

All Hail 941

Chapter 941 - 941: Cinnabar Privilege Proof

Yu Youyao took a deep breath. Without thinking about anything else, she picked up the “privilege proof” under the secret decree. This was the most important thing.

For a moment, she was trembling in fear.

The “death-exemption gold plate” was often mentioned in operas.

However, in fact, in every dynasty, there was no so-called death-exemption gold plate. There was only the privilege proof.

Therefore, it was a “book”, not a gold plate. It was not a gold medallion. It was made of fine iron, not gold. It was modeled after the pages of a book and had many words engraved on it.

During the Han Dynasty, this contract was all written with cinnabar, so it was called the “Cinnabar Book.” Later on, it was mostly written in gold powder. Alternatively, the words were carved.

It recorded in detail the time of the contract, the name of the target, the official title, and the land.

Second, they would write down the contributions of the person who had been given the privilege proof.

Later on, the special privileges that the emperor gave to the recipient would be written. For example, death exemption was one of them. Of course, there were prerequisites.

At the end, the emperor’s oath would be written. The rough meaning was that meritorious officials would be treated well.

The privilege proof was like an open book. It was divided into two parts. The right contract was kept in the Imperial Temple, and the left was given to the family of the meritorious official for generations to pass on.

If a meritorious official or his descendant committed a crime, the awarded “privilege proof” had to be combined with the “privilege proof” hidden in the Imperial Temple to be verified before they could be pardoned.

However, Yu Youyao knew very well that the “privilege proof” was not as reliable as it seemed.

First, at the end, the emperor made an oath. “Even if the Yellow River is as thin as a belt and Mount Tai is sharpened, as long as the ancestral temple is present, your title and manor will be passed down forever.”

The general idea was that as long as the Great Zhou Dynasty existed, the contract would always be effective unless the Yellow River dried up and Mount Tai collapsed.

The emperor had sworn on the Yellow River and Mount Tai. It was indeed a promise using Mount Tai. One shouldn’t forget that the world was huge. Could it be that all of the land was under the emperor’s rule? Could it be that all officials, be it the Yellow River or Mount Tai, were under the emperor’s rule?

However, although the privilege proof wasn’t that guaranteed, it was still a

promise. As long as the recipient didn't harm the interests of the royal family, causing the royal family to hate them, it was basically very reliable.

However, the privilege proof was not given to her.

It was for Yin Huaixi.

It was first engraved that Yin Huaixi's dragon vein was related to Emperor Chengzong. He was a true "dragon's grandson". It seemed as if it was only writing about Yin Huaixi's identity, but it emphasized on the "orthodox lineage of the royal family", increasing the weight of the privilege proof.

Second, it even briefly explained the extraordinary contributions his father, King Li of Zhou, had made to the Great Zhou.

Although it was glossed over, it emphasized that "his ancestors were virtuous and meritorious."

Later on, it was written in detail. Yin Huaixi entered the military camp at the age of seven. At the age of 12, he went into battle to resist the Di people. At the age of 15, he used his crippled body to serve his ancestors. He was strong-willed and wanted to stabilize the nine states and calm the four seas.

He quelled the rebellion in Shandong and eliminated the lingering troubles in Shandong for hundreds of years to avenge his father. Later, he was conferred the title of King of the North by Yue Fei. He guarded the main border of Liaodong and intimidated foreign states. He fixed the country and protected it. He worked hard.

At the age of 18, the Great Zhou Dynasty had suffered natural and man-made disasters. He helped the Imperial Court promote national policies, take in refugees, and settle them down...

Every word was pertinent.

At the end, there were these sentences. "He bears the legacy of his noble ancestor. He has the five virtues of benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, and trust."

Yu Youyao was shocked. She held the box and observed it carefully, but she did not find any secret compartments or mechanisms.

In that case, after the Empress Dowager borrowed her hand and bestowed the "privilege proof" on Yin Huaixi, she did not even give her a single word. This was a little interesting.

Did this also mean that since the privilege proof had been handed over to her, she had full authority to deal with it?

Whether she gave it to King Yue Fei depended on her.

The Empress Dowager had given her the initiative.

Yu Youyao's heart suddenly surged. She kept feeling that the Empress Dowager's actions were really difficult to figure out. She felt uneasy.

Yu Youyao quickly put away the ebony box and placed it in the secret cabinet at the head of the bed. She called Yin Shi over. "Go to Longcheng immediately and tell His Highness that I have

something important to ask him. Ask him to come back immediately.” With that, she reminded him, “No one must know about this.”

There was still the last batch of refugees in Longcheng that had yet to be settled.

In addition, there was a group of refugees who had contracted the epidemic.

They needed to continue staying in the camp and undergo isolation treatment. Only after confirming that they were fine could they be resettled.

The situation in Longcheng was set, so it would not affect Yin Huaixi much if he returned to Xiangping in advance.

Yin Shi’s heart skipped a beat, and she quickly agreed.

After Yin Shi left, Yu Youyao sat in her room, unable to calm down for a long time.

There were two decrees for the betrothal, one for the man and one for the woman. Longcheng was the door to the three cities in the capital, so Yin

Huaixi must have already received the secret decree sent by the Empress Dowager.

That night, Yu Youyao had another dream.

In her dream, not long after her grandmother passed away, there was suddenly a rumor in the capital that her second sister, Yu Shuangbai, was born with a phoenix fate.

This news had originally spread from the Precious Peace Temple. When the news reached the palace, it immediately attracted the Empress’s attention. The Empress sent someone to the Yu Residence to investigate and confirmed that when Old Madam Yu was alive, she had indeed seen Grandmaster Hui Neng three times and received the “Golden Buddha Mouth” from him.

The abbot of the Precious Peace Temple had also confirmed that Grandmaster Hui Neng indeed treated the Yu Residence differently. Grandmaster Hui Neng had traveled the world and his whereabouts were uncertain. He had only returned to the capital a few times and had seen Old Madam Yu three times.

The Empress had sent the Imperial Astronomer to the Yu Residence and realized that the Feng Shui of the Yu Residence was very good. There was even a thousand-year-old parasol tree.

This shock was no small matter.

Phoenixes only perched on parasol trees, but they didn’t perch on all parasol trees. Only parasol trees that had grown for a thousand years like this were called “phoenix parasols.” However, parasol trees were easy to obtain, but phoenix parasols were difficult to find.

No one cared who this phoenix parasol belonged to or whose courtyard it grew in.

How could an ill-mannered “bereaved eldest daughter” be qualified to take on the phoenix’s fate because she had damaged her reputation by “secretly meeting” the prince and was engaged?

Meanwhile, Third Miss Yu Jianjia was born to the second wife. Her status was weaker, and her body was weak, so she naturally couldn’t bear the phoenix fate.

The only person in the Yu Residence who was most qualified to inherit the phoenix fate was the only legitimate daughter of the Grand Secretary Yu

Zongshen.

Yu Shuangbai!

The Imperial Astronomer also asserted that Yu Shuangbai's fate was rich and noble.

At this moment, Madam Yao suddenly thought of something. "A few years ago, when I accompanied the Matriarch to the Precious Peace Temple, the sisters in the family asked for a lot out of curiosity. I remember that the lot Shuangbai drew was 'A Blessing in Disguise r.'"

This was a sign of good fortune. The Imperial Astronomer became even more cautious. He found an old monk who had interpreted lots at the Precious Peace Temple in his early years to confirm this lot.

Dou Yujun taught his children the right way of conduct, and his five sons were very outstanding. It was a legend that had been widely circulated for generations. In the "Three Character Classic", there was a saying, "Dou Yujun taught the right way of conduct. His five children raised the family reputation."

This also confirmed the rumor that Yu Shuangbai was born with a phoenix fate.

The Empress immediately agreed with the Yu Residence and issued a decree to give Yu Shuangbai to the Fourth Prince as the princess consort..

Chapter 942 - 942: Not Allowing Benefits Created by Her Own Work to Accrue to Others

Since ancient times, there had been a saying that the girl with the phoenix fate would obtain the world. The Empress and the Fourth Prince had obtained the initiative in the competition for the position of heir. Soon, with the support of the royalists, the Fourth Prince would be adopted as their heir. The word "orthodox" would allow him to suppress the Second and Third Princes, becoming the most popular prince.

What about the adult Yao Yao?

In her initial nightmare, she had married into the Zhenguo Marquis Residence within a hundred days of her grandmother's death.

At that time, she only thought that the Zhenguo Marquis Residence was worried that her offspring would be delayed as she was mourning for her grandmother.

However, that was not the case.

After Yu Shuangbai accepted the "phoenix fate", the ugly matter of Yu Zongshen falling in love with his eldest sister-in-law and having an affair with her was exposed by Madam Yang and her daughter. In the past, Yu Zongshen's kindness to the adult Yao Yao and his attention to her had all become evidence of her "unbearable" background.

In order to cover up the scandal, the Yu Residence had taken on the responsibility of affecting Yu Zongshen's reputation and Yu Shuangbai's

“future.” They had hit it off with the Marquis of Zhenguo’s wife and married Yao Yao into the Zhenguo Marquis Residence early on.

Of course, the Zhenguo Marquis Residence did not want Song Mingzhao to marry the adult Yao Yao.

However, first of all, the marriage was set by the elders of the two families and could not be easily annulled.

Second, the Song and Yu families were connected. Yu Zongshen was already a little worried. If there was a “scandal” because of Yao Yao, it would be a huge blow to the royalists.

For the sake of the overall situation, the Zhenguo Marquis Residence could only pinch their noses and admit it.

Moreover, a married daughter was like water that had been splashed out.

The adult Yao Yao did not even have a chance to observe mourning for her grandmother for a year.

Yu Yao woke up from her nightmare. She lay upright on the bed and looked up blankly. She did not know if Yu Shuangbai was really born with a phoenix fate, or if all of this was just a scheme by the Empress to fight for the throne.

But no matter what, the Empress had used the Fourth Prince’s marriage to achieve her goal.

The Fourth Prince would become the winner of the battle for the throne and ascend the throne with the support of the Zhenguo Marquis Residence.

After Yu Shuangbai became the empress, the Yu Clan would be even more beautiful than the Weining Marquis Residence back then.

Not only had the Zhenguo Marquis Residence contributed greatly, but they had also stepped on the corpses of the entire Xie family and become the number one noble of the Great Zhou.

Although Yu Jianjia had taken her mother’s old path and become a second wife, she had also fulfilled her wish to become the Marquis’s wife. There was no greater glory than this.

In this strange scheme, Yu Youyao and the Xie family had paid a painful price.

The blood and tears of her and the Xie family had fulfilled their path to glory.

Even though she already knew very well that this was just a “heartfelt” dream,

Yu Youyao still felt a lingering chill in her heart.

Yu Youyao had an inexplicable feeling.

In the nightmare, the person who was really “born with a phoenix fate” was the adult Yao Yao herself.

Yu Shuangbai had replaced the adult Yao Yao and become the “girl with the phoenix fate.” This was definitely not a coincidence. Then, what role did Madam Yao play?

All of the adult Yao Yao’s tragedies had started with the Flower Festival at Duke Rongs Residence. Then, was Madam Yao involved in what happened at the Flower Festival?

She was not afraid to speculate about others with the greatest malice.

Looking at the situation that the older Yao Yao was in while she was at the Yu Residence in the nightmare, Yu Youyao definitely did not believe that Madam Yao was innocent.

Madam Yao was born into a noble family and did not lack character and upbringing. However, noble families were a little more noble than ordinary scholarly families. There was often a coldness and selfishness in their bones. In circumstances where their interests were not affected, they displayed their self-restraint and bearing. However, once their own interests were involved, the saying that a gentleman shouldn't stand under a dangerous wall would become a benchmark for their actions.

Yu Youyao took a deep breath. Since she had already left the capital, there was no need to think too much about the people in the capital.

However, in the nightmare, the so-called "girl with the phoenix fate" was the same as in reality. In a sense, she, "Eldest Princess Shaoyi", was comparable to the "girl with the phoenix fate".

In the nightmare, the adult Yao Yao was trapped in the inner residence and had not received any warning. Naturally, the Empress had no way of scheming against her and chose to start with Yu Shuangbai.

In reality, if the Empress's plan failed, would she change her plan and start with Yu Shuangbai to achieve her goal like in her nightmare?

At this moment, Yu Youyao's jade plate was kept in the Imperial Temple.

The Empress Dowager could no longer cover up the matter of Yu Youyao being conferred the title of "Eldest Princess Shaoyi." It caused a huge commotion in the royal court, but none of the court officials had any objections.

The matter of conferring an additional title was logical.

When the news reached the harem, the Empress listened to Auntie Dan Hong's report with no expression on her face.

Auntie Dan Hong said, "This morning, the Empress Dowager summoned the Fourth Prince to the Longevity Palace and said that she liked the Fourth Prince's calligraphy. She praised the Fourth Prince for being upright, causing his calligraphy to be naturally proper. He had already obtained some of the essence of Liu Gongquan's calligraphy style. The Fourth Prince immediately expressed that he had recently obtained a scripture and planned to copy it with the Empress Dowager."

The Empress Dowager was praising her openly but secretly warning her.

Everyone in the world knew that the Empress Dowager paid respects to Buddha. Coincidentally, her constitution was unwell, and she had even expressed her liking for the Fourth Prince's calligraphy. Anyone with a brain should know how to "respect" the Empress Dowager.

Getting the Fourth Prince to copy Buddhist scriptures was just a pretext.

In fact, she wanted the Fourth Prince to stay in the residence to copy scriptures and pray for good fortune. She didn't want him to get involved in the matters of the court. The Fourth Prince would be

busy “doing his best” for the Empress Dowager, so he couldn’t divert his attention to deal with the court affairs. When the court officials found out about this, they wouldn’t dare to disturb him rashly.

Anyone with brains would not disobey the Empress Dowager at this time.

After Auntie Dan Hong finished reporting, the room gradually fell silent.

The Empress was holding a pair of golden scissors and trimming a peony. April and May was the blooming season of peony flowers. The bowl-sized peony bloomed purple and red, proud of its branches. It was beautiful.

This was the result of the Empress’s meticulous arrangements.

After a while, the Empress put down the golden scissors and said, “The older, the wiser. After this, my future plans can’t go forward.”

From the looks of it, the Empress Dowager had already made arrangements for Eldest Princess Shaoyi.

She did not allow benefits created by her own work to accrue to others. Since ancient times, among the daughters of foreign ministers, most of the women who had been conferred titles had married into the imperial family, let alone those who had been conferred the title of “Eldest”.

However, there were very few disciples in the imperial family who had really gained power and were about the same age as Eldest Princess Shaoyi.

The Empress Dowager gave out this honor and dignity. Her marriage could not bring disgrace to this honor and dignity, and wrong Eldest Princess Shaoyi.

It was obvious who the Empress Dowager had taken a fancy to.

Auntie Dan Hong felt that it was a pity. “In that case, it’s a pity that those priceless treasures in the Empress’s private vault were given.”

It wasn’t that she was petty, but that the things that the Empress had rewarded Princess Shaoyi were all rare treasures that the Ning Residence had accumulated over the years.

Chapter 943 - 943: Grand Secretary’s Daughter

The Empress did not care and chuckled. “Money is just a worldly possession.

Eldest Princess Shaoyi is the only eldest princess in the Great Zhou Dynasty in three generations. Her status is second only to the Empress. What priceless treasure can’t she take?! Since she’s a meritorious family member, I’ll reward her heavily to show my virtue.”

Auntie Dan Hong quickly said, “The Empress is right.”

“It’s just that it’s a pity in the end.” The Empress sighed softly and continued, “Eldest Princess Shaoyi is as kind as water. Water benefits all things without competing. Water doesn’t compete, but no strong force can defeat it. In addition, she’ll do anything. Not only is she famous for her good reputation of being virtuous, but there are also two merit memorials in the clan. Not only is she the child of the first wife, but she’s also the eldest. There’s no such dignified person.

If she's matched with the Fourth Prince, it's time for a conclusion to the battle for the throne.'

Auntie Dan Hong did not dare to say anything else.

The Empress picked up her teacup and took a sip of tea. She said in a low voice, "The Empress Dowager doesn't want me to participate in the struggle for the position of heir. During this period of time, I've already been warned many times, openly and secretly. However, if I don't fight, who will help me settle the blood debt of hundreds of lives in the Ning Residence? Who will help me avenge the pain of losing my son?"

When she said this, the Empress's slightly sallow face was still calm, as if no gloom or resentment could be seen. She was just talking.

However, no one knew that the hatred had turned into a flame of revenge that burned fiercely in her heart.

Her entire heart had been refined repeatedly with the hundreds of people in the Ning Residence and the passion of her beloved son, forming a sword of revenge.

Auntie Dan Hong lowered her head, wishing she could cover her ears.

Fortunately, the Empress Dowager changed the topic after saying that. "Do you think that you can stop me just because you've blocked my path to plotting against Eldest Princess Shaoyi's marriage?" She laughed silently. Her laughter was crazed and cold. "You're wrong. You're simply wrong."

Her laughter echoed in the room like a ghost. Wisps of coldness crawled up her spine, making her hair stand on end. Auntie Dan Hong subconsciously held her breath, not daring to breathe too loudly.

"Yu Youyao has been conferred the title of Eldest Princess, and her status is

only second to the Empress's. It's indeed not good for me to continue using the heavy reward to scheme for her marriage, but..." At this point, a crazy scheme flashed across the Empress's eyes. "Eldest Princess Shaoyi is a daughter of the Yu Clan. She has been raised by the Yu Clan and has received the Yu Clan's kindness. Even though she has been conferred a title, she is bound by filial piety. Eldest Princess Shaoyi and the Yu Clan will still be bound together, for good or ill."

The room fell silent again.

It wasn't until Auntie Dan Hong almost thought that the Empress wouldn't mention this anymore.

The Empress suddenly smiled and said, "The more she values Eldest Princess Shaoyi, the more I can't bear to let go. Now, she wants to match Eldest Princess Shaoyi with King Yue Fei. She has taken a fancy to the Yu Clan. The Yu Clan is loyal and dedicated. She wanted to use the Yu Clan's daughters to restrain King Yue Fei's ambition."

Most men in the Yin family had the habit of being infatuated. To put it bluntly, heroes were short-tempered. Previously, there had been rumors outside that Yin Huaixi admired Eldest Princess Shaoyi. When she arrived in Liaodong, it was Yin Huaixi who personally brought people to

welcome her. It was said that Yin Huaixi had personally ordered someone to repair the “Yu Garden” where Eldest Princess Shaoyi lived.

Previously, she had only listened and did not care.

Now that she thought about it, these rumors were not groundless. Otherwise, the Empress Dowager would not have made such an arrangement.

“The Yu Clan has been in dire straits for many years. Although the Yu Clan can’t compare to many old nobles in the court, the people who were vying for the position of heir, being entrusted with orphans, and receiving the will in previous generations have never been families with status, but loyal families with deep foundations like the Yu Clan. According to what I know, the old ministers of the Yu Clan participated in the last edicts of the previous emperors of the Great Zhou Dynasty.”

The Yu Clan had a merit monument bestowed by their great ancestor. This was the best kind of political cover. The Yu Clan was extremely famous among scholars. To this day, the Yu Clan’s school was a place of “pilgrimage” for thousands of scholars.

This was also the reason why she had long planned to target the Yu Clan.

“The Empress Dowager can tell that the Yu Clan has a huge impact on the struggle for the position of heir. Considering that the Yu Clan has conflicts with Concubine Lan and Imperial Concubine Xu, in order to prevent the Yu Clan from getting involved in the battle for the position of heir, she has thought of a way out for the Yu Clan in advance. With King Yue Fei’s support, no matter who takes over the territory of the Great Zhou Dynasty in the future, no one will dare to touch the Yu Clan.’

Now that the Yu Clan had nothing to worry about, who would still get involved in those headless matters? It wasn’t like they were full or bored. Were they so free that they were courting death?!

It could be said that two birds were killed with one stone.

Even she couldn’t help but admire the Empress Dowager’s far-reaching plan.

“But.” The Empress Dowager’s smile deepened. “The Empress Dowager’s scheme is right, but at the same time, it has also strengthened the Yu Clan. How can I let go of such a powerful aid so easily?”

Dan Hong’s heart trembled. She knew that whoever the Empress wanted to scheme against, she would eventually achieve her goal.

This time, there were some mistakes in plotting against Eldest Princess Shaoyi.

However, in fact, the Empress’s plan was still successful. It was just that the Empress could not disobey the Empress Dowager on the surface and disrespect her. She was also unwilling to snatch Eldest Princess Shaoyi from King Yue Fei, so her plan was stopped.

The Empress suddenly asked, “I remember that the Minister of Revenue and Grand Secretary of the Imperial Pavilion, Lord Yu, is the Grand Secretary of the Cabinet. He has a legitimate daughter. What’s her name? Do you know her age and if she’s engaged?”

Auntie Dan Hong quickly replied, “This woman’s name is Shuangbai. She’s the second child in the residence. She’s 13 years old this year and will turn 14 in the second half of the year. As Old Madam Yu passed away suddenly, Second Miss Yu has to observe mourning for her grandmother for a year and has yet to be engaged.”

The Empress looked thoughtful. “They’re about the same age.”

Auntie Dan Hong felt as if her neck was being strangled by a pair of invisible hands. For a moment, she couldn’t breathe. She also understood what the Empress had meant by “for good or ill”.

If she couldn’t scheme against Eldest Princess Shaoyi, it would be the same if she targeted Second Miss Yu.

As long as the Yu Clan was pulled onto the Empress’s ship, the Yu Clan would still be used by the Empress. As a daughter of the Yu Clan, Eldest Princess Shaoyi naturally had to contribute to the clan.

In addition, as the daughter of the Grand Secretary and the first wife, Second Miss Yu had good parents. It was even more straightforward for her to be the Fourth Prince’s princess consort than Eldest Princess Shaoyi.

Indeed!

The Empress smiled. “What a coincidence. I’ve also heard a little about Lord Yu’s first wife, Madam Yao. Madam Yao’s family is noble and has a noble personality. On the surface, she looks gentle and magnanimous, but she’s actually arrogant and competitive.”

Dan Hong did not dare to say anything else.

However, she understood in her heart.

The Empress had said that it was a “coincidence”, but it was actually not a coincidence. She had long understood the influence of the Yu Clan in the struggle for the heir. She had targeted the Yu Clan and thought about everyone in the Yu Clan..

Chapter 944 - 944: Jealous

The Empress continued to smile. “Madam Yao asked around about the palace earlier and invited a nanny into the residence. I heard that the daughter has grown up and is used to being pampered. Taking advantage of the period of mourning for her grandmother, she can learn more rules, etiquette, and comfort her grandmother’s mind.”

The reason was extremely dignified. If anyone else heard this, they would praise Madam Yao for being virtuous and polite.

However, those who understood Madam Yao could experience some extraordinary things.

How could there be palace servants with bad upbringing in the palace?

Why didn't she invite a nanny any earlier or later? Why did she have to wait until the Yi Kun Palace opened its doors to do everything she could to ask around in the palace before inviting a nanny from the palace?

To put it bluntly, she was just worried that the nanny she had hired would not be as dignified as "Auntie Xu" in the past and would be suppressed by Yu Youyao.

After all, as the Empress, she was on par with the Empress Dowager.

Auntie Dan Hong's eyes flashed in understanding.

"Back then, Second Master Yu helped the Imperial Court lift the sea ban. Not long after he returned to the capital, Old Madam Yu was busy helping Second

Master Yu find someone. At first, Old Madam Yu didn't just fancy Madam Yao. Later, she chose the Yao family. It was Madam Yao, who was still in her residence back then, who used the banquet held by the Yu Residence, where the young misses of the various families were invited into the residence. She asked about Second Master Yu's whereabouts in advance and got someone to expose her "private" meeting with Second Master Yu. The Yu Residence was a polite family, so this marriage was naturally arranged."

Large families looked at others before getting married. It was definitely impossible for them to only look at one family.

At that time, Second Master Yu was on the rankings and had even contributed to the Imperial Court. He was also extremely handsome and elegant. He was the ideal man that many daughters in the capital dreamed of!

Even many old nobles wanted to rush to get married to him.

In a wealthy family, every family had to hold a small banquet to invite daughters with suitable family backgrounds into the residence. This way, they could observe their character and talent. There was nowhere to hide the upbringing of the young misses.

The reason why Madam Yao could take the initiative was all because Second Master Yu and Father Yao had a good relationship. Father Yao had a lot of books in his collection. Back then, in order to ban the sea, Second Master Yu often went to the residence to borrow books. Back then, as soon as Madam

Yao went to the Yu Residence, she received many polite treatments from the Yu Residence. This also gave Madam Yao an opportunity.

Such a scheme was not a big deal.

The Yao family was not prominent, but the Imperial College's Chancellor was very noble. Compared to family background, what was more worthy of attention was Father Yao's connections in the court. This was what Second Master Yu, who had just entered the royal court, needed.

Large families emphasized their daughters marrying into families with a higher status. In that case, this marriage was suitable.

However, she felt that the reason why Madam Yao could achieve her goal was not necessarily because Old Madam Yu had secretly helped to encourage her.

However, from this, Madam Yao's personality could be seen.

The Empress chuckled. "She even has such a big idea about marriage. She must be very scheming. I also heard that Madam Yao and Eldest Sister-in-Law are quite at odds. Back then, Madam Yao contributed to the reason why Eldest Master Yu could successfully remarry Madam Yang. After Madam Yang entered the family, she was suppressed by Madam Yao in every way. There was no Eldest Sister-in-Law to suppress her, and no sisters-in-law to cause trouble. Even the elders did not need her to serve them every day. Madam Yao has always been successful in the Yu Residence,"

Madam Yang's father was Yu Zongzheng's superior. Madam Yang had come to the Xie Residence with the first wife to pay her respects. They were both women, so Madam Yao had to get to know them a little. The two of them had become friends after coming and going.

Madam Yao often praised Yang Shuwan for being polite with other women. Later on, when Eldest Master Yu remarried after a hundred days, others only thought that it was Old Madam Yu who had taken a fancy to Madam Yang.

That was why Madam Yao praised Madam Yang in front of all the daughters-in-law to make Madam Yang look good and pave the way for this marriage.

Only then did it make sense to suppress some bad rumors in the capital.

After all, what about Old Madam Yu's reputation as a "virtuous woman"?

Furthermore, Old Madam Yu had been sick for a long time, and her granddaughter had just been born. The Yu Residence's Second Mansion was also divided into two branches. It wasn't appropriate for Madam Yao, the second daughter-in-law, to interfere in her brother's matters. For all kinds of reasons, her originally rude actions were forced.

Come to think of it, Madam Yao had been suppressed by her eldest sister-in-law when she first married into the Yu Residence.

No one would believe that she did not have her own thoughts.

For a moment, Dan Hong did not understand what the Empress was trying to say, but she could more or less tell that not only was Second Madam Yu scheming, but she was probably not tolerant.

Then, the Empress said, "Sigh! They're all sisters from the same family. Why is there such a big difference? Her daughter is clearly the daughter of the Grand Secretary and the eldest daughter of the first wife. She has the noblest status in the entire clan. Why did she have to let a bereaved eldest daughter of a businesswoman obtain such dignity and suppress her daughter in every way?"

Dan Hong was shocked. Madam Yao was indeed competitive. She might really think that way.

The Empress smiled. "Do you know what to do now?"

Auntie Dan Hong quickly lowered her head. "They're all sisters of the same family. How can outsiders not compare them? With this comparison, there's naturally a difference in status. No mother in this world can tolerate her daughter being discussed by outsiders or even underestimated. I'll immediately send the news out of the palace and order someone to spread the news. Don't worry. I guarantee that the news will reach Second Madam Xie tomorrow."

Actually, the more famous Eldest Princess Shaoyi was, the better the reputation of the other daughters of the Yu Clan would be.

However, as the daughter of the Grand Secretary, Yu Shuangbai did not need the Eldest Princess to boost her reputation at all.

As time passed and Eldest Princess Shaoyi's reputation increased, it was inevitable that she would surpass Second Miss Yu.

The Empress nodded in satisfaction. "In that case, the script I arranged for Eldest Princess Shaoyi will have to be changed to Second Miss Yu."

It was simply too easy to control a "mother."

The Empress frowned and said, "However, we still have to change the content of this script. As for how to change it..." She thought for a moment. "I remember that Old Madam Yu has seen Grandmaster Hui Neng three times.

She can make an issue out of it.'

Grandmaster Hui Neng was famous for his profound Buddhist teachings and proficiency in physiognomy. It was also because he was an eminent monk who had achieved the Dao that his words and actions were profound. He had already closed his mouth a few years ago and had not spoken for many years. If used well, this would become the greatest weapon for competition for the throne.

As long as Madam Yao was willing to cooperate, the Empress was not afraid that the Yu Clan would not fall for it.

The Yu Residence also received the news.

Surprisingly, the east and west branches did not express anything. Although they were still in the mourning period for the Matriarch, and it was not appropriate for the family to hold a banquet, it was a big matter for the daughter of the family to obtain such honor. Not to mention celebrating, it was time to sweep the courtyard and open the door.

The lintel on the door shone brightly.

It also expressed the emperor's grace.

When others passed by, although they were surprised, they only thought that the Yu Clan was used to keeping a low profile. Furthermore, they were in the mourning period for Old Madam Yu, so they couldn't help but praise, "Good family style!"

Madam Yao's face darkened as she entered the house..

Chapter 945 - 945: Jealousy

Nanny Qian followed behind and consciously dismissed the servants. She carefully closed the door and windows and quickly poured another cup of warm tea, handing it to Madam Yao to calm her down.

Madam Yao was furious. She took the teacup and brought it to her mouth, but she couldn't even drink the tea. With a clang, she placed it back heavily.

“You’ve really grown a temper. You’re even making a fuss with me. I was pregnant for ten months and worked so hard to give birth to her. How can I not hope for the best for her and harm her instead?”

Nanny Qian opened her mouth, wanting to persuade her, but before she could say anything—

Madam Yao suddenly raised her voice and said angrily, “You’re already so old, but you’re still so insensible. All you know is to laugh and play all day. How can you be as demure as a woman? It wasn’t easy for me to hire a powerful nanny from the Yi Kun Palace into the residence and let her learn the rules well. It’s for her own good, but she’s still making a fuss with me?!”

Nanny Qian quickly said, “The rules in the palace are strict, and the nanny is a little strict. Second Miss has never suffered like this before and feels aggrieved. You...”

A nanny’s upbringing was very strict. How could ordinary people tolerate it?

Second Miss was not like the Eldest Miss, who could endure grievances and bitterness. She had been pampered since she was young. After a few days, she couldn’t take it anymore and caused a commotion, making Madam furious.

The mother and daughter had a big fight.

How could Madam Yao listen to Nanny Qian’s advice? The more she thought about it, the angrier she became. She interrupted Nanny Qian and said, “She even said righteously that her Eldest Sister has been conferred the title of Eldest Princess. All the daughters of the Yu Clan are proud. Who dares to underestimate the upbringing of our residence?”

“She even said that she had been taught rules and etiquette by Yu Youyao in the past. In the past two years, when she walked around the capital, she didn’t do anything rude! She didn’t need to learn the rules from a nanny anymore.”

Nanny Qian lowered her head. Second Miss was naive and innocent, unlike ordinary young misses who were gentle and quiet. However, there was indeed nothing wrong with her etiquette and rules.

When Eldest Miss was in the residence, she took very good care of the young misses in the residence. She did indeed provide a lot of guidance on ordinary etiquette and rules. Not only did she teach Second Miss, but also Fifth Miss and Sixth Miss, two young misses born of concubines. They were all one in a hundred in terms of etiquette. When others saw them, they would praise them.

She looked at Fifth Miss and Sixth Miss. Their futures would not be bad.

However, Nanny Qian did not dare to say this.

Wasn’t this adding fuel to the fire?!

“Do you hear what she said?” Madam Yao’s eyes turned red with anger. She felt that her daughter did not take her, her mother, seriously. “When did Yu Youyao, a half-grown girl, become better at raising people than me, her mother?”

“Since when was I inferior to a bereaved eldest daughter like Yu Youyao in her heart?”

“She didn’t even think about it. As the daughter of the Grand Secretary, how could she count on Yu Youyao and benefit from her?”

“We’re all sisters of the same family. Her limelight has been stolen, but she’s still clapping for and praising Yu Youyao. Why did I raise such a silly roe deer?!”

Nanny Qian sighed inwardly. She understood Second Madam’s feelings.

Eldest Miss was originally the eldest daughter of a bereaved wife. Even though Auntie Xu had raised her to have a good demeanor and reputation. However, her status was still inferior to Second Miss’s.

Although Madam felt uncomfortable, there was no need to cause trouble and make the Matriarch unhappy.

However, after the Matriarch passed away, Eldest Miss had been conferred the title of Princess. Now, she had also been conferred the title of Eldest Princess. Not only had her status surpassed Second Miss, but she had also surpassed Second Madam herself.

In the past, Yu Youyao had been humble and fawning in front of Second Madam, but now, Yu Youyao had become the Eldest Princess, who they had to bow when they met in the future. It was inevitable that Second Madam would feel a little unbalanced.

In addition, Second Madam had also found out that Second Master was infatuated with Eldest Sister-in-Law. She suspected that Old Madam had deliberately schemed for her marriage and hated Matriarch and First Madam Xie to the core.

Even the Elder Miss was implicated.

Seeing that Yu Youyao had gained power, she couldn’t help but feel resentful. She could only torture Second Miss, wanting her to surpass Eldest Miss in terms of rules and etiquette.

The more Madam Yao thought about it, the angrier she became. “Listen, what did everyone say? They said that Yu Youyao has been following Old Madam since she was young. Not only does she have a Bodhisattva’s heart, but she’s also a rare virtuous woman. Not only are her younger siblings inferior to her, but even the other noble ladies in the capital are inferior to her. When did a bereaved eldest daughter actually surpass her parents’ meticulous upbringing in terms of reputation?!”

She was just short of saying that Shuangbai was inferior to Yu Youyao.

However, as the daughter of the Grand Secretary, how was Yu Shuangbai inferior to Yu Youyao? Why should outsiders support and step on her?

It was really infuriating.

Nanny Qian quickly advised, “Second Master also has political enemies in the court. With Second Master mourning at home, outsiders have to pay more attention to him. It’s inevitable that they’ll gossip a little. No one dares to really gossip. Second Miss has gained a lot of reputation when she was outside in the past. Don’t worry. These words won’t affect Second Miss’s reputation.”

However, Madam Yao did not think so. She felt that outsiders were deliberately stepping on Shuangbai and praising Yu Youyao. She was furious. “The nanny in the Empress’s palace is not inferior to Auntie Xu in the past. I originally hoped that she would learn some rules and spread a

good reputation outside. After mourning for the Matriarch for a year, I'll prepare to find someone for her.'

At this point, she was even angrier.

"Meanwhile, she's been learning for only a few days, but she's already complaining that she's tired. She said that her Eldest Sister won't force her to learn the rules, and that her Eldest Sister has never scolded her. Even if she did something wrong, she'll use her own method to let her understand what she did wrong, what the consequences will be, how to correct it, and what benefits there are after correcting it..."

As a mother, she had become a bad person while disciplining her daughter.

If she had known earlier, she wouldn't have been so scrupulous and worried about the Old Madam back then. She had given all the benefits to Yu Youyao and had always allowed Shuangbai to interact with the main family.

Madam Yao was furious. She recalled that she had been married into the Yu Residence for more than ten years. Her husband was distant, and her daughter did not dote on her. She suddenly felt a surge of resentment, and her eyes turned red. "Why is my life so bitter?!"

However, Nanny Qian felt that Second Madam had gone too far.

In the entire capital, which Madam didn't have a mother-in-law who set the rules after getting married? There were also a group of concubines in the courtyard who were scheming to seize power...

Just as she was about to persuade her, there was a knock on the door.

Madam Yao was angry, but she still suppressed her anger. "What is it?"

Cai Wei's careful voice came from outside the door. "Madam, Eldest Madam

Jiang of the first branch has sent someone over to ask. She said the Imperial Court has conferred the Eldest Miss of the residence with the title of Eldest Princess Shaoyi. This is a huge matter that will bring glory to our ancestors.

The family has to put on an act..."

Chapter 946 - 946: Outspoken

Immediately, Madam Yao's expression turned even uglier as she listened to

Cai Wei continue.

"Eldest Madam Jiang said that Eldest Miss isn't in the capital, but the residence has received the emperor's grace, so we can't be negligent. She plans to hold a family banquet in the main house tonight. Considering that we're still in mourning for the Matriarch, she won't buy any wine or meat, so we'll just make vegetable dishes. She asked Second Madam to bring a few sisters from the Second Mansion over tonight."

When Madam Yao heard this, she was immediately exasperated. “What’s there to hold? We’re still in mourning for the Matriarch. How can the family hold a banquet? Even if it’s a vegetarian banquet, it’s still a banquet. If word gets out, people will definitely talk about it.”

“Even if Yu Youyao was conferred the title of the Eldest Princess, she’s just a junior. How can she surpass the Matriarch?”

“She’s originally the daughter of an external minister. Even if she’s conferred the title, she’s not of the proper bloodline of the royal family. She should keep a low profile.”

Nanny Qian frowned. She was really shooting her mouth off.

Even though they were in mourning for the Matriarch, this couldn’t stop a big matter that would bring glory to their ancestors. Even if it wasn’t easy to hold a banquet, they had to hold one. What else could outsiders say about this?

Eldest Miss was a junior. It was not wrong that she couldn’t surpass the Matriarch.

However, in terms of status, Eldest Miss had been recorded on the imperial family’s jade plate, and her status had also surpassed that of Old Madam. The family was showing off their status to express the emperor’s grace. What did this have to do with whether Old Madam was an elder or not? Could it be that Old Madam did not hope for the family to be well in the netherworld? There was no conflict at all.

It was true that Eldest Miss was the daughter of an external minister, but there were many noble ladies in the imperial family. Why weren’t they given the title of “Eldest”, while Eldest Miss received this honor?

Furthermore, she was the only princess in the three generations of the Great Zhou Dynasty who had been conferred the title of “Eldest”. No matter if she was from the palace or the imperial family, who else could compare to her other than the Empress Dowager and the Empress?

She did not have the proper bloodline of the royal family, but her title was not faked at all. Fortunately, Eldest Miss was not in the capital. If she were in the capital, no matter where she went, the imperial concubines would have to bow

to Eldest Princess Shaoyi according to their rank. Those below the third – grade would have to kneel.

If news of Madam’s words just now were to spread outside, the palace would probably punish her for disrespecting the “Eldest Princess” and looking down on the royal family.

Nanny Qian quickly tried to smooth things over and said to Cai Wei, “Just tell her that Madam isn’t feeling well. When night comes, get the brothers and sisters at home to go over together.”

When Madam Jiang received the news from the Second Mansion, she sneered. “Someone is jealous. Not only is she not feeling well, but she’s probably even more uncomfortable. Let her be. In any case, since the Matriarch has passed on and the Second Master is mourning in the clan, no one cares about her.”

They were all legitimate daughters with proper upbringing. Although their family backgrounds were inferior, who didn't know who was who?

If she were in Madam Yao's position, would she still feel comfortable facing her powerful and honorable niece who had suppressed her daughter until she couldn't even raise her head?

If Madam Yao could still be calm, she would admire her.

It wasn't that she wasn't jealous.

However, as the second wife and with her family background, she did not even have the right to be jealous.

Madam Jiang changed the topic. "What did the Master say?"

The maidservant quickly replied, "The servant who went to the government office to deliver the letter said that the Master has official matters to attend to and will be back late tonight. The family matters are all up to you."

However, Madam Jiang understood. To put it nicely, he would come back later.

To put it bluntly, he would not participate in the family banquet.

This was how the aunt and the biological father behaved. The entire Yu Residence was really interesting.

If it were anyone else, the first thing the young misses in the family would do after obtaining such great honor would be to open the ancestral hall and report it to their ancestors before opening it widely.

How many secrets were hidden in the Yu Residence? It was not something that a concubine like her, who did not have any children to rely on, could investigate.

Madam Jiang felt that it was meaningless. "Tell the main kitchen to make a few more good dishes. Tonight, the residence will have an additional meal and everyone will be rewarded with 500 copper coins. There won't be a banquet."

The Fourth Miss in the main house was really incompetent. Not long after Eldest Miss went to Quanzhou, Yu Qingning begged her father and was released from the courtyard to continue her studies at home. She had become much more obedient and knew how to pretend to be obedient in front of her father. She had learned Third Miss Yu's trick of attempting something overambitious and ending in failure.

However, Yu Zongzheng fell for it.

It was as if he had transferred all his guilt and love for Yu Jianjia to her.

Back then, she had relied on her father's love and didn't even take her, her stepmother, seriously. After being secretly taught a few times, she had become a little more obedient.

Yu Qingning did not have a good relationship with her sisters.

Madam Yao was not coming. The brothers and sisters of the first wife of the Second Mansion were not restrained by their elders, and there was no one from the first wife in the main family to step in.

It was better not to hold a banquet, in case Yu Qingning caused a commotion. She would be in trouble.

In the Zhenguo Marquis Residence, Old Madam Song also heard about the news that the Empress Dowager had conferred the title of Eldest Princess Yu Youyao. Her spirits immediately withered and she sat on the couch, as if someone had drained her strength.

Wei Zi was shocked and quickly poured a cup of hot tea.

After Old Madam Yu passed away, Old Madam was also a little uncomfortable. The heir had been sent to Quanzhou to Dehua to make contributions. In the end, Quanzhou was plagued with Japanese pirates and the city was sealed. The news outside couldn't be sent in, nor could the news inside be sent out. Old Madam ate and slept restlessly all day.

It was really worrying.

Old Madam Song waved her hand. She couldn't even drink her tea anymore. She clutched her chest and groaned. "Aiyo, I really feel terrible!"

Wei Zi quickly helped Matriarch Yu hold on to her chest.

Old Madam Song felt weak all over, so she simply collapsed on the couch. "I could tell from the past that Yao Yao was blessed. She's been on my mind since she was young, and in the blink of an eye, she's grown up."

The Song and Yu families were family friends, so she knew a little about Yao Yao's situation at home.

However, even so, this child was neither pampered by her grandmother nor suppressed by her father and stepmother to the point that she had a mean temperament. She was still magnanimous.

She looked like a child, but she was a rare bright person.

Aristocratic families valued etiquette, rules, and talent. However, when seniors looked at people, what they valued the least were things on the surface that could be seen at one glance.

These could only showcase one's upbringing and upbringing, but often did not represent a person's true character. The old man saw through the words and actions of the young misses, and saw the nature and character behind them.

Rules, etiquette, and talent were not unimportant, but they were all considered at the end. A wealthy family's rules were not bad. Even if they were a little bad, it did not matter. It was not too late to find an old nanny to teach them.

At this point, Old Madam Song felt even worse. "I originally thought that this was my responsibility, so in the first few years, I often used the excuse of reciprocating with the Yu Residence. The two families have become close.

Mingzhao usually stays in the residence, so he often hears about Yao Yao. It's inevitable that he'll pay attention to her."

Chapter 947 - 947: Twists and Turns

Wei Zi knew.

Matriarch Yu had to order someone to give more than half of the incense, medicinal tea, and other items that the Yu Residence had given in return to the heir.

The things that the Heir usually ate were gradually changed to incense and medicinal tea made by Eldest Miss Yu. After using them often, he experienced the benefits. Gradually, he was used to them.

The Matriarch had used this method to silently fill the Heir's daily life with

Eldest Miss Yu's bits and pieces, making her a figure that could not be ignored. Old Madam Song, who had been holding back her words for many years, revealed them as if she had spilled beans. "Yao Yao is such a good child. She's just like her mother. She's a bright person. She's good-looking, and her personality isn't as rigid and boring as ordinary young misses. At a glance, she's lively and pure. She's neither biased nor arrogant, and she makes people happy. If Mingzhao really takes a fancy to her, how can he not like her?"

Wei Zixin thought to herself, "The Matriarch really knows the heir well. She doesn't take him seriously. For the sake of Princess Shaoyi, he's even willing to risk it."

"We're already waiting to see what happens. How can it change again and again?!" The more Old Madam Song thought about it, the more upset she felt. She slapped her thigh in anger. "Old Madam Yu stomped her feet and left just like that. There was no explanation for Yao Yao's marriage. I knew that there were still twists and turns in this marriage. As expected, the Imperial Court conferred another title to Princess Yao Yao again."

Wei Zi couldn't help but sigh in her heart. She felt that it was a pity. Things were indeed unpredictable.

The Old Madam rambled on until her mouth was dry. She picked up the tea on the table and finished it in one gulp. "At that time, I was thinking that after Little Yao'er observed mourning for the Old Madam for a year, at most, I would give up my dignity and exchange letters with Old Yu while he's still alive. I would personally make a trip to the Yu Residence and look for Eldest Master Yu. I would personally propose this marriage for Mingzhao to fulfill his wishes."

She and Old Yu had originally planned this marriage. Although they did not mention it explicitly in their letters, they had still expressed their intentions. Naturally, Eldest Master Yu could not go against his mother's wishes.

This marriage could also work.

"At that time, if the palace asks, I'll stiffen my scalp and say that when Old

Madam Yu was still around, the two families had already exchanged tokens. The big matter of marriage emphasizes the orders of parents and matchmakers. Even if the palace has other plans for Princess Shaoyi's marriage, we can't ignore family ties and surpass Old Madam Yu, her grandmother!"

Yao Yao was still in mourning, so it wasn't appropriate for her to talk about marriage.

Others couldn't mention this, especially the Zhenguo Marquis Residence, who was a family friend. In addition, Yao Yao was still young and wasn't in a hurry to get engaged. At the very least, she had to wait for the one-year mourning period to pass.

Unexpectedly, this delay caused another variable.

Yao Yao had also been conferred the title of the eldest princess. With the title of the Eldest Princess, she could be considered to have been fixed on the ancestral plate of the imperial family. It was so important. How could the Imperial Family let her marry into another family?!

The husband of the "Eldest Princess" was not called her husband. That was called the "Junma" and it was arranged by the royal family.

As Old Madam Song spoke, she couldn't help but wipe her tears. "Ever since we were young, our Mingzhao has only asked for me this time. However, his grandmother is useless. I wonder how upset he'll feel when he hears this news!"

For Yao Yao, Mingzhao had even abandoned his bright future in the capital and gone to Quanzhou to suffer.

At this moment, Quanzhou had been sealed off for a few months because of the Japanese pirates. The family had only received a letter from Mingzhao.

The lacquer seal on the family letter was made by the family.

As soon as the family received the letter, they knew that this letter had been opened before being sent to the capital.

It was not wrong for the government to have the right to read the letters exchanged at the courier station.

However, if Quanzhou was under martial law only because of the Japanese pirates, it was unlikely that even letters from county magistrates would be controlled.

Even if the letters were controlled, it wasn't to the extent that after the letter was opened, it was sealed back to its original state, as if they were afraid that others would know that this letter had been secretly opened.

The family letter only reported that he was safe and mentioned a little about his recent situation in Dehua. However, the abnormality revealed by the "lacquer seal" only meant that Song Mingzhao's words and actions in

Quanzhou were monitored by someone.

The Zhenguo Marquis Residence was shocked.

From the information obtained by various parties, they guessed that there were variables in Quanzhou. The Jiazhou Residence was not honest, and it was probably related to Concubine Lan in the palace and the person in the south.

The family only knew that Mingzhao was still safe for the time being, so they did not dare to probe further.

The more Old Madam Song cried, the sadder she became. "What should we do..."

A few days ago, after the reward from the palace was sent to Liaodong, there were rumors that the Empress had given Eldest Princess Shaoyi something from her private vault. At that time, she felt that something was amiss. Now that the matter of the seal had been exposed, what else did she not understand?!

However, the Empress had taken a fancy to Yao Yao's current reputation as a virtuous person. She had also taken a fancy to Yao Yao's status as the eldest child of the first wife, which matched the Fourth Prince. In addition, she had taken a fancy to the Yu Clan, which had a huge impact on the struggle for the throne behind Yao Yao. She had also taken a fancy to Yao Yao's maternal family, the Xie Residence, which was as rich as a country.

The Empress Dowager understood this. With the addition of the seal, she stabilized the North, promoted national policy, and warned the Empress and the Fourth Prince, as well as the radicals who were involved in the struggle for the throne.

It seemed that she had already made arrangements for Eldest Princess Shaoyi's marriage. Even if the Zhenguo Marquis Residence had ten heads, they could not push their way through!

“MV poor Minezhao...! Old Madam Song couldn't help but wail.

Yu Youyao did not care much about the people in the capital. The next morning, she brought Auntie Xu to the Xie Residence next door and explained some etiquette and details of what to wear.

Just as it was loam, Eunuch Li brought the emperor's carriage to the Xie Residence with great fanfare.

The Xie Residence was a merchant's residence, so they couldn't invite Eunuch Li into the residence to welcome him.

Old Master Xie brought the old and young people of the residence and knelt outside the residence to welcome them.

Eunuch Li went up the steps and stood at the entrance of the Xie Residence.

Looking down from above, he read out the Empress Dowager's commendation document for the Xie Residence and gave them many tributes from the palace.

After the commendation document was read, Eunuch Li and Old Master Xie exchanged a few pleasantries.

Old Master Xie quickly handed over the gift that he had prepared and ordered someone to send it to Eunuch Li's carriage.

After receiving the thank-you gift, Eunuch Li's smile became a little more sincere. “The Empress Dowager has awarded the Bai Residence with something else. We still have official matters to attend to, so we'll leave first.”

Old Master Xie quickly said, “Eunuch, you've worked hard.”

Then, he called out Xie Xun's name and asked him to accompany Eunuch Li.

Eunuch Li's smile deepened as he agreed happily.

The Bai Residence was also a merchant family, but their family was not as well-mannered as the family of the Eldest Princess. They were afraid that if the Bai Residence offended Eunuch Li, Eunuch Li would not be happy.

Old Master Xie chose Xie Xun to facilitate the interaction. It couldn't be better.

This matter was done well. Eunuch Li was proud and naturally happy to see this happen..

Chapter 948 - 948: Heart of a Bodhisattva

The group went to the Bai Residence majestically.

At this moment, the Bai Residence had already received the news. The family was surprised and delighted. They messed around in a panic, but the more anxious they became, the more chaotic they became. They were like a cat on a hot tin roof, spinning around in panic.

They were either worried that something would go wrong with their etiquette, and a great thing would become a bad thing, or they were worried that their clothes would be inappropriate and they would offend a noble.

Xie Xun had arrived before Eunuch Li and helped the Bai Residence with their etiquette. It was like receiving a pillow when they were sleepy, making Old Master Bai and his wife extremely grateful. It was as if they had taken a calming pill.

The Empress Dowager had only rewarded the Bai Residence with some things, which was more than half of what the Xie Residence had. After reading the reward, Eunuch Li passed on a few more words of praise and encouragement to the Bai Residence.

Even so, this was a great honor for the Bai Residence.

Compared to such a great honor, the losses the Bai Residence had suffered previously were nothing.

Old Master Bai and his wife were very glad that they had made the right choice back then. They had lost most of their assets and gotten close to Princess Shaoyi.

Eunuch Li received another generous gift from the Bai Residence and was very satisfied.

The situation in Liaodong was more stable than the Imperial Court had thought. The sweet potatoes were planted on a large scale in Liaodong, and the drought in the second half of the year would definitely be alleviated.

The first season of silkworm cocoons came out. Princess Shaoyi joined forces with the retail investors, foreign merchants, and some nobles who raised silkworms to distribute the silkworm cocoons from the silkworm farms to the refugees who had settled near the manor as their food. The refugees grounded the silkworm cocoons into powder and mixed them with wild vegetables to relieve the food pressure in Liaodong.

The nobles in the Liaodong area admired Princess Shaoyi's benevolence and kindness. They were also very sensible and sided with the Imperial Court. Now that the North was stable, it also resolved a huge problem for the nobles.

This trip to Liaodong was considered complete.

When he returned to the palace, he could also report to the nobles in the palace and be rewarded.

Eunuch Li felt that he had already obtained all the information he needed, so he did not continue to delay. He set off for the capital the next day and was in a hurry to return to the palace to report.

It was May.

The Dragon Boat Festival was about to arrive, and the strong festive atmosphere could not stop the commoners from feeling excited because of

Eldest Princess Shaoyi.

The Empress Dowager was right.

Enfeoffing Yu Youyao had indeed suppressed the arrogance of the other nobles in the North and stabilized the negative impact on the North caused by the Han family's case in Xi'an.

Due to the secret marriage decree and the privilege proof that the Empress Dowager had secretly sent over, Yu Youyao had been a little uneasy for the past two days, but she still forced herself to perk up. She looked for Madam Huang and General Ning Yuan's wife and suggested holding the Dragon Boat

Festival in the various county districts of Liaodong.

Yu Youyao did not have this idea from the beginning.

She suddenly felt the strong festive atmosphere in Xiangping City. She felt that no matter where she was, the Dragon Boat Festival would always be the same.

It was filled with the desire of the world for a good life.

Madam Huang asked curiously, "It's less than five days before the Dragon Boat Festival. It's too late to manage it now. Why are you suddenly thinking of doing everything?"

This did not match her thorough personality.

Yu Youyao shook her head. "There's no need to manage it especially. We just have to borrow a team from the government office to maintain order by the river for safety. The government and the local rich families have owned dragon boats for years. At that time, let them organize it themselves. The commoners will go over and watch the commotion."

The rich families were very happy to cause such a commotion.

Moreover, there were servants guarding the house, so they were not worried that something would happen when they went to the river.

"Let the people of Liaodong and the refugees who had just been resettled a long time ago have fun and feel the atmosphere of the Dragon Boat Festival. Let's pray that the weather will be good this year and that a calamity won't descend again. Let the hearts of the refugees be at ease. Let them sweep away the pain and bad luck brought to them by the drought, and start a new life that is better.'

Now that the refugees' lives had been settled, what about their psychological state?

The commoners of Liaodong were not xenophobic and welcomed everyone warmly.

However, if the refugees wanted to adapt to local life, they still needed to get

swim, and they were all strong men. If they arranged for more people to maintain order and safety on the shore, it would be less dangerous.

The dragon boat race was a water activity. All the participants knew how to swim, and they were all strong men. If they arranged for more people to maintain order and safety on the shore, it would be less dangerous.

If it were the Mid-Autumn Festival, she wouldn't dare to do this.

General Ning Yuan's wife also understood Eldest Princess Shaoyi's good intentions. "The refugees have fled to this place. They're unfamiliar with the place. Even if they're settled, it'll be difficult for them to walk out of the trauma of the disaster for a while. Everyone can use the Dragon Boat Festival to reminisce about their relatives who lost their lives because of the drought as a way to vent their emotions. After that, it's also a good thing to have fun together. The place is different, but the Dragon Boat Festival is the same. It can always cause the refugees to cry emotionally, and their sense of belonging to Liaodong will increase."

After the few of them discussed the details, Madam Huang and General Ning Yuan's wife left in a hurry.

Unexpectedly, the next day, the state government office put up a notice. The various county offices in Liaodong were about to prepare for the dragon boat race.

The entire Xiangping City was in an uproar.

The reason why the local commoners were excited was because there had not been a dragon boat race in Xiangping for many years.

The refugees were even more excited than the local commoners. This was because the famine had traumatized them. They yearned more than anyone else for the weather to be smooth and for calamity to not descend.

They hoped more than anyone else that they could use this day of nostalgia to vent the sorrow of their families passing.

In fact, when they found out that there had been no dragon boat race in Xiangping City for many years, the refugees had a feeling that the government had held the dragon boat race for them. For a moment, their sense of belonging to the local area increased greatly.

When Yu Youyao heard the news, she felt much more relieved.

With the government office taking the lead, there wouldn't be too many mistakes in the dragon boat competition.

Ye Xiaoci was far away in Xi'an, and all the matters in the government office were handled by the deputy.

When the deputy heard his subordinate's report on the situation, he couldn't help but sigh with emotion. "No wonder before the Lord went to Xi'an, he repeatedly reminded me to pay more attention to Princess Shaoyi's words and actions. There won't be too many mistakes in the government office. There might even be unexpected gains."

The subordinate was stunned. “Why is that?”

The deputy said meaningfully, “Because Eldest Princess Shaoyi has a Bodhisattva’s heart.”

That was why she knew the hardships of the commoners and how to benefit them.

A truly kind person would not deliberately do good deeds. They would see the truth in every move and word. Therefore, when Huang M/engxian arrived at the government office yesterday and discussed this matter with him, he immediately realized how important the dragon boat race was to Liaodong.

The dragon boat race was to offer sacrifices to the Dragon God. They would pray that the wind and rain would be good, and that calamity would not descend. However, at the same time, it also had the traditional meaning of suppressing evil, resisting calamities, and everything would go as planned..

Chapter 949 - 949: Enlightened

This was undoubtedly what all the commoners looked forward to from the bottom of their hearts, especially those affected by the disaster. Dragon boats played a huge role in calming the hearts of the people.

At the thought of this, the deputy said meaningfully, “It’s all thanks to Eldest

Princess Shaoyi that the government avoided a lot of trouble.”

There was a saying among the commoners: When the King of Hell pointed his finger, the little ghosts would be so tired that they would eat sh*t.

The palace opened its mouth and pointed its finger. With an order from the Imperial Court, regardless of whether it was difficult or not, even if the sky fell, the people below had to give an explanation.

The Liaodong area was indeed vast and abundant. It was able to accommodate millions of refugees.

However, millions of refugees rushed into Liaodong at once, causing a huge impact on the culture, folklore, life, supplies, and so on in the Liaodong area. Previously, when the refugees were in the camp, with King Yue Fei around, most of them were obedient.

However, after the refugees were settled down, the government offices had to step in to resolve the food, shelter, and transportation matters. There were more than a million refugees, and the various government offices were even more overwrought and exhausted.

There were endless conflicts of all scales among the refugees, and between the refugees and the natives.

Disputes due to their habits and customs had never stopped.

Now that they had spent a lot of effort to hold the Dragon Boat Festival, most of the future troubles could be resolved. Why shouldn’t the government be happy?!

Just as the various government offices in Liaodong were arranging the dragon boat race with great fanfare—

Far away in Longcheng, Yin Huaixi had received Yin Shi's message. After making new arrangements and deployments for the camp, he finally rushed back to Xiangping City on the fourth of May.

When she saw Yin Huaixi, for some reason, Yu Youyao thought of the secret marriage decree that had been sent with warning and the reward.

She suddenly realized that the man in front of her, who had accompanied her as she grew up and was her teacher and brother in her heart, would continue to accompany her as her "husband" for the long years to come.

She lowered her head and stared at her toes. "You... You're back?!"

Yin Huaixi smiled. "I'm back."

As soon as he finished speaking, the room suddenly fell silent.

After a while, Yu Youyao looked up. Yin Huaixi was standing in front of her, his shoulders naturally slumped. His eyes landed on her and he was looking at her intently.

His gaze was too focused. At a glance, all he could see was her figure. Yu Youyao felt a little embarrassed by his gaze. She quickly said, "I—I'll go down and arrange for you to wash and comb first..."

As she spoke, she quickly took two steps back and fled like a frightened rabbit. Yin Huaixi looked at her flustered back and smiled. "You're enlightened!"

Perhaps it was because she had never been taught by her mother since she was young, but no one had ever told her about some private words that could only be said between mother and daughter. The little girl was very ignorant about relationships between men and women.

After the "engagement", the relationship between the two of them was not as close as before. She began to have the awareness of men and women being wary of each other, and there was a deliberate distance between them when they interacted.

This was not out of shyness.

Most of the time, it was because men and women needed to observe etiquette.

Yu Youyao walked far away before her footsteps gradually slowed down. She patted her still hot cheeks gently and took a deep breath. Only then did she calm down a little.

Due to their master's return, The Green House became busy.

While Yin Huaixi was washing off the dust, Yu Youyao quickly made a pot of medicinal porridge, sea cucumber soup, and a few simple appetizing snacks.

After accompanying Yin Huaixi for dinner, Yu Youyao planned to talk about serious matters.

Unexpectedly, Yin Huaixi stood up and reached out to her. "I'm a little stuffed. Walk with me in my courtyard while I digest my food."

She looked at the large palm he handed over. Perhaps because he had been holding weapons often recently. Thus, the calluses in his palm were much heavier than before, giving off a firm feeling.

For some reason, Yu Youyao placed her small hand in his palm.

Immediately, her entire hand was wrapped tightly. The dry and firm feeling in her palm made her feel very at ease.

Yin Huaixi pulled her back.

Yu Youyao stood up and the two of them strolled along the cobblestone path in the courtyard. "How's the situation at the Longcheng camp?"

Yin Huaixi only said, "After the Dragon Boat Festival, the last batch of refugees will also be sent to the resettlement point. The resettlement of the refugees has almost come to an end. Next, the You army will help the local authorities control the refugees who have been resettled. You have to be prepared. After that, the Liaodong area will fall into temporary chaos, but the impact is not big."

He did not mention that there were still 60,000 to 70,000 people in the casualty camp who were being isolated for treatment because of their injuries or epidemic illnesses. Even though there were donations from nobles, medicinal herbs were still a scarce resource. Some expensive medicinal herbs that had obvious effects in treating the epidemic illness were even more scarce. Most of the refugees who were infected with the epidemic could not be treated.

There was only routine treatment in the camp. Whether they could survive depended on themselves.

There were already more than a hundred thousand refugees who had died from the epidemic.

This was even when the epidemic prevention was perfect and there were more medicinal herbs.

Yu Youyao knew that after the refugees were resettled, due to the different customs, culture, and habits of the various places, and because of the psychological trauma after the disaster, mental pressure, and various other reasons, human nature would also be infinitely magnified. Under such circumstances, it was very easy for all kinds of conflicts, or even chaos, to erupt.

Yin Huaixi said that it wasn't a big problem. He planned to use violence to suppress violence and bloodshed.

After receiving a handful, they would be given some resettlement supplies as a benefit. Most of the refugees would only be grateful and hate those who caused trouble.

Yu Youyao had nothing to say. She felt that she had already done everything she could and should do. What happened next was not something she could interfere in.

If she criticized him, it was inevitable that it would bring immeasurable losses to Yin Huaixi and the government.

Yu Youyao shook her head. She wanted to ask if he had received the secret decree of the Empress Dowager's marriage. However, when the words were about to come out of her mouth, she suddenly felt a little flustered and did not know what to say.

She looked down at the tips of her toes.

Yin Huaixi lowered his head and saw that her fair ears were slightly pink. He suddenly felt an itch in his hands and couldn't help but move his fingers, wanting to reach out and rub them.

He twirled his fingers hard and restrained his impulse. "I've mentioned it to you before. My father, King Li of Zhou, was born to Concubine Hui, whom the previous emperor doted on the most. The previous emperor loved my father very much and even had the intention to nurture him. However, at that time, there were already four princes under the previous emperor. All of them were born by the other concubines in the palace before Concubine Hui entered the palace. "

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat. King Li of Zhou was ranked fifth among the princes.

He was the emperor's youngest son..

Chapter 950 - 950: Beat Her At Her Own Game

As the saying went, the emperor loved his eldest son, and the commoners doted on him.

However, this was not applicable to the previous emperor.

Yin Huaixi continued, "Ever since the previous emperor ascended the throne, he hasn't recruited any new concubines. Most of the concubines in the palace are recruited to balance the power of the royal court. Therefore, behind these concubines, there's a huge force of relatives. However, the previous emperor, who has always been benevolent, has become unyielding for his youngest son. "

Yu Youyao came to a realization. She had heard from her grandmother that the previous emperor had five sons. The first three princes were born to daughters of meritorious generals. All of them had very prominent backgrounds.

Only the Fourth Prince, who was the current emperor, was born to a palace maid beside the previous emperor.

It was almost impossible for the previous emperor to "nurture" the Fifth Prince.

Indeed!

Yin Huaixi sighed softly. "Then, my father fell from the rockery and injured his head, almost losing his life. Although the previous emperor didn't pursue the matter for his youngest son, he was still furious. Many people in the harem were implicated. There were rumors outside the palace that Concubine Hui was a demon concubine who caused trouble for the king. The rumors became more and more intense. Not long after, Concubine Hui fell sick from depression and passed away in a few years."

The emperor, who had always been benevolent, was blinded by lust. For a woman, he became tough, domineering, and bloodthirsty. This also became the most favorable evidence for Concubine Hui causing trouble for the emperor.

Concubine Hui doted on the six palaces alone, and many concubines in the palace already had a grudge. However, because the Empress Dowager, who was still the Empress at that time, was suppressing them, they had never made a fuss.

However, the previous emperor's intention to "establish a heir" had touched the interests of all the concubines who had given birth to princes in the harem. The interests of the Empress were also touched.

One could imagine what happened after that.

The reason why the Fifth Prince had fallen from the rockery was because of a scheme against the Fifth Prince and Concubine Hui.

The previous emperor couldn't help but love his son. He was worried that if he didn't issue a punishment, he would become worse in the future and still fall for it. Concubine Hui also knew very well that as long as she was alive, the previous emperor would always be in a dilemma for her. Her son would also become a sacrifice for the concubines to fight for power. That was why she died of depression.

Yin Huaixi continued, 'After Concubine Hui passed away, the previous emperor suppressed the imperial family and the generals wantonly. He still didn't give up and had the intention to support his youngest son to ascend the throne. Unfortunately, not long after, the previous emperor worked so hard that he fell sick.'

"The struggle for the throne became more and more intense. At that time, the Empress Dowager was still the Emperor. As she did not have any children, in order to protect herself and the interests of the family, she joined forces with the imperial family and the generals who had been suppressed to launch a palace riot and support the Fourth Prince to ascend the throne."

"I wonder what kind of agreement the Empress Dowager and the previous emperor had reached. Later on, the Empress Dowager took out the previous emperor's edict. The Fourth Prince successfully ascended the throne. After that, my father was protected. The other princes who participated in the palace riot were all killed for treason. The forces behind them were defeated."

Her grandmother was also vague about what had happened when the current emperor ascended the throne.

She only mentioned that the previous emperor had made a will before he died and passed it on to the Fourth Prince.

She had never mentioned a palace riot.

Back then, among the old officials who had read the will and informed the world, there was an old official of the Yu Clan. Not long after the new emperor ascended the throne, he retired because of his old age.

Generally speaking, the old ministers who had been entrusted with the will were all personally appointed by the previous emperor to assist the new emperor. Not only did they assist the new emperor, but they also had the responsibility of persuading, teaching, and rejecting him. As the previous emperor had appointed them, the new emperor had to treat them with respect.

The fundamental reason why the current emperor had always treated the Yu Clan preferentially was because the Yu Clan had contributed to following the dragon back then. After that, that old minister

of the Yu Clan was also obedient. He did not rely on the credit of the previous emperor entrusting him with the will to criticize the new emperor in the court. Instead, he took the initiative to resign and hand over his authority.

For someone like Grand Tutor Yang from the Ning Residence, it was probably not a temporary disaster.

Instead, it was like three feet of ice.

It wasn't without reason that Yu Youyao thought this way. It was just that the dog emperor didn't have tolerance and liked to play with power. How could he tolerate someone criticizing him?!

Yin Huaixi smiled. "My connections in the palace are all the connections that the previous emperor left for my father, including Eunuch He."

"I heard that Eunuch He is the dog emperor's companion when he was in the palace. He follows the Fourth Prince's biological mother." Yu Youyao was shocked. She had always thought that Eunuch Zhu was Yin Huaixi's subordinate. Who knew that Eunuch Zhu was only working for Eunuch He?!

Yin Huaixi continued, "The Fourth Prince's biological mother was originally from the previous emperor's palace. She was a knowledgeable..." He paused for a moment. "A palace maid."

Whether it was in the palace or in a wealthy family, when the descendants of the family reached the age of 15 or 16 years old, they would arrange for a beautiful and "knowledgeable" palace maid to guide men and women.

At this age, men would naturally have some fantasies about women. If their families did not guide and resolve them, their families were afraid that they would mess around behind their backs and ruin their bodies.

Young men at this age were still ignorant about this matter and couldn't taste it. When they understood the matters between men and women, it was just to prevent them from being too outstanding.

As she was the first to follow the previous emperor, her status was low and she could not obtain a true title. She could only serve him as a palace maid.

However, her relationship with the emperor was ultimately different from other women who were accepted into the palace for benefits.

That was why she was allowed to give birth to an emperor's child.

However, it wasn't good for him to say this to Yu Youyao directly, lest it dirtied her ears.

Yu Youyao came to a realization. "The Fourth Prince's biological mother is a slave. The people following her were specially bestowed by the previous emperor. The ones who are truly loyal are also from the previous emperor."

It was no wonder that Yin Huaixi always knew the news in the palace so well and could scheme accurately.

Yin Huaixi nodded. “I received news earlier that the Empress had secretly sent someone to investigate your situation. The Precious Peace Temple and Mr. Xian Yun didn’t fall behind. Monks don’t lie. The Precious Peace Temple didn’t really reveal anything, but it was inevitable that it was revealed. Grandmaster Hui Neng did two readings for you and revealed that your fate is precious.”

Be it a marriage with a wealthy family or an ordinary family, they had to investigate in advance. They had to deduce the other party’s rough fate since they were young. Then, they had to find someone to combine their fates to see if this marriage was auspicious.

The Empress’s actions had already revealed some clues.

Yu Youyao’s eyes widened. “Did you know long ago that the Empress wanted to scheme for my marriage?” In a flash, she thought of the secret marriage decree sent by the Empress Dowager. “So, you revealed the news to the Empress Dowager. The Empress Dowager understood the Empress’s intention to compete for the position of heir. In order to curb the Empress’s ambition, she gave us a marriage in advance, right?” She was a little confused.

How much had Yin Huaixi hidden from her?