

All Hail 881

Chapter 881 - 881: Beating the Drum to Voice Grievances

After King Li of Zhou's death, the North was in a mess because of the Marquis of Changxing. Madam Zhang, who was supposed to receive the pension, did not receive it. As this matter involved King Li of Zhou's death, others also kept it a secret, and the matter of the pension was left unsettled. This gave her an excuse to make a fuss.

Yu Youyao's tense emotions finally relaxed. The vassal lords did not engage in political matters, but they could legitimately step in for matters related to the vassal lords.

The matter of the pension was mentioned again. No matter what, the You army could not stay out of it. Then, it would be best to let the You army deal with Madam Zhang's complaint.

As long as she did not get involved, this matter would not implicate her.

No matter how many schemes the aristocratic families had, they were useless.

This matter seemed to have been resolved by her casually, but she knew the danger best.

This was an open scheme. The aristocratic families had never hidden their sinister intentions from the beginning.

Madam Zhang's kneeling had already pushed her to the top of the limelight.

How could beautiful jade collide with a stubborn stone?

The only thing that could collide with a stubborn stone was a sharp knife.

The You army was this sharp knife that could cut through gold and stone.

Yu Youyao took a detour and started with the pension money. In public, she pushed Madam Zhang's sorrow onto the officials who had caused King Li of Zhou's death. It seemed to be diverting the trouble, but this also forced the person behind the scenes to panic.

Others kept King Li of Zhou's death a secret and did not dare to talk about it wantonly.

However, this did not include Princess Shaoyi, who had been personally conferred the title by the Imperial Court.

This action indeed caused the aristocratic families to panic, forcing them to plant the clueless hooligans early on in public.

Only then did Yu Youyao take control of the situation.

But!

Her counterattack had just begun.

Yu Youyao's lips curled up slightly. "To the government office."

Ye Xiaoci was dealing with official matters in the government office when he suddenly heard the sound of drums.

His eyelids couldn't help but twitch. He immediately had a bad feeling.

Indeed!

Hurried footsteps came from outside. A bailiff rushed into the study as if his chips were down and pressing. "Lord— Lord— Lord, bad news. Princess Shaoyi is here. She's beating the drum outside to voice her grievances!

"What?" Ye Xiaoci's hand that was holding the brush trembled, and a drop of ink landed on the official document. "Who did you just say was beating the drum outside to voice her grievances?"

The bailiff wiped his cold sweat. "It's— It's Princess Shaoyi."

Ye Xiaoci had been practicing in the government for many years. However, his expressionless face immediately broke. "This is really unexpected."

The bailiff was also dumbfounded. Who wouldn't say no?

After his shock, Ye Xiaoci picked up the black veil hat at the side and put it on his head. He adjusted his official uniform. "I want to see what Princess Shaoyi is playing at."

Outside the government office, drums sounded, piercing through the nearby streets.

News of Princess Shao Yi knocking on the door and voicing her grievances in the government office also spread like wildfire.

The commoners who had rushed over from all directions surrounded the government office.

The tightly shut red-lacquered door outside the government office was pulled open by the bailiffs with a clang. Immediately after, the sound of "ascension" came from the government office.

Yu Youyao put the drumstick back to its original place and took the handkerchief from Chun Xiao to wipe her hands. Then, she tidied her appearance and clothes, waiting for the hall to summon her.

The Great Zhou Dynasty had states and counties.

A state official governed a state and was already the biggest official in the area. However, governors were divided into the upper, middle, and lower levels. Upper-leveled governors had jurisdiction over middle- and lower-leveled governors, while middle-leveled governors had jurisdiction over lower-leveled governors.

Governors usually also held other official positions. The authority of the border governors was also greater than that of ordinary governors.

The official positions of the governors usually ranged from the third- to fifth-grade. The exact grade depended on the size of the area under their rule, the population, prosperity, the military, and various other situations.

Ye Xiaoci was the governor of the three provinces of Liaodong, but at the same time, he was also the provincial governor. His authority extended to the Shanxi Shaanxi area, and directly covered the entire Youzhou. He controlled the three divisions of the local army, politics, and the people. He could be said to be a feudal official.

Therefore, he was also known as the Youzhou Governor.

Youzhou Governor was just Ye Xiaoci's nickname.

If it were anyone else who took over the position of governor, they wouldn't be called the Youzhou Governor.

The function of the border governor was greater than that of other areas. It was presided over by the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs and had a restrictive effect on the local vassal lords.

Due to the fact that there were governors everywhere, the inspectors who were sent out occasionally, as well as all kinds of censors, also played a restraining and even controlling role to a certain extent.

Therefore, although the position of governor seemed glorious, its main role was still to restrain the vassal lords.

Ye Xiaoci seemed to be in charge of the army, politics, and the people of a county. He had immense power and was treated as a "governing official." However, unlike other areas, the military power at the border was in the hands of the vassal lords. The state capital had the right to mobilize the army, but it did not have the right to control. Furthermore, because the state officials wanted to restrain the vassal lords, they were also controlled by the Imperial Court from time to time.

He was really powerful, but it was also really dangerous. Other than the disciples of the Ye family, ordinary people really couldn't deal with such a situation.

Therefore, Ye Xiaoci usually wouldn't get involved in the matters between the vassal lords and nobles, in case he accidentally got involved and caused trouble.

However, there was no doubt that Ye Xiaoci had immense power in the North.

What Yu Youyao wanted to do was to use Ye Xiaoci to drag out the people who had schemed against her today and publicly execute them.

Not long after, a bailiff rushed over and respectfully invited Yu Youyao into the court.

Ye Xiaoci asked routinely, "Who was playing the drum in the hall?"

Yu Youyao had a noble title. She did not kneel when she saw an official. Instead, she replied loudly, "I'm Yu Youyao of the Yu Clan from the capital. I'm the eldest daughter of the first wife of the Left Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs, Yu Zongzheng. His Majesty has personally conferred the title of first-grade Saint Venerable Princess Yi. Greetings, Lord Ye."

Ye Xiaoci nodded. "Princess Shaoyi, there's no need to be so polite." Then, he turned around and instructed the bailiffs at the side, "Set up a seat. Princess, please sit down."

The bailiff quickly entered the inner hall. Soon, he moved an ebony armchair into the hall and invited Yu Youyao to sit down.

Yu Youyao did not decline. She gathered her clothes and sat down.

Ye Xiaoci continued to ask, "Since you've beaten the drum and entered the court, I have to do things according to the rules. If I've been negligent, please forgive me."

Yu Youyao nodded. "That's how it should be."

Only then did Ye Xiaoci ask, “Princess, what grievances do you have? Please tell me the truth.”

Yu Youyao stood up from her chair and stood in front of the court. She bowed to Ye Xiaoci. “I went to the Dragon Phoenix Temple to offer incense today. On the way back, I encountered a commoner’s wife. In broad daylight, in front of everyone, she publicly intercepted my carriage and knelt down to cry out for justice. Such a ridiculous act was originally not a big deal. I only thought that this commoner’s wife did not know the rules.”

Chapter 882: Killing

Ye Xiaoci’s eyelids twitched heavily, and he suddenly felt that the wooden stick in his hand was a little hot. Standing in the hall, Princess Shaoyi was wearing a jade crown and ceremonial robe. Her posture was straight, and she looked straight ahead. Her every move revealed the demeanor and upbringing of a noble lady of a noble family.

A sentence suddenly popped into his mind. The land-owning class had kicked an iron plate!

Indeed!

Yu Youyao continued, “This common woman was like a drowning man clutching at a straw, but it’s understandable. Our county has no intention of holding it against the commoners. However, the country has the law of the country, and the court has its rules. It’s originally the duty of the government to distinguish clearly and resolve grievances. How can our county violate the law and overstep the rules of the court? Wouldn’t that be disrespectful to the law of the country? Although our county is graced by the heavens and has received the emperor’s grace, and the daughter of a foreign minister has been conferred the position of Princess, we’re always careful with our words and actions. We obey the law and behave appropriately.”

Although the land-owning class’s scheme on the streets had failed, there would definitely be rumors about Madam Zhang intercepting her carriage and crying out for justice on the streets. The land-owning class would definitely use public opinion to deal with her.

When someone had a good reputation, others would be jealous of them. When someone was doted on, they would be slandered.

Regardless of whether she interfered in Madam Zhang’s complaint, as soon as this matter spread, there would still be some arrogant people who would think that she was the one who did not know her place and relied on her status as a Princess to publicly interfere in the matters of the government.

Although she was upright and wasn’t afraid of her shadow being crooked, it was said that one who had a mind to beat their dog would easily find a stick.

The more rumors spread, the more true they would become.

She needed to be open and aboveboard. From the perspective of a victim, she needed to completely cut off the malicious speculations of others.

As the governor of Youzhou, Ye Xiaoci’s responsibility was to restrain the vassal lords and balance the noble families.

General servitude, listening to litigation, teaching, simplifying customs, raising the people, and so on were all handled diligently by him.

The Imperial Court issued a national policy and accommodated a large number of refugees. The promotion of the planting of sweet potatoes was the most important and was directly related to him. Now, it was difficult to prevent the epidemic.

Yu Youyao was the key to both.

This morning, Madam Ye had gone to the Dragon Phoenix Temple and even mentioned Ms. Ye to her openly. It was Ye Xiaoci who was expressing goodwill to her.

She and Ye Xiaoci had a common interest. Before that, Ye Xiaoci's position was on her side.

This was why there was the matter of beating the drum and crying out for justice.

Of course, this was her first step in her plan.

Ye Xiaoci's eyes flashed, and he went with the flow. "Princess, you're right. It's the duty of the government to redress grievances. Some commoners crossed the government office and begged you. It's undoubtedly because you're kind and benevolent. The commoners don't know the etiquette. Furthermore, isn't it because the local officials aren't managing it well, causing the commoners to have no way to seek help? That's why they were desperate and looked for you. It's also my fault for overlooking this."

The county office was under the rule of the state government office. Ye Xiaoci had the right to supervise, control, and hold all the counties in Youzhou accountable.

Yu Youyao's expression was a little solemn. "I was also puzzled. If Madam Zhang had been wronged, why didn't she go to the county office to plead? However, at that time, the commoners were discussing the matter fervently, so it wasn't appropriate for me to wash my hands of it. I planned to ask about the situation, but the guards around me accidentally realized that someone in the crowd was deliberately instigating and inciting the commoners."

Ye Xiaoci's expression immediately turned solemn. "Princess, do you have evidence to confirm what you just said?"

Yu Youyao said, "Our county's guards captured them one by one. They also admitted in public that they were paid to do it. Now, they're outside and guarded by our county's guards."

When Ye Xiaoci heard this, he understood that Princess Shaoyi had come prepared. He patted the wooden stick and said, "Someone, bring the perpetrators up."

A bailiff walked into the hall and cupped his hands to receive his orders.

The commoners outside the government office also consciously made way.

Ye Xiaoci looked at Yu Youyao. "Princess, please sit down for a moment."

Yu Youyao thanked him and sat on the armchair. She had originally thought that it was a mutual understanding between King Yue Fei and the land-owning class.

Unexpectedly, as soon as Madam Xie made a move, the Han family could not sit still.

They had directly schemed against her.

Since they did not abide by the rules of the game, she could not be blamed for killing the chicken to warn the monkeys and uprooting the Han family.

Moreover, borrowing strength was her second step.

After beating the drum and voicing their grievances, the government office would understand the case in detail. After confirming that the case was true, the government office would accept this case and establish a case.

She was Princess Shaoyi, personally conferred the title by the emperor, and she had a common interest with Ye Xiaoci. This case was very important, and Ye Xiaoci would definitely investigate it strictly.

Who was the person who had bribed the hooligans?

Furthermore, who instigated it?

Why was Madam Zhang so bold as to stop the Princess's carriage and cry out for justice? Who instigated this?

Which pharmacy was Madam Zhang going to sue?

What was the cause of Madam Zhang's husband's death?

... .

Once the government opened a case, they would investigate thoroughly.

Ye Xiaoci had been the governor of Youzhou for more than 20 years. He restrained the military power of the vassal lords and balanced the relationship of the land-owning class. He already had a certain level of suppression against the land-owning class.

The government office of the state capital was located in Xiangping. His control over the three provinces of Liaodong far exceeded that of the land-owning class.

Ye Xiaoci was from the Ye family of Linjiang, so the noble families were especially wary of him.

As the case went deeper, the person behind it would have nowhere to hide.

Behind the matter, it was often the case that evidence of other crimes would be uncovered during the investigation of a crime. On the surface, there was only one crime investigated, but once a case was opened for investigation, there were multiple crimes at the same time.

Not long after, the bailiffs brought 18 criminals to the court.

When these hooligans saw the officials, they were like rats seeing a cat. When Ye Xiaoci beat the wooden stick, they were so frightened that they peed their pants. They revealed everything in detail.

According to their confessions, it was already confirmed that there was something else behind Madam Zhang openly stopping the Princess's carriage and crying out for justice on the streets.

The case was established.

At this point, Yu Youyao's goal had been achieved. She walked into the hall. "I deeply feel that the emperor's grace is vast, so ever since I was conferred the title, I've inherited the rules of respect and

etiquette. I've followed the laws of the country and followed the rules. I have been careful with my words and stayed in seclusion. It's like walking on thin ice every day."

Ye Xiaoci agreed deeply.

Although Princess Shaoyi was famous, she kept a low profile. She kept a low profile and did things in a high-profile manner, revealing the upbringing of a noble family.

"No matter what kind of scheme is behind this, one thing is certain. Someone wants to use the name of the county's holy benevolence to instigate the commoners to interfere in the government's matters and interfere in the rules of the court. They want to implicate the county for being disloyal and unrighteous."

"Lord Ye, why don't you think about it? If this matter spreads like this, wouldn't those who don't know the truth think that a woman from our county has interfered in the court and caused chaos?" At this point, Yu Youyao cupped her hands and bowed deeply to Ye Xiaoci. "That's all. Lord Ye, please investigate this matter strictly and seek justice for our county."

Ye Xiaoci hurriedly said, "Princess, please get up quickly and clear your name. It's originally my duty. Since you've suffered such injustice under my rule, I'll definitely investigate this matter strictly and restore your clean reputation."

Chapter 883: How Is That Impossible?

Sixth Young Master Han's meticulous scheme against Princess Shaoyi did not achieve the desired effect. He couldn't help but feel ashamed and resentful. "Look at what you've done. Madam Zhang is so incompetent. She was fooled by Princess Shaoyi's grace and power, and she was controlled. Have you forgotten how King Li of Zhou died back then? You even found a commoner to complain and got involved with the You army..."

He Zhixian was so scolded that he couldn't raise his head.

Liaodong was vast and sparsely populated. Women were made to work like men, while men were made to work like livestock. Widows without a husband could still survive. It was easy to find an ordinary poor person, but it was even more difficult to find someone who had the guts to complain to Princess Shaoyi.

He had asked around about Madam Zhang's family situation. The two parents could not work and there were still many children in the family. Although Madam Zhang had a shrewish personality, she was not a capable person. The entire family was counting on a man's carpentry skills to survive.

She could only barely make ends meet.

He had secretly plotted for Madam Zhang's husband to fall into the water. When Madam Zhang's husband caught a cold, she went to the medicinal shop under the Bai Residence to get the medicine. The medicinal shop arranged for their people to change the medicine that Madam Zhang had gotten in advance. After Madam Zhang's husband took the medicine, the cold intensified day by day, and he passed away in less than two days.

Once the man in the family passed away, the days at home would not last.

Madam Zhang had found out by chance that there was a problem with the medicine her husband was taking. Among them, one of the medicines included ox bezoars, which were cooling and didn't treat colds, so she reported it to the county office.

After the county office verified that the prescription was correct, without evidence, the case naturally did not stand.

A few days after her husband died, she couldn't even find the medicinal dregs. Madam Zhang couldn't ask for help and was instigated by someone. That was why she had the intention to stop Princess Shaoyi's carriage and plead for her husband.

Everything was logical.

He Zhixian was unwilling to be scolded and couldn't help but defend himself. "The commoners haven't seen the world. Not everyone has the guts to stop a noble's carriage with just a few words. Madam Zhang was at her wits' end, so she was instigated. It's not good to be too obvious."

When Princess Shaoyi went to the Dragon Phoenix Temple, there were more than 300 guards accompanying her. All of them were elites of the You army and surrounded Princess Shaoyi's carriage tightly. Even the commoners had to retreat when they saw this formation. Who would dare to stop the Princess's carriage?

Weren't they afraid that the guards would treat them as a spy or an assassin and stab them on the spot?

Sixth Young Master Han opened his mouth.

Little did he know how much preparation and arrangements He Zhixian had made.

When things didn't work out, he pushed the responsibility to He Zhixian.

"Princess Shaoyi has grown up in the capital since she was young and has seen the world. She's not easy to fool. I originally considered that although Madam Zhang's ex-husband joined the army, he died in battle before the Di people invaded the North wantonly. It wouldn't have involved King Li of Zhou's death. Who knew..."

Meanwhile, Princess Shaoyi made a big deal out of it and implicated King Li of Zhou's death. It was simply shocking.

Sixth Young Master Han's face was ashen. "Princess Shaoyi implicated Madam Zhang's case in public. The You army will definitely interfere. Huang Wenxian isn't someone who's easy to fool. They will definitely investigate the cause of Madam Zhang's husband's death thoroughly. Are you sure you didn't leave any evidence behind?"

He Zhixian hurriedly said, "Sixth Young Master, don't worry. I've arranged the cause of Madam Zhang's husband's death flawlessly. I guarantee that it won't be traced back to you. Military officials are not allowed to interfere in politics. Even if Huang Wenxian wants to interfere in this case, it will involve the government's investigation. There's only a limited number of vassal lords

who can interfere. This case will be tried by me. I don't believe that Huang Wenxian can trace it back to me."

Sixth Young Master Han was much more relieved. He Zhixian was a hidden chess piece arranged by the Han family in Liaodong. Huang Wenxian would not have guessed that there was a problem with Hezhi County.

When He Zhixian saw Sixth Young Master Han, his expression softened a little. He quickly said, "In my opinion, Sixth Young Master's plan today wasn't completely a mistake."

Sixth Young Master Han's gaze flickered. "Oh? Tell me."

He Zhixian took a step forward. "Sixth Young Master's goal was originally just to accuse Princess Shaoyi of interfering in the court and causing chaos in the country. Madam Zhang publicly stopped Princess Shaoyi's carriage and cried out for justice on the streets. This is obvious to everyone. When the time comes, we just have to spread some rumors..."

Sixth Young Master Han came to a realization. "Rumors spread like wildfire... The more they spread, the more unrecognizable they will be. At that time, we'll release some more rumors about Princess Shaoyi not knowing her limits. It'll cause speculation and suspicion, and it'll extend to etiquette. It'll point out that Princess Shaoyi is not worthy of the position. The Imperial Court will definitely report Princess Shaoyi. We can still achieve our goal."

He Zhixian chuckled. "Sixth Young Master, you're right."

"You're really something. No wonder the clan thinks so highly of Lord He. Lord He has a limitless future." Sixth Young Master Han laughed and patted He Zhixian's shoulder. "You let Princess Shaoyi dodge the bullet this time. It won't be so easy next time."

After resolving his worries, Sixth Young Master Han felt relieved.

He Zhixian suggested, "Sixth Young Master has been in Xiangping for so long. I think you're bored. Why don't I arrange some fun and let you relax?"

His smile was a wretchedness that only men understood. "The families of the offenders sent from the capital have been taught. When they are clothed, they are girls from good families. However, once they take off their clothes..."

Sixth Young Master Han was from a noble family after all. Although he prided himself on being a playboy, he also cherished his reputation. Initially, he was a little unmoved, but when he heard Lord He's interesting words, he was a little interested.

Just as he was about to agree!

At this moment, there was an urgent knock on the door.

When He Zhixian heard this, he quickly cleared his throat and his expression changed. His square face looked dignified and upright, and he did not look wretched at all. "Come in."

This person was a trusted servant sent by He Zhixian to keep a close eye on Princess Shaoyi.

The servant quickly walked up to He Zhixian and said anxiously, “Lord, bad news. Princess Shaoyi has brought a group of hooligans we’ve planted to the government office of the state capital to beat the drum and voice her grievances. She said that someone has deliberately used her reputation as a benevolent saint and the mouths of the commoners to frame her for being disloyal and unrighteous. Lord Ye has already accepted this case. This matter has already spread to Xiangping City.”

He Zhixian was stunned and suddenly raised his voice. “What did you say just now? Say it again.”

The servant was shocked and quickly repeated what he had just said.

This time, Sixth Young Master Han also heard it clearly. His expression immediately changed. “This b*tch. I’ve really underestimated her.”

In the next moment, He Zhixian was shocked. He swallowed and subconsciously asked, “How is that possible? Lord Ye has never interfered in the matters between the nobles and the You army. Back then, when the nobles of the North joined forces to frame King Li of Zhou, he was still uninvolved. How could he...”

Chapter 884: Idiot

At first, Sixth Young Master Han was also a little puzzled. In a flash, he thought of something. “Idiot, the Imperial Court has issued a national policy and has taken in a large number of refugees. The resettlement of the refugees is related to Princess Shaoyi promoting the planting of sweet potatoes. Otherwise, food will become the biggest problem when a million refugees gather in the Liaodong area. If there’s not enough food, it’s easy to cause a riot. The government office of the state capital can’t escape its responsibility. Also, right now, the most troublesome prevention and treatment of the disease in the government office is also led by Princess Shaoyi...”

After figuring this out, he regretted it so much that his intestines turned green. He felt that he had chosen the best time to knock on the mountain and scare the tiger. While dealing with Princess Shaoyi, he could also intimidate the nobles.

However, Princess Shaoyi had probably long guessed that the land-owning class would make a move.

Although Princess Shaoyi had played a huge role in helping to promote the planting of sweet potatoes, the sweet potatoes had been planted successfully on a large scale last year. The government also took this matter very seriously. This was not enough to make Ye Xiaoci, who had always been “wise”, stand on Princess Shaoyi’s side.

Therefore, as soon as Princess Shaoyi came to Xiangping, she first led the prevention of the disease and pulled Ye Xiaoci into her camp.

Once the land-owning class made any rash moves, she could use the power of the government office to deal with them.

This was not a scheme.

However, those who achieved great things often planned before the rain. Since the house was already built, why would they be afraid of being drenched in the rain?

This was Princess Shaoyi’s brilliance.

He Zhixian's mind cleared, and his face immediately turned ashen. "If an epidemic erupts among the million refugees, the government office of the state capital will be the first to bear the brunt. Princess Shaoyi is the most important person to prevent and treat the epidemic. Moreover, Princess Shaoyi is not an ordinary person. She also has the royalists, the imperial family, and the Empress Dowager, who is in charge of the court now. It's impossible for Lord Ye not to care if she has a grievance and reports it to the government office. The difference is how to manage it and how much..."

The authority of the government office had created a certain balance for the land-owning class. It was impossible for him to easily break the balance and cause trouble for himself. Even if Ye Xiaoci accepted this case, at most, he would find out the truth and restore Princess Shaoyi's reputation.

However, if Ye Xiaoci stood on Princess Shaoyi's side, he would definitely manage it to the end.

"It's over, it's over!" He Zhixian's forehead kept breaking out in a cold sweat.

Although he was confident that he could avoid Huang Wenxian's detection, this was under the premise that Madam Zhang's case would be heard by the county office. He would directly participate in this case. Only then would it be foolproof.

However, now that the state government office had accepted Princess Shaoyi's injustice, Madam Zhang's complaint, which was directly related to her, was naturally handed over to the state government office for trial.

Once the case was thoroughly investigated, what he had done could not be hidden.

When one pulled up a radish, some dirt would come with it. The Han family would probably...

Sixth Young Master Han also thought of this and said anxiously, "No, I have to rush back to Xi'an immediately and report this matter to the family so that I can deal with it in advance. I'll have to trouble Lord He to take on the matter in Xiangping for the time being. When I return to the clan and discuss it with the elders, I'll definitely help you."

When He Zhixian heard this, his expression turned ashen. Sixth Young Master Han had said it nicely. Once he left Xiangping, it would be equivalent to the Han family giving up on him.

Everything that had happened behind Madam Zhang's complaint had been decided by Sixth Young Master Han. He had arranged it. If Sixth Young Master Han left, there would be no additional evidence that all of this was related to Sixth Young Master Han.

Sixth Young Master Han wanted to sacrifice him to protect himself and even the Han family.

He Zhixian's eyes flashed. "Only if this matter doesn't implicate the Han family can the Han family free up their hands to protect me from being implicated. Sixth Young Master, don't worry. The government office won't be able to trace it to me for a while..."

Sixth Young Master Han's eyes flashed as he turned to leave.

At this moment, He Zhixian gave the servant beside him a look.

The servant understood and quietly took a step forward. He raised his elbow and suddenly struck the back of Sixth Young Master Han's neck. Sixth Young Master Han's vision darkened and he fell to the ground with a bang.

He Zhixian sneered and raised his leg to kick Sixth Young Master Han. "Pfft, do you think I'm a fool? I've been an official for more than ten years. How can I be fooled by a young brat?"

Sixth Young Master Han was a direct descendant of the Han family. As long as Sixth Young Master Han stayed in Xiangping City, he would be involved with Madam Zhang's complaint. The Han family would not give up on him easily.

Recalling how Sixth Young Master Han had been drinking and ordering him around recently, He Zhixian couldn't help but spit at him and kick him a few more times.

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Yu Youyao returned to the Yu Garden from the government office. Just as she changed her clothes, Xia Tao came over to report, "Young Miss, Madam Zhang's family has already been brought to the Yu Garden. They have been arranged to stay in the side courtyard. I've sent someone to get a doctor to treat Madam Zhang's in-laws."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Take good care of them."

Madam Zhang was just an insignificant character in this matter. From Madam Zhang's previous words, she knew very little, but one should not forget that Madam Zhang was also a key person in this matter.

Madam Zhang was the one who had obtained and brewed the medicine. Before Madam Zhang's husband died, he had the most contact with Madam Zhang. The person who instigated Madam Zhang to complain had also come into contact with her...

There were many things that could be excavated.

There was naturally no need to mention Ye Xiaoci's ability to become a governor. There was naturally an interrogation process in the government office. He could find some unexpected evidence from these insignificant clues.

Madam Zhang had brought her child along and remarried. After her husband passed away, it was also because her family couldn't support her that she was willing to take the risk and stop her carriage.

It was obvious that Madam Zhang valued her family very much.

She had brought Madam Zhang's family into the Yu Garden to take care of them. To Madam Zhang, it was a grace and a threat.

As long as Madam Zhang's family was in Yu Youyao's hands, all of Madam Zhang's confessions in the court would be the most beneficial to Yu Youyao. Madam Zhang's heart was with her family, so she would do everything she could to find more details that would help Yu Youyao.

Xia Tao agreed and said, "In addition, Madam Bai and Old Master Bai are requesting an audience outside."

“They’re quite sensible.” Yu Youyao’s lips curled up slightly as she said calmly, “Please come in!”

Xia Tao received her orders and left. Not long after, she brought Old Master Bai and Madam Bai into the living room.

The two of them lowered their heads and kowtowed to Yu Youyao obediently. “Greetings, Princess.”

Yu Youyao picked up her teacup and took a slow sip. Then, she put down her teacup and looked at the two people kneeling on the ground, observing and examining them.

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

Smoke rose from the phoenix head incense burner. The faint agarwood fragrance was elegant and calm, making one’s mind calm down. One could also clearly sense the dignity of a superior.

Old Master Bai and Madam Bai were so nervous that their backs were covered in sweat.

Chapter 885 - 885: Deterrence

“Get up.” After an unknown period of time, they finally heard a heavenly voice. “Sit down and talk.”

Old Master Bai and Madam Bai felt as if they had been pardoned. They quickly thanked her and stood up, before being led to their seats by the maidservant.

Then, a young maidservant came over to serve tea.

The two of them thanked her very politely. They did not dare to delay the Princess’s time and quickly took the teacup. Ignoring the tea, they hurriedly took a sip of tea and carefully put down the teacup before sitting down.

After tea, it was time to talk about serious matters.

Yu Youyao saw their reaction and found it funny.

The method of a superior ruling their subordinates was actually very simple. First, she had to create a high and mighty attitude, causing a certain amount of pressure on the subordinates.

When the subordinates bowed and knelt, she would not be in a hurry to get them to get up. It was easier to pressure the subordinates’ spirits.

The subordinates would instinctively feel uneasy and terrified, and they would feel such reverence for their superior. They would consciously put themselves in a lowly role and submit mentally and psychologically.

Yu Youyao was especially touched by this when she entered the palace and met the Empress Dowager.

However, in Yu Youyao’s opinion, this was only the most superficial method. It was intimidating on the outside, but not on the inside. Only virtue could intimidate and be convincing.

She did not like to use this method on others.

She rarely showed off her status as a Princess.

However, for nobles like the Bai Residence, who had not even taken King Li of Zhou seriously in the past, this was a good deterrent.

Yu Youyao did not make things difficult for them. “The news of Madam Zhang’s complaint has already spread throughout Xiangping City. Since you’ve come to the Yu Garden, it’s obvious that the medicinal shop Madam Zhang reported has a lot to do with the Bai family.”

Old Master Bai’s forehead instantly broke out in sweat. He quickly said, “Princess, the medicinal shop where Madam Zhang bought medicine from me is called the People’s Relief Hall. It’s a business under the Bai Residence.”

Yu Youyao frowned. “I remember that the medicinal shops under the Bai Residence are all called the Baiji Medicine Shops.”

Old Master Bai hesitated for a moment before gritting his teeth and saying, “Princess, you might not know this, but Baiji has its own source of medicinal herbs. At the same time, it will also buy medicinal herbs from specialized areas. Some commoners who pick the medicinal herbs will buy them. During the process of planting, nurturing, or picking medicinal herbs, some— some poor quality medicinal herbs will appear.”

If the quality was not good, it was possible that it had not grown well during the planting process, or that parts of the medicinal herbs that could be used as medicine were accidentally damaged during the harvesting process. It was also possible that there had been a mistake during the process.

However, medicinal herbs with poor quality would basically have their medicinal effects greatly reduced. Some could not even be used for medicine.

The medicinal herbs sold by the People’s Relief Hall were actually inferior. No wonder the Bai Residence did not dare to use the Bai Residence’s name.

No wonder the Bai Residence couldn’t sit still as soon as Madam Zhang complained. They had rushed over to look for her because Madam Han really had something on them.

Noticing Princess Shaoyi’s expression, his heart immediately sank. Old Master Bai’s heart skipped a beat, and he quickly said, “Although the quality isn’t good, the medicinal effect is still there. Moreover, the price of these medicinal herbs is 30% to 40% lower than the market price. Liaodong is bitterly cold, and there’s a serious lack of supplies. The commoners aren’t having a good time either. Many commoners are sick and can’t even afford to take medicine. Although the medicinal herbs sold by the People’s Relief Hall aren’t good, they’re really affordable for more commoners.”

Yu Youyao calmed down. Just because the medicinal herbs were inferior did not mean that they did not have medicinal properties. The North lacked resources, and even inferior medicinal herbs were rare.

Such a situation was not unique to the Bai Residence.

Authentic medicinal herbs from families like the Lin and Yan families would also divide an area for inferior medicinal herbs. They would be sold at a low price to people who couldn’t afford good medicinal herbs or given to the commoners for free.

Old Master Bai heaved a sigh of relief and continued, "The Bai Residence is in the medicinal herbs business and knows the pros and cons. Therefore, when the patient brought a prescription over to get the medicine, we will adjust the amount of medicinal herbs according to the prescription and also warn the family about the details of the medicine. If the patient's condition is serious, we will also suggest that they go to the Baiji shop to buy the medicine. The People's Relief Hall has been open for many years and has always been peaceful."

This also indirectly proved that although the People's Relief Hall was a little profitable, they did not disregard human lives.

Yu Youyao's expression softened a little, but her tone darkened a lot. "According to you, not only is it not a mistake for the People's Relief Hall to sell inferior medicinal herbs, but it's also a meritorious service?"

Old Master Bai held his breath and his face instantly turned pale.

Yu Youyao sneered. "If that's the case, why don't you sell the inferior medicinal herbs openly at Baiji Medicine Shop? If you sell the medicinal herbs to the commoners at a low price, won't the commoners miss you more?"

This was because there was an unwritten rule among pharmaceutical merchants. As the medicinal effects of inferior medicinal herbs were greatly reduced, they were often sold half-heartedly and were not allowed to be sold for profit.

Madam Bai's mouth trembled, but she did not dare to say anything else.

Yu Youyao continued, "The price of the medicine at the People's Relief hall is 30 to 40% lower than the market price. These words are just to fool the commoners who can't afford to take medicine and have no choice."

"The medicinal effect of the inferior medicinal herbs is greatly reduced. It's not even 30% to 40% of the original. As the medicinal effect is not stable, it's not completely guaranteed that it will be effective. It's not convenient to sell it directly to customers, but it's a pity for the commoners who can't afford the medicine. The medicinal shop usually sells it half-heartedly."

"As far as I know, some of these medicinal herbs are used for charity and are distributed to the commoners for free. The other portion is worth between 70% to 90% of the original value and is sold to the poor commoners."

Old Master Bai and Madam Bai couldn't sit still anymore. They quickly walked to the hall and knelt on the ground with a bang.

"I hope that no one in the world is sick, and that the medicine on the shelf turns dusty." Yu Youyao stared at the two of them and said in a measured tone, "This is the couplet in front of the Baiji Medicine Shop."

These words immediately made Old Master Bai and Madam Bai feel extremely ashamed.

"The original meaning of the saying that there's no such thing as an evil merchant was that when merchants were selling grains and rice, they would try

their best to pile up the grains or rice until it formed a sharp peak and give them to the customers. At the same time, it was to show their business virtue, but it was also to gain repeat customers. Later on, it evolved. When merchants weighed the goods, they would give a little more so that the weighing rod would be upturned. Therefore, there was a saying that if there was no peak, there would be no business. It was also a metaphor. Those who did not allow the profits to be given to the customers and stepped on others could not be considered merchants. They could only be considered traitors!"

Princess Shaoyi's voice was neither high nor low, and her tone was not angry, but her tone was extremely sharp. Old Master Bai and Madam Bai's bodies trembled, clearly frightened.

"Someone," Yu Youyao shouted.

Xia Tao quickly entered the room.

Yu Youyao instructed, "Go and look for Uncle Sun. Get him to go to the People's Relief Hall immediately and check the effect of all the medicinal herbs sold outside."

Chapter 886 - 886: As Greedy As a Tiger

Xia Tao quickly agreed and left the living room.

Yu Youyao calmed herself down and looked at the two people kneeling on the ground. "Everyone can see that Madam Zhang publicly intercepted my carriage and cried out for justice on the streets. At least one thing is certain. Madam Zhang's husband indeed died from taking the medicine from the People's Relief Hall. The People's Relief Hall can't escape responsibility."

Old Master Bai hurriedly said, "Yes, it must be that after Madam Zhang finished grabbing the medicine, someone tampered with it and framed the People's Relief Hall. The Jimin Hall has been in operation for more than 20 years and can be considered an old name in Xiangping City. Although the medicinal herbs in the shop are all inferior medicinal herbs, there are also differences in quality between the inferior medicinal herbs. The doctor in charge of grabbing the medicine will choose to pick the medicine from the inferior medicinal herbs according to the severity of the illness diagnosed in the prescription. The quality of the medicinal herbs will be better if the illness is more serious. If the illness is less serious, even if the medicinal effect isn't obvious, it won't hurt anyone's life. If the prescription included a ruthless medicine, the People's Relief Hall will only grab the other medicinal herbs. We usually recommend them to go to the Baiji Medicinal Shop to grab that strong medicine. The two of us are only here for money. We definitely won't harm anyone's life..."

As soon as news of Madam Zhang's complaint spread, he knew that this was a scheme by the Han family against the Bai family.

Yu Youyao's voice was indifferent. "So what? As there's no problem with the prescription, and Madam Zhang can't produce any key evidence, the county office finds this case unfounded. However, it's also a fact that the People's Relief Hall is selling inferior medicinal herbs. Once this matter spreads, Madam Zhang's complaint will be well-founded and the government can file a case."

The North lacked supplies, and strategic supplies like medicinal herbs were often 20% more valuable than other places. The Bai couple was blinded by greed and violated the unwritten rules between the pharmacists, openly selling inferior medicinal herbs for profit.

They were as greedy as a tiger.

Those who sought the skin of a “tiger” would ultimately be devoured by it.

Old Master Bai’s body went limp. “After Madam Zhang reported it to the county office, I immediately went to the People’s Relief Hall and looked for the doctor who was collecting the medicine at that time to verify the prescription. I’m sure that the doctor was collecting the medicine according to the prescription. Ordinary cold medicines all use ordinary medicinal herbs. There were no ox bezoars in the prescription. Even if the medicinal effect isn’t obvious, it won’t kill her. Princess, please investigate.”

Yu Youyao believed this. Since Old Master Bai and Madam Bai dared to come and look for her, it meant that they were confident that the death of Madam Zhang’s husband had nothing to do with the medicine administered by the medicine shop.

But!

Yu Youyao said coldly, “Do you have evidence to prove that Madam Zhang’s husband’s death had nothing to do with the People’s Relief Hall and was just framed by others?”

“It’s also true that the People’s Relief Hall sells inferior medicinal herbs. Can you guarantee the medicinal effect of inferior medicinal herbs?”

“If there’s no guarantee, it means that Madam Zhang’s husband might have died from the inferior medicinal herbs. As long as the person who framed you is clean enough and you can’t get any evidence, the People’s Relief Hall will have to bear all the blame.”

Madam Zhang’s complaint killed two birds with one stone.

The Bai Residence insisted on turning to the King of the North. The Han Clan was bound to use the fact that the People’s Relief Hall sold inferior medicinal herbs to deal with the Bai Residence. The Bai Residence would be involved in a human life lawsuit, and their family business would be destroyed in a day. The threat the Bai Residence posed to the Han Clan would undoubtedly be much smaller. At the same time, it had the effect of deterring other nobles.

“Princess, please show me a clear path.” Old Master Bai was terrified. There was no turning back. Since they had decided to join the King of the North, he had no other choice.

Today, his wife had gone to the Dragon Phoenix Temple to publicly support Princess Shaoyi’s actions. They had already angered the Han Clan. If they were disloyal once, others would always think that they were unloyal. Even if they changed their minds at the last minute, they would not be able to get anything good in front of the Han Clan. It was better to walk the path to the end and ask Princess Shaoyi for a way out.

The Xie family had earned most of their wealth to teach the nobles of the North a lesson.

The Bai Residence was a noble in the Liaodong area and had a very high prestige among the nobles in the North. If they could withstand the pressure of the land-owning class and take the initiative to stand up for Princess Shaoyi, Princess Shaoyi would definitely protect the Bai Residence. When the other nobles saw that Princess Shaoyi was not afraid of the power of the land-owning class, they would also switch sides.

Yu Youyao's mind was in a mess. Her rationality told her that protecting the Bai Residence was very beneficial to the current situation. This was also something she had been happy to see happen previously.

However, the Bai Residence's actions of using the People's Relief Hall to earn ill-gotten gains made her feel like a fishbone was stuck in her throat, and she was extremely disgusted.

For a moment, she couldn't make up her mind.

Yu Youyao was silent for a long time before saying, "Go to the side courtyard to rest first."

Old Master Bai and Madam Bai's hearts couldn't help but sink. Neither of them was a fool, and they both understood the crux of the matter. The People's Relief Hall had violated Princess Shao Yi's taboo.

Mrs. Bai kowtowed to Princess Shao Yi with a thud. "The incident at the People's Relief Hall was indeed caused by the greed of the two of us. However, I can swear to the Princess that although the medicinal herbs in the People's Relief Hall are all inferior medicinal herbs, they have all been tested and are effective. There's definitely no disregard for human lives, and we won't harm the commoners. Although the two of us aren't kind people, it's not easy for the Bai Residence to manage this branch of the family business, but there's no reason to destroy the Great Wall..."

Yu Youyao's expression darkened. "Leave!"

Madam Bai felt as if someone was choking her throat. The unfinished words were stuck in her throat, and she did not dare to say anything else.

At the side, Shu Yun hurriedly went forward to lead Old Master Bai and Madam Bai to the side courtyard to wait.

After Yu Youyao was conferred the title of Princess, other than Chun Xiao and Dong Mei, Xia Tao and Qiu Xing also became her maidservants.

Chun Xiao served her personally as usual. Dong Mei was in charge of the room. Xia Tao was smart and still did things that involved interaction with others. After being conferred the title of Princess, Yu Youyao's study became an important place. Qiu Xing was still in charge of the study.

In addition, there were Liu'er and the four young maidservants — Qin Xin, Qin Yu, Shu Yun, and Hua Xin — who were personally chosen by Nanny Xu in the past. Other than Qin Xin, who was staying in the capital, the remaining second-in-charge maidservants were Qin Yu, Shu Yun, and Hua Xin.

Nanny Xu had personally taught her, and she was also her most capable person.

In addition, Cui Zhu and Bi Zhu, who had been arranged by her grandmother, were also second-in-charge maidservants. Although they were not by her side to serve her, they were arranged to serve her in the Jiushao Courtyard.

The living room returned to silence. The maidservants did not even dare to breathe loudly.

At this moment, Auntie Xu brought the medicinal cuisine into the front hall.

Chun Xiao immediately heaved a sigh of relief.

Auntie Xu placed the wooden plate on the table and scooped a bowl of vegetarian soup from the bowl of food. She placed it in front of Yu Youyao. "This is a vegetarian soup with more than ten types of mushrooms, plus female ginseng, *Ligusticum striatum*, astragalus, ginseng roots, and more than ten types of Chinese medicine. Just the stock alone has been brewed for an entire day. Drink some. This soup can't be kept overnight."

Therefore, if she didn't drink it, her efforts for the day would be in vain.

"I didn't say I wouldn't drink it." Yu Youyao muttered softly. Seeing that it was already dark outside, she realized that it was almost dark after a long day.

Chapter 887: Governance

Auntie Xu glared at her angrily. "Don't I know you? You're already so old, but you're still like when you were young. When you're angry, you sulk on your own. Don't you know how your body was damaged?"

When the Old Madam passed away, Auntie Xu couldn't say much and could only try her best to take care of Yu Youyao. Auntie Xu couldn't let her cause trouble for herself now. Otherwise, at such a young age, she would cause trouble for herself sooner or later.

Yu Youyao looked guilty and quickly picked up the small bowl. The mushroom soup was light and delicious. The soup was salty and fresh in her mouth, and it was very appetizing. The mushrooms had absorbed the soup and tasted a little sweet. It was very refreshing.

After finishing the soup, Yu Youyao was covered in sweat and finally felt a little better. She couldn't help but chatter to Auntie Xu about what had happened today. Then, she mentioned the Bai couple's actions of using inferior medicinal herbs to earn ill-gotten gains.

After hearing this, Auntie Xu understood why she was so angry.

Before Yu Youyao came to the North, she had already understood the power of the nobles entrenched in the North. The Bai Residence was a well-deserved noble in the Liaodong area. When Madam Bai went to the Dragon Phoenix Temple to express the Bai Residence's intention to join them, Yu Youyao was naturally happy to see it happen.

Firstly, the Bai Residence did not directly participate in the persecution of King Li of Zhou.

Secondly, the Bai Residence and the You army were related by interests, but over the years, although the two sides had constant friction, they were still in harmony.

Thirdly, the medicinal herbs business under the Bai Residence had a good reputation.

Although Yu Youyao was dissatisfied with the Bai family taking sides with the evildoer, she could understand the helplessness of merchants.

It was already not bad for the Bai Residence to be like a fish in water between the government, the land-owning class, and the You army.

However, when she found out that the Bai Residence had earned ill-gotten gains, other than being angry, she was more disappointed. Helping to abuse others could be a helpless move, but it could be used to deceive the commoners and earn ill-gotten gains. At the same time, it also showed that human nature was heartless. It showed the greed and virtue of merchants vividly.

Auntie Xu smiled. "That's a separate matter. The Bai Residence has done many injustices, and they will ultimately be devoured by greed. They brought this on themselves. The law of the country is to clearly distinguish wrongful treatment. Whether Madam Zhang should be protected or not depends on whether Madam Zhang's husband's death is related to the People's Relief Hall."

It was obvious that those involved were confused by such an obvious question.

Yu Youyao was enlightened. "Auntie is right. If Madam Bai and her husband had nothing to do with Husband Zhang's death, they shouldn't have to bear this responsibility."

At this moment, Shu Yun came over to report, "Young Miss, someone from the government office has come. They said that they want to bring Madam Zhang back to the government office for interrogation overnight. They're outside now."

Yu Youyao did not expect the government office to act so quickly. She instructed, "Tell Madam Zhang about the seriousness of this case. Get her to do her best to accompany the government office for the trial. Let Old Madam Sun work harder and accompany her."

As the plaintiff, Yu Youyao would be summoned at any time when the government office was investigating the case. However, as a Princess, it was not appropriate for her to enter and leave the government office often. If it was not necessary, she would find someone close to her and summon them on behalf of the government office. It would be more appropriate for them to cooperate with the government office to investigate the case.

The case had entered the interrogation process. According to the confessions of the parties involved, they would capture all the people involved one by one. The case would go through layers of interrogation and go deeper.

After the case was filed, Ye Xiaoci would also go to the Imperial Court, and the royalists and the nobles of the North would also become turbulent.

Once the Han family was implicated, it would also implicate Elder Han in the capital, and the royalists would further encroach on the cabinet power.

Every step she took and every decision she made was in line with the interests of the royalists and the Empress Dowager. Only then would the royalists fully support her.

In a way, she was indeed in politics.

However, the backyard was often related to the previous dynasty, and her every move had to follow the court's rules. There was no concrete evidence that she had indeed interfered in the court's rules.

Everything she did was only for a woman from the inner residence. It was only right for her to follow the court's actions.

Yu Youyao lowered her eyes to hide the darkness in them.

At nine o'clock, Uncle Sun and Xia Tao arrived at the Yu Garden.

Uncle Sun said, "There are more than 600 medicinal herbs in the People's Relief Hall, and most of them are commonly used. Not all the medicinal herbs are inferior. Some medicinal herbs that are cheap can also have more than 70% of their original medicinal effect. The other medicinal herbs have effects, ranging from 50% to 20%."

"The doctor in charge of picking out medicine in the People's Relief Hall has ordinary medical skills, but he's proficient in pharmacology. I've checked the list of medicinal herbs in the shop recently. The doctor uses better medicinal herbs for serious illnesses, and poorer medicinal herbs for minor illnesses..."

There were about 300 to 400 types of medicinal herbs in the small medicinal shop, and the larger ones were all more than 500 types. For example, there were no less than 2,000 types in the Baiji Medicinal Shop.

Yu Youyao felt relieved. These words matched Old Master Bai's previous words.

From this, it could be seen that the Bai couple indeed only wanted money and did not want to harm the lives of others. Although they had earned ill-gotten gains, the medicinal herbs in the People's Relief Hall were indeed relatively cheap.

Uncle Sun continued, "I've seen Madam Zhang's list of medicinal herbs. The medicinal herbs used are indeed all ordinary medicinal herbs. The physicians-in-charge at the People's Relief Hall are very experienced in choosing medicinal herbs. If Husband Zhang really had a cold, the cold should ease after using the medicine for three days. Ox bezoar is a rare and precious medicinal herb in the People's Relief Hall. The People's Relief Hall isn't big and doesn't have much stock. It's only used for a few emergencies."

If there was an emergency, life-saving medicine would be given. Usually, medicinal shops with some foundation would prepare some medicine to treat an emergency as much as possible.

In other words, the problem was not with the People's Relief Hall.

Yu Youyao had an idea. "According to you, it's impossible for the doctor to have grabbed the wrong medicinal ingredient. He should be able to start with the ingredient that killed Madam Zhang's husband, the ox bezoar."

Ordinary cold medicine only included ordinary medicinal herbs. Even if it couldn't cure one's cold, it wouldn't kill them. If the people from the Bai Residence wanted to tamper with the medicine, they could only use strong medicine according to the prescription. However, the scale of the People's Relief Hall wasn't big, and there wasn't a complete collection of medicinal herbs. If they wanted to choose a "strong medicine", they could only choose from the herbs available in the People's Relief Hall. The range of choices was very limited.

Ox bezoar became the first choice.

Yu Youyao's sharpness amazed Uncle Sun. He felt even more regretful that she didn't learn medicine.

The Bai Residence was guilty, but not guilty to death. Protecting the Bai Residence was beneficial to the current situation. Yu Youyao asked carefully about the situation in the People's Relief Hall. Then, she instructed Xia Tao to prepare a room and bring Uncle Sun over to rest.

The Bai couple waited in the side courtyard for four to six hours, completely tormenting them until they felt guilty and short of breath. They were extremely terrified and were brought to the living room with trepidation. They knelt on the ground, not daring to get up.

Yu Youyao did not make things difficult for them. "Not long ago, the state government office has already sent someone to summon Madam Zhang to the government office. They want to interrogate her overnight. I think that the investigation of the case will reach you in a few days."

Chapter 888: Instruction

The first thing the government office would investigate was the mastermind who instigated Madam Zhang to stop the princess's carriage and cry out for justice on the streets, as well as the mastermind who instigated the hooligans who stirred up the commoners.

When all the people involved were arrested and brought to justice, they would then investigate further. It was inevitable that it would implicate the death of Madam Zhang's husband, the People's Relief Hall, and the Bai Residence.

After the government office interrogated Madam Zhang, the case would be related to the Bai Residence. The government would issue relevant documents that prohibited the freedom of movement of the people from the Bai Residence. They would also send someone to keep an eye on the Bai Residence's every move.

It was impossible to destroy the evidence or escape.

Old Master Bai's heart was ashen. "The Bai family is at the Princess's disposal."

Although the Bai Residence had done many injustices, they still had their merits. Yu Youyao said calmly, "I want you to accuse the Han Clan of being unscrupulous and framing the People's Relief Hall in the court. The motive of the Han Clan to do this is because the Bai Residence has unintentionally obtained evidence of the Han Clan's corruption and lawlessness..."

"Isn't— Isn't this openly challenging the Han Clan..." When Madam Bai heard this, she felt dizzy and the world spun in front of her, almost fainting on the spot.

Old Master Bai's body trembled as he gritted his teeth. "Princess, please instruct us."

Yu Youyao was very satisfied with Old Master Bai's tact. "It's a long story. Sit down and talk."

Old Master Bai was mentally and physically exhausted. His legs were as limp as noodles, and his body staggered. He only stopped falling because of Madam Bai's help. The couple helped each other to the chairs.

The maidservant quickly served tea and snacks.

Yu Youyao held the teacup in her hand, but she did not drink it. "I heard from the maidservants in the side courtyard that the dinner prepared in the residence doesn't seem to suit your taste. The two of you haven't eaten dinner." She smiled slightly and said gently, "My mother's family is from Quanzhou, and the taste of the dishes follow my mother's. She prefers salty and fresh food. The chefs in the Yu Garden are also good at Fujian cuisine, but I didn't entertain them well."

Her words seemed to be casual, but when the Bai couple heard this, they felt as if they had been pardoned.

Princess Shaoyi's maternal family, the Xie Residence of Quanzhou, was also a merchant. These words undoubtedly indicated that Princess Shaoyi was very close to her maternal family, which indirectly showed her attitude towards merchants.

This was her sincerity.

Madam Bai quickly said, "Princess, you're being too serious. We don't have an appetite..."

Yu Youyao nodded slightly and said, "I can't let you talk on an empty stomach. I ordered someone to prepare some exquisite pies and pastries from the Liaodong area. Have some to fill your stomach first."

The Bai couple relaxed and felt thirsty and hungry. After drinking some tea and eating some snacks, they felt much better.

Only then did Yu Youyao say, "What the Bai Residence is most worried about now is that the Han Clan has something on you regarding the sale of inferior medicinal herbs in the People's Relief Hall."

Old Master Bai regretted it. The price of medicinal herbs in the North was 20% to 30% higher than ordinary herbs in other areas. Even if the price of inferior medicinal herbs was reduced by 30% to 40%, they could still be sold for a good price. The Bai family had more than 20 halls in the entire North. It was indeed easy to earn money without spending money.

It was inevitable that people in the medicinal herbs business would provoke human lives. The Bai Residence was a big family. As long as there was no problem with the medicinal herbs themselves, it would be settled with a little more money.

However, the person behind Madam Zhang's matter was the Han Clan. This was simply a disaster for the Bai Residence.

If they had known earlier, they wouldn't have done it back then. It was too late to regret it.

"However." Yu Youyao changed the topic. "This isn't impossible."

Madam Bai's eyes lit up and she quickly asked, "Princess, do you have a way?"

Yu Youyao did not keep him in suspense. "Do you still remember the message I sent to you this morning at the Dragon Phoenix Temple?"

Madam Bai was stunned for a moment before she reacted.

“My maternal family, the Xie family, has an ancestral teaching. All the talents in the world should be taken from the people and used on them. Seventy percent of one’s wealth should benefit the region, while 30% belongs to them. If you don’t earn unrighteous money, you can’t do anything unrighteous. This is the way of business. I’ve been taught by my maternal ancestors and have always admired these businessmen and nobles who are dedicated to good.”

This was what Princess Shaoyi had sent to her and the families of the nobles led by the Bai Residence. It coincided with the Bai Residence’s previous plan.

Yu Youyao continued, “Take the initiative to admit that the medicinal herbs sold by the People’s Relief Hall are all inferior medicinal herbs. The two of you are deeply interested in this and have decided to stand up and donate to the government, the You army, and the refugees on behalf of the nobles of the North. The government, the You army, and the commoners will all appreciate your benevolence.”

Old Master Bai was a little hesitant. “But, in that case, the Bai Residence’s reputation will be damaged, and the foundation that we’ve been managing for many years will probably...”

Yu Youyao said calmly, “This matter will be exposed sooner or later. By taking the initiative to admit your mistake, while avoiding being led by the nose, you can also strike first and cause the opponent to run out of tricks and fall into a passive position.”

Mrs. Bai immediately reacted. “The Han Clan will definitely expose the sale of inferior medicinal herbs by the People’s Relief Hall at the best time. At that time, the Bai Residence will completely fall into a passive state. If the Bai Residence steps forward and admits it, it will disrupt the Han Clan’s scheme and catch them off guard. The Bai Residence will still have room to deal with it.”

Yu Youyao nodded. “Just because the medicinal herbs are inferior doesn’t mean that they don’t have medicinal effects. The price of the medicinal herbs in the People’s Relief Hall is low, and this is also the truth. Although the Bai Residence’s reputation will be affected, it’s not uncontrollable. The medicinal herbs in the Baiji Medicine Shop will be sold at a reduced price to the commoners. The inferior medicinal herbs will be sold at half price and given away at the same time. There’s an old saying that goes, ‘The mouth that has been fed by others is soft.’ As long as the commoners take advantage of it, they won’t be too harsh.”

To be honest, the reputation of the Baiji Medicinal Shop was not bad.

The People’s Relief Hall had been in operation for many years, and it had indeed made things a little convenient for the commoners. Its reputation was also passable.

The commoners would fall for this.

The Bai Residence had done many injustices, but they had not lost their conscience. In the end, they had still begged for a way out for the Bai Residence. It was good to leave a way out for others.

“This is a good idea. Let’s do as the Princess says.” Madam Bai nodded repeatedly. In that case, although the Bai Residence would suffer a lot, as long as their foundation was still there, they could still earn back the family business.

However, Old Master Bai was still puzzled. “But once the case of Madam Zhang’s husband’s death spreads and the People’s Relief Hall is involved in a human life lawsuit, I’m afraid the commoners won’t buy it.”

The Princess’s method was good, but the premise was that the Bai Residence was not involved in a human life lawsuit.

Yu Youyao said, “That’s the second question.”

Old Master Bai was stunned. From what she said, was all of this within Princess Shaoyi’s consideration?

Yu Youyao continued, “Although the Bai Residence has committed many injustices, the bitter fruit it has brewed is also a little related to me. The Bai Residence has been accused for no reason, so I can’t just stand by and do nothing. As the saying goes, it’s good to learn from your mistakes. Since the Bai Residence has the intention to be kind, I’m naturally willing to help. Since the death of Madam Zhang’s husband has nothing to do with the People’s Relief Hall, I naturally won’t let the Bai Residence bear this crime.”

Chapter 889: To Be Kind

Old Master Bai and Madam Bai seemed to have taken a calming pill.

Yu Youyao continued, “There are pros and cons to everything. The People’s Relief Hall is deeply involved in a human life case, and it will push the Bai Residence to the top of the limelight. However, as long as the government office investigates and proves that the People’s Relief Hall is innocent, it will also indirectly prove that there’s no problem with the medicine in the People’s Relief Hall. It will make the commoners more convinced. The Bai Residence’s reputation will be damaged, but its reputation won’t decrease. The Bai Residence will have more reason to identify the Han Clan from the perspective of the victim.”

The Bai couple was extremely excited. They quickly knelt in the hall to thank her. “Thank you for your kindness, Princess.”

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As early as when the Bai couple decided to join the King of the North, they were already prepared to use money to save their lives.

This matter could not be delayed. The next morning, the Bai Residence posted notices at the entrances of all the Baiji Medicinal Shops and the People’s Relief Hall in Xiangping City.

They announced to the public that Princess Shaoyi had gone to the Dragon Phoenix Temple to offer incense and pray for the refugees. She prayed that plagues and disasters would not descend. Madam Bai was lucky to have received Princess Shaoyi’s permission to enter the temple and witness Princess Shaoyi’s elegance. When she heard the Sutra of the Medicine Buddha from Zen Master Hui Ji, one of the Six Wise Monks from the Precious Peace Temple, she was enlightened by Bodhisattva and was determined to be kind.

As soon as the notice was released, it caused an uproar in Xiangping City.

The content of the notice seemed quite ridiculous, but often, people with great virtue could attract people to do good deeds, creating their virtuous reputation. Princess Shaoyi was originally known as a “living Bodhisattva”. Buddhism was also meant to teach all living beings to plant and obtain good karma.

In that case, it made sense for Madam Bai to be determined to be kind after receiving Princess Shaoyi’s guidance and enlightenment.

There was still the latter part of the notice. “The People’s Relief Hall is one of the Bai Residence’s businesses. Baiji was greedy and sold the inferior medicinal herbs produced to the commoners at a reduced price. We’re guilty of earning ill-gotten gains.”

“From today onwards, the inferior medicinal herbs produced by Baiji will not be sold in the People’s Relief Hall. The People’s Relief Hall will be permanently closed.”

“The prices at all the Baiji Medicinal Shops will be permanently reduced by 20%.”

“From today onwards, for three days, all customers who buy medicinal herbs from this shop will enjoy a 30% discount. Each family will only be able to buy one portion once. The second-grade medicinal herbs will no longer be sold officially. Half of them will be sold, while the other half will be given to customers who need them.”

“The Baiji Medicinal Shop will start a five-day volunteer medical consultation. All the commoners who participate in the volunteer medical consultation will be given low-grade medicinal herbs for free according to the severity of their illness.”

“The inferior medicinal herbs sold by the People’s Relief Hall have been tested by Sun Sheng and have medicinal effects. Please take them at ease.”

“The Bai Residence is deeply sorry that the People’s Relief Hall was inhumane as a business and deceived its customers. We will also repay the vast population. From now on, we will definitely follow your instructions and be kind. We will report this to the public.”

As soon as the notice spread, there were various opinions.

The commoners scolded Baiji for being shameless, but there was nothing to scold.

The commoners in Xiangping City who couldn’t afford medicinal herbs all bought them from the People’s Relief Hall. Although they were inferior medicinal herbs, they had the effect of treating illnesses and saving lives. The price was indeed cheaper than other medicinal shops.

Therefore, after a short period of indignation, the commoners’ attention was diverted by the series of activities such as lowering prices, discounts, volunteer consultations, and giving medicine.

They were not even in the mood to scold them. They ran to the Baiji Medicinal Shop to buy the medicinal herbs and queued up for the volunteer consultation.

The price of medicinal herbs was relatively high, causing most commoners to almost not be able to afford them. Naturally, they could not miss such a good opportunity like reduced prices and a discount.

How could a person not fall sick?

It was also good to prepare medicine for colds, injuries, heat reduction, detoxification, and so on.

When Yu Youyao heard about the situation outside, everything was as she had expected.

“Discounts, volunteer consultations, and giving medicine will cause the Bai Residence to suffer from a shortage of medicinal herbs and insufficient funds, causing the Bai Residence to suffer a huge loss. However, this is only for a moment. The Bai Residence has its own source of medicinal herbs and many business partners. As long as its foundation is still there, it will recover quickly.”

Uncle Sun did not care about this. He was only a little curious. “The ox bezoar sold by the People’s Relief Hall is fake and has no medicinal effect. Recently, the People’s Relief Hall has not bought ox bezoar. Then, Madam Zhang’s husband died from taking the medicine that wrongly included ox bezoar. It’s not valid at all. You just have to report this matter to the government office. This case won’t implicate the Bai Residence.”

After understanding Madam Zhang’s case, he first checked the ox bezoar sold in Jimin Hall.

Ox bezoar was obtained from the guts and liver of special cows. It was an expensive medicine and was mostly from the northwest, Liaodong, and other places where special cows were raised. It was very rare. It was also because ox bezoar was precious and rare that many people faked it. Some fake ox bezoars could even look authentic. Only experienced doctors could tell.

Not all special cows could bear ox bezoar, and ox bezoar could not be truly raised. Most of them were bought from cattle feeders. Those of good quality would naturally be left in the Baiji Medicinal Shop. Those of lower quality would be sold in the People’s Relief Hall.

The medical skills of the physicians in the People’s Relief Hall were average. It was not common for the People’s Relief Hall to have expensive medicinal herbs like ox bezoar. They did not have much contact with them, so they naturally did not know how to distinguish them.

Uncle Sun continued, “Although selling inferior medicinal herbs will damage the Bai Residence’s reputation, the Han Clan’s plan to deal with the Bai Residence will also fail. Why go through so much trouble to arrange this show?”

The Bai Residence did not need to reduce prices, discounts, volunteer consultations, and medicine to deal with the Han Clan at all. They could easily survive this calamity.

However, Yu Youyao had hidden the case of the fake ox bezoar and deliberately caused the Bai Residence to suffer losses.

It seemed a little unkind.

Yu Youyao’s lips curled up slightly. “The medicinal herbs in the North are more expensive, and the commoners can’t afford them. It turned out that it was also the land-owning class who joined forces

with the medicinal herb merchants to control the medicinal herbs business and wantonly raised the price of the herbs to restrict the vassal lords. Since I've interfered in this matter, I can't sit back and do nothing."

Why did the Bai Residence open the People's Relief Hall to help the people and sell low-grade medicinal herbs?

It was all because the medicinal herbs in the North were more expensive. The Bai family felt that even inferior medicinal herbs were profitable. Not only did they sell the inferior medicinal herbs they produced, but they also bought inferior medicinal herbs from other medicinal herb merchants wantonly to sell them for profit.

As far as she knew, the Bai Residence had a large number of second-grade medicinal herbs.

Anyone who knew pharmacology could tell the quality of the medicinal herbs. It was definitely not a secret in the North that the Bai Residence publicly sold inferior medicinal herbs. The Bai Residence was the first and definitely not the last.

"Only when the Bai Residence and the other medicinal herbs merchants see the unbearable consequences of selling inferior medicinal herbs will they take it as a warning and not use inferior medicinal herbs to profit anymore. This is one of the reasons."

Uncle Sun agreed deeply.

"Second, if the Bai Residence reduces the price, it will cause a huge impact on the other medicinal herb merchants. The other medicinal herb merchants will also reduce their prices one after another to compete with Baiji. When the medicinal prices of the three provinces of Liaodong fall, the commoners will be able to afford them. Good-quality medicine will also cause a head-on blow to the medicinal herbs business in Shanxi. At the same time, they will give warning to other merchants who have maliciously raised the price."

It was no different from fighting a tiger from afar.

This move was to deal with the nobles.

Chapter 890: Three Feet of Ice

"Third, discounts, volunteer consultations, medicine, and the human lives lawsuit will push the Bai Residence to the top of the limelight in a short period of time, causing the Bai Residence to sink deeper and deeper. I'm the only one they can rely on."

Victory that was too easy to obtain often made one forget the pain.

The Bai Residence was willing to listen to her now because she could help the Bai Residence escape and easily help them escape. The Bai Residence might also be grateful to her, but they might not have the courage to resist the Han Clan.

“If I don’t force the Bai couple into a desperate situation and experience true despair, how can they be willing to be controlled by me?”

The land-owning class was not easy to deal with. The Bai Residence was a good opportunity. How to use the Bai Residence to uproot the Han Clan was her true goal.

Uncle Sun glared at her and shook his beard. “You’re simply comparable to Young Master Yin.”

Yu Youyao puffed up her cheeks indignantly. “Rome wasn’t built in a day. Letting the Bai Residence stand up to the Han Clan and uproot them will cause the land-owning class to suffer a huge blow. It can completely change the structure of the nobles.”

The power of the nobles was deeply rooted. Often, a single move would affect everything. Even the Imperial Court was very afraid of them, but the relationship of interests between the nobles was not strong.

For example, even though the Bai Residence had cooperated with the Han Clan for many years and had formed an inherent relationship of interests, once they realized that the land-owning class was unreliable, they would be willing to take the risk to escape the control of the land-owning class.

When the nobles of the North realized that the land-owning class was not unshakable, would they still continue to be manipulated by them?

Therefore, getting rid of the Han Clan was also an opportunity to break the alliance of the land-owning class.

Uncle Sun looked up. “From the looks of it, the Han Clan has made a bad move. Madam Zhang’s complaint gave you an opportunity to take them down.”

Yu Youyao said deeply, “There are pros and cons to everything. In the Book of Daoism, there’s a saying that disasters and blessings depend on each other. Fortunes and blessings are intertwined, and they’re integrated. They’re like Yin and Yang, transforming and relying on each other. When calamity descends, blessings lie dormant and hide. When blessings descend, there’s often a hidden danger behind them. Therefore, there’s no absolute good or bad in this world. It’s good to observe the changes in the situation and grab the contradictory points in the transformation of events. It’s good to make use of them. Bad things can also be transformed into good, and vice versa.”

Uncle Sun agreed deeply. The schemes of the land-owning class did not seem to hurt Yu Youyao at all. However, if Yu Youyao did not find the contradiction in this matter immediately and implicated King Li of Zhou’s death, stabbing the weak point of the land-owning class, the consequences could be imagined.

Yu Youyao sighed softly. “I’ve been in Xiangping for a while. Although it’s bitterly cold in the Liaodong area, the commoners are hardworking. The Heavenly Dao rewards hard work. Their lives shouldn’t be so hard, but because the nobles control the local resources and maliciously raise the prices, they’re suffering unspeakably.”

The main reason why the Liaodong area was so vast and sparsely populated was because of low productivity, causing the local economy to be backward, and the living conditions of the people to be difficult. However, Liaodong was filled with mountains, and the mountains were rich in mountain goods, wild animals, herbs, and trees. With such living conditions, it was impossible for it to be more difficult to live over time.

Dealing with the Han Clan was not only to remove the obstacles for Yin Huaixi and let him further control the entire North, but also to change the current situation in the North so that the people could live and work in peace.

Uncle Sun was a little enlightened. "I finally understand why Young Master Yin treats you differently."

In his opinion, Young Master Yin was sinister, cunning, and scheming. However, Yu Youyao's heart was like glass, pure and flawless. These two people were completely two extremes, but they just had to get together.

At this moment, he suddenly understood.

There was a concept of equality in Yu Youyao's bones. Although her actions were restricted by dogma, her heart was independent, equal, and free. She was never restricted by etiquette, rules, and standards. She adhered to the principles of dealing with people. If others did not offend her, she would not offend them. If others respected her, she would respect them tenfold.

There was no pedantic Confucian philosophy like repaying evil with kindness.

Daoism did not have the belief that heaven, the earth, the king, one's parents, and one's teachers should be respected in that order. There was no etiquette between seniors and juniors, nor that women were below men. They believed that everyone was born equal and that the world was natural.

She did not learn Daoism, but her thoughts were in line with the philosophy of Daoism.

On this point, it coincided with Young Master Yin, who was a disciple of a Daoist. They were originally the same kind of people.

In this world, it was difficult to have many friends. People with the same thoughts could only be found by chance. This was a resonance of the soul and the recognition of thoughts.

Yu Youyao was the one who shared his thoughts.

At the mention of Yin Huaixi, Yu Youyao couldn't help but miss him. "I've been in Xiangping for so long, but I haven't received a message from my Nineteenth Brother. I wonder how he's doing."

There was no time to delay the resettlement of the refugees.

Yin Huaixi patrolled the various areas of Liaodong to make arrangements, deployments, and corresponding guidance to prepare for the resettlement of the refugees. He must be busy and couldn't care about anything else.

Uncle Sun said, "Don't worry. He'll be back by the beginning of April at the latest. I heard that the resettlement of the refugees has already been carried out in Longcheng. A portion of the refugees have been relocated one after another. When the weather warms up in April, they'll have to migrate greatly. We have to settle the refugees properly before the weather warms up in May."

The first to be settled were literate and skilled refugees. Most of these people settled in the businesses under Yu Youyao's name. When they arrived in a new environment and settled down there, they would obtain a job that could support their families.

Yu Youyao heaved a sigh of relief. "In that case, I think we can avoid the occurrence of germs. May is also the best time to plant the sweet potatoes, so it won't delay the exploration. My Nineteenth Brother has already considered this."

Yin Huaixi had thought of the problems she hadn't thought of in advance and responded.

According to statistics, there were already nearly three million refugees in the entire Liaodong area. It was not easy to settle such a huge number of refugees properly.

Although the Imperial Court and some merchants who had come from afar to seek business opportunities had all given them material support, and the local nobles had no choice but to cooperate and work hard because of the national policies issued by the Imperial Court, Yin Huaixi was still the one who worked the hardest.

Uncle Sun smiled. "Young Master Yin has always been careful with his actions. The selection of the refugees' camp has all been done while considering feng shui. It's ventilated and the soil is dry and thick. It's not easy for germs to breed in such a place. Every seven days, we'll mix sulfur with wood ash and send someone to disperse it in the camp. All the refugees who have joined us have to be cleaned outside the camp and checked by a doctor before they can be resettled."

There were many hot springs in Liaodong, so sulfur was not rare. If he had not taken precautions in advance, he would not have taken in a large number of refugees.

The matter of accepting refugees was personally arranged by her Nineteenth Brother in the name of a disaster. General An Yuan and Huang Wenxian were not aware of it.

The reason why Uncle Sun was so clear was probably because preventing the epidemic was very important. Yin Huaixi had discussed it with Uncle Sun.