

All Hail 931

Chapter 931 - 931: Wishing to Wear a Crown

“It’s not wrong for you to think that way. No matter what, it’s never a big mistake to be careful. There’s never a big disaster if you’re cautious.” Yu Youyao had never been a careless person. She was a thorough and appropriate person. Even the maidservants in front of her were cautious. Auntie Xu was still very satisfied with the maidservants.

Auntie Xu helped Yu Youyao change into a gown. The gown was complicated.

There were nine layers of clothes. This was a spring and summer-style outfit. When it came to autumn and winter, there were a total of twelve layers of clothes.

A few maidservants assisted at the side.

Auntie Xu quickly hung the purple robe on Yu Youyao’s shoulder. She changed the topic and said, “It’s a good thing to be cautious, but there’s no need to be too nervous. The people from the palace also want to treat others based on their social status. Eldest Miss has gained power now. In the entire Great Zhou Dynasty, no one dares to make things difficult for you. It’s fine as long as you’re polite. No one will really hold it against you regarding the details.” The maidservants heaved a sigh of relief thoughtfully.

Auntie Xu pushed Yu Youyao, who was dressed neatly, to the dressing table and sat down. Auntie Xu untied the bun on her head and combed it again. In order to express Yu Youyao’s unmarried status, she braided a few braids on both sides of the bun and let them hang by her ears. Then, she took the emerald crown and fixed it on her head.

Dong Mei couldn’t take her eyes off this set of actions.

Auntie Xu helped Yu Youyao put on her jewelry. She observed her makeup with a smile and praised, “You look really good in this.”

After Yu Youyao was conferred the title of princess, she fled to Liaodong with the Xie family. After that, although she showed off her status as a princess, the most important thing she had done was that she had gone to the government office to be interrogated early in the morning. She was wearing ordinary clothes then. How could ordinary clothes compare to half the beauty and value of a gown?!

This was the first time she had worn a princess’s dress.

Be it the etiquette, rules, materials, color, embroidery, and so on, the County Head’s crown clothes were completely incomparable to that of the princess’s.

The maidservants were stunned.

Yu Youyao also felt that it looked good. The princess’s emerald crown was especially dazzling. There were more than 2,000 pearls that were of the same size. They shone warmly.

There were more than 120 seven-colored gems. All the gems had not been carved and had been naturally formed. Almost every one of them was the size of a pigeon egg. The color was extremely pure and rare.

There were a total of seven pure gold phoenixes on the crown. They were made of the Eight Absolutes of Beijing. They were inlaid with filigree. Every phoenix was vivid and had a tassel in its mouth.

Tian-tsui craftsmanship was not popular in the Great Zhou Dynasty, but the emerald crown of the crown clothes was called an emerald crown because the exquisite Tian-tsui craftsmanship on the crown was bright and never faded.

The craftsmen of the Internal Affairs Department had used peacock feathers to make a more beautiful Tian-tsui crown. In fact, the peacocks of every dynasty were far nobler than kingfishers, and their feathers were also more beautiful.

However, peacock feathers were very big. Not only would they shed their own feathers, but even if they were plucked a few times, they would quickly grow back. They were mainly emerald green and greenish-blue, but there were occasionally purple, yellow, and red colors at the end.

Depending on the grade, the color of the emerald crown was also different. The crown of the imperial family was mainly greenish-blue. The higher one's grade, the darker and more solemn the color of the feather.

Based on one's grade and the rules, particular attention was paid to the amount of purple, yellow, red, and other colors used.

Ordinary mingfu only used blueish-green and emerald green.

Moreover, because peacocks were auspicious birds, and their status was second only to the phoenix, the Great Zhou Dynasty had a rule. Peacocks were imperial birds, and the commoners were not allowed to raise them privately. The feathers of peacocks were also for imperial use. The commoners were not allowed to use them privately. Otherwise, they would be punished.

The Tian-tsui craftsmanship on Yu Youyao's emerald crown was dark blue, representing her noble status. In addition, there were yellow and purple embellishments on the peacock feathers, making it look even more beautiful.

However, it was beautiful, but it was also really heavy.

At the thought that she might wear such a heavy crown often in the future, she felt that the crown did not seem so beautiful anymore and immediately lost interest in admiring it.

Auntie Xu knew her so well that she immediately smiled. "This emerald crown only weighs 1.5 kilograms. The crown on the Empress Dowager's head has more than 4,000 pearls and more than 160 gems of various colors. It weighs 4-9 kilograms."

Even the Empress's Nine Dragons and Nine Phoenixes Crown weighed four kilograms.

Yu Youyao was immediately stunned. The Empress Dowager was so old. How did she do it? She was wearing such a heavy phoenix crown, but she could still maintain her expression and talk to the mingfu!

Just thinking about it made her feel afraid. “I can finally feel what it means to wear a crown. If you want to wear it, you have to bear its weight. The crown is so heavy. I think it’s to warn the mingfu inside and out.”

“That’s right.” Auntie Xu smiled and nodded. She simply applied makeup for

Yu Youyao. She did not apply any cosmetics and only drew her eyebrows carefully. There was some gold powder around her eyes, revealing her nobility.

After everything was over, Auntie Xu looked at her carefully for a moment. “Bring over the palace token that the Empress Dowager rewarded a few years ago.”

Dong Mei quickly took out the palace token from the secret compartment under the combing table.

Auntie Xu took the palace token and tied it around Yu Youyao’s waist. As she nodded, she smiled and said, “In that case, it’s appropriate.”

Yu Youyao brought Chun Xiao and Xia Tao to the front hall.

At this moment, Old Madam Xie had received the news and rushed to the Yu Garden with her three daughters-in-law. She was waiting in the front hall.

Seeing Yu Youyao’s outfit, the three of them were also stunned. Clearly, they were shocked.

Until Yu Youyao stepped forward and held Old Madam’s arm, calling out softly, ‘Grandmother.’

Only then did Old Madam Xie react. She patted her arm and smiled angrily. “This is the first time our Little Yao’er is wearing the princess’s makeup. It’s really shocking.”

Second Aunt Madam Lin came back to her senses. “The princess’s outfit is indeed imposing. At first glance, I don’t even know where to put my eyes. My heart is beating like a drum.”

Third Aunt Madam Wen also smiled. “Princess Shaoyi’s crown outfit is of the highest style among the women in the imperial family. It’s a style that only the legitimate princess of the dynasty has. Of course it’s imposing!’

“Yi” had always represented the Empress Dowager or the Empress. In a sense, it also meant that she was the formal wife. It was obvious how important the word “Yi n was.

Eldest Aunt Wang smiled. “Our Little Yao’er is blessed. In the entire Great Zhou Dynasty, other than Princess Lishan from the palace, who can compete with our Little Yao’er in terms of status, there’s no other woman more respected than her.”

The princess’s outfit was expensive and solemn, exuding an exquisite and heavy aura from the inside out. It also exuded the majestic aura of a superior.

There were also many pearls and jade of equal sizes and all kinds of gems on the gown. There were thousands of them. At a glance, they felt that they were dazzling..

Chapter 932 - 932: Rules Regarding Crown Clothes

The purple silk robe with golden phoenixes on her shoulder had more than 2,000 pearls, and it was inlaid with more than 100 gems of various colors. The peacock patterns on it were woven with peacock feathers, and the tail was inlaid with real peacock feathers.

Every detail was filled with hints of respect and etiquette that could not be surpassed.

From the bottom of their hearts, they felt a strong sense of oppression, making them feel ashamed of their inferiority. They suddenly felt like kneeling and submitting.

Hearing her three daughters-in-law discussing the nobleness of the princess's outfit, Old Madam Xie couldn't help but smile and look proud.

Yu Youyao muttered, "How can it be so exaggerated?!"

Her voice was soft and obedient, making people subconsciously ignore her noble status. They couldn't help but want to dote on her and not let her suffer a little.

The aunts looked at one another and couldn't help but smile.

After chatting for a while, a servant came over to report, "Young Miss, Eunuch

Li and the others have already arrived at the entrance of the Yu Garden. Old Master has brought three uncles and five young masters to welcome them outside.'

The group quickly got up and checked each other to see if their clothes were appropriate. After waiting for a while, they finally heard a voice from outside.

Not long after, they saw Eunuch Li wearing a vermilion eunuch's uniform. He was invited into the front hall by Old Master Xie and the others.

Behind him was a smart eunuch holding a golden tray with a bright yellow phoenix embroidery decree on it.

When he suddenly saw Princess Shaoyi, who was wearing a crown and looking dignified, even Eunuch Zhu, who was used to seeing nobles in the palace, couldn't help but take a deep breath.

For a moment, even his straight back subconsciously bent a little. His expression and actions consciously revealed a hint of humility.

It was all because Princess Shaoyi's crown clothes were actually according to the rules of the dynasty's legitimate princess.

However, on closer look, there were still some subtle differences between the two.

On the crown clothes of the legitimate princess, there would be some dragon patterns to symbolize the bloodline of the royal family and the status of an imperial descendent.

Meanwhile, Princess Shaoyi had been recorded as an "adopted daughter" on the imperial jade plate. She was not of the royal family's bloodline, so there were peacock patterns on her crown.

Others couldn't tell the difference at first glance, but those with good eyesight could tell that she was the daughter of an external minister who had been conferred the title of princess.

However, often, the daughters of foreign ministers enjoyed the rights that only legitimate princesses had. Instead, they were even more important.

Eunuch Li, who had gained power in the palace, thought even more.

The emperor had been obsessed with alchemy since he was young and had not recruited anyone for many years. He did not have many children. After the eldest son of the first wife died prematurely, the Empress had been sick in the palace for a long time and did not have any more children.

Although Princess Lishan was the legitimate princess, everyone in the court knew that she was from the Ning Residence to begin with. She was the daughter of a concubine. She was not of the royal bloodline to begin with.

Putting aside the fact that her status was a little unpresentable, even the emperor did not like her very much. Her current dignity was all thanks to the Empress Dowager's praise.

This dynasty valued the first wife and the eldest son. Princess Lishan seemed to be dignified, but her background was inferior to Yu Youyao, who was from a famous family and the daughter of the first wife,

In terms of status, Princess Shaoyi was only a princess on the surface. She seemed to be a little inferior to the princess, but in terms of status, Princess Shao Yi was even superior to Princess Lishan.

Furthermore, the Imperial Court had also treated Princess Shaoyi well. They had given her the dignity she deserved without any hesitation.

How could Princess Lishan compare?!

Eunuch Li had a plan in mind. He quickly took a step forward and bowed to Princess Shaoyi. "Greetings, Princess."

Yu Youyao quickly dodged. "That won't do. You've received the emperor's order to come on a mission this time. You've worked hard and contributed a lot. Besides, it's been a long journey. It's too much."

Eunuch Li was amazed.

Her words were simple, but her meaning was not vague at all.

He had the emperor's order, so there was indeed no need for him to deliberately show such etiquette. This etiquette was completely for the sake of befriending Princess Shaoyi. Furthermore, the person he was working with this time was also Princess Shaoyi.

Princess Shao Yi accepted this kindness, but not this etiquette.

The reason was also very reasonable. Not to mention that the emperor's order was absolute, just on account of the hard work of passing down the decree and giving her rewards, she shouldn't have received such etiquette.

But was that the truth?

Princess Shaoyi was a popular person now. Other than a few nobles in the palace, what kind of etiquette could she not accept?!

Not to mention that it was the etiquette from a eunuch like him!

Princess Shaoyi's words and actions revealed a gentle and benevolent side. She was also magnanimous and dignified. Such upbringing was not something that many large clans could raise. No wonder Eunuch Zhu always said, "Princess Shaoyi is a pure and kind person."

At this point, Eunuch Li followed suit and did not mention etiquette. He swept his gaze and saw Old Master Xie and the others maintaining etiquette.

A smile appeared on his face again, and he quickly said politely, "Oh, you have to stop. The Xie family has contributed greatly to the successful implementation of the national policy in the North by the Imperial Court. You're all heroes. The Empress Dowager even publicly praised the Xie family in the royal court. She praised the Xie family for being a family with accumulated kindness and will definitely have a celebration. She even personally wrote a document of commendation to praise the Xie family." During this period of time, the Baotong Bank had been frequently transferring money from all over the country. Such a big move could not be hidden from the Imperial Court. The Xie family had stood out and donated most of their assets. This matter had long spread throughout the world.

The implementation of the national policy was led by King Yue Fei. Princess Shaoyi played a role, but no one could erase the contribution of the Xie family to national policy.

The Imperial Court had publicly praised the Xie Residence for the sake of all the merchants in the world. They also wanted to set a typical example for the Xie Residence and teach all the merchants in the world a lesson.

They couldn't be careless at all.

Old Master Xie and the others were immediately flattered. "The national policy is for the sake of the country, so it's only right for everyone to follow them. We only did our best, so we don't dare to take credit. Thank you for the

Empress Dowager's kindness and the Imperial Court's grace. The Xie family is grateful."

Eunuch Li nodded in satisfaction. After saying a few more polite words, he was led to his seat by Princess Shaoyi. Immediately, a maidservant served tea.

Eunuch Li took a sip but did not eat much tea.

Seeing Eunuch Li's strange expression, Yu Youyao explained, "There's no good tea in the Liaodong area to entertain you. You're used to using good things in the palace. I think the old tea last year wasn't suitable for you either. I made the Rougui tea myself and added some spices and medicinal herbs to make medicinal tea. Fortunately, the older this medicinal tea is, the more fragrant it is. It's refreshing and can relieve fatigue."

Those who knew tea could tell the quality of the tea as soon as they tasted it. Anyone who came were guests. No matter what guests they were, it was not good to let others misunderstand that the residence was neglectful..

Chapter 933 - 933: Venerable Supreme-Grade Eldest Princess Yi Zhao

Eunuch Li hurriedly said, "Princess, you're righteous. If you were still in the capital, you would have already drunk this year's new tea."

Along the way, the Yu Garden where Princess Shaoyi lived looked pretty good. However, in his eyes, the Yu Garden was still rough.

The flowers and trees in the garden were also ordinary flowers and trees that could withstand the cold and drought in Liaodong. They could not compare to the strange flowers and plants in the capital.

Moreover, as Liaodong was still cold and wet, even the wood in the house was mostly wet-resistant elm wood. It was even more detailed and exquisite than precious wood such as sandalwood, rosewood, and agarwood.

It had to be known that if Princess Shaoyi was in the capital, her food and clothes would be better than those in the palace. However, Liaodong was bitterly cold and had limited conditions. It definitely could not compare to the capital.

It was obvious that Princess Shaoyi's life in Liaodong had not been good either. She had suffered.

When the nobles in the palace returned, they would definitely ask about Princess Shaoyi's situation in Liaodong.

With this in mind, Eunuch Li did not show it on his face. "This time, when I came over, the Empress Dowager rewarded me with new tea from all over the world. Princess, try it. However, I feel that the jade laurel tea that you made yourself is fragrant, mellow, and fresh. It's quite delicious."

Compared to the tribute tea, although the jade osmanthus tea was a little inferior, what was rare was that the taste of this tea was strange and novel. Furthermore, the medicinal tea that Princess Shaoyi had personally brewed revealed that it was extraordinary.

"The Empress Dowager is still thinking about me." Yu Youyao looked flattered. Then, she changed the topic. "Coincidentally, I've also prepared some things to show filial piety to her. I'll have to trouble you to bring them back to the palace. "

Eunuch Li quickly agreed.

The two of them chatted for ten minutes. On the surface, they were just gossiping, but anyone who understood the deeper meaning behind it understood.

One of them had "ulterior motives". The meaning between the lines revealed the love and concern that the nobles in the palace had for Princess Shaoyi. They gave her this year's tribute tea. They also learned that Princess Shaoyi had suffered in Liaodong, and that Elder Han had been locked up in the residence.

The other party "pretended to be flattered". Her words expressed her gratitude to the Empress Dowager and her loyalty to the Imperial Court, showing how loyal the women of the Yu Clan should be.

Both sides exchanged blows.

It wasn't until both sides consciously expressed what they wanted to say clearly and were very satisfied with the attitudes they expressed that this conversation that was "full of mysteries" finally ended.

Eunuch Li smiled in satisfaction before standing up. "It's getting late. It's time for us to read the Empress Dowager's decree. We can't miss the time."

Yu Youyao immediately knelt in the hall with the people from the Xie Residence to listen to the decree.

This was actually a decree to be conferred a noble title.

Yu Youyao's title had changed from a first-rate Saint Venerable Princess to Venerable Supreme-Grade Eldest Princess Yi Zhao. Her status had increased by more than a level.

The emperor issued the imperial edict.

The Empress Dowager and the Empress Dowager issued the empress's decree.

Generally speaking, the titles of all the ministers and the female members of their families were personally ordered by the emperor. The emperor's close ministers would draft the details of the content according to the oral decree. After the emperor read it, if there was no problem with the words and sentences, if the ministers had expressed the holy will very clearly, and if there was nothing biased or ominous, the emperor would personally draft a decree and issue it.

Now, the emperor had sealed the palace and did not come out. The court affairs were handled by the Empress Dowager on his behalf. All the decrees were issued by the Empress Dowager. Although it was still an empress's decree, in order for the empress's decree to have the dragon might of the imperial decree, not only did the empress's decree have to be stamped with a phoenix seal, but it also had to be stamped with a seal to represent that the emperor ordered the Empress Dowager to convey the holy message.

Not only was Yu Youyao shocked, but even Eunuch Li, who was announcing the decree, was shocked.

The emperor's sisters could be conferred the title of "Senior Princess."

Only the emperor's aunt could be conferred the title of "Great Senior Princess."

Only the emperor's grandaunt could be conferred the title of "Eldest Princess."

There was actually no news in the palace about such a big matter. Even he had always thought that this was just a decree from the Imperial Court.

Eunuch Li was shocked. He had a guess, but he did not dare to show it at all.

Yu Youyao knelt down respectfully to listen to the decree.

She was the Venerable Supreme-Grade Eldest Princess Yi Zhao. The longer her title was, the more important her status was.

"Yi" was her honorific name.

"Zhao" was the title of the daughter of the current emperor. There were only three princesses in the palace now. Other than Princess Liyang, the other two princesses were all called Zhao.

For example, Concubine Lan's daughter had been conferred the title of Princess Zhao Ping.

However, there were many princesses in history who did not have a specific title. Some especially doted on princesses were often given more honorable titles.

It couldn't be decided uniformly.

Noble titles had to be divided into different ranks. The ranks were the same, but the grades were different. Naturally, the higher the grade, the more important the status.

The grades were the same, but the higher the rank, the higher the status.

“Venerable” referred to the difference in ranks. It was the highest rank among all the ranks.

“Supreme-grade” referred to her grade. Above the first-grade was the supreme-grade.

The daughters of the emperor were all royal-grade. For example, Princess

Zhao Ping was a first-grade princess of the royal family. Her status was that of a first-ranked, first-grade princess.

Above the royal-grade, there was also the imperial-grade, such as the Senior Princess.

Above the imperial-grade, there was also supreme-grade, such as the Great Senior Princess.

Below the royal-grade was the saint-grade. For example, Yu Youyao was a first-grade Saint Venerable Princess Yi. Her rank was the same as Princess Zhao Ping, but her grade was lower than Princess Zhao Ping.

Her status was that of a first-leveled Saint Venerable and a first-grade Princess.

However, whether a title in the imperial family was noble or not depended on one's rank first. After that, it also depended on the grade. Yu Youyao's title had the word ‘Yi’, so her status naturally rose.

And now, her title had been directly raised by more than one position.

“Yi” became “Yi Zhao”, allowing her to enjoy the special title that the princess of the dynasty had.

She also became a “Venerable”. Her rank changed from a first-ranked princess to an official first-ranked princess. This was a rank that only legitimate princesses had.

The grade of “Saint Venerable” directly surpassed the royal-grade and supreme-grade, becoming the highest “supreme-grade”.

The word “Eldest” was added in front of the word “Princess”. Thus, she changed from a Princess to the “Eldest Princess”. There was a difference of one word, but the statuses were worlds apart. In this dynasty, the first wife was important, and as long as she could be called “Eldest”, her status would be extraordinary.

In the past dynasties, only the sisters of the emperor could have the title of “Eldest”. However, there was another special case, which was that they had made a huge contribution to the Imperial Court and were given an exception.

An example was Princess Shaoyi.

However, such a situation was rare in history books.

The Empress Dowager had set a precedent for the Eldest Princess Shaoyi and made an exception. Eldest Princess Shaoyi had directly become the most respected person in the Great Zhou Dynasty other than the emperor, the

Empress Dowager, and the Empress.

King Yue Fei still had to follow behind.

In the future, they would have to change the way they addressed Princess Shaoyi.

Eunuch Li t s back subconsciously lowered a little, and his tone subconsciously became flattering.. “Eldest Princess Shaoyi, please accept the decree!”

Chapter 934 - 934: The Reward of a King

In particular, Eunuch Li emphasized the word “eldest”, his tone filled with respect.

Yu Youyao lowered her eyes and quickly raised her hands.

Satisfied, Eunuch Li rolled up the Empress Dowager’s decree and carefully placed it into Eldest Princess Shaoyi’s hand.

Yu Youyao held the imperial edict high and bowed respectfully. Her voice was respectful. “I, Youyao of the Yu Clan, thank Your Majesty for your grace and the Empress Dowager’s grace.”

Eunuch Li looked at Eldest Princess Shaoyi and sighed inwardly.

In order to raise Princess Shaoyi’s status, the Empress Dowager had really put in a lot of effort. In order to prevent others from criticizing the title of “Eldest Princess Shaoyi”, she had deliberately added the word “Zhao” to the title, indicating that Princess Shaoyi’s title followed the title of the princess from the royal family.

With that, no one said anything else.

It was a small title, but there was a lot of meaning behind it.

After announcing the decree, Eunuch Li took out the list of rewards and read it out. “The Empress Dowager has bestowed Princess Shaoyi with a phoenix box made of ebony and inlaid with treasures...”

Yu Youyao immediately became interested. The most precious items rewarded by the palace were often placed at the front.

Ebony was an imperial wood. There were certain rules according to the grade of ebony. If one went beyond the rules, they would be punished with “overstepping”. Furthermore, it was rarely given by the palace.

In addition to the 50,000 acres of fertile land, there were countless tributes. Everything was priceless. The Empress Dowager had also rewarded many additional things from her private vault.

After a while, the front hall was quickly filled with rewards.

Yu Youyao quickly thanked the Empress Dowager for her grace.

However, this was not the end.

Eunuch Li's mouth was dry from reading. After calming down, he said, "The

Empress found out that the Eldest Princess had worked hard and suffered a lot in the Liaodong area. She praised the Eldest Princess for being magnanimous and kind. She did not disgrace the family and did not let the

Imperial Court down. She also prepared a reward for the Eldest Princess..." Yu Youyao was a little surprised.

Then, she heard Eunuch Li begin to read out the reward list. "The Empress has bestowed Eldest Princess Shaoyi with a pair of jade ruyi and a Lantian jade pine tree..."

After that, there were also eunuchs and palace maids carrying boxes of things into the hall.

Yu Youyao was numb.

The Empress's rewards were only a little less than the Empress Dowager's rewards from her private vault, but the value of the items was actually higher than the Empress Dowager's.

The entire hall was packed.

Even people as wealthy as the Xie family couldn't help but feel dizzy.

They recalled that when they had gone out to welcome Eunuch Li and the others just now, more than ten carriages had followed the street and the emperor's throne. They had actually stretched for a few kilometers.

Yu Youyao quickly thanked the Empress for her grace before standing up.

After the rewards were handed over, Eunuch Li continued, "The Eldest

Princess's crown clothes are a serious matter and will take a long time. The Internal Affairs Department is intensifying its supervision. It will take about a month to complete. When the crown clothes are completed, we will send someone else to send it over. Eldest Princess, please wait for a few days."

The crown clothes of the "Eldest Princess" was only second to the Empress's. The emerald crown on her head had to be changed from a crown with seven phoenixes to a crown with 12 Hui's and four phoenixes.

The Hui was a type of five-colored pheasant, with two fewer colors than the seven-colored phoenix. Its status was second only to the phoenix.

Other than the Empress who could use the Dragon Phoenix Crown, the other concubines, princesses, and relatives of the Great Zhou Dynasty could only use phoenixes. The number of phoenixes depended on the position.

A crown with nine Hui's and four phoenixes was a ceremonial crown of the prince and the princess consort.

A crown with 12 Hui's and four phoenixes was a crown that only those with the title "Eldest" had. The corresponding craftsmanship of the crown was already worlds apart from that of the princess.

More than a month was a conservative estimate. Everyone in the Ministry of

Internal Affairs had to work harder, so time was still tight.

However, as servants of the palace, they had never said anything.

Yu Youyao quickly thanked him. "Thank you, Eunuch Li. There are still many matters in Xiangping. I won't be able to return to the capital for a while, so I won't have a chance to wear it. It's fine to slow down."

Eunuch Li's smile relaxed and he understood. "I'm really impressed by the

Eldest Princess's hard work.'

He took a boat all the way from the Beijing Canal to the pier of Liancheng in Liao Province.

After going ashore, he stayed at the Liancheng courier station for two days. After that, he switch to traveling on a carriage. As he gathered information, he headed to Xiangping, walking and stopping along the way.

According to what he knew, there was still a group of refugees in the Longcheng camps who had yet to be settled. The last batch of sweet potatoes could only be successfully cut after the Dragon Boat Festival.

The large-scale promotion of sweet potato planting went very smoothly.

However, the sweet potatoes had just been planted not long ago. There were still five to six months before the harvest. There were still many things to do. It was impossible for Princess Shaoyi to return to the capital now.

Yu Youyao smiled and said, "I'm a woman, but have to bear the burden of a ruler. Although I'm weak, the entire family has received the emperor's grace.

I've inherited the familys etiquette, law, and principles since I was young. I naturally don't dare to disgrace the family, embarrass the family, and embarrass my ancestors."

Eunuch Li was very satisfied.

Yu Youyao invited Eunuch Li to eat and drink some tea. Only then did Eunuch Li leave. "Tomorrow morning, I'll send the commendation and reward fro the

Empress Dowager to the Xie family. Please wait!"

Old Master Xie looked flattered again and quickly thanked him. "Thank you,

Eunuch.'

Before leaving, Yu Youyao arranged for a rich gift and ordered someone to send it to Eunuch Li's carriage in advance.

The family respectfully and politely sent Eunuch Li and the others out of the house. They watched them leave and heaved a sigh of relief.

Back in the front hall.

Old Master Xie dismissed the servants and asked someone to guard the door. Then, he asked, “Little Yao’er, did you receive the news that the Imperial Court had conferred the title of the Eldest Princess on you in advance?”

Xiangping and the capital were not far apart. If the news was sent at full speed, it often took three to five days to arrive.

The matter of adding a title and the reward had always been discussed by the cabinet and handed over to the Empress Dowager to decide. If the Imperial Court wanted to add a title and reward her, there would definitely have been news long ago.

Then, Xiangping would also hear the news.

Yu Youyao shook her head. “Two days ago, I received a message from the Yu Clan saying that the Imperial Court wanted to reward me with something. They didn’t mention anything about conferring an additional title.” The Yu Clan might not have known about this before.

Old Master Xie felt a little uneasy. “From the looks of it, the matter of conferring an additional title should have come about after Lord Ye sent the memorial requesting credit for you to the capital, right?”

In addition to seeking credit for Little Yao’er, Lord Ye had also submitted a case file related to the Han Clan.

These cases had all been tried and there was conclusive evidence. It was probably the Han Clan who had framed Little Yao’er, killed Liu Dagen, framed the Bai Residence, brushed off the national policy, and so on.

The remaining charges were still under trial.

They would not deal with it for the time being.

Old Master Xie nodded. “That’s most likely the case.”

Yu Youyao said, “Just now, I noticed that when Eunuch Li issued the decree, his tone was clearly filled with surprise. I’m afraid the matter of conferring an additional title hasn’t been discussed in the cabinet..

Chapter 935 - 935: Executive Power

Everyone from the Xie Residence was shocked.

After a while, Old Master Xie said, “Isn’t the Empress Dowager... exposed...”

The emperor sealed the palace and did not leave. The Empress Dowager had the responsibility to assist the court. All matters in the court were discussed and drafted by the cabinet officials and handed over to the Empress Dowager to decide. It was not considered the use of exclusive power.

However, if it was privately decided, there was the suspicion of exercising exclusive power.

The seal on this piece of paper was a little intriguing.

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat. "The Empress Dowager is quite fair in her handling of matters, and her rewards and punishments are also clear. Whether the matter of conferring an additional title has been discussed with the cabinet has also been set in stone."

Everyone in the Xie Residence understood the deeper meaning.

Old Master Xie nodded. "That's true. There are only two secondary aides in the cabinet. Elder Han has lost his power. The royalists are powerful, but the weak can't overcome the strong. Not only did Little Yao'er alleviate the drought for the Imperial Court, but she also promoted national policy. You brought peace and stability to society. You were originally conferred the title of princess. With the word Eldest', it will only add some honor and wealth. Why should the court officials offend the Empress Dowager regarding such a matter?"

The Empress Dowager and the Empress were in charge of the internal and external mingfu and had the right to reward them.

If the emperor wanted to confer an edict, he had to listen to the opinion of the Empress or the Empress Dowager first. The content of the edict was also drawn up by the Empress Dowager or the Empress and handed over to the emperor to be issued.

The Empress Dowager's actions were not too out of line.

Old Master Xie agreed deeply. "The court officials know the scheme behind the Han family of Xi'an very well. The Empress Dowager did not hide her anger. No one will provoke her at this juncture."

How important was the Empress Dowager's status? How could the Empress Dowager tolerate the Han family of Xi'an trying to provoke the Empress Dowager's authority?

Giving Little Yao'er a gift expressed the Empress Dowager's determination to stabilize the country and suppress the Han family in Xi'an.

It was for the world to see.

She wanted everyone in the world to know that the dignity of the Imperial Court, the heavenly might of the royal family, and the authority of the Empress Dowager could not be provoked.

Princess Shaoyi, who had pushed for the national policy to settle the refugees and alleviate the drought, had been undisguisedly rewarded heavily. It was also to let the world know that the Imperial Court's determination to promote the national policy and settle the refugees and alleviate the drought was unquestionable. This was to calm the hearts of the people.

Anyone like the Han family of Xi'an who wanted to look down on the court for their own interests, provoke the dignity of the royal family, and cause chaos in the country would end up like the Han family of Xi'an.

"Right now, the most important thing is to successfully promote national policy, settle the refugees, relieve the drought, and stabilize the country. The key to all of this is Little Yao'er. The reason why they rewarded her heavily is also to

stabilize the situation in the North. Without exception, all those who obstruct it are going against the Imperial Court.”

As long as the court officials were not stupid, they would not jump out at this time to object to the Empress Dowager’s decision.

Otherwise, once they were beaten into the “Han Party”, they would be beyond redemption.

Xie Xun also said, “Last year, during the water disaster in Zhejiang, although the refugees received relief from the Imperial Court and civil society organizations, the relief was only temporary. There was a lot of sand in the flooded land, and it would take less than a year and a half to plant food. However, Little Yao’er ordered someone to promote the planting of sweet potatoes in the affected areas of Zhejiang. The affected commoners relied on planting sweet potatoes to grow their food for the second half of the year. The shadow of the water disaster in Zhejiang also dissipated because of the high yield of sweet potatoes.”

Food was the most important thing for the people. Since ancient times, there had never been a crop as cheap as sweet potatoes.

This was also why the Imperial Court valued the promotion of sweet potatoes.

At the same time, the treasury was empty, and the Imperial Court was unable to help with the disaster. However, they could not ignore the lives of tens of millions of commoners. Otherwise, there would be resentment everywhere, and riots and uprisings would happen frequently.

Where would the huge military expenditure come from if the Imperial Court sent troops to quell the chaos?

In this chaotic situation, the Great Zhou Dynasty was in danger.

At this juncture, not only could Princess Shaoyi and King Yue Fei step forward, but they could also give tens of millions of refugees a way out.

The royal faction spared no effort to support Little Yao’er.

It was also why Little Yao’er could obtain such great dignity by trying to grow sweet potatoes.

“Little Yao’er came to Liaodong because of a righteous cause, but she was almost framed by the Han family of Xi’an. She has really suffered a huge grievance. The Han family’s case in Xi’an has been made known to the world. Under everyone’s scrutiny, it’s impossible for the Imperial Court to pretend that nothing happened. They definitely have to be grateful and appease her.

Otherwise, it’s really unreasonable to reward you.”

This was a clear reward from the standpoint of the country.

Who dared to object?

Old Madam Xie sighed softly. “Although Little Yao’er has been conferred the title of the Eldest Princess, just thinking about all the schemes in the palace makes me feel like a fishbone is stuck in

my throat. I wonder how many tricks are hidden behind this supreme honor. Just thinking about it makes me shocked.”

Yu Youyao agreed wholeheartedly.

Old Master Xie frowned. “Since ancient times, how can one obtain benefits from the royal family in exchange for nothing? No matter how much we get now, we’ll definitely be ordered by them in the future. Previously, Little Yao’er took out most of her assets to receive the title of County Head.”

The family looked at the bright yellow phoenix-embroidered imperial edict on the table and sighed helplessly.

The atmosphere in the room became a little heavy.

It was clearly a supreme honor in the eyes of outsiders, but no one was happy.

At this moment, Yu Youyao smiled. “Fate will naturally take its course in the future. From the looks of it, it’s a good thing that I’ve been conferred the title of the Eldest Princess. I think soon, once the news gets out, the nobles in the North who still have hope won’t be able to sit still anymore.”

The reason why the nobles restricted the vassal lords was because the Imperial Court wanted to restrain them so that the vassal lords would not gather their troops and shock their masters.

The nobles were fearless.

However, the person who wanted to suppress the nobles now was the Empress Dowager, who was in charge of the court. She represented the Imperial Court.

The cover of the nobles was gone.

The matter of the Han family being overthrown was even more logical.

Old Master Xie took a look at the rewards placed at the side. “The Empress Dowager’s rewards are all rare tributes, but they mostly revolve around Little Yao’er’s clothes, food, shelter, and transportation. There are also many precious spices and medicinal herbs mixed in. She knew that the Liaodong area is bitterly cold, so she specially ordered someone to prepare them.” It was obvious that she was still considerate.

However, no one knew how much she cared about Little Yao’er. At the very least, he would still protect Little Yao’er without harming her own interests.

Yu Youyao also realized this.

Then, Old Master Xie looked at the rewards on the other side. “Most of the

Empress’s rewards are flashy but insubstantial. They’re all extremely rare. Any one of them is a rare treasure.” At this point, he paused for a moment and became a little more serious. “The meaning of ‘colluding’ is obvious. You have to consider it carefully.”

When he said the word “colluding”, his tone was a little complicated, revealing an unusual meaning..

Chapter 936 - 936: The Fourth Princess Consort

It seemed that as soon as the reward from the palace was sent to Little Yao'er, it had already spread throughout the capital.

Things like conferring titles and rewards had never been hidden. Otherwise, how could the royal family express to the world that the Imperial Court rewarded and punished clearly, intimidating everyone?

However, the Empress's extraordinary rewards and generous gifts were intriguing.

Even he could sense the deeper meaning behind this.

How could others not notice?

She was afraid that after this reward was received, Little Yao'er and the Empress would be connected.

However, on the surface, the Empress Dowager was on the same side as the Empress, but there was also the Fourth Prince involved. Now that the competition for the position of heir was becoming more and more intense, it was definitely impossible for the Fourth Prince to only think of himself. Was it easy to deal with this?

Old Master Xie was worried.

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat. She said calmly, "Since the Empress has rewarded me, I'll accept it. In any case, she can't surpass the Empress Dowager. She's the Empress, and the Yi Kun Palace has opened its doors. As the mother of a country, it's only right for her to reward her contributing relatives.'

Yu Youyao had been given titles several times. However, the Empress sealed the palace and never expressed anything. Now that the gates of the Yi Kun Palace had opened, the Empress would definitely express twice as much to show her motherly demeanor.

The Empress was a model woman of the world. She ruled over both internal and external mingfu with virtue. She rewarded meritorious family members to show her motherly etiquette.

It was only right to reward her handsomely.

That made sense, However, Old Master Xie shook his head. "In the eyes of others, such a heavy reward is still a little too out of line. There are also certain rules for the palace to reward the family members. Since the Empress is the mother of the country, she won't expose the reward. It'll make others think that she's overstepping the rules. After all, the reward should come from the palace's inner vault."

The inner treasury was equivalent to the government. It had to follow the old rules.

No matter how slow Yu Youyao was, she still sensed that something was amiss.

"The Empress wouldn't break the rules knowingly. Clearly, such a heavy reward doesn't come from the inner vault, but from the Empress's private vault. It belongs to the Empress herself. However, they're unrelated. Why would the Empress reward you generously with the things in her personal vault? What will others think?"

Moreover, the rewards were very expensive.

This clearly did not make sense.

Old Madam Xie held her breath and almost knocked over her teacup. Clearly, she had already understood something.

Yu Youyao looked at her grandmother in surprise, confused. “Didn’t you just say that the Empress’s intention to rope me in was obvious?”

Indeed, she also felt that the Empress’s attempt to rope her in was a little too shallow, so she couldn’t help but feel strange.

However, after thinking about it carefully, she did not feel that there was a problem.

The Yu Clan and the Empress belonged to the royal faction. It made sense for the Empress to want to rope her in further on this basis.

Yu Youyao did not have any room to refuse the reward sent by the palace. It was not wrong, but whether she would accept the Empress’s attempt in “further” roping her in was not something the Empress could control.

She was far away in Liaodong and was not under the Empress’s control. As long as she remained respectful to the Empress, the Empress could not do anything to her.

To put it bluntly, this “shallow” attempt to “further” rope Yu Youyao in did not affect her much.

Therefore, Yu Youyao did not care too much.

“You...” Seeing her confused expression, Old Master Xie hesitated and looked helpless. He could only glance at Old Madam Xie.

She did not even think about it. If it was just to rope her in, the Empress would definitely not bypass the Yu Clan. In the face of the clan’s interests, it was not up to Little Yao’er to decide who she would join.

Everyone knew that this “shallow method of “further” roping Yu Youyao in would not affect Yu Youyao much. How could the Empress not know?

It was a thankless task. Could it be that she was doing this just to give Princess Shaoyi benefits for free?

How could there be such a good thing in the world?

Old Madam Xie sighed softly. “Little Yao’er, you’re already 14 years old. It’s the age to talk about marriage. It’s because you’re mourning, so it’s not appropriate for others to visit, let alone mention it. However, with your current reputation and talent, I think there must be many people eyeing you. Since ancient times, almost all the daughters of foreign ministers and women who were conferred the title of imperial family member have married into the imperial family.”

It was said that the Empress and the Fourth Prince were as close as mother and son. It couldn’t be wrong.

The Fourth Prince in the palace was already 18 years old, and he had just reached the age to talk about marriage. After Little Yao'er's mourning period passed, one of them would just reach adulthood, and the other would just reach the age of maturity. It was time to get married.

Yu Youyao's eyes widened in shock.

In a flash, she suddenly remembered that she had been in the capital a long time ago. After she was conferred the title of County Head, she had gone to pay her respects to her foster father in the clan. She had happened to hear a rumor that the Empress Dowager had wanted to make her the Fourth Prince's princess consort a long time ago. Later, it had been disrupted by the Duke Rongs Residence. That was why the palace was so angry and severely punished the Duke Rongs Residence.

At that time, she did not take it seriously and thought to herself, "The emperor severely punished Duke Rongs Residence. Isn't he thinking about how the Duke Rongs Residence has been managed for many years and is rich?"

The Fourth Prince was the son of a concubine and didn't have any power in the palace. She also knew that with her status at that time, she was still a little lacking as the princess consort.

After all, Yu Zongzheng's official position and skills were not prominent. Although the Yu Clan was placed in an important position, they had still been in dire straits for many years. Their reputation was still a little lacking.

Although Yu Youyao was the eldest daughter of the first wife, her status was not as high as Yu Shuangbai's. It made sense if it was Yu Shuangbai.

Even so, princes and princess consorts were usually chosen from those old nobles with deep foundations.

This was so that it would not insult the bloodline of the royal family.

But now, after hearing her grandmother's words, she suddenly realized that this was very likely not groundless. "The Empress suddenly took things from her own private vault and rewarded me without any reason. This is clearly unreasonable. If she's interested in the Fourth Prince's marriage, then everything will..." Everything would make sense!

It was the Empress who had taken a fancy to her, so it was like a mother who was in charge of her "marriage" for her "son." For the sake of the Fourth

Prince, she wanted to reward Yu Youyao generously and express her attitude. Everything was reasonable and smooth.

Every move, word, and action of a superior carried a deeper meaning and purpose.

As long as others thought about it for a moment, it was very easy to guess what the Empress meant behind the "heavy reward."

In addition, early on, there were rumors in the imperial family that the

Empress Dowager wanted to make her the Fourth Prince's princess consort. Today was different from before. With her current status, she complemented the Fourth Prince even more, so everything made sense.

The Empress had used this method to forcefully rope her in.

Seeing that she had understood, Old Madam Xie heaved a sigh of relief. “Think about it carefully.. When Eunuch Li read the reward list just now, what was the first thing the Empress gave you?”

Chapter 937 - 937: Born with a Phoenix Fate

Yu Youyao took a deep breath. “It’s a pair of jade ruyi.”

The jade ruyi was auspicious.

What did this mean?

When ordinary families looked at marriage, if they took a fancy to someone, to prevent offending the other party, they usually wouldn’t come directly. First, they would give them some expensive and dignified gifts to test them.

Every family raised their children, and the elders had also experienced it. When they saw this etiquette, they could roughly guess and give the appropriate reaction.

If it succeeded, everyone would naturally be happy.

If it didn’t work, it wouldn’t hurt their dignity and relationship.

The gifts were all gold and jade.

It meant that they were fated to be together.

There were also patterns on it, such as cloud patterns, ruyi patterns, and so on.

It further expressed the elders’ satisfaction with the woman.

The rarer and more expensive something was, the more sincerity it represented.

Not only had the Empress given her jade, but it was also a jade ruyi. It was a rare pair of jade ruyi. It meant that one was satisfactory.

Her thoughts were obvious.

Old Madam Xie continued, “This is also the Empress’s test for the Yu Clan and you.”

Yu Youyao frowned and thought to herself, “Eunuch Li has sent a reward over with great fanfare. I think in a few days, the Empress’s generous reward will spread throughout the world.”

How was this a test? Everyone knew what the Empress was thinking.

However, as the person involved, Yu Youyao did not even have any room to refuse. No matter if this matter succeeded or not, she would still be criticized.

Old Master Xie continued and explained the pros and cons to her. “Previously, because of the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxings Residence and the Duke Rong’s Residence, the Yu Residence, Concubine Lan, and Imperial Concubine Xu inevitably had conflicts. These conflicts were not related to interests, but to reputation. The Yu Clan is a scholarly family with a strong foundation. What they value is reputation. It’s because the Yu Residence is reasonable and did not suffer a loss that they calmed down. However, the conflicts are irreconcilable.’

Concubine Lan's maiden family, the former Weining Marquis Residence, had been demoted to Ning Yuanbo. As they were implicated in the imperial examination fraud, they were still in jail. A decision was still being made.

The Marquis of Changxings Residence, which was on the same side as Ning Yuanbo's Residence, was implicated in King Li of Zhou's case and all their property had been confiscated.

Back then, at the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxings Residence, as Concubine Lan's mother, the Marquis of Weinings wife even openly helped the Marquis of Changxings wife with the intention of ruining Little Yao'er's reputation.

Imperial Concubine Xu had used the Flower Festival at Duke Rongs Residence to scheme against Little Yao'er's reputation.

There was still room for negotiation in a conflict of interests.

There were no eternal enemies in the world, only eternal benefits.

However, the schemes of both sides involved the reputation of the family in public and even the elders. It was impossible for anyone to pretend that nothing had happened.

Yu Youyao did not understand for a moment.

Old Madam Xie also knew that without her mother's guidance, she did not know enough about the pros and cons involved in marriage. "In other words, the Empress is using the status of the Fourth Prince's princess consort to lure the Yu Clan and you."

Yu Youyao instantly understood. "The emperor only has three princes.

Whether it's the Second Prince or the Third Prince, it's disadvantageous to the Yu Clan. The Yu Clan has just risen and its foundation in the court is not as good as some old nobles. If we want to improve further, we have to contribute to the dragon. On the surface, the Empress is rewarding me generously, but she's actually using the identity of the Fourth Prince's princess consort to probe and lure me. In the future, if the Fourth Prince... I..."

There had to be a conclusion.

The Yu Clan had already walked into a dead end. Whether it was for the sake of advancing further in the court or for the sake of the huge family, they had no choice but to continue establishing themselves in the court and passing down their legacy.

Yu Youyao felt her heart tremble.

Old Master Xie sighed softly. "The Yu Clan is currently at the peak of its power in the royal court. The Zhenguo Marquis Residence and the Qi Residence, who are on good terms with us, have also gained power in the court and can't be underestimated. Meanwhile, you're in Liaodong now and have a close relationship with King Yue Fei. If they rope you in, the Empress will definitely have a closer relationship with him. The benefits behind you are really too great."

What he did not say was that not long after the Flower Festival in Duke Rongs Residence, Old Madam Yu had personally written a letter to him. In the letter, she had mentioned that the Six Wise Monks of the Precious Peace Temple,

Grandmaster Hui Neng, and Zen Master Hui Ji had written an order for Little Yao'er. She had even mentioned that Mr. Xian Yun had said something similar.

She was born with a phoenix's fate—

If news of this spread, Little Yao'er would probably become the target of public criticism.

If she wanted to get something, she would rack her brains to scheme.

If she couldn't get it, she would rack her brains to destroy it.

On such a hot day, Yu Youyao broke out in a cold sweat for no reason. Her entire body was cold. "In that case, it's not just a rumor that the Empress will adopt the Fourth Prince as her heir. It's very likely to succeed."

Therefore, from the beginning, the Empress had already planned to drag her down.

She couldn't help but continue to analyze what was going on.

With a legitimate heir in the court and the protection of the royal faction, it was a sure bet that the Fourth Prince would ascend to the throne. As the princess consort of the prince, Yu Youyao had the royal faction led by the Yu Clan behind her. There would be almost no suspense after she was conferred the title.

Now that there was an imperial consort in the family, the Yu Clan's fame and fortune were yet to come.

There were probably not many people in the world who could withstand such a noble and supreme authority.

Even Yu Youyao couldn't help but be stunned when she suddenly thought of all this.

She recalled the situation when she had entered the palace with her grandmother back then. At that time, she was crawling at the Empress Dowager's feet, trembling and not even daring to breathe loudly. Above her head, there was a noble's cold and scrutinizing gaze that observed her fearlessly. She was afraid that there would be a mistake in etiquette. Heaven and hell were only decided by the nobles.

When it came to such supreme nobility—

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat, and even her face turned abnormally red.

Old Master Xie frowned. "Little Yao'er, what do you think?"

This was why he had refused to say it clearly previously.

As an elder, it wasn't appropriate for him to mention the marriage between a man and a woman in front of Eldest Miss. He was also worried that there would be too many benefits behind this. If Little Yao'er was blindfolded...

Yu Youyao seemed to have woken up from a dream. She bit her lip and subconsciously lowered her head. In the end, she was a little embarrassed to say it. "King Yue Fei and I..."

Old Master Yu's expression did not relax as he said in a low voice, "Although you have an engagement with King Yue Fei, you don't have a parental order or a matchmaker. The marriage hasn't been properly arranged, and both sides haven't exchanged the token of engagement. It's still

not legitimate. Just in case it damages your reputation, it's naturally not appropriate to announce it to the public."

This was the reason on the surface.

Of course, there was a deeper layer. "The situation in the Imperial Court is very delicate now. There's an engagement between you and King Yue Fei, but it's not appropriate to make it public. You even have to pretend that this marriage doesn't exist.."

Chapter 938 - 938: The Emperor's Order Can't Be Disobeyed

Yu Youyao only knew a little about marriage, but that did not mean that she did not understand the implications behind it.

The collapse of the Han Clan was still in progress. If the engagement was exposed now, her motive for coming to Liaodong would seem impure. One would not be afraid to speculate about others with the greatest malice, but others would definitely guess that she had selfish motives.

Meanwhile, the private contact between King Yue Fei and the Yu Clan was certain. A clique forming between court officials and vassal lords was a huge taboo, and it would arouse the suspicion of the Imperial Court.

Only after the collapse of the Han Clan would Yin Huaixi completely control the North. In order to prevent King Yue Fei from leading his troops and shocking the lord, the Imperial Court would think of ways to restrain the vassal lords.

The most convenient and effective way was to arrange a marriage.

At this moment, Yin Huaixi's marriage with her was what the royal family was happy to see.

Princess Shaoyi had received the emperor's vast grace, which was why she had been conferred the title of the Eldest Princess. She had to thank the emperor for his kindness. The Yu Clan's foundation in the royal court was still shallow, and it was not as deep-rooted as the other old nobles. Furthermore, they were under the protection of the emperor and were restrained by the Imperial Court. With the word "filial piety" in mind, it was impossible for Yu Youyao not to care about her family.

The Yu Clan was both loyal and ready to die to preserve their chastity. The daughters of the Yu Clan could not betray their ancestors and forget their sect. They had been attacked by the world for hundreds of years and relied on the blood and tears of the Yu Clan to support themselves.

King Yue Fei wanted to make use of the Yu Clan behind Princess Shaoyi to have some thoughts that they shouldn't have. That was definitely impossible.

Instead, he would be restrained by his wife's family.

Yu Youyao frowned. "The Empress has given me such a generous reward on such a grand scale. Doesn't that mean I don't even have an excuse to refuse? Is this a forced sale?!"

How noble was the position of the Empress?!

If it were anyone else, they would inevitably be tempted. However, Yu Youyao knew very well what she wanted and did not want. She only felt disgusted by the Empress's scheme.

Old Master Xie could clearly see the disgust on her face and felt relieved. However, he said, “You have a noble title, so your marriage will most likely be decided by the Empress Dowager and the emperor. The Yu Clan has no right to make decisions on its own. You have a noble status and a huge father clan behind you. There are too many interests involved. The palace will be more cautious about your marriage. The Empress can’t make a rash decision.”

From the looks of it, the Empress’s scheme was not so terrifying.

Yu Youyao’s mood did not relax. “Although that’s the case, since ancient times, marriage has always been decided by my parents. Although my marriage is decided by the palace, I still have to ask my elders. The elders can still help to encourage me. The Empress rewarded me generously for the Yu Clan to see.”

The Han family of Xian was deeply rooted in the North. They were intertwined and involved a lot of matters. These things had to be investigated one by one before they could make a decision.

This case would take at least three to five months. Furthermore, behind it was the Deputy Grand Secretary of the Cabinet, Elder Han. In the end, the case still had to be handed over to the Imperial Court and to the capital for a second trial. After confirming that there were no mistakes in the case, it had to be handed over to the Court of Justice for a third trial.

After three trials, the Ministry of Justice would determine the sentence and close the case.

No one knew how long this would take because the case involved too many things and there were too many variables.

However, if Yin Huaixi wanted to completely control the North, he had to at least wait until the Han family’s case in Xi’an and the related people involved were transferred to the capital. This period of time was a little tricky.

The emperor and the Empress Dowager were seriously ill. One of them was sealed in the palace and the other was lying in bed. Meanwhile, Yin Huaixi did not control the North. As the Eldest Princess, she did not have any autonomy over her marriage.

In the end, the Empress still needed to step in for her marriage. The Empress could not make a hasty decision, but what if she reached a consensus with the Yu Clan, which was her father’s clan?

Marriage was a big deal. It involved her parents’ orders, the matchmaker’s words, and the palace’s betrothal.

Wouldn’t that be logical?!

Although it had been less than a year since her grandmother had passed away, and it was not convenient to discuss marriage at this time, as long as the royal family took a fancy to someone, they only needed to say a few words and it would be done.

In addition, loyalty came before filial piety. The Empress was the ruler, and Yu Youyao was a minister. If the Empress really had such intentions, she would first exchange the engagement token. A child in mourning had to mourn for three years, while a grandchild in mourning only had to mourn for a year. After she observed filial piety for her grandmother for a year, it would be more logical for them to exchange invitations.

The emperor's order could not be disobeyed.

Unless the emperor annulled the marriage that the royal family had given her, it would be decided. Even if the Fourth Prince died, she had to be a widow and grow old alone until she died in the name of being loyal. Otherwise, it would be considered disrespectful and unchaste to the royal family.

Ordinary families did not dare to marry women that the royal family had taken a fancy to in the past.

For the sake of the family's reputation and dignity, no matter how noble her status was, a noble family would definitely not marry her.

However, compared to other women, Yu Youyao's situation would be even more difficult.

Back then, at the Marquis of Changxings Flower Festival, Seventh Miss Cao and the Marquis of Changxings wife had planned to ruin her reputation. At that time, she had used her grandmother's reputation to build a good reputation for herself.

Everyone knew that she had been raised by her grandmother since she was young, and her morals had also taken after her grandmother.

Her grandmother was a chaste woman, and the Imperial Court had even established a memorial arch. Not only did she bear her grandmother's name, but that memorial arch also reflected her grandmother.

If she married Yin Huaixi, not only would she lose her reputation as an indecent person, but she would also implicate her grandmother's reputation. The entire Yu Clan would be criticized.

If Yin Huaixi dared to marry her, it was inevitable that he would be known as

“forcefully snatching his brother's wife”, “inhumane”, and “incestuous.”

In ancient times, there were people who forcibly snatched other people's wives, although they were criticized.

However, if the person he had snatched was his brother's wife, it would be a mess. The stakes were different, and Yu Youyao would only meet a dead end.

This was not Yu Youyao letting her imagination run wild, but the Empress's true plan.

The Yu Clan's foundation in the court was still shallow, and now that they were in hot water, they urgently needed to stabilize their foundation in the court. If the Yu Clan could produce an empress, it would be beneficial to the Yu Clan.

The Yu Clan had no reason to refuse.

Recently, there had also been some rumors in the court that the Fourth

Prince's reputation for being benevolent, filial, and virtuous had to be established. How much did the Fourth Prince have to achieve?

On the surface, the royal faction did not participate in the battle for the throne, but if they really did not have any thoughts about the battle for the throne, why would they let the Empress use the fact that the Empress Dowager was seriously ill to join the royal faction and cause trouble in the palace?

Wasn't it just a gamble?

If the Empress could defeat Concubine Lan and Imperial Concubine Xu, it was not impossible for her to support the Fourth Prince to ascend the throne. In the future, they would be able to obtain wealth easily.

Everyone had selfish motives.

Even if it didn't work, the Empress could still be accused of disobeying the Empress Dowager and having exclusive power to do political work, causing chaos in the court. Previously, the Ning Residence had been punished, and the eldest son of the Emperor had died prematurely. The old and the new were dealt with, and several crimes were committed at the same time. The Empress could also be suppressed..

Chapter 939 - 939: Palace Battle

Everyone from the Xie Residence also figured out what was going on, and their expressions immediately turned solemn.

There was dead silence in the room.

Even the smoke in the Boshan furnace was meticulous as it rose vertically.

After Yu Youyao's anger subsided, she gradually calmed down. Then, she thought carefully about what had happened today and her heart skipped a beat. "Perhaps the Empress Dowager doesn't trust the Empress."

Just now, she had been shocked and angry at the Empress's sudden scheme,

She couldn't help but speculate about the vicious scheme behind the Empress's actions.

After calming down, she discovered many details that she had neglected previously.

Old Master Xie realized something. "The Empress Dowager has been silent and hasn't even discussed with the cabinet. She has decided to confer the title of Eldest Princess on you to prevent the Empress from plotting against you." These words were not groundless.

With the current court situation, the Empress Dowager's actions of conferring Little Yao'er with a title were out of calming the hearts of the people, promoting the policies of the country, and stabilizing the country. Then, it was only logical for her to be conferred a title.

The cabinet had no reason to stop it.

The Empress Dowager did not need to go through the cabinet to make a private decision.

However, on the other hand, it was only logical. Even if the decision was made through the cabinet, it was only right and proper. Why should the Empress Dowager make a decision on her own?

Yu Youyao said meaningfully, "If I'm not wrong, the Empress Dowager's seal on this piece of paper is also an attempt to borrow me as a warning to the Empress. If the Empress is tactful, she won't continue to make a fuss about rewarding me. As long as the Empress doesn't make a fuss about this, the reward will seem logical. Although others have some guesses, they won't dare to make it public."

In that case, the Empress's scheme would be exposed.

Indeed!

The older, the wiser.

The Empress Dowager had schemed thoroughly against the Empress and resolved her vicious scheme.

In terms of status, the Empress Dowager was on par with the Empress, but as her mother-in-law and an elder, the Empress Dowager was superior to the Empress in terms of seniority.

This was a battle between the two most respected people in the inner palace. There was no smoke, but it hit the nail on the head.

The Empress Dowager was displeased with the Empress.

However, in the end, she had taken into account the Empress's dignity and used Yu Youyao to teach her a lesson.

It was really a palace battle between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

From the looks of it, it was obvious that the Empress Dowager was a foot taller than the Empress.

Yu Youyao's expression relaxed and she took a sip of tea. "After the Empress Dowager fell seriously ill, the Empress took control of the royalist faction. At one point, there were rumors that she wanted to adopt the Fourth Prince and stir up the situation in the court, causing the struggle for the heir to become more and more intense. There were open and secret struggles in the court, and the situation became even more delicate."

Previously, there had been rumors in the palace that the Empress Dowager wanted to make her the Fourth Prince's princess consort.

What did this mean?

This meant that the Empress Dowager was still very satisfied with the Fourth Prince and valued him very much. She even planned to personally step in and arrange a marriage for him.

Therefore, before this, the Empress Dowager was still very tolerant of the Empress and even the Fourth Prince.

"Because of this rumor, Imperial Concubine Xu's faction couldn't even sit still anymore and ordered the Han family of Xi'an to attack the royalists and achieve the Empress's goal of the royalists losing their virtue. The other wanted to frame King Yue Fei and continue to control the North. Although both sides had different goals, they had common interests and hit it off immediately."

The sealing of this piece of paper gradually caused more undercurrents in the court to surface.

Why was Imperial Consort Xu the first to lose her composure?

It was because although Concubine Lan had been reinstated after Ning Yuanbo's residence was imprisoned, her position was still inferior to Imperial

Concubine Xu's. The Second Prince was the "eldest", but he was not really the "eldest". After thinking about it carefully, the word "eldest" might not really stand. Looking at the Third Prince, he was noble because of his mother. The Third Prince's status was the most important. The Xu family was in charge of the military, and they were the most powerful.

The rumors of adopting the Fourth Prince directly threatened the Third Prince.

Old Master Xie said, "The Empress Dowager has issued a national policy to stabilize the country and help the North tide over this drought as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Her Majesty's actions are already against the Empress Dowager's political opinions. I'm afraid the Empress Dowager has long been dissatisfied with the Empress, but she suppressed it because she couldn't find a suitable time.'

As the mother of the country, the Empress had the right to support the government.

On the surface, the Empress Dowager really couldn't catch the Empress's weakness.

Yu Youyao nodded and said, "Anyone with discerning eyes understands that the Han family of Xi'an has been scheming behind the scenes and is targeting the Empress Dowager. However, the royalist faction behind the Empress Dowager is deeply rooted. The harem's political affairs won't have much impact on the Empress Dowager. Other than not being able to manage the court smoothly in the future, the Empress Dowager still has the right to assist the country. Although the royalist faction will be suppressed, the royalist faction is still a deeply rooted noble of the Great Zhou Dynasty. Many of them even control the military power. It's impossible for them to lose power."

Putting everything else aside, Yu Zongshen had taken root in the Ministry of Revenue after entering the royal court.

The Ministry of Revenue controlled the financial power of the entire Imperial Court. None of the six ministries could surpass the Ministry of Revenue. Even if the treasury was empty, it could still whitewash peace and support the Great

Zhou Dynasty for many years.

If it weren't for the sudden natural and man-made disasters that kept descending, Yu Zongshen wouldn't be mourning at home just after he took over as the Grand Secretary.

This caused the subsequent imperial examinations to be delayed repeatedly.

The matter of relief for the drought in the North was delayed again and again.

In the southeast coast, where they had just suffered a disaster, there was no one in the court to manage the overall situation, causing the sea to be banned and merchant ships to be unable to trade overseas.

When the emperor sealed the palace and did not come out, the competition for the heir became even more intense!

If Yu Zongshen were still in the royal court, all of this would have been carried out in an orderly manner. The situation in the Great Zhou Dynasty would not have been like this.

The situation in the Great Zhou Dynasty had changed drastically. It had only begun after Yu Zongshen left the royal court. It was obvious that Yu Zongshen had controlled the Ministry of Revenue and balanced the royal court for many years.

However, although Yu Zongshen was mourning at home, the Ministry of Revenue was still in the hands of the Yu Clan. Nothing in the Imperial Court could surpass the Ministry of Revenue, and the authority of the cabinet would never fall.

It had only been a while since those people in the cabinet had jumped up and down.

In the eyes of outsiders, as long as Yu Zongshen returned to the royal court, he would still have power and the royalists would still gain power.

Old Master Xie understood what she meant. "The Empress's foundation is too shallow, and the harem's politics have a greater impact on her. The Empress

Dowager used the matter of the Han family in Xian to use the seal to warn the Empress. At the same time, she warned those court officials who were restless and wanted to participate in the struggle for the throne."

Yu Youyao smiled. "The older the wiser."

Everyone from the Xie Residence looked relieved.

However, Yu Youyao did not feel relaxed. The Xie family was a merchant family. Due to the limitations of the news, they knew far less about the undercurrents in the Imperial Court than Yu Youyao..

Chapter 940 - 940: Ten Feet Higher

The Great Zhou Dynasty valued the legitimate wife and the eldest child, so it was rare for her to be conferred the title of "Eldest". In the past generations of the Great Zhou Dynasty, there were only a handful of women in the imperial family who had been conferred the title of "Eldest".

Yu Youyao was the only 'Eldest' princess in the three generations of the Great Zhou Dynasty. Her status was noble, only inferior to the Empress Dowager and the Empress.

Not only was she a meritorious family member, but she also deserved to be rewarded, let alone bestowed with a title. It was to stabilize the situation in the North, promote national policy, and stabilize the country.

She deserved a heavy reward.

It was obvious that the Empress had ulterior motives for rewarding her with the things in her private vault.

However, the Empress Dowager had clearly warned the Empress. It was impossible for the Empress to ignore it, let alone disrespect the Empress Dowager on the surface and disobey her mother-in-law.

As long as the Empress did not use the heavy reward to scheme against the marriage between Eldest Princess Shaoyi and the Fourth Prince, as the only Eldest Princess now, Yu Youyao could afford it.

Thinking about it carefully, the Empress's scheme was impossible to guard against. If it weren't for this warning, no matter how smart Yu Youyao was, she wouldn't have been able to escape.

When a superior schemed against someone, it was often fatal. It still made Yu Youyao's heart skip a beat.

Old Madam Xie immediately beamed with joy. "Since it's a good thing, the matter of expanding the Yu Garden can be settled. I'll contact the craftsman later. I noticed that as soon as Eunuch Li entered the house, his slender eyes glanced into the room and he looked down on the Yu Garden..."

Although the Yu Garden was not bad and was indeed not as exquisite as the capital, there was nothing they could do. They had come too hurriedly, so they could only move in first and slowly repair it later.

She had originally planned to expand the Yu Garden.

However, Little Yao'er never agreed. She kept feeling that it was not good to start building as soon as they arrived at Xiangping. Besides, there was still a famine in the North, and there were many refugees in Liaodong. It was not appropriate to make a fuss.

She thought about it and agreed, so she temporarily gave up on this idea. However, Eunuch Li's attitude of looking down on the Yu Garden today had agitated Old Madam.

The daughters-in-law of the Wang family also agreed very much.

When their family bought this house, they had taken a fancy to it. The empty space behind the house was very big. Be it expansion or garden repair, it was an excellent place for doing so.

The old residence of the Xie Residence in Quanzhou was not like it had been at the beginning. As the family continued to have more children, the population slowly increased and kept expanding. Only then did it reach the later scale.

Yu Youyao knew that Old Madam's heart ached for her. She kept feeling that the Yu Garden was not exquisite enough. "Grandmother, Eunuch Li came from the palace, and his taste is also from the palace. Everything is the best, so he naturally doesn't care about the things of the commoners. The buildings in the north and south have their own styles, and they can't be generalized. The Yu

Garden is spacious, but it can't compare to the capital. I can't live in a big courtyard alone."

After living in the Yu Garden for a while, she gradually understood the beauty of everything in the Yu Garden. The garden was wide and open. It didn't look tense at all, and it was comfortable to live in.

However, her grandmother and the others always felt that the Liaodong area was more bitter and cold. They felt that it was unfair to her, but they also felt that with her current status, it was indeed a little inappropriate for her to live in a three-way courtyard.

They had been planning to expand the Yu Garden long ago.

She had rejected them a few times.

The uncles agreed.

“Your status is different now. If you were in the capital, you might even be given the residence of the Eldest Princess. At the very least, you would be able to live in a five-way courtyard. You might even be able to live in a six-way or a seven-way courtyard. The Yu Garden indeed needs to be repaired. I can’t let you suffer.”

“That’s right. In the future, you have to stay here for a long time. It’s time to show off the dignity and rules that the Eldest Princess should have. Today is different from before. You can’t decline anymore.”

“Now that you’re the Eldest Princess, no one will say much even if you’re busy building. The layout of the Yu Garden is originally suitable for expansion. A two-way courtyard can be added. We have to find a capable craftsman. It’ll take at most a year and a half to complete the construction. The mountain behind is very big, so the construction won’t disturb you. It won’t affect you much...

Everyone spoke one after another, and the topic immediately changed to how to expand the residence, what materials to use, and so on.

Yu Youyao pursed her lips and smiled, not saying anything else to refuse.

With that, the Xie family returned to the room next door.

Yu Youyao thought of something. The first thing the Empress had given her was a pair of jade ruyi. Then, what was in the first box made of ebony and inlaid with treasures that the Empress Dowager had given her?

Since the Empress Dowager could guess the Empress’s scheme, she should know that the restrictions on the Empress were very limited.

Even she could tell that ever since the Empress opened the palace door, her words and actions were suspected of disrupting the court. How could the Empress Dowager not guess?

Since the Empress had targeted her.

The Empress Dowager also resolved it accordingly.

However, would the Empress really stop just like that?

She didn’t think so.

The Empress’s scheme was so ruthless. It was obvious that she was determined to obtain the throne.

If one plan didn’t work, there was still a backup plan.

How could the Empress Dowager not know?

Also, back then, when the Ning Residence was convicted and the emperor’s eldest son died prematurely, did the Empress really not resent him at all?

Was the Empress Dowager really at ease as the Empress was fighting for the supreme position?

Yu Youyao kept feeling that the Empress Dowager had a backup plan.

After returning to her room, Yu Youyao dismissed the servants and sat at the table. She carefully opened the golden lock hanging on the ebony box.

The things placed in the box made Yu Youyao gasp.

That was indeed the case!

Yu Youyao sighed softly and took out the bright yellow phoenix embroidery decree from the box. She unfolded it with a solemn expression. It was indeed an empress's decree to sanction her marriage with King Yue Fei.

The Empress Dowager had already seen through the future situation in the North.

She had long planned to use this decree to bestow marriage and use the wife's family to restrain King Yue Fei. Yu Youyao had helped King Yue Fei promote the state policy in the North, and she had also helped King Yue Fei to get rid of the harm posed by the Han family in Xi'an. King Yue Fei would definitely treat Princess Shaoyi well in the future no matter what.

In that case, it was only logical to use Princess Shaoyi to restrict King Yue Fei's ambition.

At this moment, the situation in the court was very delicate.

It wasn't good to betroth her with great fanfare. In order to prevent the Empress from being unyielding, the Empress Dowager could only issue a secret decree first. No matter how many schemes the Empress had later, they would still die in the womb.

The Empress wanted to control the royalists and adopt the Fourth Prince. The Yu and Song families were indispensable. However, the Yu and Song families were family friends and in-laws. They had been on the same side for many years. Both of them were conservatives and followed the Empress Dowager's lead.

The biggest breakthrough was Princess Shaoyi's marriage.

As long as Princess Shaoyi's marriage was blocked, the Empress's "Road to Heaven" would probably be difficult to achieve.

Indeed, as virtue rose by one foot, vice rose ten.

However, Yu Youyao still had some doubts. She wondered how the Empress Dowager treated the Fourth Prince..