriculture, artisans, and business. All he had learned was to govern the world and serve the people.

Sometimes, he wondered if he could have plucked up the courage like Song Mingzhao three years ago and been sent to a small county to be a seventh-grade official. Would he have been able to protect the commoners and benefit a region?

It was better than spending the past three years in the Hanlin Academy, interacting with and befriending mediocre people.

After the notice was released by the Imperial Court, he immediately left the residence and went straight out of the city.

No matter how the servants in the family shouted and chased after him, he ignored them.

At the bottom, a refugee asked in a daze, "What kind of official is the Hanlin Academy Steward? How big is this official? Does what he says count?"

Someone also replied, "It's a sixth-grade official position. It doesn't seem to be a big official position, but he's a close minister of the emperor. He's in charge of drafting the emperor's words and actions, the history of the country, the scriptures, and so on. Those who take on this position are all valued by the emperor. In the future, they'll most likely be able to enter the cabinet and become elders."

"That's amazing..."

"He's even Princess Shaoyi's brother..."

"Did the emperor send him over?"

"..."

There was a commotion below.

At this moment, someone asked carefully.

"Is King Yue Fei really willing to accept us refugees? Is he lying to us?"

"The capital is a long way from the North. How are we going to get there?"

"That's right. We're starving. We'll starve to death before we can reach the North. Are you trying to trick us away on purpose..."

"Bastard official, you're up to no good..."

"It's all a lie. You just want us to die..."

"..."

The refugees, who had finally calmed down, were furious again. Yu Shande quickly explained, "Calm down and listen to me. Calm down..."

After a while, someone finally stood up to stop them.

Yu Shande finally heaved a sigh of relief. "Tomorrow, the government will distribute food. Everyone will be given 1.5 kilograms of food. The Imperial Court will send a thousand elite troops to escort you to the North. When you reach the North, King Yue Fei's men will come to pick you up..."

One and a half kilograms of food had already been decided after a dispute among the court officials.

Many people did not want to pay for this food, but if they did not pay for it and appeased the refugees first, how could the refugees obediently go to the North?

They had 1.5 kilograms of food. If they ate one meal that weighed 100 grams a day, it was only enough for 15 days.

The capital was relatively close to Liaodong, and there was a direct official road. A large number of refugees did not have enough to eat and could not walk fast. They would definitely arrive in half a month.

Upon hearing that there was food, the refugees quietened down. Even if it was only 1.5 kilograms, at the very least, they wouldn't starve to death.

The leader of the refugees asked again, "I heard that King Yue Fei has already used the military's relief money to help the refugees. A large number of refugees have gathered in the North. Where did the food come from?"

#### Chapter 805 - 805: Different Paths Lead to the Same Destination

Yu Shande replied patiently, "The Imperial Court has already ordered the officials and nobles of various places in the North to help with the resettlement of the refugees. The three provinces of Liaodong are near the sea, so they have more resources and less drought. When you reach the Liaodong area, you can still obtain food from other places."

If the government and the nobles were really reliable, there wouldn't have been so many refugees rushing into the capital.

Whether the refugees could be settled still depended on King Yue Fei.

King Yue Fei was not a fool. There were so many refugees without money or food. How were they going to settle down?

After some consideration, the court officials planned to prioritize the You army's salary. They even gathered 30% more military salary from other places to compensate King Yue Fei.

In addition, they had transferred a batch of food from Hubei, Henan, and other food-producing lands to the North. Although there wasn't much, they couldn't be ignored.

The court officials wanted to throw the refugee problem to King Yue Fei.

However, they couldn't do it too shabbily.

However, they couldn't mention the food transfer for the time being, or there would be trouble.

Yu Shande answered the refugees' questions one by one without any hesitation.

There were also some talented and knowledgeable people among the refugees. After asking about everything, a group of people gathered together and discussed this matter at once. They felt that this was a way out. If the capital did not open the city gate and release food, they would still starve to death if they just guarded it. They might as well go to the North to find a way out.

King Yue Fei was willing to accept refugees, and Princess Shaoyi was also in the North. No matter what, it was better than waiting for death.

Yu Shande said, "Tomorrow morning, the relief food from the government will be distributed. At that time, the officials and nobles in the city will set up porridge sheds outside the city. You can have a full meal before leaving. It can be considered a farewell. The government will send troops over to guard it. Everyone, remember not to snatch and cause trouble."

When the refugees heard that they could still have a full meal before leaving, most of them were teary-eyed and excited.

When Yu Shande saw this scene, he felt sorry for them.

It was Sixth Miss Qi, Third Miss Song, and Fifth Miss Tang who had joined forces with various families in the capital to raise money and food, asking the Graceful Heart Hall to help the refugees.

Some families were sincerely kind. Previously, they did not want to stand out because there were too many refugees and they could not help them. With the Graceful Heart Hall standing up, they were naturally willing to contribute generously.

Some families wanted to take the opportunity to build a good reputation for their daughters and were willing to fork out money and food.

There were also some families who were worried that there would be additional complications when they heard that the Imperial Court was moving the refugees to the North. It was better to avoid trouble and pay some money to send the refugees away.

Otherwise, if a large number of refugees gathered outside the city, they would not even be able to sleep well. They were afraid that the rebels would cause a riot and rebel.

In short, no matter what their goal was, the refugees could still eat their fill.

When Yu Shande returned home, he looked for Elder Yu.

Elder Yu was over 60 years old and had a white beard. After hearing his reason for coming, he dug his ears. "What did you say? Say it again!"

Yu Shande knelt on the ground with a thud. "Uncle, I've been in the Hanlin Academy for three years. It's time for me to find a proper job."

Elder Yu looked at him steadily for a while. "After you entered the Hanlin Academy, you're very valued by His Majesty. You've already been promoted to a steward of the Hanlin Academy. After enduring it, you can be promoted to a fifth-grade steward scholar or even a third-grade courtyard head scholar. The Hanlin Academy is your stepping stone. In ten years at most, you'll be able to enter the cabinet and become an elder. Your future won't be inferior to that of your second uncle."

All these years, the Yu Clan had produced many talents. Yu Shande was not too eye-catching. It was a coincidence that he was valued by the Imperial Court.

However, what made everyone's eyes widen was that he could stabilize the opportunity brought about by the emperor's kindness. Moreover, with the solid foundation he had built over the years, he quickly gained a foothold in the Hanlin Academy and opened up a path to success for himself.

In his imagination, Yu Shande only needed to stay in the Hanlin Academy for ten years, and the Yu Clan would have another elder.

Yu Shande shook his head. "This isn't my intention after studying hard for more than ten years. I want to take off my thin silk pants and change into coarse clothes. I want to starve with the refugees and eat grassroots together. I want to bring the 200,000 refugees outside the city to the North to help them settle down in the North."

His words were so shocking that Elder Yu couldn't react for a long time.

"Uncle, there are some things a gentleman can do and some things he can't do. Sister Yao'er is a woman, but she has the breadth of mind to help the world. I,

Yu Shande, am a dignified man. How can I tolerate the suffering of the commoners and all living beings but not do anything? My family has named me with the character for virtue. What is virtue? To establish kindness and show benevolence is virtue. Only by taking my name and doing good deeds can I establish myself as a person.” Yu Shande slowly stood up and bowed. “Uncle, please fulfill my wish.”

Elder Yu looked up at him. “Have you decided?”

Yu Shande nodded. “I’ve decided.”

Elder Yu asked again, “Don’t you regret it?”

Yu Shande insisted, “I definitely won’t regret it.”

“Okay.” Old Yu said one word and closed his eyes again. He was old and often felt exhausted. Sitting down made him want to doze off. He was not as ambitious as young people.

Yu Shande was stunned on the spot.

Elder Yu narrowed his eyes, his eyelids twitching as if he was about to fall asleep. “I won’t stop you, and the Yu Clan won’t stop you.”

Yu Shande lowered his head, not knowing what to say.

Elder Yu said, “Why does Emperor Gaozu have an extremely high evaluation of the Yu Clan? Why is he willing to use the Yu Clan but not put in an important position? Just because our Yu Clan killed the king? Then why did our Yu Clan kill the king?”

Yu Shande was stunned.

Elder Yu said, “The Yu Clan killed the king because the previous dynasty was heartless. The commoners had nowhere to live and the Yu Clan couldn’t bear to see the people suffer. Emperor Gaozu praised the Yu Clan for being loyal and strong. He used the Yu Clan, but it was endless. He knew that the Yu Clan was the Yu Clan of everyone in the world, but not the Yu Clan of the Yin Imperial Clan. One day, the descendants of the Yin Clan would be unfilial. How is one to know whether his descendants will be killed?”

Yu Shande was shocked.

Elder Yu said, “Teaching according to talent and according to ambition is the reason why the aristocratic families can always nurture many famous scholars. If you don’t want to do something, naturally, someone will do it. It doesn’t have to be you. Your ambition isn’t in the temple. You’re focused on the people and have the demeanor of an ancestor.” At this point, he said meaningfully, “If the Yu Clan only pursues fame and power, they won’t be able to pass it down.”

In a family, there were people who were famous, people who sought profit, people who loved power, and people who sought wealth...

Some were willing to plead for the people, while others were greedy for power.



Different paths led to the same destination!

Yu Shande bowed deeply. "I've learned my lesson."

Elder Yu closed his eyes and dozed off.

Yu Shande had a choice, but some people did not even have a choice.

Just like Yu Zongshen.

After Old Master Yu's death, other than not wanting to live, the orphan and widow could only live properly. Otherwise, in such a huge family, they would be eaten until not even their bones were left.

The family emphasized fairness, not justice.

Chapter 806 - 806: Open Gambit

What was fair?

The root of the matter was balance.

What was balance?

It was just for show.

Under the balance, some were shrewd and scheming, some were aggrieved, and some used their power for personal gain. However, as long as the overall benefits were not damaged, who would care?

There would always be bad people among a community.

When Yu Shande returned home, he opened a set of ragged clothes hidden in a box and looked at them for a long time.

From then on, Hanlin Academy Steward Yu Shande no longer existed. His hometown suffered a calamity and he fled into the capital with thousands of refugees.

... .

The news from the Imperial Court was sent in less than three days. It was in the hands of King Yue Fei of Liancheng, and it spread throughout the North and even the entire Great Zhou Dynasty at an astonishing speed.

Under the deliberate exaggeration of the Imperial Court, Princess Shaoyi had suddenly become a living Bodhisattva in the hearts of thousands of refugees. She had become a bright lamp that guided the desperate refugees who were waiting for death.

A large number of refugees began to rush to the North.

At the same time, Princess Shaoyi was in Liancheng. She had also joined forces with some retail investors in Liancheng to open up silkworm farms and settle the refugees in Fuzhen and Liancheng.

More than a hundred thousand refugees cried excitedly.

Everyone was crying. They were crying that they had been stranded all the way and had suffered the torture of hunger and cold. That was why they had fled to this place and were homeless from then on.

Now, someone told them this.

Princess Shaoyi wanted to promote sweet potato cultivation in the three provinces of Liaodong.

They could rely on raising silkworms and exchanging silk for food to support their families and settle down in this place where there was no drought.

Liancheng had little farmland and many forests. Even if they did not have farmland, Princess Shaoyi and King Yue Fei still opened a way out for them.

They wouldn't starve to death.

In the sorrowful atmosphere, someone shouted hoarsely, "May Princess Shaoyi live for a thousand years..."

It was as if a stone had caused a thousand ripples. People kept kneeling and shouting.

"May Princess Shaoyi live for a thousand years..."

"May King Yue Fei live for a thousand years..."

The refugees did not forget who had taken them in and provided them with food when they were in despair.

They would also not forget who planted the sweet potatoes that they relied on to survive every day.

Who was the one who gave them the medicine they had taken after they fell sick and the medicine to prevent the epidemic?

... .

However, the expressions of the heads of the Qiao, Zhang, Zhao, and Wan families were ashen. They took in refugees and settled them down to deal with internal and external problems. It was the national policy to strengthen the borders and resist external forces.

Princess Shaoyi had expanded the rules of raising silkworms and arranged for the refugees to follow the national policy.

The Imperial Court gave a clear order, requesting the full support of the nobles of the North.

Those who disobeyed the order would be dealt with for undermining politics.

The Imperial Court personally handed a butcher's knife to King Yue Fei.

In the future, King Yue Fei would not be controlled by the nobles because of his status as a vassal lord.

King Yue Fei controlled everything in the North, and those nobles who had once offended him would not have a good ending.

There was dead silence in the room.

The four of them controlled the silkworm business in Liancheng together. On the surface, they were in a cooperative relationship, but there were many conflicts in private. Whenever the four of them met, they would always quarrel.

This was the first time it had been so quiet.

Patriarch Qiao was anxious and couldn't stand the quiet and heavy atmosphere. "Speak. Aren't all of you quite eloquent? Why are you acting like mutes now?"

Patriarch Zhang glanced at him and stabbed him sarcastically. "If you're capable, speak. You don't even take the dignified Princess Shaoyi seriously."

Patriarch Qiao recalled what he had said previously. "She's the daughter of an external minister. She's really putting on the airs of a princess."

Immediately, his old face turned red. It was unknown if he was angry or upset. He subconsciously raised his eyebrows and was about to retort, but he swallowed his words.

Seeing that he was holding back his anger and his face had turned purple, Patriarch Zhao sneered. "The Imperial Court has issued a national policy to accommodate refugees, settle them down, and strengthen the internal and external affairs. They have also mentioned Emperor Gaozu. The person who led all of this is the Grand Secretary of the Hall of Literature, Elder Yu. What does this mean?"

Patriarch Qiao's face was ashen as he shut his mouth.

Why were they afraid of Princess Shaoyi previously but did not take her seriously?

That was because Princess Shaoyi was a woman. Even if she had a noble status, could she interfere in the court? As long as they did not offend her on the surface and respected the rules, what could a princess do to them?

But!

Princess Shaoyi had just come to the North and planned to expand the scale of raising silkworms and settle the refugees. The Imperial Court had issued the corresponding national policies, and the person who led everything was none other than Elder Yu, who had a high status in the Yu Clan.

They did not believe that all of this had nothing to do with Princess Shaoyi.

What did this mean?

This meant that Princess Shaoyi had a pivotal position in the Yu Clan.

It also showed how much the palace valued Princess Shaoyi.

This meant that Princess Shaoyi's current status was enough to affect the court.

Master Wan smiled bitterly and sighed softly. "Princess Shaoyi has really given the nobles of the North an opening gambit."

Master Zhang also said, "That's right. She has the Yu Clan in the court to pave the way for her, and King Yue Fei to support her in the North. She also has the support of millions of refugees behind her. Who dares to say anything bad about her? In the future, she will be successful in the North. No matter what she wants to do, the nobles have to hold their noses and make way for her. If necessary,

they even have to support her wholeheartedly. Otherwise..." At this point, a faint chill rose in his heart. "King Yue Fei is no longer the same as before. Moreover, there are tens of millions of refugees in the North. They can drown people even if one person spits once."

The aristocratic families valued their reputation.

A noble valued fame and fortune.

Words were terrifying. These words were closely related to the fame and fortune of the nobles. Once the commoners targeted the nobles, it would give King Yue Fei a chance to deal with them openly.

The person who really controlled the sharp weapon to deal with the nobles was Princess Shaoyi.

No one in the entire Great Zhou Dynasty dared to offend her.

Even the imperial family.

Patriarch Qiao looked impatient. "Tell me, what should we do now?"

Patriarch Zhao looked helpless. "Why don't we go to the county office together tomorrow and ask Lord Li to bring us to the courier station to meet Princess Shaoyi and show our loyalty? What do you think?"

To show their loyalty, they would just give Princess Shaoyi more money and food to help her settle the refugees.

There were already more than 150,000 refugees outside the city.

After the Imperial Court issued a series of national policies to accommodate the refugees, there were still a large number of refugees rushing to the North from the north. The northwest region had suffered a large-scale disaster. Only the three provinces of Liaodong had the ability to accommodate the refugees. The government's stock of food was limited, and King Yue Fei couldn't always use the army to provide relief to the refugees.

To put it bluntly, it was better to let the nobles pay for it.

Chapter 807 - 807: The Less Harmful of Two Bad Outcomes

Patriarch Wan shook his head. "It's already too late. If the Imperial Court hadn't issued a national policy, Princess Shaoyi might have accepted it if we had gone to show our loyalty to her. But now..." He shook his head again, his expression not looking too good. "With the national policy, the lives of the scholars are in Princess Shaoyi's hands. If Princess Shaoyi is dissatisfied with the crime of complying on the surface but disobeying on the inside, do you think the Imperial Court will believe in the scholars or Princess Shaoyi? Do the commoners believe in the scholars or Princess Shaoyi?"

The atmosphere darkened again, and the family heads regretted it greatly.

If they had known this would happen, they wouldn't have done it back then.

Patriarch Wan continued, "Go home and prepare money and food for Lord Li. You know very well how much you should prepare. Lord Li also knows in his heart and is more straightforward. All

these years, Lord Li has benefited a lot from us. Lord Li is sensible and has some dignity in front of Princess Shaoyi. Let him step in and put in a good word for him in front of King Yue Fei.”

Their ancestors had said it well. Every family had 10,000 kilograms of food, so there was no need to panic when there was food. Which large family’s granary did not exchange old food for new food every year?

Lord Li knew very well how much food each family had.

If they wanted Lord Li to intercede, the four families had to at least let Lord Li have the confidence to speak in front of King Yue Fei. They could not fool him.

Lord Li was not stupid. If they paid him too much money and food for him to intercede with King Yue Fei, they would be credited.

If they paid too little, they would be in trouble.

“The women and children in the family will go and set up a porridge shed outside the city to help the refugees. Don’t pretend like before. At the very least, make it big enough. Don’t give Princess Shaoyi an excuse to attack.”

“I heard that Princess Shaoyi likes incense and strange stones. You have to show filial piety to her. You’re too kind to her. Even if you can’t please Princess Shaoyi, you have to be humble and show your respect.”

None of them looked happy.

Patriarch Wan’s meaning was very clear. They had to be willing to spend money, food, and effort. Their lives were more important.

... .

The Imperial Court had used Emperor Gaozu as an example and issued a national policy. The nobles of the North had different reactions, but they were probably the same as the four families of Liancheng.

All of this was within Yu Youyao’s expectations.

It was impossible for the court officials not to know that letting Yin Huaixi interfere in the resettlement of the refugees was equivalent to letting go of the shackles restraining Yin Huaixi and letting him be free.

At that time, Yin Huaixi would have a chance to gather his troops in the North.

Yin Huaixi was extremely famous among the commoners, and it was suspected that he would have shocking contributions.

However, compared to Yin Huaixi gathering his troops in the North and having shocking contributions.

What was even more terrifying was the large-scale riots and uprisings initiated by a large number of refugees. It was the country that would be shaken. Such examples were common in history.

Of the two bad outcomes, they chose the less harmful one.

Now, tens of millions of refugees had a way out.

Yin Huaixi was no longer controlled by the nobles.

Yu Youyao finally heaved a sigh of relief. Ever since she came to the North, she had been planning non-stop.

At first, she was thinking about the situation in Liancheng and even the North.

Later on, when she saw Lord Li, she had to consider every word carefully. She had to control Lord Li from the beginning. As long as there was a sentence that Lord Li took advantage of, it was obvious who Lord Li would choose between a mere woman and the four families of Liancheng.

Not only could the memorial presented to the Empress Dowager not express the suspicion of interfering with the court, but it also had to guide the Empress Dowager and even the court officials to target the North for dealing with the refugees.

Not only could the letter to the Yu Clan not reveal Yin Huaixi's ambition, but it also had to guide Elder Yu to issue a national policy to Emperor Gaozu.

Be it the Empress Dowager, the court officials, or Elder Yu, they were all powerful people. They were also extremely scheming and not easy to fool.

As a woman, it was very difficult for Yu Youyao to control the entire situation of the court. However, she succeeded.

The next day, Yin Huaixi came to look for Yu Youyao.

Xie Jingliu came along.

After all, staying at the courier station was not like staying at home. Every time Yin Huaixi looked for Yu Youyao, he had to send someone to report it to Old Madam Xie first.

Old Madam Xie also knew that Yin Huaixi and Little Yao'er had the relationship of "cousins" when they were in the Yu Residence. Now that they had the "token" alliance, it was not appropriate to stop them.

However, Xie Jingliu was guarding against Yin Huaixi as if he was guarding against a thief.

Whenever Yin Huaixi looked for Yu Youyao, Xie Jingliu had to come over and keep an eye on her.

To put it nicely, it was like saying, "Not to mention that your marriage with Little Yao'er hasn't been officially decided yet. Even if it has been decided, you have to abide by the rules. It's fine if you meet or invite her, or even give her a private gift. However, it's impossible for a man and woman to be alone in the same room."

What could Yin Huaixi say? Yin Huaixi could only pinch his nose and accept it.

At this moment, Yu Youyao was standing under an old elm tree in the small courtyard. When she saw Yin Huaixi and her Third Cousin coming over, she pointed at the tree and said, "The elm tree is blooming. That's great."

Almost every family in the North had elm trees planted in front and behind their doors.

Yin Huaixi looked up at the trees. The elm trees produced flowers before leaves. “Before long, the elm leaves, elm, and elm bark will all be edible. The famine in the North will be alleviated soon, and no more refugees will starve to death.”

Elm trees were resistant to drought and could survive in desert areas. Since ancient times, there had been a saying in the north that an elm could relieve three droughts. If one planted an elm tree in their home, they would not be afraid of three years of drought.

There were many edible wild vegetables in the mountains.

However, the elm tree could fill one’s stomach, but not the other wild vegetables.

Xie Jingliu smiled. “By the way, I asked around outside today. Someone imitated Duke Zhang Wenzhong of the previous dynasty and brought more than 200,000 refugees gathered outside the capital to the North. On the way, they collected refugees when they encountered them, buried the dead when they encountered them, and entered the city alone when they encountered the city. They knocked on the doors of the wealthy families in the city one by one and begged them to provide food relief. No matter how unwilling the wealthy families were, they had to provide some food relief because of his status, family background, and official position. He asked as he traveled along the way. More than 500,000 refugees were willing to follow him.”

“Who is this person?” Yu Youyao’s eyes widened. Duke Zhang Wenzhong had experienced seven emperors in his life. After resigning and retiring, the Imperial Court could not hire him.

After a drought in the central Shaanxi plain, Duke Zhang Wenzhong, who was over 60 years old, came out of seclusion and became the deputy minister of the station in Shaanxi.

He had spent all his wealth to provide relief when the people were in trouble, and he would bury the dead when they were dead. Moreover, he had convinced the rich local families to provide food relief.

Later, he fell ill from overwork and passed away.

After his death, he was posthumously named Duke Wen Zhong, and the people mourned as if they had lost their parents.

They wrote a poem, “Sheep on Mountain Slope: Meditation on the Past at Tong Pass”, and left behind a famous sentence, “When dynasties rise, the people suffer. When dynasties fall, the people suffer.”

Xie Jingliu opened his fan. “You know this person too. He’s your brother, Yu Shande.”

Yu Youyao was stunned for a long time.

Her grandmother had a grudge against the Yu Clan, and she had always been strong. Her relationship with the clan was only average, and she did not interact much with the clan. She only had a good relationship with the Clan Chief’s wife and the Second Old Madam.

Chapter 808 - 808: Bearing the Burden for the People

Yu Shande was the son of the Clan Chief's wife. The thing that left the deepest impression on Yu Youyao was the imperial examination four years ago. He had entered the residence a few times to visit his grandmother. Once, behind the rockery, she had bumped into him and another brother, talking about the cheating in the imperial examination.

After a long while, Yu Youyao said, "I remember that he has already been promoted to the Hanlin Academy's Steward. He's a close minister of the emperor. After gaining experience in the Hanlin Academy, he can rise up the ranks and enter the cabinet directly. He's not inferior to Yu Zongshen back then." She lowered her eyelashes and said softly, "I'm not as good as him."

Everyone in the world praised her for being kind and a living Bodhisattva. However, compared to Yu Shande's book business and righteousness, she was far inferior.

Her kindness was within her ability.

Yu Shande's kindness was to care about the world and bear the burden for the people.

Yin Huaixi frowned. "You did more than him. It was you who mediated with the Imperial Court and obtained the support of the Imperial Court, forcing the nobles to fork out money and food. That's why I allowed a large number of refugees to flood into the North. You took the first 99 steps, and Yu Shande only finished the last step you didn't take."

Yu Youyao chuckled. "I don't have any intention of comparing myself to Brother De. I'm just expressing my admiration for his sincerity to Duke Zhang. It's rare in the world for someone to learn from a sage."

The scholars treated Duke Zhang as a sage, but how many people in this world dared to do as he did?

Xie Jingliu waved his fan. "Most scholars can't hide their faces and cherish their reputation. They respect Duke Zhang, but they don't dare to follow him. They're afraid that they'll imitate him and make people laugh. Even Yu Shande only planned to starve and freeze with the refugees in the beginning. He would eat grass roots, peel tree bark, and bring the refugees to the North. He just didn't expect to encounter more refugees along the way."

"The refugees who joined later did not have any food in their hands and often snatched the food of others. In addition, the Imperial Court sent troops to suppress them, causing many casualties. He tried his best to appease the refugees, so he had no choice but to give up on his reputation. He imitated Duke Zhang and entered the city when he encountered it, asking the rich families in the city for food relief."

"He's from a famous family and is the son of the Yu Clan Chief. He's a scholar on two lists, and he's a Shujishi. He's a scholar of the Hanlin Academy and a close confidant of the emperor. Although the city gates are closed everywhere and refugees are forbidden from entering, they can't stop him. Most of the rich families in the city can't offend him. They'll more or less have to provide some food."



Yu Youyao was a little curious. “You don’t seem surprised by Brother De’s actions at all.”

Yin Huaixi said, “There’s nothing to be surprised about. Isn’t it normal for the Yu Clan to produce a few virtuous people from the previous dynasty to the present? The reason why the clan educates the clansmen is to bring glory to their ancestors. For example, Yu Zongshen’s generous salary is a glory to his ancestors. If Yu Shande bears such a heavy burden for the people, isn’t it also a glory to his ancestors?”

A large family had both good and bad sides. The Yu Clan was considered decent on the outside and fair on the inside.

Although it was inevitable that there would be some benefits when it came to Madam Xie, in other words, to the Yu Clan, Madam Xie was the wife of the Yu Clan. Every clansman was contributing to the clan. As the saying went, the more strength one had, the more work they should do. Madam Xie had a lot of money. Naturally, she had to contribute more in this aspect.

From the perspective of the overall interests of the family, this was not wrong.

Madam Xie also understood.

If it weren’t for Madam Xie’s long-term vision back then, she would have taken the initiative to give the Yu Clan 30% of the profits.

Later on, how could Yu Youyao easily return to her mother’s clan?

Old Madam Yu was one thing, but after all, wasn’t it also because Madam Xie had formed a good relationship with the clan for her daughter?

If it weren’t for Madam Xie’s deep foresight back then, how could Yu Youyao maintain a good relationship with the Yu Clan, causing them to spare no effort to help Yu Youyao when she needed it?

Previously, they had helped her trip up the court and delay the Jiazhou Residence, so the Xie family and her had successfully evacuated Quanzhou.

Now, they had helped her achieve the “national policy”.

This was undoubtedly because of Yu Youyao’s noble status.

Wasn’t this also the attitude of the Yu Clan towards their clansmen?

Yu Youyao agreed deeply. “The refugees have a backbone and food. There will be fewer and fewer people who starve to death. The casualties caused by riots will also decrease. More and more people will survive. The tragedy of starving people will not happen again. This is really good.”

Although the national policy had been issued, it was still a big problem if the refugees could survive the journey to the three provinces of Liaodong.

The North was only 350 to 400 kilometers away from the three provinces of Liaodong. It was a journey that only lasted two to three days. However, the mountains in Liaodong were steep. Furthermore, the refugees would walk to the North on their own feet on an empty stomach. It was no different from gambling their lives.

Eating 100 grams of food per day could only ensure that they wouldn't starve to death. It wouldn't be enough to last them for a day of walking.

It was already fast to drag it out for half a month.

When a large number of refugees were together, they were a group of hungry trapped beasts. Exhaustion from traveling for a long time could easily cause anxiety and fear. Conflicts could erupt at any moment. A small argument and snatching might cause a large riot, causing a lot of casualties. There were also people who were weak and could not last long, causing them to die of illness or starvation.

After the national policy was adopted, this was what she was most worried about. However, she was far away in Liancheng and was helpless for a moment. She could only do her best and leave it to fate.

Unexpectedly, someone had done what she wanted to do but couldn't.

Yin Huaixi did not want to mention this anymore, so he got down to business. "Fuzhen and Lianzhen have each planned a million acres of silkworm farms. I've left the best land to you. The two towns will each have 500,000 acres. The rest will be divided between the soldiers under my name, the silkworm farmers in Liancheng, and the foreign merchants."

Fuzhen and Lianzhen were connected to Tai Mo Shan. The scale of the forest far exceeded two million acres. It was not completely surrounded because they considered that raising too many silkworms would destroy the natural advantages and environment for raising silkworms.

There were two million acres of silkworm farms, and Yu Youyao monopolized half of it. "Isn't that a little too much? Why don't I transfer a portion of it from my name to yours? No one said that vassal lords can't buy private property. They have to spend money to buy land after all. No one will say that you're abusing your power for personal gain. If you don't have time to manage it, I can help."

In the world, everything belonged to the king. Every mountain and piece of land in the Great Zhou Dynasty belonged to the Imperial Court. The government had the right to sell and buy the land and trees under its rule. Thirty percent of the profits from the sale would go to the government, and 70% would go to the treasury. If the Imperial Court needed to seize land one day, they would return the original price.

This was targeted at ownerless pieces of land.

For pieces of lands with owners, there was no need to go through the Imperial Court. The buyer and seller could negotiate on their own. When trading, they had to pay a certain amount of taxes to the Imperial Court.

Yu Youyao had joined forces with the retail investors for a win-win cooperation. She couldn't eat two million acres of forest land alone.

She wasn't a local. She could do business, but she couldn't cut off the local people's money. If there was money, they could earn it together. If they were competitive, the business wouldn't die.

Being too greedy would incur public anger.

Chapter 809 - 809: Focusing on Agriculture and Suppressing Trade

Yin Huaixi shook his head. "It's very complicated to raise silkworms, and I don't have the energy to do this. A million acres isn't much. Even the retail investors in the city have been oppressed by the four families for many years and have limited money and food. In the past few years, there has been a drought in the north, and the Liaodong area has also been affected a little. There won't be many people who have the ability and are willing to take the risk to buy forests and expand their silkworm farming."

"The soldiers in the army are suffering and have limited money. Their ability to buy capital won't be too high. Although this million acres is a lot, only you have the financial resources to buy it. Only you can guarantee that you can settle the refugees after buying the forest land."

The refugees did not have the ability to buy land to raise silkworms. In order to ensure that the refugees could be settled well, Yu Youyao had to have absolute say in the silkworm industry in Liancheng. Then, she could not have too few silkworm farms under her name. Each of the four families controlled nearly 400,000 to 500,000 acres of silkworm farms.

Yu Youyao nodded. "Alright, I'll discuss buying the silkworm eggs with the retail investors of the guild. The refugees will raise silkworms in my silkworm farm, and 30% of the harvest will belong to them. Seventy percent will be mine. I'll buy 30% of their silkworm cocoons at the market price in exchange for silver and food. As for the related contracts, after the refugees are settled in Fuzhen and Lianzhen, I'll sign a contract with each family and distribute a suitable number of silkworm eggs according to the population of each family."

This was decided after careful consideration and discussion with the two stewards of the silkworm manor under her name.

The North had taken in a large number of refugees, and a portion of them would be arranged to explore and grow sweet potatoes in a sparsely populated place.

A portion of the refugees would be settled in places suitable for raising silkworms in Liaodong.

The price of Chinese oak silkworms was higher than domestic silkworms, and the profits were very impressive. She couldn't let the profits from raising silkworms be higher than farming. Otherwise, everyone in the three provinces of Liaodong would raise silkworms. If no one farmed and produced food, they would have to buy food outside. If they couldn't be self-sufficient, they would be controlled by others. If there was a natural disaster, the commoners would only wait for death.

She had to make the profits of raising silkworms equal to the profits of farming.

Only by raising silkworms and farming could the North develop.

It was the national policy to focus on agriculture and suppress trade. They had to nip the seeds in the bud from the beginning.

Being able to keep 30% of the silk was already a lot.

Xie Jingliu looked at Yu Youyao deeply. "There have been a few strange droughts recorded in history. The most serious one affected almost ten areas. More than ten million people starved to

death, and more than ten million clueless refugees fled to other places. Not only was this a natural disaster, but it was also a man-made disaster.”

“At that time, the Imperial Court was very corrupt. Civil society organized a large-scale uprising and left the Imperial Court to establish a regime. The conflict between the two sides lasted for more than 20 years and affected the entire country, causing a fatal blow to agriculture at that time.”

“The commoners couldn’t recuperate and farm. In order to suppress the uprising, the Imperial Court wantonly collected food. In order to resist the Imperial Court, the rebel army also collected food from the commoners. The commoners didn’t have money or food. When the disaster arrives, they could only wait for death.”

His little cousin’s breadth of mind was not something ordinary people could compare to.

Xie Jingliu looked proud.

Yu Youyao nodded. “This time, the drought in the north is far from being as serious as the strange droughts recorded in history. However, even so, there are still tens of millions of refugees in the entire North, and there are four to five million refugees who have fled. At the bottom of it all, it’s still in Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Gansu. The merchant guild is huge and has suppressed agricultural development, causing the productivity in the North to be low and food production to decrease year by year.”

She had also learned her lesson. No matter what way she used to earn money, she had to create favorable conditions for agriculture.

Yin Huaixi smiled and nodded. “We’ll do as you say.”

Yu Youyao frowned. “It’s already the middle of February. I heard from the retail investors who raise silkworms that in the past, silkworm eggs had already begun to hatch at this time. It was only because the weather was colder this year that it was delayed. However, the silkworm eggs will start to hatch at the end of the month at the latest, so the resettlement of the refugees has to be completed as soon as possible. We can’t delay this season’s spring silkworms.”

Yin Huaixi said, “Don’t worry. The basic fortifications will be completed in half a month at most. It won’t conflict with raising silkworms. Yesterday, Lord Li came to look for me. The four families of the city stepped in and joined forces with the local rich families to donate a batch of money, food, tents, and other items to support the resettlement of the refugees.”

Lord Li first brought over the list of donations and the account book. In about ten days at most, everything recorded in the account book would be in place.

Yu Youyao was deep in thought. “That’s good too. The refugees will stay in the tents first. The silkworms will be raised on the trees, so there’s no need to build another place to raise them. As for the building of the silkworm farm, it won’t be a problem to find craftsmen in the future to build it slowly.” At this point, she smiled again. “There are also many people among the refugees who know about clay bricks. We can ask them to do the fortifications of the silkworm farm.”

She could only help settle the refugees. How they settled down in a foreign country and relocated depended on themselves.

From the looks of it, the refugees would be settled down in half a month at most. Yu Youyao couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief. "The four families are not careless."

Yin Huaixi smiled faintly. "After all, they're families who are deeply rooted in the local area. It's true that they're greedy, but they're not really stupid."

As she spoke, Xia Tao came over. After bowing to Yin Huaixi and Xie Jingliu, she said, "Young Miss, Lord Li sent someone over. The four families have specially prepared a generous gift for you."

Yu Youyao was a little surprised, but on second thought, she understood that this was the desire of the four families to live.

The four families were still considered sensible. As soon as the national policy was issued, they took the initiative to donate money, items, and food. Compared to the nobles who occupied Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Gansu, the four families were nothing. Yin Huaixi did not plan to attack them.

Yu Youyao smiled. "In that case, if we don't accept this 'big gift', it'll make them feel on tenterhooks and uneasy." She turned to look at Xia Tao. "Just accept it. I'll ask Lord Li to pass a message to the four families. In the future, the refugees will settle down in Liancheng. Please take care of them."

Whether they took care of the refugees or not was secondary. These words were originally meant to warn the four families not to fool them for a moment. At the same time, it was also to calm the hearts of the four families.

Xia Tao bowed and left the small courtyard.

As for how the four families reacted when they heard this, Yu Youyao did not care.

Yin Huaixi chuckled. "I've been busy patrolling the border recently. You've been in Liancheng for more than ten days, but I haven't had the chance to accompany you around. The weather has warmed up these past few days, and the spring light is just right. Tomorrow, I plan to go to Fuzhen and Lianzhen to patrol. Tai Mo Shan is there, and the scenery is not bad. Do you want to go over and take a look?"

As he spoke, he looked at Xie Jingliu. Seeing that Xie Jingliu did not object, he felt relieved.

Yu Youyao was a little tempted. In every dynasty, there was a tradition of taking a youth trip. Yu Youyao was the eldest daughter who had lost her mother, so she was more reserved than others. Her stepmother was in charge of the family. Thus, she had never participated.

However, news of her being in Liancheng had already spread. It seemed that many people were keeping an eye on the courier station. There would definitely be many inconveniences when traveling.

Chapter 810 - 810: Spring Outing

Yu Youyao shook her head. "I'm mourning..."

Xie Jingliu interrupted her. "The customs of the people of the North are not as good as in the capital. Since you're in Liancheng, you have to do as the Romans do and be more casual. You've bought an estate in Fuzhen and Lianzhen, so it's only right for you to go over and take a look at the resettlement of the refugees. If you still feel that it's inappropriate, call your Grandfather and the others along tomorrow. It's just to accompany your elders and relax. It won't affect anything."

Yin Huaixi smiled. "At the foot of Tai Mo Shan, there's a Puming Zen Temple. It's built according to the mountain's situation. There's a winding corridor with flying eaves and wings. It's a spectacular sight. I've booked a room in the temple. We can stay in the temple for a few more days."

Old Madam Yu bowed to Buddha, so it made more sense for Yu Youyao to go to the temple to offer incense and pray for her.

Yu Youyao had already thought of an excuse. She even mentioned her elders so that it wouldn't stop her from being filial. Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled. "Since it's already arranged, I'll accept it respectfully!"

As she was going on a spring outing, Yu Youyao looked very excited for the entire day. She instructed her maidservants to prepare food, incense, tools, and everything else.

Not long after, there were two large carriages.

At night, thinking about the spring outing, Yu Youyao couldn't help but feel a little excited. She tossed and turned until late at night before closing her eyes.

The next day, Yu Youyao got up at dawn. The sky outside was gray. The world seemed to be dyed with a layer of greenish-black fog, making it look light and spiritual.

Taking a deep breath, she felt a refreshing coldness in her nose. Yu Youyao shuddered, and even her mind cleared up.

Nanny Xu picked out a crepe myrtle flower dress from the box. "You're mourning, so it's not appropriate for you to be fancy. However, you can't be dull when you're outside. This crepe myrtle flower dress is an old one from last year. There are light purple and silver crepe myrtle flowers piled on the flower dress, diluting the beauty of the dress and making it look elegant and pleasant. It's suitable for a trip."

When one was mourning, there would be no new clothes for three years. The people of the North were more open-minded. As long as they did not wear fancy clothes and were not covered in pearls and jade, it was suitable for them to look fresh and elegant.

Yu Youyao nodded. "I'll take this!"

Nanny Xu combed Yu Youyao's hair into a single conch and added a light purple headband to hold her hair in place. Yu Youyao also wore a pair of small and exquisite light purple lilac pendants on her ears, and she no longer had any other accessories.

After washing up, Yu Youyao looked at the polished brass mirror. She was reflected in it. Her slightly hazy and beautiful face looked fresh and elegant.

There were two important entrances into the three provinces of Liaodong that were connected to the capital. One was Liancheng, which was connected to water transport, and the other was Longcheng, which was connected to land.

These two places were important places in the three provinces of Liaodong and often had important supplies.

When the Great Zhou Dynasty was strong, the surrounding 100 dynasties came to congratulate it. Small countries like Goguryeo often paid tributes in order to seek protection. Thus, Liancheng became the link between the two countries.

As a result, the scale of the Liancheng courier station was very large.

As a princess, Yu Youyao occupied the best courtyard in the courier station.

The others from the Xie Residence had also been arranged to occupy a small courtyard.

Yu Youyao followed the corridor and arrived at the small courtyard where the Xie family lived. She accompanied her grandmother and her Eldest Aunt for a simple breakfast before going to the front courtyard.

At this moment, it was already halfway through the morning. The sky outside was gray and bright, and the greenish-black color seemed to have been washed.

The carriage was already parked in the front courtyard.

Old Master Xie was old, and it wasn't appropriate for him to squander his time with his young age, so he didn't go.

Old Master Xie was also weak and didn't go.

Meanwhile, Old Madam Xie's heart ached for her granddaughter. In the past, she had been detained in the capital and had never gone out to play. She was very happy to bring her granddaughter out to play. She didn't find it troublesome or tiring at all.

Madam Wang completely doted on Yu Youyao as her biological daughter and was happy to bring her along to take care of her.

As a grandson, son, and cousin, Xie Jingliu consciously followed and took on the "heavy responsibility" of taking care of the family.

There was also Yin Huaixi.

As they were out to play, they were not in a hurry to travel. The carriage traveled and stopped. At noon, they simply found a place with good water and scenery and sat on the ground.

The servants helped build a simple stove.

Yu Youyao picked wild vegetables on the spot and took the ingredients. She fried a few simple dishes. They were also fresh and refreshing.

When they arrived at the Puming Zen Temple, the sun was already setting in the west.

It was getting late, so it wasn't appropriate for them to stroll around the temple. Yu Youyao, Old Madam Xie, and Madam Wang went to the room to settle down.

Yin Huaixi had booked a quiet small courtyard. There was a small pool in the small courtyard, which should have been filled with live water. The water was clear to the bottom, and there were colorful pebbles at the bottom. There were more than ten fishes with beautiful tails, and there was a rockery built in the middle of the pool. It looked quite beautiful.

The courtyard was quite big. There were three main rooms and six side rooms. It was enough for the women to live together.

After resting for the night, the next day, Yu Youyao welcomed the sun and went to the temple with Old Madam Xie and Madam Wang to offer incense to pray for her deceased relatives, elders, and brothers in the family. At the same time, she strolled around the temple.

After returning to the room, Old Madam Xie said, "King Yue Fei wants to bring you to patrol the assets. Bring a few maidservants along. We won't go with you." At this point, she was a little hesitant. "I know that you and King Yue Fei used to be 'cousins' and have always been close. However, the two of you will be engaged in the future. After all, it's a little different from before. There's no need to abide by the rules of men and women. However, you still have to abide by some rules when it comes to love."

It was common for women to get married at the age of 13 or 14. Empress Zhangsun had married Li Shimin at the age of 13. She should be reminded of this.

Old Madam Xie continued, "You've been raised since you were young, so I don't have to say much about this. However, you're still young and haven't experienced this before. It's inevitable that you'll be muddle-headed because of your ignorance."

She was already especially relaxed.

With Yu Youyao's status as a princess, the restrictions of the worldly etiquette could be relaxed a little.

She and Yin Huaixi had been close in the past. In the past few years in the Yu Residence, it had always been Yin Huaixi who treated her well. As an elder, Old Madam Xie had mixed feelings towards Yin Huaixi. On the one hand, she was grateful to Yin Huaixi for taking good care of her granddaughter and sparing no effort to ensure her safety. On the other hand, she also felt that Yin Huaixi had long had ulterior motives towards her granddaughter and was secretly angry.

However, she was unwilling to be a bad person and did not allow Yu Youyao to get close to Yin Huaixi.

Yu Youyao's cheeks heated up. She couldn't help but lower her head and explain softly, "My Nineteenth Brother is a polite person."

Old Madam Xie gritted her teeth. "Alright, as long as you know what you're doing."

He was pretending to be polite and obedient, but he was too scheming. He could always make his rude and unruly behavior sound dignified, making the Old Masters angry, but they couldn't do anything to him.

She even suspected that Yin Huaixi's brain had been completely used on Little Yao'er.