

## All Hail 851

### Chapter 851: Profound Truth

Kong Qing knelt on the ground with a thud, his body trembling like a leaf. His face was ashen. His mouth trembled as he said in a trembling voice, “Heir, your, your hair...”

“Hair?” Song Mingzhao was confused and was stunned for a moment. “What happened to my hair?”

Tears immediately rushed out of his eyes. Kong Qing’s throat choked badly, and his mouth kept trembling. He couldn’t even say anything.

Song Mingzhao stood up and walked to the side of the desk. He set up another small table. There was a basin of water on the table for washing spare ink off his hands. When he lowered his head, he saw that the copper basin clearly reflected his gray hair mixed with white strands. There were also silver threads at the temples. He had actually withered before he grew old.

He was stunned for a long time.

In the nightmare, after “Song Mingzhao” found out the truth, his hair turned white overnight.

In the nightmare, “Song Mingzhao” also had a heart disease.

Song Mingzhao had convinced himself countless times that the “Song Mingzhao” in his nightmare was not him, and the person who had hurt Yu Youyao and caused her death was not him.

That person was not him.

He wouldn’t hurt Yu Youyao.

However, the many similarities between nightmare and reality gradually pushed him into eternal damnation.

Song Mingzhao chuckled. “Whether it’s a dream or reality, it’s just a fool’s dream in the end.”

Kong Qing looked at the heir’s pale face and was very worried. “Did you have another heart disease yesterday? Why don’t I get a doctor over...”

“It’s fine. There’s no need to make it public.” Song Mingzhao sat back down on the desk.

He took out a few pieces of paper and spread them on the desk. He flattened them with a paperweight. When he picked up his brush and dipped it in ink, his hand that was holding the brush suddenly paused, and his gaze landed on the Duan inkstone.

The Duan inkstone was like the moon that was reflected in a lotus pond. It was greenish-gray in color. It was an old inkstone from Guangdong. The color of the inkstone was moon-white with a hint of blue. It was made of top-notch white jade. Although it was very uncommon, it was indeed not rare.

It was the only serious reciprocation between him and Yu Youyao.

When he obtained this Duan inkstone, he was very happy. At first, he couldn't bear to use it, but in the dead of night, he couldn't help but take it out and play with it.

Later on, he felt that he couldn't be separated from this Duan inkstone. He couldn't look away either. He had to place it at all times where he could see it. Only then did he feel at ease, so he kept using this inkstone.

Every time he finished writing with ink, he would wash the inkstone in time and never lend it to others.

In his spare time, he would also cultivate it in the spring water and use wax oil to maintain it.

Song Mingzhao dipped in ink and began to write.

In the letter, he only wrote about all the trivial matters of governance and virtue after he became a virtuous person. At the end of the letter, he only left the words "Don't worry about me." He did not mention anything else.

After writing the letter, Song Mingzhao blew dry his brush and ink. He took out an envelope and folded the letter into it. Then, he took out some wax and used it to seal the envelope.

Kong Qing was still conflicted. Why had the heir's hair turned half white overnight? He was both worried and uncomfortable.

Song Mingzhao handed the letter to Kong Qing. "Take the letter to the courier station and send it back to the Duke's Residence."

Kong Qing was stunned for a moment before hurriedly saying, "Heir, how can that be? Quanzhou is already under full martial law. I thought news couldn't be sent over? Why are you still..."

Song Mingzhao said calmly, "There are pirates in Quanzhou. It's suspected that pirates and pirates are stirring up trouble. As Quanzhou is close to the sea, the sea route extends in all directions. The goal of martial law is to prevent pirates and Japanese pirates from harassing them. Not all news can't be sent out. Otherwise, it's easy to cause fear. Quanzhou would have long been in chaos."

Quanzhou was rich and coastal, and Japanese pirates often caused trouble. Last year, the pirates had already invaded Dehua. Before they could reach Quanzhou City, they were beaten up by Lord Ye and fled in all directions.

It was also because of this that the Jiazhou Residence used the excuse of bandits entering the city to kill and set fire to Quanzhou. The Imperial Court only thought that pirates had infiltrated the city and did not arouse any suspicion.

In order to prevent the news in the city from leaking, letters entering and leaving Quanzhou must have been checked by the government before being sent out.

Kong Qing understood immediately, but he was still a little worried. "But your every move is being monitored. Will sending a letter rashly alert the enemy?"

Song Mingzhao shook his head. "That might be the case earlier, but not now."

Kong Qing did not understand.

Song Mingzhao said, "When I first came to Quanzhou, it was when the Jiazhou Residence was most afraid of me. If I send a letter rashly at this time, it will definitely cause him to panic. He didn't even dare to let me enter the city, so he directly sent me to Dehua."

The excuse was just right. The previous county magistrate had been mediocre, causing a mess in Dehua. He urgently needed the county magistrate to be in charge of the overall situation.

"I took advantage of the fact that I was busy with work in the government office and was overwrought all day. I wasn't even in the mood to write a family letter, confusing the Jiazhou Residence. The Jiazhou Residence sent someone to keep an eye on me. Seeing that there was nothing wrong with me for the time being, they felt that they could control my every move and make them let down their guard against me."

Kong Qing came to a realization.

Song Mingzhao continued, "I'm the heir of the Marquis of Zhenguo, a new top scholar who has been nurtured by the royalists. I also have a shocking reputation. The family and the royalists have high hopes for me. If I'm demoted to Dehua, it's impossible for the family to ignore me. If I don't contact the family for a long time, the family will also think of ways to send someone over to investigate me. The Zhenguo Marquis Residence is very powerful. Once they get involved in Quanzhou, I think the Jiazhou Residence will have a headache."

"This is the best time to send a letter. Not only can it dispel the doubts in the Jiazhou Residence's heart, but it can also appease the family. I think this letter will definitely be safely sent to the Zhenguo Marquis Residence."

Kong Qing still had doubts. "But letters to and from Quanzhou have to be checked by the government. The Heir..."

Song Mingzhao said, "It's just a family letter. If they want to investigate, let them. In any case, the Jiazhou Residence won't touch me easily. I'll be safe in Quanzhou."

Kong Qing was confused. Why was the Heir so sure that the Jiazhou Residence wouldn't attack him? Also, wasn't the sudden letter really for the sake of sending a message? Was it just an ordinary family letter?

Song Mingzhao smiled and did not explain.

It wasn't the contents of the letter that were problematic. It was the wax used for the letter.

The incense was made secretly at home, and there was a special incense in it. This kind of incense was only used for some important secret letters at home.

Once the incense was damaged, the incense would seep into the paper. Others did not know about the incense, so they naturally could not smell the difference. However, his father would have smelled it before he saw the letter.

Naturally, he would know that this letter had been opened and sealed again.

His father would definitely be able to guess. Why would an ordinary family letter need to be sealed with the family's secret wax?

His status was different. Even if there were pirates causing trouble in Quanzhou, as the heir of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence, why did he have to be checked by the government to send a letter to his family?

With so many suspicious points, his father would naturally know that things had changed in Quanzhou.

The world did not know what kind of foundation the aristocratic family had inherited for generations. How could they know the various mysteries behind it?

## Chapter 852: Endless Troubles

As Song Mingzhao had expected, as soon as his letter was sent to the courier station, it was sent to the Jiazhou Residence.

In the Jiazhou Residence, there were capable people who passed down forged letters and opened letters.

Song Mingzhao did not send a letter for a long time. The Jiazhou Residence was very anxious, worried that they would provoke the Zhenguo Marquis Residence to investigate. Of course, they were also confident that all the matters in Quanzhou would be arranged flawlessly. The Zhenguo Marquis Residence might not be able to find anything.

However, as the saying went, one could never be too careful.

The head had originally wanted to forge a letter, but he was stopped by his aide. "The Zhenguo Marquis Residence is an old noble of the Great Zhou Dynasty. Their foundation is extraordinary. Forgery can be hidden from ordinary people's eyes, but it might not be able to hide from the Zhenguo Marquis Residence. I'm afraid it'll backfire."

In that case, he could only give up.

The head of the Jiazhou Residence had originally planned to let the registrar he had planted in the Dehua County Office use the friendship of colleagues to remind Song Mingzhao that he was busy with work and had to remember to send a letter to his family to prevent them from worrying.

Unexpectedly, he received something that was in his favor.

Immediately, he ordered a capable person who was good at opening seals to remove the lacquer seal with various special methods and open the envelope to ensure that it was the same as before it was sealed.

Then, he gathered his aides and carefully read the contents of the letter. After reading it word for word and not finding anything unusual, he looked for other people and carefully checked the paper envelope for anything unusual.

After a night, it was indeed just an ordinary family letter.

The huge stone in the Jiazhou Residence's heart was finally settled. He quickly sent someone to send the letter to the courier station and instructed, "Send it to the Zhenguo Marquis Residence at full speed. Don't delay."

After the letter was sent out, the head of the Jiazhou Residence said to the aide beside him, "Heir Song is quite capable. He has only been in Dehua for two months, and this county magistrate is quite impressive." His tone revealed a trace of admiration, then he sighed. "It's just that these young masters of aristocratic families are all arrogant, skilled in human relationships, and insightful of the world. In the end, they're still a little inexperienced. Look, as soon as he arrived at Dehua, he was distracted by the mountain of official matters and complicated trivial matters in the government office."

Song Mingzhao was not the county magistrate of Dehua County.

It was after the Zhenguo Marquis Residence arranged it that he replaced the original candidate. As a result, Song Mingzhao only received the relevant documents from the Imperial Court after he set off.

At this moment, the Xie family had already escaped from Quanzhou. The government was also overwrought from the fire before the Xie family left and was busy cleaning up the aftermath.

At this moment, Song Mingzhao came over.

Naturally, he was not in the mood to care. The city was still in chaos, so he did not dare to let Song Mingzhao enter the city.

Worried that Song Mingzhao would ruin things after he reached Dehua, he quickly instructed the people he had planted in the Dehua County Office to find more things for him to do.

If there were too many things to do, Song Mingzhao would be too busy to care about anything else. As the saying went, the more one did, the more mistakes one would make. At that time, he could use the excuse of making a mistake to control Song Mingzhao and restrain him.

From the looks of it, the effect was not bad.

At the mention of this, the head of the Jiazhou Residence said with a smile, "These young masters of aristocratic families are living a good life, but they insist on finding trouble for themselves. What good life can they have if they're demoted? They've learned a lot, but they're useless. They can't rely on idle theorizing to govern the land and the people. They have to do everything themselves. Even if they lose an ox, the government will find it. Wouldn't they be overwrought?"

He was already like this as a poor student, let alone a young master like Song Mingzhao, who was born into a noble family and did not know the hardships of the commoners.

The aide laughed. "Isn't that so? The older the ginger, the spicier it is. No matter how powerful Heir Song is, he's only eighteen or nineteen years old. He's still young and hasn't reached his prime. How can he compare to you?"

The head of the Jiazhou Residence shook his head. "Although that's the case, as long as Song Mingzhao stays in Quanzhou, I won't be able to sleep or eat in peace. The royalists usually don't get involved in the struggle for the throne, and they will support whoever becomes the emperor. Our lord hasn't started anything yet, and we don't know if he's friend or foe. It's not good for him to be enemies with the royalists. We really can't kill him or provide for him. It's a headache."

Song Mingzhao was the next Yu Zongshen. He was almost the next candidate for the Grand Secretary by default. Killing him would be equivalent to making an enemy of the royalists.

The aide hurriedly said, "Lord, why don't you think in another direction? Although Song Mingzhao's arrival in Quanzhou was unexpected and has many drawbacks for you, Song Mingzhao is the heir of the Marquis of Zhenguo. He has enough weight in the royalist party. Who knows if he won't become a beneficial bargaining chip for us to suppress the royalist party in the future?"

It was precisely because Song Mingzhao was too important that the Jiazhou Residence was worried that they would make a mistake. "We can't underestimate these aristocratic families. Back then, our plan for the Xie family was foolproof, but what happened in the end?"

They had actually underestimated Princess Shaoyi.

They did not expect that from the moment Princess Shao Yi came to Quanzhou, everything she had done was already buying time for the Xie Residence to leave Quanzhou. Even he was stunned.

What infuriated him the most was that he had placed his attention on the Xie family. The Lin family, who had always been on good terms with the Xie family, had actually escaped under his watch.

It had to be known that the medicinal herbs business managed by the Lin family was an important part of his lord's plan.

He had really suffered a double loss for Madam.

The aide also felt sad. "Lord, you're right."

Now, Princess Shaoyi was in the limelight. She had brought the entire Xie family to the North and joined King Yue Fei. She had even won the support of the Imperial Court and everyone in the world in the name of helping King Yue Fei promote the planting of sweet potatoes in the North to ease the drought.

However, if they beat the tiger without killing it, there would be endless trouble in the future.

The more the head of the Jiazhou Residence thought about it, the more aggrieved he felt, and the more cautious he became. "Send a letter to my lord later. Tell him everything that Song Mingzhao has done in Dehua County during this period of time. We can't make any mistakes at this juncture."

It had been a long time since the emperor had come to the court, and he had not even taken half a step out of the palace gate. The Empress Dowager had come to listen to the court affairs, but everyone in the court was still restless.

Concubine Lan relied on the Empress Dowager's support to control the harem.

With the Empress Dowager's tacit approval, the Second Prince began to participate openly in the court.

The Xu Residence had roped in his henchmen in the court. Among the princes, the Third Prince was the most powerful.

Even the once inconspicuous Fourth Prince had begun to show himself frequently.

The battle for the position of heir was already on the table.

The lord was waiting for the right time. It was almost time. The more critical the moment was, the more cautious he had to be.

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At the same time, Yu Youyao successfully arrived at Xiangping City.

General An Yuan was worried about her leg injury, so they traveled and stopped along the way. When they encountered a place with good scenery, they stopped and set up camp. They traveled for seven days.

Hence, Yu Youyao's feet had mostly recovered under Auntie Xu's meticulous care.

With a wooden cane, she could walk slowly on the ground. However, when she was on the ground, there was still a slight swelling pain in her ankle. She still had to recuperate for a while to recover.

### Chapter 853: Xiangping City

As soon as the princess's carriage arrived at the city gate, they bumped into Xie Jingliu, who was riding out of the city.

The people from the Xie Residence left separately from Yu Youyao. They set off three days earlier than her.

Firstly, they wanted to come over early to understand the exact situation in Xiangping so that they could plan for the future. Secondly, General An Yuan had personally come to pick up Yu Youyao. The Xie family were only merchants, so it was not appropriate for them to travel together.

Of course, based on their relationship, it was understandable if they traveled together. However, if it involved respect and etiquette, it would be a little inappropriate.

The Xie Residence were all magnanimous people, and everything they did was open and aboveboard. They would never lose their composure because of such a matter and let others gossip about them.

Huang Wenxian was also a straightforward person. He immediately ordered a hundred elite troops, in addition to the experts brought by the Xie Residence, and the group went to Xiangping majestically.

Xie Jingliu quickly dismounted and strode forward. The guards on both sides did not stop him.

"After we arrived in Xiangping City, we waited for a few days, but you didn't come. We sent people to investigate from many sources. Only then did we know that you had been attacked by bandits in the area of Anshan. Grandmother was worried about you, and I was a little worried, so I planned to go along the road to take a look. I didn't expect to meet your phoenix carriage as soon as I left the city."

Yu Youyao quickly asked, "Did your journey go smoothly?"

The mountain bandits also had to treat others based on their social standing. The Xie family had brought many experts with them, and the supplies had long been shipped to Xiangping in batches. There were not many supplies accompanying them.

Xie Jingliu said, "With the escort of the elite troops arranged by General An Yuan, the journey naturally went smoothly." As he spoke, he observed Yu Youyao. Seeing that she looked good and was full of energy, he felt relieved and quickly asked, "Didn't you agree to come over three days later? Why were you delayed for so long on the way? The news of you being attacked by bandits in the Anshan area has already spread to Xiangping City. Nothing happened, right?"

If they traveled more quickly from Liancheng to Xiangping, it would take about five to six days. If they traveled day by day and did not stop, they would be able to reach in three to four days.

Yu Youyao had been delayed for ten days. Even if she had been attacked by mountain bandits, it wouldn't have taken so long.

Yu Youyao shook her head. "I accidentally sprained my ankle on the way, so we traveled more slowly. I wasn't in a hurry to travel, so I simply admired the scenery along the way. Thus, I was a few days late."

Xie Jingliu was very smart. He immediately knocked her forehead angrily. "I knew it. Previously, our Great-Grandfather suggested that we leave separately and had to leave first. Why didn't you stop him? You originally planned to send us away long ago and be a heroine yourself. You're really bold."

Yu Youyao looked aggrieved. She covered her forehead and glared at him. "Third Cousin, why are you like this? I'm already grown up, but you're still knocking on my head. If you do this again, I'll tell our Grandmother that you're bullying me."

Xie Jingliu was caught between laughter and tears. "You're still aggrieved. When we get home, let's see how you answer to our Grandmother."

Yu Youyao's face fell as she looked at her Third Cousin plaintively.

Xie Jingliu couldn't stand such an expression and his tone softened. "Didn't you say that you sprained your ankle? Was your injury serious?"

Yu Youyao quickly said, "I didn't hurt my bones. Auntie is good at massage. After recuperating for a few days, I'm fine." As she spoke, she revealed the front of her shoes under her dress. Her dress blocked the socks at the right time. "I can already walk. I'll be fine in a few days."

After the swelling in her feet subsided, she did not bandage it tightly anymore.

She was also wearing ordinary shoes, so she must be fine. Xie Jingliu heaved a sigh of relief. "It's good that you're fine. When Grandmother asks later, tell her that you were sitting in the carriage and didn't let the mountain bandits crash into you. Seeing that the scenery along the way is not bad. You weren't in a hurry either. You sprained your ankle during the trip."

The men in the family could most likely guess what was going on in the area of Anshan. In order to prevent their Grandmother from worrying, they had been avoiding the main point. With him covering up from the side, they could also muddle through.

Yu Youyao immediately cheered. "Third Cousin, you're the best."

She was usually like a little adult, but when she needed help, she was more coquettish and obedient than anyone else. Xie Jingliu couldn't help but smile. "Next time, don't say that I bullied you."



Yu Youyao blinked with an innocent expression, as if to say, “What are you talking about? Why don’t I understand?”

Xie Jingliu couldn’t help but laugh. “Let’s go. Grandfather and the others are still waiting at home.”

Xie Jingliu arranged for a servant to return to the residence in advance to report. He got on his horse and followed the princess’s phoenix carriage.

The princess’s phoenix carriage had four horses and four wheels. It was covered in jewels.

There were more than a thousand You soldiers guarding Liancheng. In front, there were two rows on the left and the right respectively, with 25 people in each row. Thus, there were a total of 100 elite cavalry opening the way.

Each cavalry soldier was wearing cotton armor and sitting high on the back of his horse. He had a long and a short knife on each side of his waist. He held the reins of his horse in one hand and the hilt of the knife at his waist with the other. He was ready to charge at any time.

The warhorse under him was strong and valiant. It gently raised its hooves and smashed them down heavily, making a clicking sound that could always make one’s heart skip a beat.

There were two teams of elite cavalry on each side of the carriage.

Behind the carriage were a hundred soldiers in heavy iron armor.

Just this heavy armor alone weighed more than 60 kilograms. They were carrying a heavy saber on their backs. This heavy saber was the famous Mo saber from the Tang Dynasty. It weighed 20 to 30 kilograms.

This was the Mo Dao team that King Li of Zhou had once use to defeat his enemies on the battlefield.

They could be said to be the most brutal and bloody heavy-armored soldiers in history.

At that time, the You army lacked supplies and it was still difficult to fight the Di people. The warhorses were exhausted and could not be replenished, so they could only use infantry to charge. However, how could the infantry resist the valiant Di people’s cavalry?

It was inevitable that there would be too many casualties.

Helpless, King Li of Zhou established the Mo Saber Team.

He chose 1,000 elite soldiers to wear heavy armor and equipped them with Mo sabers. They also practiced the Mo Saber Formation. Later, when the Mo Saber Formation was completed and they had just fought with the Di people, they could cut people and horses to the ground with a single strike.

They had achieved an infantry charge.

However, the Mo saber had an extremely high requirement for soldiers. The armor on their bodies and their weapons added up to more than 50 kilograms. When swinging the Mo saber, one needed to exert great strength and pull out the power of the mountains and rivers. Very few people could charge forward and complete the charge.

The forging process of a Mo saber was also very complicated. It took two to three years to complete a saber.

As Di people were good at riding, the Mo saber was a sharp weapon to restrain the cavalry. Therefore, the soldiers of the You army were equipped with Mo sabers. However, as the production was low, there were only about 20 sabers a year.

It was difficult to use the Mo saber, and it had too high a requirement on the quality of the soldiers. There were not many soldiers who could use it.

At first, it did not play much role on the battlefield.

Gradually, it was placed in the military warehouse.

It wasn't until King Li of Zhou trained the Mo Saber Team that the reputation of the 1,000 Mo saber users reappeared.

Therefore, the Mo Saber Team was also the army's trump card.

In addition to these hundred swordsmen, there were almost a thousand light cotton-armored infantry behind them.

The majestic group was in unison. Wherever they went, the commoners retreated and knelt to welcome them.

Chapter 854 - 854: Ask About the Gift

Yu Youyao was a little at a loss. Although she had been conferred the title of princess and had also traveled on a phoenix carriage, the etiquette was not enforced. The commoners did not have to kneel down to welcome her. They only had to retreat to avoid collision.

Xie Jingliu, who was riding beside the carriage, smiled. "The three provinces of Liaodong are bitterly cold. The commoners have limited crops to farm, and the food they can obtain is also limited. In addition, with the nobles in charge, the commoners often don't have enough to eat."

"Xiangping City was the first batch of beneficiaries of the sweet potatoes. Everyone explored and planted sweet potatoes, and the sweet potatoes had already become their main food. The Yue Fei's Residence spared no effort to publicize your merit. Your reputation as a living Bodhisattva had first spread from Xiangping City. There were even commoners who built a shrine for you, made statues, and worshiped you every day."

Yu Youyao suddenly remembered that her original intention for planting sweet potatoes was to ensure that green vines filled the fields, that there would be no famine in the world, and that all the people in the world would be happy.

It was achieved in Xiangping City.

When the sweet potatoes were successfully promoted in the entire Great Zhou Dynasty, more people would not starve anymore.

The ancient city of Xiangping was very big. Yu Youyao opened the window and saw many shops along the way. There were also all kinds of small stalls by the roadside. There were government officials patrolling the streets from time to time. The commoners' clothes were shabby, but they were still neat. All of them were in good spirits. The people at the border were tall and strong, and their voices were loud. The streets were not prosperous, but they still looked noisy.

The men and women on the streets had magnanimous expressions as they walked freely without any reservations.

There were young and beautiful women walking on the street, causing the men to stare at them dishonestly. The women did not seem to be embarrassed at all. They even glared back righteously, and some even scolded them back shrewishly. Usually, they would cause the men to laugh and even whistle frivolously. When others saw this, they would also laugh kindly without any malice.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and chuckled.

Xiangping City was the first county in Liaodong. The carriage traveled in the city for another two hours before slowly stopping.

Xie Jingliu dismounted. "We're home."

Chun Xiao and Xia Tao were the first to get out of the carriage. They drew the curtains on the left and the right. Auntie Xu followed them out. Only then did Yu Youyao leave the carriage. She stepped on a stool and was helped out of the carriage by Auntie Xu.

The weather in Xiangping was wet and cold. It was already March, and the weather suddenly became hot and cold. It was also a little piercing.

Auntie Xu took a waist-length cloak from the old woman and helped Yu Youyao tie it.

Yu Youyao looked up and saw the noble family in front of her. There were three steps in front of the main door. There were two wooden pillars on both sides. The main door was painted in bronze, making it look simple and low-key. There was a plaque with the words "Xie Residence" hanging on the door.

At this moment, the entire Xie family was waiting at the door.

Her maternal grandfather and grandmother were there.

Eldest Uncle Xie Xun, Second Uncle Xie Liao, and Third Uncle Xie Tiao were there.

Eldest Aunt Madam Yao, Second Aunt Madam Lin, and Third Aunt Madam Zheng were present.

Eldest Cousin Xie Xingzhou, Second Cousin Xie Linyuan, Fourth Cousin Xie Yanqing, and Fifth Cousin Xie Yunze were also present.

Seeing Yu Youyao get out of the carriage, Old Madam Xie was overjoyed. She quickly shouted, "Hurry up and bring the brazier over. Cross it so that we can relieve our bad luck."

Immediately, an old woman shouted, "The brazier is here."

The brazier was placed at the entrance. Old Madam Xie quickly said, "My children and grandchildren will step over the fire and smoke. Bad luck will disappear and blessings will arrive."

The family business will prosper and we won't be unhappy. The family will be harmonious and everything will prosper."

Yu Youyao picked up her skirt, raised her legs, stepped over the brazier, and entered.

Old Madam Xie smiled until her eyes narrowed. She quickly picked up the willow branch, dipped it in citrus water, and sprinkled it all over her body. She asked her, "Is it clean?"

This was an auspicious gift. It was done by her elders to chase away evil and avoid calamity. Yu Youyao quickly said, "Yes!"

Old Madam Xie's smile deepened. She asked, "Is it auspicious?"

Yu Youyao continued, "It's auspicious!"

Old Master Xie quickly said, "Old Master is still waiting in the main hall. Hurry up and greet him."

Yu Youyao went to the main hall surrounded by her cousins.

During this time, Old Madam Xie saw that Yu Youyao was walking strangely and quickly asked what was going on.

Yu Youyao explained using the excuse she had made with her Third Cousin.

Old Madam Xie did not suspect anything when Xie Jingliu chimed in from the side. She just felt sorry for her granddaughter. She held her granddaughter's hand and asked about the injury on her foot in detail.

When they arrived at the main hall, Yu Youyao thanked the Old Master respectfully.

Old Master Xie hurriedly said, "Get up, get up. You sprained your ankle and haven't recovered fully. You have to be careful. Our family doesn't care about such superficial etiquette."

Old Madam Xie stepped forward and helped Yu Youyao up. "Your Second and Third Uncles arrived in Xiangping in December. With King Yue Fei's help, they bought two adjacent three-way houses in Xiangping City. The third branch of the Xie Residence lives here, and the left side is for you to stay in. The few people in front of you have already arranged the courtyard long ago."

Yu Youyao's maidservants all came to Xiangping first.

"Can the third branch live in a three-way house?" The Xie family had built a group of residences in Quanzhou, and every family lived in a three-way courtyard.

It wasn't that there weren't bigger houses in Xiangping City, but because of the rules of respect and etiquette, ordinary families couldn't have a house that was larger than a three-way house. They were also new here, so the ready-made houses didn't have everything they wanted. They might not be able to buy a suitable one even if they paid money.

As soon as she entered the courtyard, she saw an independent four-part courtyard. The main house had two floors, with side houses on the east and west sides. There were also side courtyards of various sizes.

The Xie Residence did not take in concubines. There were not many sons and daughters of concubines in the family. There were only a few people in the house, so it was definitely more than enough for them to live in a courtyard.

However, with the comparison of the Xie Residence in Quanzhou, it was inevitable that there would be a difference.

Old Madam Xie also thought of the residence in Quanzhou and felt a little sad. "It's enough to live in. There are few people in the Liaodong area, unlike Quanzhou, where every inch of land is made of gold. The residence takes up a lot of space, and the layout inside is also wide. There are many rooms and courtyards. The size of one courtyard is as big as a two-way courtyard in Quanzhou."

The North was far away from the authorities and the residential land was not expensive. However, they could not exceed the residential rules. They took advantage of the size of the land, the layout of the homes, and the number of small courtyards.

King Yue Fei had helped to choose the residence, but their family had also taken a fancy to the size of this residence. Each courtyard was more than 460 square meters large. The family could live comfortably, so they bought it.

Madam Wang also smiled and said, "There's a small mountain behind our house. When we bought the house, we bought it along with it. When our family settles down in Xiangping City, we'll flatten the mountain and build a few more courtyards. We're new here, so the first few days definitely won't go as planned. Fortunately, the entire family is in one place. This is better than anything else. The later days will definitely be better."

Everyone in the family lived in the courtyard, but she lived alone in a large residence. Yu Youyao felt that it was not suitable.

Madam Lin held her hand. "Other than being a young lady of our family, you're also Princess Shaoyi, who has been personally conferred the title by the Imperial Court. You've even lived in a five-way courtyard. It was only because you couldn't find a more suitable residence for the time being that I arranged for you to live in the courtyard beside us. When our family settles down, we'll expand the courtyard beside us."

Chapter 855 - 855: Yu Garden

After Yu Youyao arrived in Xiangping, she should have moved into the Yue Fei Residence to be safe. However, the Xie family did not want to be separated from Yu Youyao.

With Yu Youyao's current status, it was not suitable for them to live under the same roof.

King Yue Fei had arranged for two adjacent residences. It was also a compromise.

Yu Youyao did not want to be separated from the Xie Residence. She did not interact with the Xie Residence like she did with her grandmother in the Yu Residence.

However, true family members actually did not need to trouble themselves to please each other. They cared, respected, and took care of each other's feelings. Naturally, they were an inseparable family.

Madam Zheng said gently, "It's been a tiring journey. Go back and rest first. Tonight, the family will have a reunion meal. It can be considered a welcome for you."

Yu Youyao was mourning, so it wasn't appropriate for the family to hold a banquet.

The two residences were built on a mountaintop. In the middle, there was a corridor that pierced through the mountain. It was like a "green belt" that divided the two residences into two, like a pair of fish.

There were ancient trees along the corridor, and strange stones stood tall. They were in a strange shape, and there were wild vines on the stones. There were unknown wild flowers.

A side door opened in the middle of the two residences. After passing through the side door, Yu Youyao saw a green stone that was half the height of a person standing at the door of the residence opposite. The stone naturally showed the color of a lake and a mountain.

The words "Yu Garden" were engraved on it.

Yu Youyao looked at the familiar words steadily, and her eyes suddenly welled up.

Madam Zheng smiled. "This piece of Laoshan green stone has the texture of jade. The color is semi-transparent and unclear. Under different light, it will reflect different scenes. It's very strange. King Yue Fei named the residence 'Yu Garden'. The words on it were also carved by him personally."

A woman's household could not be established in the Great Zhou Dynasty, and women could not leave their families to live alone.

At this moment, the words "Yu Garden" seemed to have broken the barrier that had been placed on her. She couldn't live alone without her family, but she could enjoy a unique courtyard and live as she pleased.

Yin Huaixi had always understood her. Yu Youyao chuckled. "The Yu Garden is quite good."

Madam Zheng sent Yu Youyao to the next room and returned.

Yu Youyao was excited. She ignored the fact that her ankle had yet to recover and wanted to stroll around the residence.

Auntie Xu couldn't dissuade her. Thinking that she had walked a lot just now, she ordered a servant to carry the shoulder carriage. "Let Dong Mei accompany you. It's been a long journey. I'll go to the small kitchen to prepare a medicinal bath for you first and some food."

The layout of the courtyard followed the terrain. There was a jade belt stream that meandered. It was also deep and hidden. The long corridor rose and fell according to the mountain, winding into the pavilion with mountain rocks on the left and the right.

It revealed a deep, simple, natural, and unrestrained aura.

As they strolled, they arrived at the main courtyard.

Seeing that the place where the plaque had originally hung on the front door of the courtyard was still empty, Yu Youyao suddenly said, "There is a famous musical piece called Jiushao. This will be renamed the Jiushao Courtyard."

From now on, it was truly her territory.

Dong Mei helped Young Miss walk around the main courtyard.

Dong Mei arrived early and introduced, “The layout of the main courtyard is a little similar to the Yi Water Courtyard. His Highness personally found a powerful craftsman and renovated it according to the requirements. His Highness said that Young Miss is used to living in such a house. She can be more at ease if she lives in the same kind of house.”

As soon as Yu Youyao walked over, she saw that there were pebbles of all sizes on the ground. The color, shape, and patterns of the pebbles were ever-changing, revealing thousands of patterns.

Dong Mei explained, “It’s damp and bitterly cold. His Highness is worried that Young Miss won’t be used to it. Anshan is rich in limestone, but limestone isn’t as heat-resistant as pebbles. His Highness has made the decision to lay out large, smooth sea pebbles in the courtyard. The sea pebbles absorb moisture and resist the cold. The fireplace burns in winter. Not only is it heat-resistant, but it also transmits heat. In summer, sprinkle some water on the ground to relieve the heat. It’ll be warm in winter and cold in summer.”

There were fewer large sea pebbles, and the largest could reach more than 30 feet (about 10 meters).

The courtyard occupied a large area. It was not easy to polish the sea pebbles, so it was impossible to complete it in just three months. Yin Huaixi must have arranged for someone to make preparations early in the morning.

He had indeed put in a lot of effort.

Dong Mei supported Yu Youyao and finally stopped under the old elm tree in the courtyard.

Coincidentally, this was also a purple elm tree. It was even older than the one in the Xie Residence. Its roots were intertwined, like a huge dragon entrenched. It was strong and slanted, spiraling up. The green cover above was like clouds, resembling layers of green clouds that the “dragon” spat out.

Yu Youyao couldn’t help but think of the old elm tree that accompanied her mother’s growth in the Yi Water Courtyard. “Was this purple elm planted here from the beginning?”

Dong Mei nodded. “That’s right.”

The purple elm tree was already full of leaves. Yu Youyao couldn’t help but smile and say, “I’ll get Auntie Xu to make elm leaf pie another day. When the elm tree grows, I can even make elm egg pancakes.”

In the main house, there was an exquisite velvet blanket. The furnishings in the house reflected the Yi Water Garden. In addition, there was a heated bed, a heated bed table, and a fireplace built with pebbles.

Yu Youyao took a medicinal bath and washed away her fatigue from the journey. Suddenly, she felt a sense of stability that she had not felt for a long time.

Auntie Xu brought lunch over.

In addition to light and nourishing medicinal porridge, eggs, mushrooms, and so on, she had also prepared cold elm leaves and a golden and crispy elm leaf pie.

The fresh and tender elm leaves tasted abnormally fresh with a little sweetness. It was a very simple and natural taste.

It was cold in the north, so there were no wooden beds. Most of them slept on brick beds, making them look a little simple.

Considering that Yu Youyao was used to a thousand-jointed bed, Yin Huaixi had set up a thousand-jointed bed room around the bed. It was no different from the thousand-jointed bed she usually slept in. It was wet and cold. Wood such as agarwood and old sandalwood were not as moist and comfortable as elm trees, so old purple elm wood was used for all the materials.

There was a jade blanket woven with jade pieces on the bed.

After traveling in the open for a few days, Yu Youyao couldn't help but feel a little tired and took a nap.

When she woke up, it was already past midnight.

Chun Xiao helped Yu Youyao wash up. "Uncle Sun and Butler Wen from the Yue Fei's Residence are here."

Yu Youyao quickly said, "When did Uncle Sun come over? Why didn't you wake me up?" With a thought, she asked, "The butler of the Yue Fei's Residence is surnamed Wen? Is he an old man who used to be by the old Princess Consort's side?"

The surname of the old princess consort's maiden family was Wen.

Dong Mei picked out a green dress with embroidered branches, flowers, leaves, and a round collar. When she heard this, she said, "Uncle Sun has only just arrived and asked us not to disturb the Princess Consort. As for Butler Wen, he used to be the old Princess Consort's escort and is very trusted by His Highness. Previously, when the Yu Residence was renovated, it was also Butler Wen who helped manage it inside and out."

Yu Youyao asked about Butler Wen. Then, she got up to enter the side room to change her clothes.

It was more bitter and cold, and the clothes were heavier. The top with a round collar and big sleeves reached her calves. It was paired with a skirt that had eight pleats. Two to three inches of the top of the skirt and one or two inches of the bottom of the skirt were decorated with an exquisite and complicated lace. They resembled water ripples that rolled with delicate waves.

## Chapter 856: Settling Down

Liu'er combed Yu Youyao's hair into a swallow's tail hairstyle. Her hair was piled on top of her head, and a bun that resembled a swallow's tail was tied at the back of her head. Tasseled pearls and jade fell from the back of her hair, and there was a silver crown on her head.

As the saying went, girls would wear a flower crown and dress with big sleeves and a round collar.

This way, it would look good.

After Yu Youyao was conferred the title of princess, she became more particular about her daily makeup and clothes.



For example, the single conch and the Feixian buns were only worn when she was in her room. Most of the time, her hair was combed into a solid bun. She also wore a small crown to show her solemnity and dignity.

However, only married women in the Great Zhou Dynasty would tie their hair into a tight bun. Therefore, she left a swallow's tail bun behind her head to show her unmarried status.

As she was mourning, her jewelry still consisted mainly of silver, jade, pearls, and so on.

The people of the North were open-minded, so she rarely wore clothes that were too light. She still mainly wore dark clothes.

Chun Xiao helped Yu Youyao to the reception pavilion.

Uncle Sun was still drinking his tea calmly.

Butler Wen was neither thin nor fat, but his hair was white and his face was old. However, in fact, this old man who had accompanied the main family and experienced many difficulties was only in his early fifties.

Seeing Yu Youyao come over, Butler Wen quickly stood up and bowed.

Yu Youyao hurriedly stepped forward and helped him up. "Butler Wen, there's no need to be so polite. The accompanying maidservants in front of me have all been in the capital since they were young. When they came to Xiangping City, they were also unfamiliar with the place. I'll have to trouble you to help manage all the matters in the Yu Residence."

There were deep wrinkles at the corners of the butler's eyes, but he was very easy-going. "Princess, you're too polite. His Highness misses you, so he specially instructed me not to let you down. In the past, His Highness relied on you to take care of him in the capital to recover. Now that you're in the North, it's his turn to take care of you."

Looking at the bright and elegant Yu Youyao, who was a bright woman that was hard to come across like the old princess consort, he couldn't help but feel relieved.

He only hoped that His Highness could marry the Little Princess Consort as soon as possible.

Yu Youyao blushed at these words.

Butler Wen's smile deepened, and he asked Uncle Sun to take Yu Youyao's pulse.

Uncle Sun rubbed his fingers and closed his eyes. As he stroked his long beard, he said after a while, "Your qi and blood are a little insufficient. It's mostly caused by fatigue and worry. It's not a big problem. In the future, use more food to nourish your qi and blood. Relax and recuperate for a while."

It was still thanks to the prescription she had previously obtained from Imperial Physician Hu in the capital. However, after recuperating for a while, her illness had mostly recovered.

Yu Youyao nodded. "Thank you, Uncle Sun."

Uncle Sun glanced at her. "If there's discord in your qi and blood, it will cause all kinds of illnesses." He put down his teacup. "Although it's bitterly cold in the North, the Feng Shui in your residence was personally set up by Little Yin and is compatible with the Xie family's yin and yang.

The Xie family is kind to others. It's a family with accumulated goodwill and there's plenty of good fortune. When the two are intertwined, the vitality will be long-lasting and is meant to nourish your lives. As long as you don't poke your nose into the business for others and stay here for long, you'll have the benefit of recuperating."

Neo-Daoism and Feng Shui emphasized the interaction of essence, qi, and spirit, which corresponded to the human heart, body, and mind respectively. One had to cultivate the heart, nourish their nature, and enhance the spirit.

One had to relax, achieve harmony in their body, and have a calm mind.

If she stayed in such a good residence for a long time, she would be able to achieve the effect of recuperation and would naturally be able to settle down.

Therefore, all three were indispensable.

Yin Huaixi had spent a lot of effort on renovating this courtyard. He had even meticulously arranged every flower, tree, mountain, and river.

Yu Youyao was a little surprised. "No wonder as soon as I entered the courtyard, I felt that this place was vast and open, making me feel relaxed, as if I was unrestrained. I didn't expect him to be so proficient in this."

Uncle Sun rolled his eyes. "Hmph, he's not good at this. He's asked me for advice on the layout of the flowers and trees inside."

"This is already very impressive." Yu Youyao spoke quickly and habitually defended Yin Huaixi. Seeing Uncle Sun blowing his beard and glaring at her, she quickly pretended to be shocked. "Uncle Sun, do you actually know feng shui?"

Uncle Sun immediately sat up straight and stroked his beard with one hand, pretending to be unfathomable. "The Sun family is the descendant of the King of Medicine. The King of Medicine advocates Daoism, and what he has learned includes Daoist medicine, and Daoist medicine also includes Feng Shui. As a descendant, I can't help but dabble in it."

Plants were formed by vitality. Every plant had its own unique function. Only by placing them in a suitable position could they grow lushly and unleash other characteristics.

Take elm wood for example!

In Feng Shui, it was believed that elm trees tended towards the yang. They were yang trees that could guard the residence, ward off evil spirits, and allow one to settle down.

In pharmacology, elm wood had four purposes, namely for medicine, food, reward, and play. It had the effect of turning sunlight into moisture and calming the mind and soul. Living in a place with lush elm wood could help one sleep and calm the mind. It was a longevity tree.

From the perspective of a scholar, elm trees appealed to all and portrayed an image of determination.

Different cultures achieved a subtle harmony with regards to elm wood. It was beneficial to humans and harmless. Living on the elm wood was naturally beneficial to the body.

Therefore, it was auspicious.

Yu Youyao looked at him with admiration. “You’re amazing!”

A true Daoist doctor had knowledge from dozens or even hundreds of fields, such as medicinal herbs, alchemy, physiognomy, astronomical phenomena, feng shui, fate, and so on.

Meanwhile, Daoist doctors pursued learning, prudence, discernment, and observantness. They were completely opposite to those people who only had half-baked knowledge and were blindly superstitious.

Uncle Sun had painstakingly studied the inheritance left behind by the King of Medicine. He did not spend much effort on treating illnesses and saving people.

Some people felt that Uncle Bo learned a lot of medical skills for nothing, and he did not want to save anyone. It was against the path of a doctor.

However, Uncle Sun said earnestly, “Someone has to study the good things left behind by our ancestors. Now, each generation is worse than the last. If the inheritance is gone and good things are lost, it’s inevitable that future generations will think of them as dregs when they are mentioned again. Everyone thinks that only good things are worth passing on. If the inheritance of the Daoist doctors is broken, does that mean that what our ancestors have isn’t good? However, they’re clearly good.”

Uncle Sun cleared his throat and glanced at Yu Youyao. “I’ve set up a pharmaceutical school in Xiangping City. I teach for two hours every three days. As long as you’re interested in medicine, anyone can come to class. Those who are listening only need to personally go up the mountain every time and pick a medicinal herb to cultivate. If you have anything in the future, look for me at the pharmaceutical school.”

Yu Youyao understood immediately. “Are you going to choose a successor?”

With such a wide net, there would definitely be many people who would come to listen to the class. However, as time passed, the people who could really persevere and learn were good students who were really interested in medicine, and were determined and talented.

Regardless of whether she could learn everything that Uncle Sun had learned, even if she could inherit one thing, it was already very impressive.

Early on, learning medicine required memorizing soup recipes, distinguishing medicine, and recognizing medicinal properties. Even if one couldn’t read, they could still learn.

Students who were illiterate also had a chance to come into contact with literacy.

Currently, there were more than 2,300 medicinal herbs with medicinal effects recorded in the Medicine Manual. One only needed to remember the names of each medicinal herb and put in more effort. One could copy and read more in class. When one finished learning the Medicine Manual, they would be able to recognize all the words they needed to.

Chapter 857: Big Liar

At the mention of this, Uncle Sun's expression drooped and he glared at her angrily. "Previously, I asked you to learn medicine from me, but you refused. Otherwise, I wouldn't have to show my face outside at such an old age and work so hard to choose a successor. Hmph!"

Moreover, when she learned about incense and medicine, not only could she restore lost recipes, but she could also constantly innovate on the basis of a type of incense and create a brand new incense recipe or medicine.

For example, the Musk Medicinal Fragrance Pill, her ointments, and the Tianze Fragrance Pill were all not inferior to medicinal pills.

Incense and medicine came from the same source. They were indispensable for mixing, treating, and nourishing. Almost all spices also had medicinal properties when they were fragrant. Blending incense medicine or prescriptions typically required a huge amount of pharmacology learning and rich knowledge of Dao medicine to support it.

This was why he valued Yu Youyao.

His talent was not as good as Yu Youyao's, so he was still lacking in studying the wisdom of his predecessors.

However, Yu Youyao could innovate.

Now that he was choosing a successor, he could also choose good students with talent, perseverance, and temperament. However, it was difficult to find someone like Yu Youyao, who could bring Daoist medicine to greater heights.

He couldn't help but feel regretful. Every time he saw her, she couldn't help but feel embarrassed.

Yu Youyao looked innocent. She quickly picked up her teacup and pretended that she was drinking tea, as if she hadn't heard him clearly.

Just this personality alone made Uncle Sun look heartbroken and helpless. "I've only taken a fancy to two successors in my life. One is completely uninterested in medical skills, and the other is busy elsewhere."

Yu Youyao was a little curious. Who was the first person Uncle Sun had taken a fancy to?

Then!

Uncle Sun started nagging. "The most hateful person is that kid, Little Yin. He's been bad since he was young. He clearly knows that I've traveled all over the country to choose a successor. Later, when I finally took a fancy to him, he tried his best to keep me hanging."

This was really unexpected but reasonable. Yu Youyao looked sympathetic.

She knew it. Uncle Sun was focused on studying medicine and had given many prescriptions to others regardless of whether they knew medicine or not. According to him, "Only things that are useful to others have the value of inheritance."

The logic was very simple. Since this prescription had helped the other party, it would naturally be passed down from generation to generation.

Therefore, Uncle Sun rarely treated people.

Why was it so easy for King Li of Zhou to invite him back to the residence to treat his blood problem?

It turned out that he had taken a fancy to Yin Huaixi and wanted to take him in as his disciple.

He deliberately sent himself to Yin Huaixi's door.

"... Later on, he said that he's never heard of my name and questioned my medical skills. In order to prove my medical skills, I went to the army and taught the military doctors three years of medical skills."

"Later, he said that his father didn't really want him to learn medicine, so I found a military doctor in the army and compiled what I had learned into a book, giving it to King Li of Zhou to show my sincerity."

"After I finished writing the book, he felt that it was too difficult to get started with medicine. I could only write down my experience in medicine..."

In order to choose a successor, he had been completely taken advantage of. This... This was simply saddening.

Yu Youyao looked sympathetic. She cleared her throat and said righteously, "The path of medicine is difficult. Instead of aimlessly finding a successor who might or might not exist, it's better to compile all the classics, experiences, and encounters you've learned from in your life into a book for future generations. Isn't this another way of inheritance?"

"It's true that the later scholars might not have your insights, but the medical path is long. There's a long way to go. One has to cultivate it profoundly and tirelessly. They have to keep striving. There's an old saying that people learn from the mistakes of their predecessors. People also seek the old and discover the new. This is the right path for an inheritance."

Uncle Sun raised his eyebrows and snorted.

Back then, he had been fooled by Little Yin into selling himself completely. It was as if he had been sold and helped them count the money from the sale. In the end, he tied himself to their ship.

Later on, he realized that this person came from the Ghost Valley and was a big liar.

Yu Youyao sat up straight and said dignifiedly, "Although my Nineteenth Brother didn't inherit your medical skills, he helped you write the medicine book. You're not on the same path, but you're better than people from the same path. You're also acquaintances who only met for no reason."

Uncle Sun glanced at her from the corner of his eye, but agreed with her.

Otherwise, he wouldn't have stayed in the North back then. After all, not everyone could gather hundreds of thousands of military doctors to debate medicine with him and learn from everyone.

It was also because of this that he acknowledged Yin Huaixi's breadth of mind and knowledge.

Uncle Sun still refused to give up. He put down the teacup in his hand and said seriously, “You’ve left the Yu Residence and come to the North. Can you consider learning medicine from me?”

Seeing that Uncle Sun’s hair and beard were all white, Yu Youyao felt a lump in her throat. Even saying the word “no” made her feel that she had committed a heinous crime. She quickly picked up her tea and pretended to be dead.

She wasn’t listening. She wasn’t listening. Uncle Sun was reciting scriptures.

Uncle Sun tried his best to persuade her. “The people of the North are valiant and don’t have many rules. There are many female military doctors in the army, and incense and medicine come from the same source. You’re already very accomplished in incense and medicine, so you can learn medical skills with half the effort. You don’t have to treat illnesses and save people. You just have to practice some pharmacology and medical theories. Don’t just talk about it on paper. From now on, focus on inheriting the medical path and learn from everyone. Innovate and learn.”

Learning about incense and medicine required learning a huge amount of pharmacological and medical knowledge.

Yu Youyao maintained a sense of reverence for medical skills. It was impossible for her to become a respected doctor like Imperial Physician Shi, nor was it possible for her to spend her life studying the medical path like Uncle Sun. She couldn’t do it without distractions, nor could she bear the weight of this “inheritance.”

Uncle Sun’s mouth had dried. He finally stopped to drink his tea.

Seeing this, Butler Wen took this opportunity to speak up and help Yu Youyao out. “The Princess’s status is noble and important. The Yu Residence also needs to send troops to guard it. With the size and layout of the residence, we have to set up a guardhouse in the residence.”

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief, then frowned.

She did not have a clear understanding and approval of the princess’s identity.

She also did not like to show off her status as a princess. The changes in her clothes and accessories were also on the surface, in case anyone thought that she was neglecting the rules of respect.

Butler Wen noticed the change in her emotions. Seeing that she did not raise any objections, he continued, “The Yu Residence has eight hundred-man commanders. Five of them are in charge of guarding the area outside the courtyard. Two of them are in charge of the internal defense of the courtyard. One of them is in charge of patrolling the courtyard. There are a total of 800 guards people. As the Princess was invited by His Highness, all the expenses of hiring the commanders will be borne by King Yue Fei.”

Yu Youyao had been conferred the title of imperial family member, so she should enjoy a portion of the honor of having guards. However, women of the Great Zhou Dynasty did not establish their own sects, and the Imperial Court had not bestowed the residence of a princess. It was not appropriate for her to be so blatant, lest she went overboard.

In the name of protecting Princess Shaoyi’s safety, Butler Wen had reduced most of the rules on the basis of the guards in the residence. There were only a hundred-man commanders and not thousand-man commanders. No one could find fault with it.

## Chapter 858 - 858: Siblings

After all, the North was not as peaceful as the capital. There were powerful enemies on the outside and nobles on the inside. Yu Youyao nodded. "We'll do as Butler Wen says."

Butler Wen smiled and nodded. "In addition, the Princess has just arrived and there's not enough manpower in the residence. I'm afraid it'll be unfair to you. I brought a group of people over today and taught them the rules in the Yue Fei King's Residence. It's convenient to use them. Why don't you use them first? You can choose a suitable servant after settling down."

From the capital to Xiangping, the people who served Yu Youyao were all arranged by Old Madam Yu in the Jade Courtyard.

Most of them were born into the family and had served them for generations.

For example, when Liu'er and Xia Tao signed the death contract, she had also made it clear that if they did not want to follow, they could take the return contract for free. However, there were a few people who were determined to serve her.

The Yu Residence was a little bigger than the Xie Residence. Although there was only a three-way house, it occupied three to four fields (each field occupies 666 square meters, resulting in a total area of 2,000 square meters) and required a lot of servants.

Butler Wen had thought it through. Since he had already made preparations, this group of people would definitely be trustworthy.

Yu Youyao had no need to decline. "Thank you, Butler Wen."

Butler Wen quickly took the name list and handed it to Yu Youyao.

After Yu Youyao took a closer look at the list, she couldn't help but sigh with emotion. Butler Wen was really meticulous. The details of these servants were written in detail on the list.

She would decide how to arrange the manpower in the Yu Garden herself.

The actual number of people on the list only guaranteed the basic operations of the Yu Garden. If they wanted to improve their manpower, the Yu Garden would need to find another brokerage house, choose suitable people, and train them themselves.

Moreover, Yu Youyao had also seen some familiar people on the list. They had served in the Qingqu Courtyard earlier.

Among them was Nanny Lu.

Yu Youyao thought for a moment and understood Butler Wen's painstaking efforts.

In the past, when she lived in a small courtyard, only the third branch lived in the courtyard. The people who were previously serving them was enough.

After all, the Yu Garden was a little bigger. It was a little difficult for the third branch to manage an entire residence. Nanny Lu was familiar with her. Not only could she help Yu Youyao familiarize

herself with Xiangping and integrate into life here, but she could also help manage the matters in the residence. It was more appropriate than going out to look for someone herself.

Seeing that Yu Youyao had no objections, the butler took out another box. "His Highness ordered me to teach them. When I was teaching them, he also made it clear that he wanted to send them to the Yu Garden to serve the Princess. Their contracts are all here. Since the Princess has accepted them, they'll be the people of the Yu Garden in the future. They'll listen to the Princess's orders."

Wherever the contract was, the servants would be loyal to whoever the owner of the contracts was. It also further showed her position that the butler had not interfered in the inner residence of the Yu Garden.

Butler Wen was magnanimous, so Yu Youyao was naturally not dissatisfied. This matter was settled just like that.

Butler Wen had also brought a lot of specialties of Xiangping City and expensive medicinal herbs and spices. Before he left, he said, "The Yu Garden and the Yue Fei Residence are only separated by a street. There's a shortcut in the middle. You'll reach there in half an hour at most. Princess, when you're free, you have to come to the residence to play."

Yu Youyao nodded to show agreement.

Uncle Sun still refused to give up. "Remember to consider what I just said. When you change your mind, come to the pharmacy school to look for me..."

Yu Youyao sent Uncle Sun and Butler Wen off with a helpless expression. She turned around and handed the name list to Auntie Xu. "I'll leave all the matters in the outer courtyard to Nanny Lu. Arrange the matters in the inner courtyard in the same way that the inner courtyard of the Jade Courtyard. I'll have to trouble Auntie to take care of the matters in my residence. Dong Mei will arrange the rest."

She had handed the authority of the outer courtyard manager to Nanny Lu.

Although the outer courtyard was important, the people from the third branch around Yu Youyao were all close to her. It was not appropriate to let anyone into the outer courtyard. Nanny Lu had been in charge of managing the entire Jade Courtyard in the past and was familiar with this. There was naturally no need to mention her ability. Everyone would be convinced by this arrangement.

The group of people that Butler Wen had brought were all arranged to serve in the outer courtyard. Auntie Xu brought Old Madam Sun, Auntie Tao, and Auntie Zhao to the outer courtyard to pick people.

After a long afternoon, the guards were arranged and managed by Third Commander Yin.

The people from the Yu Garden had also been put in place, and they had already started planning.

The next day, Yu Youyao got up at dawn. After breakfast, she went to the connecting buildings in the inner and outer courtyards. There were more than a hundred servants, each male and female, standing in the courtyard obediently.

Yu Youyao knew that ever since King Li of Zhou set a precedent, there had been arrangements to accommodate the orphans of martyrs. Some had been nurtured into secret guards, some had been



sent to the army, some had been sent to work in the manor, and some had learned a skill and continued to work for the residence. Those who were unwilling to accept the above arrangements were also released from the residence to live.

These servants were more or less related to the Yu army.

Xia Tao took out the name list. When they heard her name, the servants would come forward and kowtow to Yu Youyao. They would also briefly tell her about their family background, what they were good at, and where they were on duty.

This was the first time they had seen their master. A smart person knew how to perform in front of her and leave a good impression on her. They would also have a better future. An honest person would naturally do their job.

From a young age, Yu Youyao could almost tell their general personalities.

Yu Youyao recognized the servants one by one and gave them a few more words of advice before returning to the Jiushao Courtyard.

At this moment, Xia Tao came over to report, “Young Miss, Fourth Young Master is here.”

Yu Youyao quickly said, “Please come in!”

Not long after, Xia Tao led Yu Shansi into the house.

Yu Shansi was already ten years old and had grown a lot taller. He was wearing a set of green stone patterns. After not seeing him for a long time, his eyes had widened a little, and his every move was calm and generous.

Yu Youyao still remembered that on the day Madam Yang was sent back to her maiden home, Yu Shansi had a timid expression. He had taken an expensive jade pendant and a bag of broken silver and asked her to pass it to Bi Tao.

This action made Yu Youyao think highly of her. “Sheep have the grace of kneeling in front of their mother’s breasts, and crows have the righteousness of nourishing their parents. If he advanced by his own, it would be good for his mother-son relationship.”

At the very least, she still had her grandmother’s protection. Yu Shansi was neither a legitimate son nor the son of a concubine, and he was hated by Yu Zongzheng. In the future, he would only be another “Little Youyao” in the residence.

In the end, Yu Youyao couldn’t bear to see him like this. She decided to bring Yu Shansi away from the Yu Residence. A man’s ambition was to travel in all directions. His future fate would depend on him.

Now, it seemed that Yu Shansi had not let her down.

Yu Shansi looked happy, but he suppressed it and bowed respectfully to Yu Youyao. “Hello, Eldest Sister.”

Yu Youyao smiled and said, “Sit down and talk.”

Yu Shansi moved over and sat beside Yu Youyao. “As soon as my Eldest Sister entered the city yesterday, I received the news. I originally wanted to come over to visit you, but I thought that you had worked hard along the way, so I waited for the entire night before coming over today.”

He looked at his Eldest Sister with joy and admiration.

## Chapter 859 - 859: Lushan Academy

In the past, in the Yu Residence, Yu Youyao had taken care of Yu Shansi but also distanced herself from him. She did not expect that after leaving the capital, she would no longer have any grudges with Yu Shansi.

She smiled and asked, "Have you had breakfast?"

Yu Shansi subconsciously shook his head. "I only allowed half a day off, so..." I left for the Yu Garden at dawn.

"You can't skip breakfast for a day. You have to be more careful in the future. Don't tire yourself out." Yu Youyao looked at Yu Shansi and instructed gently. After saying that, she instructed Chun Xiao, "Go to the small kitchen and see if there's anything to eat. Bring some over."

Xia Tao bowed and left.

Only the siblings were left in the reception pavilion. Yu Shansi quickly asked, "Is my Eldest Sister feeling better?"

Yu Youyao nodded. "I'm much better. I'll be fine after recuperating a little more in the future." At this point, she changed the topic. "You've been in the North for so long. Are you used to it?"

Yu Shansi also nodded. "The North is quite good. The Yue Fei's Residence has also taken good care of me. I'm studying at the Lushan Academy now and living in a school building."

Then, he chatted about many things in the academy.

The academy did not allow servants to be brought along. The students had to handle their daily lives themselves. Mr. Xian Yun and Mr. Hu Shan only conducted half a day of classes every day and taught as they pleased. They would teach whatever they thought of and stuck to the rules. How much they could learn depended on themselves.

There were no examinations in the academy, nor was there a competition for knowledge. However, every month, the teacher would bring the students out to travel for ten days. They would visit famous mountains and rivers, go to the small courtyards of farmers, engage in farming, and so on. After that, they would ask every student to submit a piece of homework or articles, paintings, music, calligraphy, and so on.

In the academy, not only did it teach Confucian classics, including the Four Books and Five Classics, as well as the Three Fundamental Bonds and Five Constant Virtues, but it also taught Taoism, Buddhism, and so on.

They taught preparatory literary studies, but they didn't just teach this.

The academy was divided into the east courtyard and the west courtyard. The east courtyard provided systematic learning, but they did not require students to compare their knowledge.

The west courtyard taught military strategies and martial arts.

It could be said that the students were good at both civil and military matters.

Yu Youyao was deep in thought. It turned out that Mr. Xian Yun and Mr. Hu Shan had opened an academy in the North because of Yin Huaixi.

When it came to teaching, Yin Huaixi was the first to say, “The teaching content includes the Four Books and Five Classics, and the Three Principles and Five Changes, but it’s not restricted to Confucianism and Daoism.”

Out of the eight-part essay of the imperial examination, two questions were required to come from the Four Books and the Five Classics. The answers to the questions had to come from Zhu Xi’s Annotations to the Four Books and the Three Principles and Five Changes. Since the students had to argue based on the questions, the candidates’ freedom to explain was limited.

The range of questions and answers restricted the thoughts of the candidates. Therefore, in order to take the examination, the only books that the candidates could study mechanically were the Four Books and Five Classics, and the Three Principles and Five Changes.

If they studied the books mechanically, they would only be bookish.

The imperial examination was to choose outstanding talents in all aspects, not mediocre people who only took the examination for the sake of it.

The eight-part essay only contained foolish wisdom.

Only culture could enrich a person’s horizons, knowledge, and breadth of mind.

Looking at the past dynasties, the prosperity of culture also represented the prosperity of a dynasty.

She did not expect that in just three to four months, the academy had already done well. Yu Youyao smiled. “Are you able to keep up with your studies?”

Yu Shansi hesitated for a moment before saying, “My foundation is not bad. In addition, Mr. Hu Shan cares about his relationship with the Yu Residence and usually gives me a lot of guidance. I can still keep up.”

However, in the end, he was not as agile as his Big Brother and the others.

After entering the Lushan Academy, he realized that Mr. Xian Yun and Mr. Hu Shan were famous. Students from all over the country came to study, and it was difficult to enter the academy.

Although his foundation was not bad, he was still a little mediocre compared to the other students in the academy. It was all thanks to his Eldest Sister that he could enter the academy to study.

He recalled that in the past, when he was in the residence, every time his Third Sister asked him about his studies, she would say that she was encouraging him, but her eyes subconsciously revealed disappointment.

Thinking about it, His Big Sister would be very disappointed!

Yu Youyao smiled again. “Didn’t I give you a set of notes earlier? There’s a lot of logic in it. You should study more often and test it with your studies. I think you’ll gain something.”

Yin Huaixi had written the notes for her in the past. There were more than ten books, including the Four Books and Five Classics, Heavenly Works, and history books.

As everyone at home liked the books, she got someone to make a few copies and give them to her siblings.

Yu Youyao paused for a moment. "I sent you to Wushan Academy because Mr. Xian Yun and Mr. Hu Shan are very reasonable. It's also good for you to learn from them and broaden your horizons. Your studies are your own. If you feel that you've benefited, you've learned."

Hearing her sincere words and ordinary tone, Yu Shansi finally felt relieved. "Shansi has learned something."

Yu Youyao tested his studies again. The questions she set weren't too difficult, but they often seemed tricky. He needed to apply what he had learned, integrate them, and change flexibly before he could answer.

Yu Shansi was not fluent in answering, but he was still commendable. It was obvious that his foundation was indeed solid.

Yu Youyao was quite satisfied and subconsciously smiled.

This also made Yu Shansi feel relieved.

Next, the two of them chatted about the recent situation.

Yu Youyao told her about what she had seen and heard along the way from Quanzhou to Xiangping City.

Yu Shansi had also mentioned that earlier, the teacher had brought the students to the countryside to help plow. They had gone to look at the sweet potato seedlings, watched the breeding of silkworm eggs, and so on.

After that, Yu Shansi couldn't help but ask, "Big Sister, I don't know." He stammered and lowered his head uneasily. Even his voice became much softer. "How's the capital?"

Yu Youyao put down her teacup and did not hide anything. "The capital is still the same. The Yu Residence is fine. Previously, there was news from the clan that Yu Zongzheng had raised the status of Concubine Jiang to his wife. Our Third Sister is praying for our Grandmother in the clan's nunnery. Our Father takes good care of her and often sends some expensive medicinal herbs and supplements to nourish her body."

If she did not do anything wrong, she was not afraid of ghosts knocking on her door. She felt that she was worthy of anyone in the Yu Residence, so she could naturally mention it calmly.

Her grandmother did not deliberately hide everything that had happened in the residence from Yu Shansi. Yu Shansi was also at the age where he could tell right from wrong, so she would not bother to explain anything.

She would only be the eldest daughter of the first wife, a woman of a noble family, and a sister.

It was just right.

No more, no less.

Her conscience was clear.

That was all.

The grudge between her, Yu Jianjia, and Yang Shuwan had nothing to do with Yu Shansi, so she would not vent her anger on him. Whatever Yu Shansi thought was not within her plan, so she would not care.

Although she had brought Yu Shansi to the North because she “sympathized” with him and couldn’t bear to see his life ruined at such a young age, most of it was to communicate with her and the Yu Clan and show them that although she had returned to her mother’s clan, she still cared about the Yu Clan.

This way, they could all be related to the clan, and outsiders would not guess anything.

Perhaps some people would find it unreasonable.

Chapter 860: Human or Ghost?

But!

Human hearts were reciprocal in the first place. If Yu Shansi treated her sincerely, she would repay him with some sincerity.

Yu Shansi was silent for a moment before saying, “That’s good.”

His tone revealed a hint of relief.

Concubine Jiang’s background was not bad. After she was promoted, Brother Ming would be promoted from the son of a concubine to the son of a legitimate wife. His father had a legitimate son, so why would he care about his son who wasn’t born to a legitimate wife or a concubine?

Their Third Sister had made a huge mistake and was sent back to the clan. If she could pray for her grandmother in the nunnery for three years.

Three years later, she would fulfill her filial piety to her elders, and her reputation would not be bad. With her father’s love for her, she would be able to marry into a wealthy family. He would prepare more dowry and match her with a family that had a better family background. In the future, she would have a good life and he would not have to worry about her.

Yu Shansi thought about it. After his mother was locked up in the Tranquil Heart Residence, his father treated him coldly. Then, he thought of his father’s disgusted attitude towards him after his mother was divorced. He felt very uncomfortable, but in the end, he couldn’t ignore it.

“How’s our Father?”

Yu Shansi had enjoyed Yu Zongzheng’s fatherly love, and those years of sincere love could not be faked. Yu Youyao also understood his conflicted feelings. “He’s quite good too.”

However, he did not say that after Yu Zongshen went into mourning, Yu Zongzheng was not as successful in the royal court as before. He was neither of high nor low status in the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, nor could he interfere in the Imperial Court.

He was already a little powerless.

This was because he was the eldest son. The brothers had long separated, and their grandmother followed the eldest son. Furthermore, the eldest son had to observe a period of mourning for his parents. That was the rightful reason.

Although no one openly accused him of being unfilial, he was still exposed in the end, and his reputation was not as good as before.

Although the clan did not say anything explicitly, their tolerance and dissatisfaction with Yu Zongzheng for many years had reached its peak after their grandmother's sudden death.

Perhaps Yu Zongzheng did not notice that he had already been marginalized by his family.

Without the help and resources of the family, it wouldn't be long before Yu Zongzheng was marginalized in the royal court.

Yu Zongzheng was greedy for power and greed. In the end, he would only end up with a disappointing outcome.

The outcome was predestined.

Therefore, she had never cared about Yu Zongzheng.

The siblings had reunited after a long time and chatted a lot. Yu Youyao ordered someone to prepare lunch in advance.

After the siblings finished their meal, Yu Shansi was about to return to the academy.

Yu Youyao prepared some fine gold and silver, as well as a lot of incense and food. She sent a vehicle to send Yu Shansi off. "I've prepared a courtyard for you in the Yu Garden. Come over when you're free. If you suffer in the academy, tell me. We won't take the initiative to cause trouble, but we don't have to be afraid of trouble. You usually have to take care of your health..."

Yu Shansi's eyes welled up and he quickly lowered his head. "I understand, Eldest Sister."

He suddenly thought of everything that had happened in the Yu Residence in the past.

However, his memories came to an abrupt stop on the day he almost drowned.

The day the nanny was sent out of the residence, she had come to look for him. When he found out that she was leaving, he tugged at her sleeve and cried as he apologized to her, saying that he would never hit Mo Cai again.

A nanny was like half a mother.

He had been fed by the nanny since he was young, and his daily life was taken care of by her. He had a deep relationship with her.

In the past, when the nanny was by his side, he did not think much of it.

When he suddenly found out that the nanny was leaving, he panicked and was really afraid.

The nanny also hugged him and cried. She said to him word by word, "Miss Xia Tao and I brought Carpenter Li to check the railings by the lake one by one. There can't really be a problem. Eldest Miss won't be negligent in such matters."

He was stunned when he heard this.

However, the nanny did not explain anything and continued, “Eldest Miss was not involved in the matter of moving the courtyard. First Madam was the one who arranged everything. Third Miss also sent someone close to her to help. Nanny Qin was even sent over early in the morning. That’s why Nanny Qin was able to come and save the Fourth Young Master immediately after he drowned.”

He did not understand such complicated words, but he felt a sense of uneasiness for no reason.

The nanny continued, “You have to think carefully. Who was the one who deliberately gossiped and lured you to the lake? No matter how busy the huge Songtao Courtyard is, it’s not to the extent that everyone in front of you won’t be free. Someone deliberately sent the people around you away and made you and Mo Cai alone by the lake.”

He shivered in fear.

Then, she heard the nanny continue, “Eldest Miss only said that the newly built railing was not firm and was a little loose. However, I was the first to rush over. It’s obvious that the railing was not firm, but deliberately loosened.”

“After that, First Madam insisted that Eldest Miss had deliberately wanted to harm you. If Eldest Miss hadn’t saved your life, I’m afraid you wouldn’t have been able to defend yourself.”

Yu Shansi’s mind went blank. Did someone deliberately harm him?

There was no problem with the railing, and Yu Youyao did not interfere in the moving of the courtyard. He had also been saved by Yu Youyao, so he ruled out the possibility that Yu Youyao wanted to harm him.

His mother had always doted on him the most, so it was even more impossible for her to harm him.

Then who else could loosen the railing of the Songtao Courtyard without anyone noticing?

Who else could quietly transfer all the people around him to help and leave him alone?

Who else could understand his personality and use the servants’ words to instigate him to go to the lake to play?

No matter how stupid he was, he understood that it was impossible for servants to do such a thing.

There were only a few people in the main house.

Concubine He was still locked up.

The nanny continued, “After your Nanny leaves, you have to think carefully about who exactly wants to harm you. You have to be a sensible person in the residence and not be a muddle-headed person. Eldest Miss and the Matriarch are kind. You have to get closer to them in the future to live well in the residence.”

Thinking of his mother being locked up in the Tranquil Heart Residence, Yu Shansi subconsciously opened his mouth to ask, “What about Third Sister? We’re biological siblings. Why can’t we get close to her and Yu Youyao?”

Nanny tidied her clothes. "You have to tell who's human and who's a ghost."

The person who had said these words to him was neither a maidservant nor a servant.

She was the nanny who had been like a mother to him since he was young.

An unbelievable thought suddenly appeared in Yu Shansi's heart, but he did not dare to continue thinking. He stubbornly believed that Yu Youyao had harmed him and his mother.

However, in the end, he still recognized who was human and who was a ghost.

Yu Shansi still remembered that on the day his mother was divorced, she had died on the way back to the main family. As she was a divorcee, her death no longer had anything to do with him. As a child, he did not even have the chance to mourn for his mother.

That night, his grandmother also passed away.

His Eldest Sister was clearly unable to suppress her grief, but she still found time to call him over and ask him solemnly, "Before our Grandmother passed away, although she had arranged a way out for you, I still want to ask you if you're willing to leave the Yu Residence with me and live a bright future."

He opened his mouth, wanting to ask, "Isn't this just coaxing our Grandmother to go in peace?"

Was it really true?

At that moment, he hesitated.