

## All Hail 841

Chapter 841 - 841: Frivolous?

“Then be gentle... It hurts, it hurts so much...” Yu Youyao’s face turned pale. Bean-sized sweat kept rolling down her forehead, and she let out a painful whimper.

It was too painful.

Hearing her hoarse voice, which was trembling in pain, and her turbid cries, Yin Huaixi subconsciously held his breath and slowed down. “It’ll hurt a little more at first, but it’ll ease a lot later. Bear with it a little longer, and I’ll be fine soon.”

In fact, the massage had to be done for half an hour to achieve the best effect.

“It hurts too much. No, no, no.” Yu Youyao fell onto the cloak, her body trembling and cowering uncontrollably. She couldn’t help but cry bitterly. Her broken voice had a mellow trembling sound, and a sobbing sound came from her throat. “No, it hurts. I don’t want you to massage me. Let go quickly, sob...”

As soon as she cried, Yin Huaixi panicked and quickly comforted her. “It’s better to deal with painful things quickly. It won’t hurt so much next time. Otherwise, you’ll still have to suffer.

“It’s none of your business. Go away. It hurts...” Perhaps it was because it was too painful, but Yu Youyao couldn’t help but exert strength, wanting to retract her foot. However, Yin Huaixi wouldn’t let her. She was furious and pushed her leg forward, but she accidentally kicked his face.

It was very sudden!

The air immediately froze, and the room fell into a dead silence.

Yu Youyao was shocked and felt a little guilty. She trembled as she lay on the cloak. There were tears in her eyes, and her eyelashes were stained with tears. Her eyes were red, and she looked aggrieved, as if she had been bullied.

Yin Huaixi licked his face, which had been kicked, with his tongue. It wasn’t very painful, but he suddenly felt an indescribable emotion.

It was quite complicated.

When he rubbed her foot, it was so painful that she wished she could die on the spot. However, now that Yin Huaixi had let go, Yu Youyao really felt that her foot did not hurt so much anymore.

She felt that she didn’t know what was good for her, so she quickly sat up straight. With the intention of covering it up and trying to salvage the situation, she took the initiative to hand her foot to Yin Huaixi. “Here, continue rubbing. It’s better to deal with painful things quickly. This time, I’ll definitely endure it and not move. I definitely won’t kick you again.”

She had never thought about whether it was polite or not.

Once etiquette was broken, it became insignificant.

Her injury was more serious than a sprain and needed a doctor to treat it. In the wilderness, a doctor couldn't come over immediately. If she waited a little longer, the pain would increase.

Yin Huaixi wasn't that kind of person who knew that she had sprained her ankle, yet kept talking about the rules and etiquette, ignoring her pain.

Yin Huaixi looked at the tender little feet in front of him. Although they were not as fair as before and were swollen, but...

The smooth touch seemed to still be in his palm. His fingers trembled, and details that he hadn't noticed before immediately rushed into his mind.

He suddenly thought of something. "The emperor is desolate and has been exhausted for a long time. Every time he held the imperial consort's foot, he would explode with desire!"

Seeing that his gaze was deep and he did not make a move, Yu Youyao felt even more guilty. "Are... Are you angry?"

"No." Yin Huaixi quickly dispelled the dirty thoughts in his mind. He held her feet and looked at them carefully for a while. He had originally wanted to see if her feet had stopped swelling after rubbing them.

However, his mind was racing uncontrollably.

The Nine Flowers Jade Dew Cream reduced swelling and pain. Its effect on blood circulation was not bad. After massaging her for about half an hour, the swelling had already subsided a little.

Yu Youyao's feet were thin, and the back of her feet were naturally curved. The soles of her feet were like a crescent moon. Even though they were still swollen, they still looked very petite. Her ten toes were very round and slightly curled. The toenails were a little green from the blood, but they were still very beautiful.

He could almost imagine that her feet were originally weak and boneless like a bamboo shoot. They were thin and sharp, and elegant.

He couldn't think about it anymore.

However, Yin Huaixi frowned and blurted out the doubts in his heart, "Why are your feet so small?"

The air immediately froze.

These words were frivolous and rash. Yu Youyao's face immediately turned red, and she looked embarrassed and angry. She kicked her legs hard, trying to retract them, but he held them tightly. "You, let go of me."

Yin Huaixi wished he could slap her on the spot. "Uh, that's not what I meant. It's just that foot binding isn't allowed in the Great Zhou Dynasty. Your feet are so small. Is it..."

Women's slender feet were naturally enchanting. They were decorated with gold and were called "lotus feet" as a form of praise. The men knew their mysteries well and were even more interesting. They exaggerated it wantonly and advocated the beauty of feet.

To this day, there were still women who bound their feet.

Only then did Yu Youyao understand that he was worried about this. She quickly lowered her head. "No, we can't bind our feet in the residence, but women's feet are not beautiful if they're too big. When we were young, the nanny who raised us asked us to wear shoes that are half an inch (one centimeter) smaller than our feet."

Yin Huaixi did not look too good. "Even now?"

Yu Youyao nodded and said, "We only wear such shoes at home. When we go out, we will wear suitable shoes. We only wear soft shoes in our rooms. The goal of doing so is to curl the toes slightly and not squeeze them. Usually, we don't walk around much at home. We also have a medicinal bath every day. Nanny will even massage our feet."

When the toes were slightly curled, they revealed a sharp and thin aesthetic. The technique of pinching the feet could modify the feet without hurting them. It could even have the effect of nourishing the feet. It was just a method of molding the feet.

It was just like how Nanny Xu had molded her bones for her. Not only could it improve her bones and body, but it could also improve her muscles and bones. It was also beneficial to her body.

Women had to be well-mannered, elegant, and polite. The aristocratic families also valued women very much and viewed foot binding with disdain. They had their own confidence and arrogance, and they valued the upbringing of women more. They did not want their daughters in the family to become tools to please others, but true talented women.

Yin Huaixi understood when he heard this, and his expression softened a little. "If it's uncomfortable to wear shoes like this, change to suitable shoes in the future. You don't have to suffer."

Yu Youyao's embarrassment did not dissipate. She nodded slightly and asked in a small voice, "Are you done?"

Previously, she had been in too much pain, so she did not think much of it. She only hoped that Yin Huaixi could really help her relieve the pain.

At this moment, the pain had eased a little. Seeing that her feet were in Yin Huaixi's hand, Yu Youyao couldn't help but feel shy and embarrassed. She began to worry about rules and etiquette again.

"It's not as swollen as before, but it's still bruised and bleeding. I have to massage it for a while more." Yin Huaixi pulled away from the abrupt thought in his mind and applied a layer of ointment on her feet. With the smoothness of the ointment, he repeated his previous actions.

However, his heart was no longer as calm as before.

The slender foot in his hand was smooth and beautiful, like a ball of soft jade. That smooth and delicate touch seemed to melt in his palm.

A surge of heat rushed to his head, and he suddenly had the urge to rub and play with it. He had to use all his strength to suppress this ridiculous thought.

If Yu Youyao paid attention to him, she would realize that Yin Huaixi's ears were red.

Unfortunately, Yu Youyao was enduring the pain and was not in the mood to pay attention to this. The pain was a little better than before, but it was still very painful. She let out a small whimper from her throat and tried her best to endure it.

Gradually, she felt that Yin Huaixi's hand that was holding her foot was a little hot. It was hot with sweat, and for no reason, it was so hot that the soles of her feet were numb. The numbness crawled along her calves like ants, making her body go limp.

The process of enduring was too difficult.

Yin Huaixi suddenly remembered that once, when his father had brought them up the mountain to play, his mother had accidentally sprained her ankle. As his father massaged his mother's feet, he had even joked to make her happy.

Hence, he cleared his throat. "In the past, there were two brothers living in a village. The two brothers were both old enough to get married, but there was no girl in the village that they liked. The two brothers decided to look outside the village. One day, the two of them passed by a village and bumped into a girl at the entrance."

Yu Youyao's eyes widened. For a moment, she forgot that her feet hurt. She quickly asked, "Is that girl especially beautiful? Did both brothers like that girl at the same time and want to marry her?"

She had already imagined a scene of two brothers competing for a woman.

Yes, that was what it said in the book.

Yin Huaixi was amused when he heard this. He shook his head and continued, "The Eldest Son felt that this girl was the person he wanted to find. In contrast, the Second Son felt that this girl didn't look very good and planned to continue looking elsewhere."

Ah?! Why was it different from what she had expected? Yu Youyao quickly said, "What happened after that?"

As Yin Huaixi told the story, his hands did not stop massaging her. "The Eldest Son asked the local people about that girl. As she wasn't good-looking, no one had ever proposed to her, and she had received a lot of gossip. However, he didn't care and asked about the local tradition of proposing."

"The locals told him that when a man proposed, he had to use cows as a betrothal gift. Ordinary girls only needed one or two cows. Virtuous and beautiful girls needed four or five cows, and the most they needed was nine cows. Such girls were like fairies. There were no such girls in the area at all, and no one had ever given nine cows."

Yu Youyao couldn't help but ask, "How many cows did the Eldest Son use to marry the girl?"

Yin Huaixi revealed, "The Eldest Son bought nine cows and drove the cows to propose the next day."

"Ah?!" Yu Youyao was shocked. Could this be a story of blind love?

Yin Huaixi lowered his head and continued, "He knocked on the door of the young lady's house. When the young lady's father found out why the Eldest Son had come, he was very shocked. He quickly told the Eldest Son that his daughter was just an ordinary young lady, and to just give them one or two cows. The villagers would laugh at her if he sent so many cows over."

Yu Youyao listened attentively, and her attention shifted to the story.

Yin Huaixi couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief. "The Eldest Son said, 'Your daughter is the best girl in the world. I think she's worth nine cows. Please accept her.' After his fruitless persuasion, in order to marry her off, the father could only agree."

"After he got married, the Eldest Son always treated his wife as the best girl in the world. Five years later, the Second Son still hadn't found a girl he was satisfied with, so he could only return to his hometown. He walked into the village and saw a girl who looked like a fairy at the entrance. He couldn't help but use the excuse of asking about his brother to go forward and talk to her. The girl brought the Second Son to the Eldest Son. The brothers were very happy to reunite after a long time. The Second Son asked the Eldest Son why he didn't see his sister-in-law."

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment. "Could that fairy-like girl be the wife whom the Eldest Son married back then?"

Yin Huaixi nodded. "The Eldest Son said, 'You've already seen her, right? The person who brought you back just now was your sister-in-law.' The Second Son couldn't believe it no matter what and asked. 'Brother, but you said that your sister-in-law was the same as before.'"

Yu Youyao was also at a loss. "Why is it that in the Second Brother's eyes, his sister-in-law has become a fairy? In the Eldest Son's eyes, his wife has never changed."

Yin Huaixi continued, "The more the Second Brother thought about it, the stranger he felt, so he went to look for his sister-in-law. His sister-in-law smiled and said, 'Before I met your brother, everyone, including my parents and relatives, felt that I was ugly and not worth a cow. Even I thought so.'"

"However, your brother felt that I was worth nine cows. As time passed, even I thought that I was worth nine cows. Unknowingly, I had become like this."

Yu Youyao was enlightened. Appearance came from the heart!

A person's life was not fixed. A person's appearance and personality would also change according to their heart. The human heart changed according to the environment a person was in and the people they interacted with.

Yin Huaixi said gently, "In the Eldest Son's heart, his wife had always been the best girl in the world, so he felt that his wife has never changed. She's still the most beautiful girl. She was in the past, is now, and will always be. She wouldn't change just because time passed and her face gradually changed. This also made his wife firmly believe that she's worthy of nine cows, so she became the woman who is worth nine cows, the person she was supposed to be."

Yu Youyao was stunned. She and Yin Huaixi were in the story itself.

In everyone's eyes, this stupid, mischievous, and uneducated little girl was treated like a treasure by her "cousin" who was living under someone else's roof. As time passed, she also became what a treasure should be.

Yin Huaixi lowered his head. "In my heart, you're the best girl.

Yu Youyao's heart trembled as she made up for what he had yet to say in her heart. It had been like this in the past, now, and ever since. It would not change because of the passage of time.

Since she was favored by a person, she was willing to be generous for the rest of her life.

Yin Huaixi lowered his head and massaged her for half an hour. The bruise on her ankle had already faded. Her foot was still swollen, but her slender and beautiful appearance was also revealed.

He had suddenly told her about this piece of history to divert his attention and Yu Youyao's attention.

"The massage is already done." Yin Huaixi tore off a piece of cloth from her skirt and wrapped it around her feet before finally letting go.

There was still the beauty of the soft jade in his palm, making him feel a little disappointed and relieved.

Only then did Yu Youyao suddenly realize that the massage had ended, and the sweat on her body had never stopped. The hair at her temples was even drenched.

Yu Youyao's entire body was covered in sweat. All the strength in her body seemed to have been drained by the pain just now. Her sitting body couldn't help but fall.

Yin Huaixi quickly reached out and pulled her into his arms. "Are you feeling better?"

Chapter 843 - 843: Hostage

Yu Youyao's face was pale as she nodded weakly. "It doesn't hurt so much anymore." Her fingers tugged at his sleeve, relying on him as she had when she was young. "Don't worry."

Yin Huaixi nodded and took a handkerchief from her waist to wipe the sweat off her forehead. "Don't walk on the ground for the next few days. After soaking in the medicinal bath every morning, noon, and night, massage your foot with medicinal oil for 15 minutes. You'll recover in about five to six days. In the future, you'll be completely fine after recuperating for a few more days."

"Okay!" Yu Youyao nodded.

Yin Huaixi picked her up by the waist. "The village is very chaotic, so I don't want subject you to jerking motions. In addition, there are still many things to deal with. I'll send you down the

mountain first. The princess's phoenix carriage is waiting at the foot of the mountain. You'll be more at ease with a maidservant serving you."

They put on a complete show. On the second day after Yin Shi disguised herself as a "young miss of a wealthy family" and set off first, Princess Shaoyi's phoenix carriage was also escorted out of the city by the You army and headed towards Anshan.

The carriage traveled for an entire day until they arrived at the foot of the mountain at night.

At this time, it matched the time of the "mountain bandit attack" and the "You Army suppressing the bandits".

Yu Youyao was exhausted, sleepy, and exhausted. She did not even have the strength to speak. She nodded slightly and leaned into his arms. Soon, she fell asleep.

Yin Huaixi looked down at her. Her ugly makeup complemented her gloomy expression and was even a little scary. She was originally a precious little girl. After leaving the Yu Residence, she had suffered a lot along the way. Her wisdom, knowledge, and horizons had grown. Her days were much more carefree than before, but he knew that Yu Youyao yearned for a stable life.

However, he couldn't give her such a life at the moment.

Chun Xiao was waiting outside the house. When he saw Yin Huaixi carrying Young Miss out, she quickly bowed.

...

Yin Huaixi figured out the terrain in this area and brought Yu Youyao down the mountain in less than an hour.

The escort army set up camp in a relatively open area. There was a fire in the camp and torches. The princess's phoenix carriage was parked among the layers of guards.

The four-wheeled carriage, which had two wheels at the front and back, was covered in a luxurious canopy, like a small moving house. The long carriage was carved with phoenixes, flowers, and plants, making it beautiful. It was not sealed. The carriage was also inlaid with gold and jade. There were two pillars at the front and back, and the four pillars supported a large curtain that naturally hung down, blocking many peeping gazes. Jewelry and jade surrounded the carriage. When the carriage moved, pearls and jade clashed, and rings and pendants clanged. As the carriage moved up and down and made sudden turns on the terrain, they played their own movement.

It was very luxurious.

The emperor had six horses, dukes had four horses, senior officials had three horses, soldiers had two horses, and commoners had one horse. As a princess, Yu Youyao enjoyed the etiquette of riding four horses and riding a four-wheeled carriage.

With four wheels and four horses, it would be more stable and not too bumpy.

Yin Huaixi personally carried Yu Youyao into the carriage.

The interior of the carriage was even more extravagant. There was a folding screen in the carriage, and outside was a place for activities. Behind the screen was a soft couch for resting.

Nanny Xu was outside the carriage, asking Chun Xiao about what had happened in the mountains. When she saw Yin Huaixi leave the carriage, she quickly bowed.

Yin Huaixi mentioned that Yu Youyao had sprained her ankle. Then, he instructed, “Don’t let her step on the ground for the next few days. Feed her the medicinal soup that can improve one’s blood circulation and disperse stasis, and soak her in it. Couple it with medicinal oil that can nourish her muscles and meridians. You have to massage her three times a day. Her tendon is torn, so you have to pay attention to your massage method. Use the flat pushing method to help reset the position of her fascia. Her diet also has to be light and nourishing. Her bones and tendons have to be nourished. She can’t eat meat or fish during the mourning period, so she should eat more beans, fresh milk, and some fresh fruits. She has to rest more usually...”

This explanation was detailed. Nanny Xu agreed with a smile.

After explaining everything, Yin Huaixi returned to the stockade.

At this moment, General An Yuan had already attacked the stronghold. The hostages were gathered in an open area with a few soldiers guarding the side.

Huang Wenxian had a list and was interrogating the hostages.

Seeing Yin Huaixi come over, the soldiers immediately knelt on one knee and cupped their hands. “Greetings, Your Highness.”

The hostages immediately knelt down in panic. Only then did they realize that they had really been saved, and the person who had saved them was the God of War of the North, King of the North Yue Fei.

Yin Huaixi raised his hand, and the soldiers immediately stood up. However, the hostages kneeling on the ground were still kneeling.

Huang Wenxian walked over. “There are a total of 142 hostages in the stronghold. Among them, 86 are women and children, and 56 are young and strong. Most of them are villagers at the foot of the mountain, and only a few of them are from merchant families who were passing by...”

He handed the name list to Yin Huaixi.

Yin Huaixi flipped through it and had an idea. “Have you interrogated their identities?”

Huang Wenxian nodded. “There’s no problem for the time being. When the government comes over, we’ll further verify their identities. I guarantee that no mountain bandits will deceive us.”

Yin Huaixi returned the list and swept his gaze across over a hundred hostages below. “These bandits fled from Shanxi. After the bandits are eliminated, verify your identities. I’ll make the decision and return the assets that belong to you as appropriate.”

The reason why he said that he would return their assets as appropriate was because the mountain bandits had definitely consumed a portion of their supplies. It was impossible for him to compensate them for their losses out of his own pocket.

There were soft cries from the crowd, and then many people cried with them. There were even people who wailed. The scene was heartbreaking.



After appeasing the hostages, Yin Huaixi and Huang Wenxian went to count the treasure vault.

Huang Wenxian said, "There are two treasuries in the mountain. One is on the surface and the other is secret. The treasury on the surface is used to store the resources that were plundered. The bandits registered the looted assets and put them into the treasury. The resources that are used were also registered. The account book is in my hands. Meanwhile, the other secret treasury is in a very secret cellar in the Chief's house."

Huang Wenxian had to go up the mountain first. In addition to further ensuring the Little Princess Consort's safety, he also wanted to keep the treasures in the mountain.

Yin Shi created chaos in the stronghold. She was the first to find the location of the treasure vault. Then, she obtained the key and account book immediately.

The two of them first went to the treasury on the surface. There were messy piles of gold, silver, jade, and gems. There were a lot of resources, and a few soldiers were already counting them.

Then, they went to the secret cellar in the Chief's house.

The torch lit up the pitch-black dark cellar. There were five large boxes inside. Huang Wenxian stepped forward and opened the boxes. Immediately, the room was filled with dazzling pearls and jade.

Among them, there were four boxes that were all filled with good pearls, jade, and gems. There were also some precious calligraphy and paintings. Only one box was filled with gold ores.

The truly powerful mountain bandits were all people who knew their stuff. They knew that compared to pearls and jade, some precious calligraphy, paintings, and books would be more valuable.

Yin Huaixi was a little surprised, then he smiled. "It seems that the wealth that these bandits have accumulated over the years is all here. I've benefited."

Chapter 844: Lucky Star

Shanxi was connected to a trade route. There were hundreds of thousands of mountain bandits within a hundred thousand miles. Not only did they rob passing merchant groups, but they also colluded with merchants to obtain some private salt, mines, and other businesses. Naturally, they were worth a lot.

Since the bandits had planned to escape to this place, they must have brought their assets.

Huang Wenxian smiled until his eyes narrowed. "Isn't that so? Just this batch of gold, silver, and treasures is worth a lot of money, not to mention that there's a big gold mine in the back mountain."

Most of the items in the treasury on the surface had to be returned to the victims. A portion of the items that belonged to the deceased had to be taken out as compensation for the hostages. Only then could the rest be taken by the army. It was negligible.

Meanwhile, everything in this secret vault belonged to them.

The 500,000 You soldiers had been poor for many years. Now that they had suddenly become rich, the surprise was too big. Huang Wenxian's legs were swollen from pinching them, and he finally felt a sense of reality.

Huang Wenxian sighed with emotion. "Our Little Princess Consort is really a lucky star."

After King Li of Zhou's rebellion, His Highness regained control of the You army. In the past few years, the Imperial Court had not owed the army any more money. His Highness had managed many businesses under his own name, and the You army did not lack money. This was only on the surface.

His Highness's goal was huge, but he was still a little short of money in secret. It was all thanks to the Little Princess Consort's donation of clothes, food, and medicine that they had more money to buy armor and good equipment.

Yin Huaixi was pleased by Huang Wenxian's words. A low laugh came from his throat. "Yao Yao is thin-skinned. Don't let this slip in front of her."

Huang Wenxian was speechless when he saw Yin Huaixi's smug expression.

Yin Huaixi stepped forward and took out a piece of gold ore from the box. He held it in his hand to observe it and weighed it. "It's indeed very valuable."

Huang Wenxian frowned. "The commotion caused by suppressing the bandits is not small. Once the government interferes, it won't be easy to hide the matter of the vein. There are also many people in the stockade. If word gets out..."

Yin Huaixi's expression was indifferent, and his voice was extremely cold. "It can't be leaked. For someone like you, when you found out that there was a gold mine in the mountain, you tried your best to hide it and wanted to keep it for yourself to prevent more people from knowing, let alone these mountain bandits who want money and don't care about their lives. There definitely won't be more than 30 people who know about the existence of the gold mine."

Huang Wenxian was stunned for a moment. He looked at the box of gold ores in the secret vault and suddenly understood.

Gold ores were very difficult to mine. So far, the mountain bandits had only mined one box. Thinking of the traces of the gold mine and the depth of the mining, it could be inferred that the discovery of the gold mine had definitely occurred less than a month ago. It was obvious that very few people had participated in the mining.

The soldiers who had disguised themselves as servants were locked up alone as soon as they entered the mountain. It could be inferred that the mountain bandits felt that the mining progress was too slow and planned to hide it from others. They planned to rob some young and strong laborers for their secret mining and kill them after that. That way, nothing would go wrong.

However, before they could implement it.

Yin Huaixi said calmly, "First, interrogate the mountain bandits in the stronghold. Draw up a list of the mountain bandits and the crimes they committed. Leave dozens of mountain bandits who don't

know anything and haven't killed anyone in their hands to be executed by the government. Then, burn the stronghold."

Among the mountain bandits, there were only a hundred people who had fled from Shanxi. The other three to four hundred people were all gathered along the way. Most of them were refugees. Some joined voluntarily, while others were forced to join.

Some people's hands were covered in blood, but many people were only helping the wicked. According to the laws of the government, although they were guilty, their crimes did not warrant death.

Yin Huaixi said calmly, "Only dead people keep secrets."

With just a casual sentence, it had already decided the lives of three to four hundred people. No wonder they had to send the Little Princess Consort down the mountain first.

Huang Wenxian held his breath. "If the government asks..."

Although Lord Li was sensible, he definitely had to ask about such a big matter. If he was too perfunctory, it would inevitably arouse suspicion and it would backfire.

Yin Huaixi said slowly, "Tell him that these bandits fled from Shanxi and committed countless murders. I have a copy of the dossier with the background of the bandits in my hands. Send a copy to Lord Li. He's a smart person. He'll definitely be willing to take over and deal with ordinary bandits. Once the bandits are involved, he won't dare to get involved."

He had a group of people under him who specialized in taking the trade route in Shanxi. They knew more about the mountain bandits entrenched in Shanxi.

In addition, there were also people who had befriended the mountain bandits. They were all on the edge of a knife. Who wouldn't know about the situation of this group of mountain bandits?

The news could be easily obtained.

This group of bandits had a powerful background. Ordinary county offices did not dare to interfere.

Huang Wenxian continued, "How should we arrange those hostages? After the government takes over, it's inevitable that they'll interrogate the hostages. If any of them participated in the mining..."

Yin Huaixi thought for a moment. Considering that Yu Youyao was very concerned about the hostages, he said, "We'll take over the hostages. The reason is that this group of mountain bandits is extremely vicious. In order to prevent the mountain bandits from acting as hostages by mixing in with the hostages and trying to hide, before their identities are verified, the You army will temporarily take over. In addition, hand the list of the people you interrogated previously to Lord Li. With so many hostages, it's impossible for Lord Li to ask everyone. With this list, you can just arrange for dozens of people who are indeed fine to be handed over to Lord Li."

Huang Wenxian thought about it carefully and felt that this method was very appropriate. The identity of these bandits had become the best cover. "How should they be arranged after this?"

Yin Huaixi was straightforward. "Let's warn them first. Don't tell anyone about what happened in the stronghold. If anyone among the hostages participates in the mining, arrange for them to work in

the mine after that and they can also earn an income. If they don't, escort them home after returning their assets."

The overall arrangements were also very meticulous.

Huang Wenxian had an idea.

Yin Huaixi said calmly, "I'll leave the matter of the gold mine to you. Pick a few people from the army who know how to survey the mineral veins and come over to carefully investigate the size and direction of the gold mine. Then, investigate if there are other mineral veins in the mountain. After that, design a mine path and arrange for manpower, facilities, mining, refining, transportation, and so on. You have to choose people you trust to participate. If it's possible to reduce how many people know about this, that's good. This is to prevent more people from complicating matters."

Huang Wenxian said, "Don't worry, I know the severity of the matter."

...

The commotion in the village lasted the entire night.

When Yu Youyao woke up, it was already almost seven o'clock. Her sprained ankle was still swollen and a little painful, but it was not as painful as yesterday. The bandage on her foot had been changed to clean cotton cloth, and her foot had been bandaged again. Her entire foot was wrapped like a dumpling, and only her toes were exposed, making it easier for her to breathe. This was to stabilize the wound so that she would not hurt her foot again and cause a second injury.

The injuries on her wrist had also been treated again.

For some reason, Yu Youyao recalled the scene of Yin Huaixi pinching her feet and helping her with the massage. She couldn't help but blush, feeling that she was too undignified.

Chapter 845: Someone from the Government

Even though she had her parents' orders and the matchmaker's words, she was not married after all. How, how...

She pounded her little head a few times in frustration. She must be in so much pain that she had become stupid.

At this moment, Nanny Xu entered the carriage. "You're awake!"

Yu Youyao sat up straight and quickly asked, "How's the clearing of the mountain bandits?"

Nanny Xu nodded. "Last night, there was a fire on the mountain. In order not to worry you, His Highness specially sent someone down the mountain to report and reassure you. His Highness is still in the mountain, so we don't know the details."

Yu Youyao's heart tightened. "Have all the hostages in the stronghold been saved?"

Nanny Xu said, "Yin San has escorted the hostages down the mountain early in the morning and arranged for them to be not far from the camp. These bandits are very cunning. Until the hostages' identities are verified, they'll be temporarily guarded by the You army. Miss, don't go near that place."

Yu Youyao was overjoyed. “By the way, have the officials arrived? Has there been any news?”

Nanny Xu shook her head. “The government sent someone over in advance to send a message. They said that Lord Li has brought 500 people and is on his way. He won’t arrive until around noon.”

From the looks of it, when the officials arrived, everything in the mountain would be settled, and the matter of the gold mine could be covered up. Yu Youyao was finally relieved.

Nanny Xu helped Yu Youyao put on her clothes. “Girl, you’re really worrisome. You’re really too bold. Exterminating bandits is a man’s business. Why are you involved as a woman? You have scruples and your own opinions. Do you know how worried His Highness, who’s far away, is? How can you know that the problem you’re worried about can’t be resolved by His Highness?”

Yu Youyao was confused, but she was a bystander.

Indeed, there was a turbulent undercurrent inside and outside the court. It was not appropriate to complicate matters. The suppression of bandits was indeed a little inappropriate for the You army.

However, with Yin Huaixi’s ability, how could he not resolve it?

Yu Youyao wanted to eliminate the bandits, but she was worried that she would cause trouble for Yin Huaixi. She would rather take on more danger herself to kill them all.

In her opinion, Yin Huaixi cared more about Yu Youyao’s safety than the trouble brought by suppressing the bandits.

Before deciding to take the risk, Yu Youyao had indeed not considered Yin Huaixi’s feelings. However, she had also thought it through yesterday and thought about it carefully.

If she did it again, she would still insist on her decision. It was true that Yin Huaixi was capable, but she was the one who wanted to eliminate the bandits. There was no reason for her to throw the mess to someone else.

Yu Youyao said, “If I can resolve it myself, I definitely have to do my best to settle what I can. I won’t get involved easily if I don’t have the ability to resolve it.”

If she relied on others blindly, even if this person was Yin Huaixi, in her opinion, she would just be constantly exhausting the feelings this person had invested in her.

If she had the ability to do it well, why should she let others take the risk for her?

Nanny Xu sighed slightly. That made sense, but human hearts were made of flesh. After Yu Youyao returned yesterday, her body was covered in injuries. Even her knees, elbows, and back had varying degrees of abrasions. It was obvious that she had suffered.

How could Nanny Xu’s heart not ache?

Yu Youyao threw herself into her arms and said cutely, “Auntie, I won’t do anything I’m not confident of taking the risk.”

Nanny Xu did not say anything else. “I’ve prepared a medicinal bath. Soak in it carefully to loosen your muscles and bones. You can also nourish your mind and remove the medicinal liquid on you.”

There was a tent in the camp. After all, they were in the wilderness. Nanny Xu arranged for the old maids and maidservants to surround the tent.

Yu Youyao soaked in it for 45 minutes. The medicinal liquid on her body had been removed, and her skin had returned to being smooth and fair. She felt refreshed.

Nanny Xu helped her apply the medicine again and ordered someone to prepare breakfast.

Yu Youyao had not eaten properly the entire day yesterday. Now that she was hungry, she ate a lot.

After breakfast, Nanny Xu prepared a medicinal soup for Yu Youyao to soak her feet in for 15 minutes. Then, Nanny Xu took out the medicinal oil that could nourish her tendons and meridians and helped her with the massage.

As expected, Yin Huaixi did not lie to her. This time, the massage was not as painful as before. There was only a slight dull pain, and it did not need to take as long as the first time until the bruises dissipated.

Nanny Xu used a flat pushing technique to massage her for only fifteen minutes. Then, she applied an analgesic ointment before fixing the bandage again.

“The wound is wrapped too tightly, so it’s not conducive to recovery. Every two hours, you have to untie it to dissipate your qi. Then, you have to apply medicine by massaging your foot and bandaging it. You’ll recover in about five days.”

Yu Youyao leaned against the soft couch and passed the time with a book.

At this moment, Chun Xiao came over to report, “His Highness sent someone over to report to you.”

Yu Youyao quickly put down her book. “Please come in.”

Chun Xiao bowed and left the camp. Soon, she led a soldier into the tent.

The soldier lowered his head and looked straight ahead. He knelt on one knee three steps away from Yu Youyao and cupped his hands. “Greetings, Princess. His Highness was afraid that you would be worried about the situation in the mountains, so he specially ordered me to report to you that the situation in the mountains has been decided. Princess, don’t worry.”

After receiving accurate information, Yu Youyao smiled. “I heard that there was a fire in the village yesterday. Was the fire serious? Did any bandits escape? Were our people injured?”

The soldier lowered his head and remembered that before he went down the mountain to report, His Highness had specially instructed, “If the princess asks about the situation in the mountain, just say...” Every word and sentence that His Highness had instructed appeared in his mind. The soldier hurriedly said, “Princess, the fire in the village was very strong. Fortunately, the terrain in the village is special, and we have many people. His Highness ordered someone to isolate the fire area, and the fire calmed down. Other than the group of hostages that were saved first, almost all the mountain bandits who were left in the village died in the fire. Our people were not injured.”

At first glance, there was no problem with this.

Who had started the fire in the mountains? Why had it started? That was the least of it.

After the mountain bandits were dealt with, they would be burned completely. Even if they died, they would be buried in the sea of fire. There was nothing wrong with this.

It wasn't a lie.

Yu Youyao did not know what the soldier was thinking, nor did she know that Yin Huaixi had slaughtered the mountain bandits wantonly. When the soldier said that, she subconsciously imagined the situation.

There were torches in the stronghold, and the You army also held torches. Most of the fortifications and houses in the stronghold were straw huts and wooden houses. Once the scene was chaotic, it was indeed easy to cause a fire.

Yu Youyao only treated it as an accident and did not think too much about it.

The bandits were cruel and treated human lives as grass. None of them were innocent. She would not sympathize with the bandits who had died in the sea of fire.

She only nodded and asked, "When is His Highness going down the mountain?"

The soldier said, "When the officials arrive, Your Highness will go down the mountain."

As soon as they arrived at noon, Lord Li rushed over with the government guards. When he found out that Princess Shaoyi had sprained her ankle during the bandit attack, he quickly came over to greet her.

#### Chapter 846 - 846: Aftermath

Lord Li looked ashamed. "It's my fault for not managing the place well, causing the bandits here to run rampant and offend the Princess. I'm extremely ashamed."

Yu Youyao said calmly, "Lord Li, you don't have to blame yourself. I originally thought that they were just ordinary bandits, so I was careless. Who knew that this group of bandits had some background? They actually fled from the mountains 50,000 kilometers in the west and occupied the mountain as king. They even gathered four to five hundred people. They're very fierce."

Lord Li was immediately frightened out of his wits.

Mountain bandits who came from a hundred thousand miles of mountains were all desperadoes. The implication was huge.

When the Great Zhou Dynasty first established its own dynasty, the mountain bandits had occupied this area. Now, hundreds of years had passed. The mountain bandits had been exterminated again and again, but the problem of bandits was still endless.

He couldn't help but rejoice in his heart. Fortunately, he had been careful. Seeing that those bandits had lost their morals and had frequently committed crimes in the area of Anshan, he felt that it was a little tricky, so he mentioned this to Princess Shaoyi.

Otherwise, if they waited for the mountain bandits to continue growing, they would sooner or later develop into a huge problem in Liancheng.

It was even more difficult for the government to suppress the bandits.

The problem of the bandits had blown up too much. He couldn't bear the blame from the state capital.

Lord Li's reaction was completely within Yu Youyao's expectations. "You don't know this, but these bandits are actually so bold as to behave atrociously in front of General An Yuan, who was personally conferred the title of third-grade by the Imperial Court. At the very least, they're the ones who don't have eyes and have a death wish. At the very least, they're ignoring the Imperial Court and looking down on Yue Fei, the King of the North. If we let them off, where will General An Yuan's dignity, which has been through hundreds of battles, be? Where will King Yue Fei's dignity go? Where will the law of the Imperial Court go?"

Lord Li agreed deeply. It was true that the princess had disguised her identity and everything had been simple. She had set up a trap to lure the mountain bandits into it. However, if the mountain bandits did not make a move themselves, General An Yuan would have no reputation.

Indeed!

Yu Youyao changed the topic. "General Anyuan immediately led his troops to attack the stronghold. Who knew that this group of mountain bandits would actually take more than a hundred hostages in the stronghold? The suppression of the bandits fell into a stalemate. It wasn't until late at night that King Yue Fei, who was patrolling the edge of the rock area, received the news and rushed over. He reformulated the plan to suppress the bandits and sent someone to secretly infiltrate the stronghold to cooperate from the outside. Only then did he save the hostages and successfully eliminate the mountain bandits."

When he heard that there were so many hostages in the mountain bandits, Lord Li was even more frightened. Once again, he was glad that he had not gotten involved. "I didn't expect the situation in the stockade to be so complicated that even King Yue Fei was alarmed."

He did not doubt Princess Shaoyi's words. The You army was all elites. No matter how powerful the mountain bandits were, they could not compare to the You army. There was no loophole in this excuse.

Yu Youyao nodded. "The situation in the mountains is a little complicated. In order to escape, there were mountain bandits setting fire in the stronghold to create chaos. Currently, Military Advisor Huang is still checking the number of mountain bandits and their identities. The hostages also need to be checked. As we're not sure if there are mountain bandits mixed in, this batch of hostages is temporarily under the care of the You army."

When he found out that this group of bandits were not ordinary bandits but bandits who had fled from Shanxi, Lord Li couldn't wait to hand them over to the You army to deal with them. This was exactly what he wanted.

The two of them chatted for a while before recounting the situation in the mountain.

Lord Li bade farewell to Princess Shaoyi and immediately went to the place where the hostages were placed, but he was stopped by the You army guarding him. "His Highness has instructed that before the identity of this group of hostages is verified, no one is allowed to approach them without His Highness's permission."



Lord Li's heart turned cold. He kept feeling that there must be unidentified mountain bandits hidden in this batch of hostages. For the time being, it was impossible to confirm. That was why King Yue Fei was so cautious and sent a large number of troops to guard them, not allowing anyone to approach.

He was even more afraid.

At that moment, Lord Li could only hire a soldier to lead the way and rush up the mountain with more than a hundred bailiffs.

The entire stockade had been destroyed by the fire and was in a mess. The bowl-shaped stockade had blocked the spread of the fire. Otherwise, the fire would have spread to the mountain and the entire mountain would have burned down.

There were many corpses in the valley. Some had been killed by the You army, and there were also charred corpses. In addition, there were more than 30 survivors kneeling on the ground with their hands and feet tied.

Huang Wenxian was still interrogating the living mountain bandits and determining the identities and crimes of the other mountain bandits in the stronghold. Yin Huaixi sat at the side and watched.

Lord Li hurriedly went to greet King Yue Fei.

Yin Huaixi said calmly, "The suppression of the bandits is also the government's business, and the You army shouldn't have interfered. It's just that not long ago, the Empress Dowager issued an imperial decree that we have to protect Princess Shaoyi. The bandits collided with the Princess's carriage, so the You army took action. All the subsequent matters should have been handled by the government. It's just that this group of bandits has an extraordinary background and is related to the bandits in the mountains 50,000 kilometers west of Shanxi. It's very important. For the Princess's safety, this matter should be investigated again. If there's anything wrong, please forgive me."

These words were enough to give him respect. How could Lord Li dare to put on airs? He quickly bowed. "It was also my fault for not managing the place well, which caused the bandits to run amok and offend Princess Shaoyi. It's already very kind of Your Highness not to blame me. Now that Your Highness has helped the government eliminate the problem of the bandits, it's my blessing and the blessing of the commoners. I'm endlessly grateful."

Yin Huaixi nodded. "Lord Li directly looked for Military Advisor Huang about the specific situation of the bandits and hostages. If the government has any needs, Military Advisor Huang will definitely cooperate fully."

With this, Lord Li was really relieved.

The mountain bandits had already been eliminated, and King Yue Fei would bear all the rest. What he needed to do next was to interrogate the living mountain bandits, interrogate the hostages, verify the identity of the hostages, calm them down, and so on.

Lord Li waited until Military Advisor Huang had finished interrogating the mountain bandits before looking for him.

Military Advisor Huang was very generous. Not only did he give him a list of mountain bandits who had fled 100,000 miles away and the crimes they had committed all these years, but he also made an additional copy of the case file he had made from interrogating the mountain bandits, as well as the list of hostages he had interrogated previously.

These three books were ironclad evidence. Lord Li believed this matter even more deeply. With these three books, the case of suppressing the bandits could almost be closed.

However, they still had to go through the motions and bring some mountain bandits over for interrogation. The hostages also had to be interrogated.

Military Advisor Huang continued, "There was a fire in the stronghold, and many mountain bandits were burned to death. There's no way to confirm the identities of the mountain bandits, nor can we confirm if all the mountain bandits have been eliminated, let alone determine if any mountain bandits have escaped. His Highness has already sent someone to search the mountain, so we have to be more cautious about everything. I'm afraid we'll overstep our boundaries. Lord Li, please understand."

Lord Li hurriedly said, "Military Advisor Huang, you're being too serious. I'm afraid."

The bailiffs brought by the government cooperated with the You army to search the mountain stronghold, move the corpses, and do some help. Lord Li heard his subordinates' bailiffs report the situation in the mountain and did not find anything abnormal. The last trace of doubt in his heart dissipated.

Chapter 847 - 847: Report to the Imperial Court

After settling the matters in the stockade, Yin Huaixi went down the mountain and accompanied Yu Youyao for lunch. "I'm setting off back to Xiuyan in the afternoon to continue patrolling and inspecting all the matters related to settling the refugees."

"So soon..." Yu Youyao's heart ached for him rushing back and forth, and she felt a little reluctant.

Yin Huaixi nodded and felt reluctant. He continued, "It's still a four to five-day journey from Anshan to Xiangping. There are no relay stations along the way. We have to camp in the wilderness at night and sleep in the wind. We have to take care of our health."

"Your foot is injured. Even if the swelling disappears, don't walk around. If it's too boring in the carriage, let Chun Xiao carry you out to take a breather."

"The massage has to be done three times a day. You can't be negligent. Sooner or later, you have to soak in the medicine that will revive your blood circulation..."

This was already an old saying. Yu Youyao actually did not know when Yin Huaixi had become so long-winded. She endured it until Yin Huaixi talked about food and what shoes to wear.

"Auntie Xu will take good care of me." She couldn't help but interrupt him. She looked up at him and her eyes couldn't help but pause.

Yin Huaixi's long eyebrows reached his temples, and there was a faint dust between them. His long and narrow eyes were bloodshot, and there was a faint green shadow in them. She suddenly remembered that Yin Huaixi had not closed his eyes even until now.

Her eyelashes trembled slightly as she lowered her eyes and said softly, "You're busy all day. It's also hard on you. You have to take care of your health more. Carry the Essence Nourishing Pill and the spiritual dewdrop with you and take it every morning and night. The other incense medicine can be used. You lost your foundation a long time ago. Nourishing more is beneficial and harmless to your body."

Her voice was gentle, and every word was sincere. Yin Huaixi held her hand. Her hand was like a tender bud as he held it in his hand. "I'll listen to you."

Yu Youyao said softly, "I'll wait for you in Xiangping City."

Yin Huaixi let go of her hand. "There's a lot of rain in Xiangping City. The climate is relatively wet and cold. When you reach Xiangping, you have to take care of your health. The new residence that the Xie family has bought isn't too far from the Yue Fei Residence. If there's anything, get Yin Shi or Yin San to go to the Yue Fei Residence to inform them. Uncle Sun lives in the residence. Xiangping City is open to the public. Don't constantly worry that you'll alarm the commoners and stay at home all the time..."

Yu Youyao had grown up in the capital. It was dry and cold in the capital in the winter, unlike Xiangping City which was frosty. He had originally only wanted to remind her, but as soon as he said this, he felt that there was a lot to be reminded.

With this explanation, he said a lot more. Yu Youyao looked at him as he nagged and the sadness of parting immediately disappeared a lot. She only found it funny.

After Yin Huaixi left in the afternoon, Lord Li also brought his men back to the government office.

The next day, General An Yuan continued to escort Yu Youyao to Xiangping City. Huang Wenhua had to stay behind to deal with the follow-up matters of suppressing the bandits.

With Huang Wenxian's cooperation, the reparations were carried out in an orderly manner. In less than three days, the case was closed.

Huang Wenxian took the account book of the bandits' looting and compared it to his account book. He counted the treasures in the treasury in the stronghold and returned them one by one according to the list of hostages that had already been verified.

After Lord Li and Huang Wenxian discussed, they decided to give a small portion of the ownerless wealth to some poor and seriously injured commoners.

All the hostages knelt on the ground and thanked King Yue Fei for his kindness.

However, Huang Wenxian sighed and said, "The vassal lords can't mobilize troops internally. Even if they know of the existence of the mountain bandits, they can't mobilize troops to suppress them. This time, it was the mountain bandits who were bold and reckless. They attacked the Princess's phoenix carriage. The Princess entrusted the You army with this task, so the You army took action to eliminate the mountain bandits. If you want to thank someone, thank Princess Shaoyi!"

The hostages cried on the spot and knelt on the ground, shouting, "Sacred Kindness."

There was not much left of the loot. The You army had put in a lot of effort to suppress the bandits, so it was only right for them to deal with it themselves.

This way, the entire matter came to an end.

Lord Li heaved a sigh of relief and immediately discussed with Huang Wenxian about the matters of the Imperial Court.

Huang Wenxian did not interfere in this matter and only said, "Lord Li is a parent official of Liancheng. This matter concerns Princess Shaoyi, and it's His Highness's duty to protect her. It's really a helpless move to overstep his authority. However, the government should step in to deal with the aftermath. I'm just helping, so Lord Li will make the decision himself."

Military Advisor Huang had his own way of advancing and retreating. It should be the credit of the government, but he was not careless at all. This made Lord Li, who had not put in much effort to begin with, feel overjoyed. He immediately drafted a memorial and explained everything in detail. Then, he sorted out all the evidence and case files related to this case and sent them to the capital.

The news spread to the capital, causing a huge commotion in the royal court.

Naturally, someone used the fact that King Yue Fei had sent troops to suppress the bandits to cause trouble and make a big fuss. "As the vassal lord, King Yue Fei is suspected of overstepping the law by interfering in the government's matters."

However, the group of royalists led by Elder Yu thought that the bandits had attacked and plundered Princess Shaoyi because they were lawless, looked down on the court, and disrespected the emperor. King Yue Fei was guarding the North. If even a small bandit dared to act rashly under his watch, where would his dignity be?

Both sides had their own opinions and argued endlessly.

In the end, the Empress Dowager stepped forward. "All the ministers are concerned about the country and have their own opinions. However, the most important thing now is to settle the refugees and alleviate the drought."

As soon as these words were spoken, the court officials shut up.

Princess Shaoyi had come to the North to help King Yue Fei promote the planting of sweet potatoes in the three provinces of Liaodong to ease the disaster.

Now that most of the refugees in the Great Zhou Dynasty had gone to the North, if the sweet potatoes could not be successfully planted, where would so many refugees get their food?

Millions of refugees had gathered in the North. There was no food, there was the threat of refugees rioting inside, and external enemies were watching. Even if King Yue Fei had three heads and six arms, he probably wouldn't be able to deal with them.

From the looks of it, Princess Shaoyi's safety was more important than anything else.

This group of bandits was related to hundreds of thousands of bandits in a mountain that stretched over hundreds of miles. They were not bandits ordinary people could deal with. Not only was King Yue Fei right to eliminate the bandits with lightning speed, but he had also contributed.

In addition, the case file submitted by the government was very clear, and there was not a single mistake. The court officials were only spouting nonsense. If they really wanted to pick out something that was wrong, they really wouldn't be able to find it.

This matter was settled.

The royalists sighed. "Ever since Princess Shaoyi was conferred the title of princess and went to the North, we've really been successful in the court."

Everything Princess Shaoyi did and was involved in was closely related to the interests of the royalists. The Empress Dowager also trusted the Yu Clan more and more.

Although Yu Zongshen and Ding You were at home, Princess Shaoyi's reputation had benefited the Yu Clan and even the entire royalist party.

Lord Qi agreed deeply. "You didn't see that when Princess Shaoyi was mentioned in the morning court just now, Duke Xu looked like he had eaten a fly. It was really satisfying!"

Chapter 848: Extremely Intelligent

Everyone in the court knew about Imperial Concubine Xu and the Xu family's scheme in the Duke Rong's Residence back then.

They had probably never dreamed that Eldest Miss Yu would become Princess Shaoyi.

The world praised her for being extremely intelligent.

She was one of the few virtuous women in the world with high morals, talent, and virtue.

The Marquis of Zhen suddenly recalled what his mother had revealed earlier and patted Yu Zongzheng's shoulder. "Brother Yu really gave birth to a good daughter!"

Lord Qi agreed deeply. "In this generation of the Yu Clan, there's a smart and holy Princess Shaoyi. There's also Yu Shande, who's renowned in the world and has learned the teachings of the sages. The reputation of the aristocratic family has also been established. It's only a matter of time before you restore your ancestors' merits."

An aristocratic family had fallen but was now thriving. In addition to the emergence of talents in the family, there would also be exemplary people. It was said that a single factor could not give rise to something new. They were both virtuous inside and out, so usually, there would be a man and a woman who formed Yin and Yang.

Men often governed the world.

With a woman who could be an example, the other sisters in the family naturally competed to learn. Their characters would not be bad. Others would also think highly of them, and their status would rise.

In the future, when they discussed marriage, they would be able to choose a good family that was most in line with the family's interests.

Furthermore, there were a few brothers of the right age in the Qi Residence. When it was time for marriage, the Matriarch would first take a fancy to the young ladies of the Yu Clan.

The others also praised Yu Youyao.

To Yu Zongzheng, this should be a very honorable thing. However, they were family and knew about his family matters. His father-daughter relationship with Yu Youyao had long ceased to exist in name.

However, the corners of Yu Zongzheng's mouth twitched. He wanted to laugh, but he couldn't, so he couldn't not answer. "She's just a woman, so she doesn't deserve such praise from everyone." At this point, he quickly changed the topic. "Mingzhao has been demoted to Dehua. It's been almost two months. Although Dehua is a good place to go, being demoted isn't as stable as being in the capital. Dehua has suffered from the Japanese pirates earlier. I wonder how he's doing now."

The interests of the royalists were intertwined. Song Mingzhao was a new talent that the royalists had nurtured vigorously in the royal court. Everyone was very concerned about this matter.

The Marquis of Zhen frowned slightly. "Only after arriving in Quanzhou did he send a message to report his safety. There has been no news back recently. I'm not sure how he's doing now."

His mother supported Mingzhao's decision, so he had no choice but to agree. Thinking that there were often troubles with Japanese pirates in Dehua, he arranged for 30 strong martial arts guards for Mingzhao. In addition, he arranged for five secret guards to protect him.

Under heavy protection, Mingzhao's safety was not a problem.

When they encountered troublesome matters, there were also people under them who could be ordered around.

However, after Mingzhao had been gone for so long, there was still no news. The Marquis of Zhen was still quite worried. He secretly sent someone to investigate, but it was like a stone sinking into the sea.

He vaguely felt that something was amiss in Quanzhou. A few days ago, he had already sent more people to investigate, waiting for the news to return.

Yu Zongzheng hurriedly said, "Don't look at how the county is only seventh-grade. The matters involved are messy and varied. Dehua is still a large county. Previously, it was plagued by the Japanese pirates. When it was first established, it was mediocre and incompetent. That's why the Imperial Court established a position. Perhaps it's because Mingzhao has just gone to Dehua and is busy with the handover and adapting to the new environment. He's too busy."

Lord Qi also said, "Previously, Quanzhou sent over an urgent report. It said that before the new year, a group of pirates had secretly infiltrated Quanzhou. They killed people and set fire in Quanzhou. This matter has blown up quite a bit, and the city has been under martial law because of it. Until now, it hasn't been lifted. It's not easy to gather information. Mingzhao is outstanding, so I don't think there's anything wrong. It won't be difficult for him."

The others agreed one after another.

However, the Marquis of Zhenguo was worried. "Quanzhou is by the sea. People travel in all directions by sea. The pirates who entered the city are either pirates or Japanese pirates. Only they can cause such a huge commotion in Quanzhou City and make the government so afraid. The

situation in Quanzhou is unknown now. I think the government hasn't caught them yet. I'm really worried about Mingzhao."

Previously, the Japanese pirates had colluded with the pirates to invade on a large scale. In the southeast coast, Lord Ye had killed them until they fled in a sorry state. As a result, these people had a grudge and quietly went ashore to kill and set fire. This kind of thing had happened before in every dynasty.

Therefore, the full martial law in Quanzhou did not arouse the suspicion of the Imperial Court.

The few of them also felt sad.

At this moment, Song Mingzhao, who was worried about his family, had been in office for almost two months.

Two months was enough for him to flip through the many files, accounts, and so on in the government office to understand the basic situation of the entire Dehua. He would also start to deal with the heavy backlog in the government office.

As the previous county magistrate was mediocre, there were too many official matters accumulated in the government office. The things he had to deal with every day were also very complicated.

In just two months, he had already accumulated a lot of prestige in Dehua. This was all because he was strict with the law and diligent in government affairs.

Eighty percent of Quanzhou consisted of mountains. As porcelain was prosperous, most of the local commoners were involved in this fortification, so food was scarce. Last year, they encountered the Japanese pirates, and many commoners were living a difficult life.

He encouraged the local people to explore and plant sweet potatoes.

The Great Zhou Dynasty had a clear rule. The land that the commoners had explored on their own belonged to them. They would not have to pay taxes for obtaining the land, but they had to pay land tax for five consecutive years.

Due to Princess Shaoyi's influence last year, the Xie family had also planted a lot of sweet potatoes in Quanzhou, and the sweet potatoes had spread in Fujian.

Song Mingzhao had contacted some rich families in Quanzhou who were planting sweet potatoes. In the name of the government, he had bought a batch of sweet potato pieces and distributed them to the commoners for free.

This move bought over the hearts of the people, and he quickly established himself in Dehua.

However, Song Mingzhao did not have an easy time in Dehua.

Previously, he had taken a boat to Quanzhou and planned to go to the state government office to meet his superior, the state official of Quanzhou, at the Jiazhou Residence to complete all the documents as the county magistrate of Dehua.

However, he was informed that there was a sea of thieves in Quanzhou City who had killed and set fire. Thus, it was already completely under martial law. The Jiazhou Residence sent a message and asked him to go to Dehua on his own to take office. A document was then sent to him.

What kind of thief had committed such a monstrous crime that the government office was so afraid of, to the point that even the previous court officials were not allowed to enter the city?

Was this really a rebellion by pirates or the Japanese pirates?!

Song Mingzhao sensed that something was amiss, but he did not say anything and brought his trusted aides to Dehua.

Song Mingzhao had always been meticulous. When he came to Quanzhou to take office, he felt that it was too eye-catching to have a group of guards by his side. These guards were prepared for him by the Marquis of Zhenguo and formed his foundation in Dehua. He should not expose them in front of others.

Therefore, before setting off, he had ordered the guards to disguise themselves and arrive at Jin County first. Then, he ordered the guards to go to Quanzhou before him.

After reaching Dehua, Song Mingzhao realized that no news of Quanzhou could be spread, and naturally, no news from the outside could spread to Quanzhou.

Chapter 849: Traitor

Song Mingzhao became even more suspicious. As he had just arrived and did not know the situation in Quanzhou, he did not act rashly. Instead, he became even more cautious.

Immediately after, Song Mingzhao realized that someone in the government office was secretly watching him.

The other party's actions were very secretive, and ordinary people could not sense it at all.

However, Song Mingzhao was not an ordinary person, let alone the more than 30 experts hidden beside him. No matter what happened, it would not escape their eyes.

It was obvious who had sent the person staring at him.

This also confirmed to Song Mingzhao that there was definitely an unspeakable secret behind the complete martial law in Quanzhou.

The entire Quanzhou was under the rule of the Jiazhou Residence, and his every move was also under their watch. Even a powerful dragon could not suppress a local snake, let alone stay far away from Quanzhou. Without the protection of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence, he was now alone. Now that he had just arrived, the Jiazhou Residence might be afraid of him. As the heir of the Marquis of Zhenguo, they did not dare to act rashly and only dared to send people to keep an eye on him.

If he did anything to threaten the Jiazhou Residence, they would probably be desperate. In a situation where the situation was unknown, Song Mingzhao hid it and did not say anything. He did not deliberately send someone to investigate Quanzhou to avoid alerting the enemy. He was busy with the trivial matters of the government office all day, as if he was unaware of the abnormality in Quanzhou.

At the same time, he was secretly paying attention to the movements of Quanzhou.

In March, Song Mingzhao had been in Dehua for almost two months, but Quanzhou was still under martial law and had no intention of lifting it.



Song Mingzhao already knew that Quanzhou had changed.

Song Mingzhao recalled that he had previously found out that the Jiazhou Residence was related to the Second Prince's lineage. He had a guess and quickly took a look at the map of Quanzhou.

A truly smart person would often be able to see everything.

Song Mingzhao was shocked. The clues about Liangzhou in his mind immediately connected.

In the beginning, it started five years ago when the Southern Barbarians invaded. The King of Liang, who had always been brave and good at fighting, was actually ambushed and seriously injured by the Southern Barbarians. Not long after, news came from Youzhou that the Marquis of Changxing had won a battle in Youzhou, causing a considerable commotion in the royal court.

At that time, when he was discussing this matter with his father, he was quite disdainful. "Back then, King You won every battle, but he was only so-so. The mere Marquis of Changxing only revealed his merits because of the King of Liang's crushing defeat. He's not worthy of talking to King You. It's laughable that everyone in the world is playing along with the monkey!"

With comparison, there was a difference.

Not long after, the King of Liang sent his heir into the capital, shocking the world. What was even more shocking was that the King of Liang even retreated unscathed and returned to Liangzhou safely.

His father turned around and mentioned this matter, feeling worried. "His Majesty is muddle-headed. If there's a precedent, there will definitely be a second time. Wouldn't that mess up the rules and help increase the ambition of the vassal lords?"

He said indifferently, "The rebels will definitely rebel in the future."

His father was shocked by his words. "Why do you say that?"

He said to his father, "Ever since King You was convicted of treason, which vassal lord in the various places hasn't been in turmoil? Moreover, looking at the King of Liang's war in recent years, he has lost soldiers and generals every time. He wants the Imperial Court to increase his troops and even ask for money and food from the Imperial Court. Do you think that King You's case has alarmed the vassal lords and frightened them? They have no choice but to show weakness to the Imperial Court in order to protect themselves. That's not wrong."

"However, His Majesty is the one who is intimidating. He's surrounded by the four seas and has dignity inside and out. His Majesty is heartless. His position is not right and his virtue is not worthy of his position. Ever since he ascended the throne, he has not contributed much to the country. This action has also stimulated the rebellion of the vassal lords. The King of Liang did not hesitate to be seriously injured and sent the heir into the capital to confuse the emperor. He's fighting for the opportunity for himself. In the future, the King of Liang will definitely rebel against the heir's death."

The meaning was already very clear. If the person who killed King You was His Majesty, this move would be a warning to the others. His Majesty would kill with his heavenly might. The vassal lords would naturally be afraid of the emperor's anger, so they would naturally be obedient.

However, what right did the current emperor have?

Killing King You would not show his dignity, but his tyranny and heartlessness. He killed the remaining worries in the hearts of the ministers.

If the heir died, the King of Liang would rebel.

The King of Liang had not given the Imperial Court a hostage to show his loyalty, but his disloyalty. It was an excuse for the King of Liang to rebel.

With King You's example, in the future, when his heir died, it was definitely because the Imperial Court had not lived up to his patriotism. He had been forced to rebel by the emperor. So what if this reason was untenable?

At the very least, he had a reason!

His father refused to believe it. "Since the heir is the eldest son, how can he be given up so easily? You have to know that the princess consort of the Prince of Liang is from a famous local family and is related to the interests of the King Ping's Residence. If the Prince of Liang wants to give up on the heir, first of all, he won't be able to get past the consort's family."

If they gave up on the heir, the first ones whose interests would be damaged would be the consort's family.

The significance of the eldest son of the first wife often did not lie in his seniority, but in the interests behind them, causing the interests of the eldest son of the first wife to be inviolable.

This was the fundamental reason why the first wife was valued.

Song Mingzhao's expression was still indifferent. "How do you know that the person sent to the capital must be the heir?"

The Marquis of Zhen was shocked. "How can this be faked? There are dozens or hundreds of checkpoints with layers of examination. They can fake their way through one or two checkpoints, but how can they fake their way through 100 checkpoints? There's almost no possibility of this being faked. It's even more ridiculous to use others to replace the heir and send him into the capital as a hostage."

Song Mingzhao agreed deeply, but said, "What if this heir is fake from the beginning to the end?"

The Marquis of Zhen was suddenly stunned.

Song Mingzhao continued, "Since the King of Liang has the intention to rebel, it can't be done in a day or two. He must have been preparing for this long ago. Then, from the moment the "heir" was born, he was promoted from the son of a concubine to the son of the princess consort and given this title to plan for the future. What's impossible?"

Song Mingzhao could guess that the King of Liang wanted to rebel. Thus, he could also guess that the Jiazhou Residence had colluded with the King of Liang to control Quanzhou for the sake of its prosperity. As the capital of Quanzhou, the Xie Residence was the first to bear the brunt.

In that case, the so-called case of bandits entering the city to kill and set fire was very likely a scheme against the Xie family.

A complete blockade meant that the water, land, and air were all under martial law. Ships could not enter, and the various checkpoints on the land were strictly guarded. They could not pass, and even a bird could not fly in.

The Jiazhou Prefecture couldn't do this, but the King of Liang could definitely do it.

Then, Yu Youyao, who was in the Xie Residence?

Song Mingzhao suddenly felt a sharp pain in his heart. He sat alone in the study for the entire night.

In the latter half of the night, he stared at the flickering lights. In a daze, he seemed to have entered a half-awake dream.

In the dream, Yu Youyao was dead.

“Song Mingzhao” felt that his heart was instantly emptied.

It was as if he was the one whose heart had been cut out.

Not long after, he suffered from a heart disease. Every time his heart ached like a knife, he couldn't sleep at night or day. The doctors were helpless.

On the day of Yu Youyao's funeral, a man called Chang An rushed over covered in wind and frost. He said that he had come to send Young Miss off on behalf of his late young master.

Chapter 850: White Hair Overnight

He knew that this old friend was Zhou Linghuai, who used to live in the Yu Residence. He and Yu Youyao were childhood sweethearts.

Before leaving, Chang An said heart-wrenching words, “Madam Xie loved her daughter deeply. Before she died, she had found a skilled craftsman to forge 15 longevity locks for her daughter. Among them, there was a longevity lock for two fishes, one yellow and one red. It was a natural phenomenon. On Eldest Miss Yu's fifth birthday, her grandmother personally helped her to wear it.”

“The next year, on the eighth of April, on the day of the Buddhist Festival, Eldest Miss Yu followed her grandmother to the Precious Peace Temple to add incense oil, pray, and mourn for her deceased mother. This longevity lock was accidentally damaged. Old Madam Yu felt that it was inauspicious. The longevity lock was related to her granddaughter's well-being and could not be easily damaged. Old Madam Yu was afraid that it would be harmful to her granddaughter, so she placed it in the temple hall and chanted scriptures every day to suppress her blessings.”

After Chang An left, “Song Mingzhao's” heart was in turmoil.

The reason why he thought that Yu Jianjia was his savior when he was young was because he had once heard Yu Jianjia mention that she had accompanied his grandmother to the Precious Peace Temple to offer incense and met a thief.

Suspicion arose in his heart, so he investigated this matter.

He found out that Yu Youyao and Yu Jianjia had gone to the Precious Peace Temple that day. Eldest Miss Yu's reputation was not good. She had been arrogant and domineering since she was young.

Naturally, he did not think that the person who had saved him would be such a notorious woman.

Naturally, he began to pay attention to Yu Jianjia.

Due to the limited evidence, "Song Mingzhao" did not confirm that Yu Jianjia was his savior. However, after interacting with her for a while, he also felt that Third Miss Yu was smart and polite. It was inevitable that he would think highly of her and have a good impression of her.

Later on, Eldest Miss Yu met the Third Prince in the Duke Rong's Residence and her reputation was damaged.

In order to protect her granddaughter's life, Old Madam Yu used the letters that her grandmother had exchanged with Old Madam Yu when she was alive to force him to admit that he was engaged to Yu Youyao.

Her grandmother had liked Yu Youyao since she was young. She and Old Madam Yu had reached a consensus on the engagement and had indeed mentioned it in the letter.

He couldn't deny it.

It would be unfilial to deny it.

However, in his heart, he did not want to marry a woman with a bad reputation.

He was even more displeased with Eldest Miss Yu.

Not long after, Old Madam Yu suddenly passed away.

Not long after, "Song Mingzhao" finally confirmed that Yu Jianjia was his savior because of a damaged longevity lock.

Yu Jianjia personally took out the longevity lock and told him, "This is what I wore when I was young."

The missing part was the broken jade part of the longevity knot that he usually wore.

Moreover, just as he saw this damaged longevity lock, he received news from the Yu Residence that Eldest Miss Yu was not Yu Zongzheng's biological daughter. Instead, her mother did not abide by the rules of a woman and had an affair with someone.

The Yu Residence did not reveal anything about this improper person.

He was engaged to Eldest Miss Yu, so when he suddenly found out about this, he was naturally furious. He sent someone to Quanzhou to investigate Madam Xie's marriage and found out that she had been in close contact with Second Master Yu.

Everything was obvious.

“Song Mingzhao” was a prodigy. How proud was he? However, he was forced to marry such a notorious and extremely dirty bastard. This was simply a huge humiliation to him.

However, his grandmother had passed away, and Old Madam Yu had also passed away.

This marriage was the order of his elders. Even if he retreated, there was no way to back down. Otherwise, if the Zhenguo Marquis Residence joined forces with him, he would also be infamous for being treacherous or even unfilial.

After their marriage, he treated Yu Youyao bluntly.

Yu Youyao seemed to feel guilty towards him because of this marriage and wanted to compensate him. She was quite concerned about him and would fawn over him from time to time.

After a few more times, he couldn’t be bothered to refuse.

Gradually, he realized that Yu Youyao did not seem to be as arrogant and unbearable as the rumors outside said.

At that time, “Song Mingzhao” did not understand that when a person began to accept the good of another, they had already accepted this person indirectly in the depths of their hearts.

This was until Yu Jianjia’s condition worsened.

He had a good impression of Third Miss Yu and was also grateful for her saving his life when he was young. He wanted to repay her kindness, so he looked for famous doctors in the world and happened to find Divine Physician Xie...

After that...

All kinds of past events appeared in his mind. How smart was “Song Mingzhao”? Chang An’s words instantly reminded him that there were many suspicious points behind this matter.

First of all, Yu Jianjia had asked him to see this broken longevity lock after Old Madam Yu passed away.

In other words, Yu Jianjia did not have it in the past. It was only after Old Madam Yu passed away that Madam Yang, as the mistress of the household, could touch the things that Old Madam Yu had left behind.

Old Madam Yu doted on Yu Youyao and was very cold to her granddaughter, Yu Jianjia. Why couldn’t she help Yu Jianjia keep her old damaged things?

“Song Mingzhao” immediately ordered someone to find the craftsman who had forged the longevity lock for Madam Xie.

Those skilled craftsmen were all very famous and were from the capital. They were easily found. When craftsmen made jewelry, they needed patterns. Even if the guests sent them patterns, they would keep them.

The truth was revealed too easily.

It was as if Yu Youyao's heart had been easily carved out.

The truth often came one after another with countless truths. All the misunderstandings, prejudices, and anger towards Yu Youyao in the past were actually planned by Madam Yang and her daughter.

“Song Mingzhao” went crazy.

Just like now, he sat there until dawn in the Frost Residence, where Yu Youyao had lived for three years.

His hair turned white overnight.

After that, “Song Mingzhao's” heart disease worsened.

He said to Yu Youyao before she died, “I'll marry Jia Jia as a second wife and take good care of your sister for you to comfort your soul in heaven.”

“Song Mingzhao” had deliberately suggested that he wanted to welcome Yu Jianjia into the family within a hundred days.

Yu Youyao felt aggrieved and hesitant. Her eyes were filled with tears, and she looked pitiful.

“Song Mingzhao” watched coldly from the side and thought maliciously, “Back then, her mother was the daughter of a lowly concubine who had climbed into bed. She was secretly pregnant and entered the family within a hundred days of mourning.”

Now, the daughter was like her mother.

The mother and daughter were in the same family. They were in a hurry to be someone's second wife and mourn for the first wife.

On the night that Yu Jianjia entered the family, he smiled and said to her, “I have a heart disease and need to use the Blood Medicinal Catalyst. Madam has had a heart disease since she was young and has consumed a lot of expensive medicinal herbs. Divine Physician Xie said that someone like Madam is already a natural blood medicine catalyst. In the future, I'll have to trouble Madam for your health.”

Song Mingzhao sat in the study until the oil lamp burned out and daylight seeped through the window paper. He moved his body and called out hoarsely, “Kong Qing.”

Kong Qing, who had been guarding outside the door for the entire night, quickly pushed open the door and entered. He was immediately stunned.

Seeing his strange expression, Song Mingzhao frowned. “What's wrong?”