

## All Hail 951

### Chapter 951 - 951: Open Secret

Yin Huaixi was worried that she would be angry, so he quickly explained, “Empress Ning has evil intentions. I was far away in Liaodong and was afraid that it would be too late for her to take advantage of the loophole, so I could only beat her at her own game and use the Empress Dowager to settle the marriage first.”

In the imperial family, all noble ladies with titles had to obtain the approval of the palace for their marriage. They could not decide on their own.

Those with more prominent statuses had their marriage personally arranged by the emperor, the Empress Dowager, or the Empress.

For a woman like Yu Youyao, the daughter of an external minister who had received the emperor’s grace, they would often be more serious about her marriage.

There was the belief that heaven, the earth, the king, one’s parents, and one’s teachers should be respected in that order. The king came before one’s parents. Even her parents did not have the right to decide on her marriage. Marriage was a big matter and always depended on her parent’s orders. Before the palace arranged a marriage, they had to seek her parents’ permission. However, the emperor’s orders could not be disobeyed, and the ministers could only listen.

The Yu Clan had a huge impact on the struggle for the position of heir. Yu Youyao’s status was noble, and she was at the age where she would get married. Knowing that the Empress had her eyes on Yu Youyao and wanted to use her marriage to make a big fuss, it was impossible for the Empress Dowager to be indifferent.

He only asked Eunuch Zhu to reveal a little information about King Yue Fei admiring Princess Shaoyi’s talent and character. Then, the Empress Dowager had some thoughts.

In the eyes of outsiders, Yin Huaixi’s leg had recovered because of Yu Youyao.

It was also because of Yu Youyao’s help that the drought in the North had eased.

It was also because of Yu Youyao that Yue Fei had avoided the sinister scheme of the Han family in Xi’an.

Furthermore, Yu Youyao had even helped King Yue Fei successfully promote the national policy in the North and stabilize the situation in the North.

At most, it was a favor for saving his life. At the very least, he owed her a

As long as he wasn’t ungrateful, she would more or less receive some kindness.

He would also be restrained by his wife’s family.

It seemed logical to arrange a marriage.

Seeing that she had her head lowered and was silent, Yin Huaixi panicked a little.

He was indeed in the wrong in this matter. Before he schemed against the Empress Dowager to bestow the marriage, he did not discuss it with the Xie family, nor did he tell her in advance.

After all, it was a lifelong matter. Anyone would be angry.

Yin Huaixi held her hand tightly and explained, "On the day of your departure, the news of the Empress rewarding you had already spread throughout the city. Someone among the royalists openly suggested in the royal court that the Fourth Prince go to Liaodong to patrol and observe the specific situation of the national policy, including the plague in the refugee camps, the settlement of the refugees, the Han family's case in Xi'an, the promotion of planting sweet potatoes, and so on." It was an open secret.

Yu Youyao was shocked.

In the past dynasties, as long as there were natural and man-made disasters, sending princes to relieve the disasters and comfort the people could better calm the hearts of the people. It could also play the role of stabilizing the country and gathering the hearts of the people.

The implementation of the national policy was not carried out overnight. In order to express the importance of the Imperial Court's implementation of the national policy, it was normal to send someone to inspect.

The Han family's case in Xi'an was still in progress. The officials in the northwest who were most qualified to go and inspect were inevitably weak and the royalists were powerful. If the Imperial Court really wanted to send someone, the Fourth Prince was undoubtedly the best candidate.

The Empress had first used the fact that Yu Youyao had been heavily rewarded to make a big fuss. Then, she had instigated the court officials to suggest that the Fourth Prince go to Liaodong to inspect. It was difficult not to think of her.

Yin Huaixi said, "The Empress has rewarded you handsomely. The Fourth Prince is inspecting it, and each plan is interconnected. When the Fourth Prince arrives in Liaodong, as Princess Shaoyi, you have to step in and cooperate with the Fourth Prince's inspection. Gradually, there will be some clues. When the time comes, release some rumors that the Fourth Prince admires you. There's no doubt about this marriage."

Yu Youyao was also a little shocked. "If Empress Ning's scheme succeeds, the Fourth Prince and the royalists will form an unbreakable benefit relationship."

Empress Ning and the Fourth Prince will definitely be able to gain the initiative in the competition for the throne. Could it be that Concubine Lan and Imperial Concubine Xu will sit back and do nothing?"

Yin Huaixi said, "Why do you think the Empress Dowager has always been in control of the royalists, making them follow her lead and allowing her to maintain her high and mighty authority as the Empress Dowager? Even the current emperor is respectful to her. Don't underestimate the Empress Dowager's control of the royal court. Of course, Concubine Lan and Imperial Concubine Xu don't want to sit back and do nothing, but their hands aren't long enough to reach into the royalists."

Yu Youyao suddenly understood. “The establishment of the throne is for the sake of peace and the continuation of the country. It’s decided by the emperor, but the struggle for the throne is overstepping the emperor’s power. One can be suspected of usurping state power and rebelling. No matter how many schemes Empress Ning has, it’s also within the royalists. No one can surpass the Empress Dowager. On the surface, the struggle for the throne is already becoming more and more intense. However, because of the Empress Dowager’s suppression, no one dares to really make a fuss and take off the layer of disguise to expose it in front of others.”

As the mother of a country, the Empress had the right to reward her family. If she used the matter of rewarding Yu Youyao and mixed in private schemes, no one could criticize her.

Could it be that Concubine Lan and the others could stop the Imperial Court from giving Princess Shaoyi a reward?!

As long as Empress Nings reward was sent to Liaodong, more than half of Empress Nings plan would be completed. The remaining half would be tied to the Fourth Prince.

To put it bluntly, Liaodong was already the territory of the royalists. It was impossible for Imperial Concubine Xu and Concubine Lan to take the risk to send the Third and Second Princes to Liaodong to inspect.

If they wanted to break through Empress Nings scheme, it was only possible if an “accident” happened to the Fourth Prince, preventing him from coming.

However, the Empress had planned everything. How could she not be prepared?

Now that the Empress Dowager was in charge of political affairs and the royalists were powerful, no one dared to act rashly without the assurance of “necessity.”

Yin Huaixi nodded and said, “The matter of inspecting Liaodong was debated in the court for a few days. The Empress Dowager never made a decision. It wasn’t until the reward from the Imperial Court and the decree from the Empress Dowager arrived in Liancheng that the Empress Dowager ordered someone to send the jade plate that was conferred to you into the Imperial Temple. Then, it was spread in the palace that the Fourth Prince wanted to copy Buddhist scriptures for the Empress Dowager and pray, so he temporarily closed the palace door. Only then was the matter of inspecting Liaodong settled.”

Officials of the Great Zhou Dynasty who were third-grade and above were usually called “recorders.”

Officials below the third-grade were all drafted by the Ministry of Official Personnel Affairs. After they were reviewed by the Imperial Court and approved by the emperor, the officials would issue an “appointment letter”. It was not personally decreed by the emperor, so it could not be considered an appointment.

The conferment of titles to clans and concubines was called “conferment.”

When clans were conferred with titles, there would be books and precious seals.

When concubines were conferred with titles, there would be books, but no treasures.

Meanwhile, the emperor, the Empress Dowager, and the Empress had books and treasure seals, which were also called “book treasures.”

In Yu Youyao's case, her clan was conferred with a title. There was a book and a precious seal. When clans were conferred with titles, the books were mostly made of gold or jade, so they were also called "jade plates" or precious plates. Like the privilege proof, the jade plate was divided into two parts. One was given to the recipients for generations to inherit, and the other would be consecrated in the Imperial Temple.

If the jade plate was sent to the Imperial Temple, it would be equivalent to telling the world about the conferment..

Chapter 952 - 952: Precious Fate

Yu Youyao's expression was complicated. "While the Empress Dowager is supervising the Fourth Prince openly, she secretly warned Empress Ning." At this point, she suddenly thought of the nightmare she had that night and couldn't help but ask, "Will Empress Ning really let it go?"

In that nightmare, Empress Ning had relied on scheming against the Yu Clan to obtain the initiative and help the Fourth Prince ascend the throne.

Yin Huaixi's expression was a little solemn. "After the jade plate was sent into the Imperial Ancestral Temple, it caused a commotion in the capital. It was originally human nature, but following that, there was also some news that you were stepping on the weak. The news lasted for two to three days, and suddenly, there were rumors in the capital that your second sister, Yu Shuangbai, had a precious fate."

"I see..." Yu Youyao looked enlightened.

Yin Huaixi cared about her feelings and did not say it clearly.

However, she was not a fool. The so-called "stepping on the weak" was clearly putting her in a higher position, causing her to step on the other sisters in the family. She was the eldest daughter of the first wife. Only the sisters of the first wife in the family were qualified to compare with her. In the Yu Residence, there were only her and Yu Shuangbai.

Yu Shuangbai had both parents, and she was also the daughter of the first wife. In the past, she was the most important daughter of the first wife in the family.

As time passed, the more famous she became and the more noble her status became, it was inevitable that she would surpass Yu Shuangbai.

Two tigers couldn't share one mountain. This was an unchanging principle.

Madam Yao looked magnanimous, but that was under the premise that it did not affect her own interests. Now that Yu Youyao had already affected Yu Shuangbai's reputation, as her mother, Madam Yao definitely could not sit back and do nothing.

Yin Huaixi said, "Back then, when the Matriarch brought you to the Precious Peace Temple, Yu Shuangbai drew 'A Blessing in Disguise'. It was also widely circulated and became proof of Yu Shuangbai's precious fate."

She was not afraid to use her greatest malice to speculate about others. After that nightmare, although Yu Youyao had her doubts about Madam Yao, she still hoped that all of this was just Empress Nings own scheme.

However, reality gave her a slap in the face.

On careful thought, she should have understood that without the cooperation of Madam Yao and even the entire Yu Residence, it would be very difficult to achieve such a thing.

Madam Yang was jealous. Madam Yao's noble background secretly competed with her.

Madam Yao also looked down on Madam Yang.

The two of them were already at odds, so only the adult Yao Yao was the only one who had caused the sisters-in-law to put down their prejudices for the time being.

This was not just a guess.

In the nightmare, many details had already shown that the older Yao Yao was the "girl with the phoenix fate." She was the one her grandmother doted on and visited Grandmaster Hui Neng three times for. Others might not know about this, but as Madam Yao's daughter-in-law, it was impossible for her not to know.

If she wanted Yu Shuangbai to naturally replace the adult Yao Yao's "phoenix fate", she had to ruin the adult Yao Yao's reputation and make her completely lose her right to inherit the phoenix fate.

As for Madam Yang, not only did she covet the adult Yao Yao's dowry, but she also treated her as a thorn in her side.

The two of them hit it off for their own benefit.

That was why the Duke Rongs Residence had schemed.

After that, the adult Yao Yao's reputation was ruined.

In order to find a way out for her, her grandmother had "forced" her to Song Mingzhao. She had originally wanted the Zhenguo Marquis Residence to protect her on account that the two families were family friends.

Unexpectedly, her grandmother's actions blocked Yu Jianjia and Song Mingzhao's marriage.

For her daughter, Madam Yang had exposed Yu Zongshen's infatuation with her eldest sister-in-law and distorted Yu Youyao's background.

After that, the Zhenguo Marquis Residence completely gave up on the adult Yao Yao.

Everything in the nightmare was completely connected. Yu Youyao smiled. "A person's status is not as important as their life. Madam Yao has made up her mind to let Yu Shuangbai surpass me in terms of fate."

After all!

As a bereaved eldest daughter, how could she compare to Yu Shuangbai in terms of fate? Not only did Yu Shuangbai have both parents, but her father was also the Grand Secretary.

At the Precious Peace Temple that day, the lot that Yu Youyao had drawn was not as good as Yu Shuangbai's.

The reason why the eldest daughter of a bereaved wife was not liked was not entirely because she was uneducated. A wealthy family raised their children in a standard manner. How bad could their upbringing be?

Most of the time, children without their mothers had a difficult and inauspicious life.

Yin Huaixi frowned and held her hand tightly. "In this world, who's fate can be compared to yours? In all the dynasties, how many daughters of foreign ministers like you can be conferred titles?!"

Yu Youyao lowered her head. Her wide and long sleeve blocked her intertwined hands, but she could feel that the hand holding hers was filled with strength and firmness.

Actually, it wasn't as uncomfortable as she had imagined.

However, she more or less empathized with the adult Yao Yao and couldn't help but feel aggrieved for her.

Yu Youyao shook his hand. "Back then, my Grandmother brought our family to the Precious Peace Temple to offer incense and did not avoid others. Just as the imperial examination was about to begin, there were too many people in the Precious Peace Temple. When we drew the lots, there were also others near the treasure hall and in the side hall. This matter can't be hidden. As long as we deliberately investigate, we will definitely be able to find out."

Putting everything else aside, at that time, the Marquis of Changxings wife and Seventh Miss Cao were outside the hall.

This was how Madam Yang and Yu Jianjia had gotten to know these two people.

The Empress must have known about this, so she could accurately scheme against Madam Yao and let her fall into her trap.

"Empress Ning is too brilliant. She used Madam Yao's competitive and kind motherly heart to quietly control Madam Yao. She made Madam Yao use her daughter's fate for her daughter's reputation and gave it to Empress Ning. She used Yu Shuangbai's fate to make a big fuss and kill people. It's nothing much. Empress Ning only dug a shallow hole, but Madam Yao took the initiative to jump into it. When Madam Yao jumps into the hole, she will be deeply trapped and unable to extricate herself.'

Only when news of Yu Shuangbai's "precious fate" spread could the Empress turn Yu Shuangbai into someone who was born with a phoenix fate.

Everyone in the world emphasized that if the ancestors were virtuous, the children would be blessed. From this perspective, the two merit monuments of the Yu Clan definitely gave greater blessings to the children of the Yu Clan than that of other clans.

Regarding whether Old Madam Yu met Grandmaster Hui Neng three times, they only needed to confirm it with the Precious Peace Temple. Grandmaster Hui Neng was an enlightened monk, which would increase the credibility of being born with a phoenix fate.

After that, they would look for the Imperial Astronomer to put on an act and create some auspicious signs to spread rumors among the commoners. This matter would most likely succeed.

The phoenix tree in the Jade Courtyard was gone.

However, the feng Shui layout of the Yu Residence was still there.

There were too many places to make a fuss.

Yin Huaixi nodded. “You’re right. Empress Ning used against Yu Shuangbai’s precious fate because she wanted to make a big fuss out of her phoenix fate. The Yu Clan’s ancestors are virtuous, and their descendants are considered motivated. It’s not an exaggeration to say that their entire family is loyal. With Yu Shuangbai’s status, she will definitely be able to withstand the phoenix Empress Nings scheme this time was already very obscure. If she hadn’t had this nightmare, Yu Youyao would never have guessed that behind all of Empress Nings schemes, she wanted Yu Shuangbai to inherit the identity of the girl with the phoenix fate and drag the Yu Clan down. She didn’t expect Yin Huaixi to already have a guess..

Chapter 953 - 953: How Cruel

Yu Youyao hesitated for a moment. “I had another nightmare previously...” Then, she explained the contents of the nightmare one by one.

Yin Huaixi’s expression darkened. Yu Youyao’s nightmares were intermittent, and they were all fragmented. Many things were blurry.

Previously, he had always suspected that in the nightmare, Madam Yang and Yu Jianjia seemed to be able to succeed no matter what they did.

The adult Yao Yao was not a fool. On the contrary, she was bright-eyed and knew how to protect herself. Why was she helpless against Madam Yang and Yu Jianjia?

In the nightmare, although “Zhou Linghuai” and the adult Yao Yao were not as close as in reality, when “Zhou Linghuai” left the capital, the adult Yao Yao’s actions of chasing him all the way to Chang An Street showed that their relationship was different.

With “Zhou Linghuai’s” personality, it was impossible for him not to have arranged a way out for the adult Yao Yao before leaving the capital.

This did not make sense.

Under what circumstances would the backup plan he had arranged for the adult Yao Yao fail?

However, the adult Yao Yao had been implicated in the battle for the throne and had become a sacrifice for the throne.

On the surface, the “phoenix fate” had fulfilled Yu Shuangbai’s phoenix path. However, in the end, it was Empress Ning and the Fourth Prince who had used the “girl with the phoenix fate” to suppress the other two princes and seize the initiative.

They were the greatest beneficiaries.

The adult Yao Yao had become the Fourth Prince's stepping stone to ascend the throne, and she had also become Empress Ning's chess piece for revenge and seizing the throne.

This was the truth of the nightmare.

Yin Huaixi's deduction was not without reason. "Back then, I was asserted by all the doctors that I wouldn't live for more than three years. In order to take revenge, I used Zhou Linghuai's identity to enter the capital. I borrowed the connections the previous emperor had prepared for my father in the palace and secretly contacted the Yi Kun Palace. I cooperated with the Yi Kun Palace and used the conflict to stir up the Great Zhou Dynasty's situation and create an opportunity for the vassal lords to rebel, hoping to destroy the Great Zhou Dynasty."

Yin Huaixi had never deliberately hidden his schemes and intentions. Yu Youyao had long guessed this, so she was not surprised.

Empress Ning did not have the support of her maiden family, and the palace had been sealed for many years. Her connections and management in the palace were far inferior to Concubine Lan and Imperial Concubine Xu. What right did she have to participate in the royalist party as soon as she opened the palace door?

She did not believe that she did not have anyone supporting her.

Now, Empress Ning was using the Fourth Prince to stir up trouble in the court. This was also in line with Yin Huaixi's original plan.

Yin Huaixi's expression became complicated. "In the nightmare, Empress Ning and the Fourth Prince could easily succeed. It's very likely. At that time, I was already terminally ill and had given up on creating a time for the vassal lords to rebel. Empress Ning and the Fourth Prince should have used some of my connections in the palace."

At that time, he was already at the end of his rope and did not have long to live. No matter how loyal a person was, they would find another way out for themselves. He had worked with Empress Ning before, so it was only logical for him to join her.

They were already famous people in the palace when the previous emperor was around. With his help, why should they worry about anything?!

He lowered his eyes. Yu Youyao had never mentioned the rebellion of the vassal lords in the nightmare. The only possibility was that he had given up on creating a chance for the vassal lords to rebel.

The only person who could make him give up on destroying the Great Zhou Dynasty was Yu Youyao.

However, at that time, the vassal lords were restless and there was a drought in the pass. The situation in the North was unstable, and the struggle for the throne was becoming more and more intense. The Great Zhou Dynasty was already about to be in chaos.

No matter how powerful Empress Ning's scheme was, it was impossible for



her to obtain the initiative in the shortest time possible. Before the Great Zhou fell into chaos, she would stabilize the court and benevolent governance to stabilize the hearts of the people and prevent internal and external trouble.

It was most likely that his portion of the connections in the palace played a vital role.

What was laughable was that Yin Huaixi hunted wild geese all day, but was ultimately pecked by them.

Empress Ning and the Fourth Prince would also do anything to ensure that the throne was foolproof. They would step on the life of a weak and innocent woman from the inner residence to climb up the ranks.

She coveted the adult Yao Yao's status as the "girl with the phoenix fate." What she had schemed for was also the huge wealth in the adult Yao Yao's hands. It could resolve the urgent matter of the drought in the plains.

She schemed against the Xie Residence, which was behind the adult Yao Yao.

The Empress had investigated the Precious Peace Temple and knew very well that the "girl with the phoenix fate" was Yu Youyao.

However, in the nightmare, the adult Yao Yao was just a bereaved eldest daughter. She did not stand out at the Flower Festival in the Marquis of Changxings Residence and attracted the Empress Dowager's attention.

She did not show her face at the Flower Festival in King Rongs Residence.

She also didn't receive any longevity merit for planting sweet potatoes.

She was just a little girl from the inner residence who stayed by her grandmother's side all day and brought bad luck. In terms of status, how could she compare to Yu Shuangbai, the daughter of the Grand Secretary?!

In order to pave the way for Yu Shuangbai, everyone had sacrificed the adult Yao Yao.

For the sake of the Fourth Prince's path to the throne, Yu Youyao first lost her reputation in the Duke Rong's Residence. Then, she had no choice but to marry into the Zhenguo Marquis Residence and die from having her blood and heart gouged out.

How cruel! !

Extreme anger surged into his chest and turned into sour emotions. Yin Huaixi held her hand tightly. "No matter how many schemes they have in reality, they won't succeed."

Yu Youyao shook her head. "I can tell the difference between a nightmare and reality."

Therefore, she no longer cared as much as before.

Although reality and nightmares were different, if Yu Youyao hadn't had a nightmare back then and had a high fever like Yu Jianjia, avoiding Yu

Zongzheng's scolding, the development of the matter would still have followed the nightmare. The turning point of Yu Youyao's fate was that she had accidentally obtained the spiritual spring water and changed her fate, changing the direction of the court and avoiding her destined tragic fate.

Yu Youyao was only a woman from the inner residence. Even if she was peerlessly smart and scheming, no matter how many abilities she had learned, how could she hide from the ruthless schemes of a superior?!

Yin Huaixi's eyes were dark, and there was a turbulent darkness in them that only he knew. Yu Youyao did not care, but this did not mean that he could treat all of this as a scheme that had never existed.

Yu Youyao did not know what was going through his mind, so she changed the topic. "Empress Ning schemed against my marriage with the Fourth Prince on a grand scale and did not hide it. If her plan failed, would the Yu Clan guess that Empress Ning wanted to use Madam Yao to scheme against Yu Shuangbai's fate to achieve her goal?"

Yin Huaixi shook his head. "The reason why we can guess Empress Ning's true intentions is because Eunuch Zhu sent me a message. Empress Ning's every move can't escape my notice."

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment before she reacted. "That's true. If it weren't for that nightmare, I wouldn't have guessed it. However, some rumors about precious fates are only about Madam Yao. For my sake, how can she think of a conspiracy? It's even more impossible for her to have thought that Empress Ning was behind this.."

Chapter 954 - 954: King of Liang's Strange Moves

Yin Huaixi said, "Due to the emperor and the Empress Dowager's serious illness, the inner courtyard of the deep palace is heavily guarded, like an impenetrable wall. The news that can be spread out of the palace is tacitly approved by the higher-ups. It's impossible for the few connections the aristocratic families manage in the palace to reach the Yi Kun Palace. Even if they find anything, they can't break through the layers of palace walls and send the news out of the palace. Don't underestimate the control of the higher-ups over the palace."

Otherwise, the news of the emperor's serious illness would have long been exposed.

The Empress Dowager's true condition would also be known by others.

In that case, wouldn't the court be in chaos?!

Furthermore, the battle for the heir was becoming more and more intense. Everyone in the palace was in danger and on guard. How could the news in the palace be easily investigated?!

When Yu Youyao heard this, she understood. "The matter of her precious fate was leaked by Madam Yao in order to plan for her daughter's reputation. The Empress doesn't have to do anything. She just has to sit back and wait for the rumors outside to ferment to a certain extent. When the fake news reaches the palace and attracts her attention, the Yu Clan will have already fallen into her trap. It'll be too late,"

It was like the matter of Yu Youyao being rewarded heavily without any warning. It was impossible to guard against.

The situation in the court changed rapidly. Normal people would not spend too much effort to pay attention to some small matters in the inner residence and some rumors outside.

Yu Youyao couldn't help but ask, "Should I send a letter to remind them?"

Yin Huaixi shook his head. "It takes two to three days for the news to be delivered. When your letter is sent to the capital, the Imperial Astronomer has already entered the Yu Residence. Besides, how do you know if the Yu Clan really doesn't have the intention to get involved in the competition for the heir?"

Yu Youyao pursed her lips.

There was something that bothered her, but she had never thought about it deeply.

It was completely blatant and undisguised that Empress Ning had planned her and the Fourth Prince's marriage. However, in the letter sent by the Yu Clan earlier, it was only mentioned that the Imperial Court wanted to send a reward. It didn't mention that Empress Ning wanted to send a heavy reward.

Actually, this already explained the problem.

The Yu Clan did not participate in the battle for the position of heir, but that did not mean that they did not want to.

The reputation of the Yu Clan's loyalty was bestowed by the king. The target of their loyalty could only be the king. By participating in the competition for the throne, they had the intention to overstep their boundaries and betray their ancestors. Once this matter was exposed, the reputation of the Yu Clan would be greatly reduced.

The Yu Clan had two monuments. As long as the Yu Clan did not court death, no matter who became the emperor, they would not attack the Yu Clan easily.

Unless it was a matter of life and death, there was no way out. Fighting for the throne would be harmful to the Yu Clan.

However, not getting involved in the struggle for the throne also meant that the Yu Clan would lose the chance to become a "dragon follower". Unless they made some extraordinary contribution, they would never be able to revive the prosperity of the previous dynasty.

This was a difficult choice for the Yu Clan, who wanted to revive the clan and restore the glory of their ancestors.

Compared to taking the initiative to participate in the competition for the throne.

The Yu Clan needed an "opportunity" to compete for the position of heir, and Empress Ning's schemes against her and the Yu Clan were a rare opportunity for the Yu Clan.

The Yu Clan adopted a conservative and even happy attitude towards this.

Therefore, even though they knew that she had been schemed against by Empress Ning, they did not remind her.

Yu Youyao did not think that there was anything wrong with the Yu Clan doing this. They had originally severed ties. Now, all that was left was endless gratitude and benefits.

Previously, in Quanzhou, she had also used the Yu Clan to restrain the Jiazhou Residence and create a chance for herself and the Xie Residence to escape.

Later on, when she came to Liaodong, she also used the Yu Clan to support the implementation of the state policy and even deal with the Han Clan in Xi'an.

"You have a good plan, and I have a wall ladder. What a palace battle. What a battle between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law." Yu Youyao sighed softly and did not say anything else. She only said, "I wonder what the Empress Dowager will think."

The Empress Dowager had the power to cover the sky in the palace, so she might not be able to stop it. Once the rumors outside the palace about Yu Shuangbai's precious fate became more and more intense, the Empress's plan would succeed.

From the looks of it, the Empress was slightly better.

"That might not be the case." Yin Huaixi smiled faintly. "The emperor is seriously ill and hasn't been in the court for a long time. Everyone in the court is in turmoil. We have to come to a conclusion."

Yu Youyao's heart skipped a beat.

Indeed!

Yin Huaixi continued, "The Empress Dowager doesn't object to the struggle for the throne. What she objects to is the struggle for the throne that will lead to the corruption of politics. She's worried that the struggle for the throne will become more and more intense, causing chaos in the court. If we can end this struggle for the throne at the lowest price, the Empress Dowager might be happy to see it happen."

Yu Youyao's head hurt when she heard this. "In that case, why doesn't the Empress Dowager simply support the Empress and the Fourth Prince?"

As soon as she finished speaking, she knew that she had said something stupid.

Concubine Lan and Imperial Concubine Xu were not to be trifled with. Of the Second and Third Princes, one was deeply valued by the emperor, and the other had an even more "precious" status. The Xu family, which was behind them, even controlled the military.

Yin Huaixi smiled. "It's not that simple. The Empress Dowager has the right to assist in political affairs, but she can't participate in the battle for the throne. Otherwise, there will be information that she exceeded her authority. Do you think that the fact that the harem can't do political work is just for show?!"

Although there was only a single word difference between assisting in governance and participating in governance, there was an essential difference. Once someone caught her red-handed, even the high and mighty Empress Dowager would be enough to cause trouble.

Therefore, not only could the Empress Dowager not interfere in the struggle for the throne, but she also had to suppress it and prevent the struggle for the throne.

Yu Youyao rubbed her head. "The thoughts of a superior are really unpredictable."

Yin Huaixi agreed deeply.

Yu Youyao continued, "The Yu Clan is part of the royal faction and doesn't participate in the battle for the throne. However, they're not sages. They definitely have selfishness and bias. Compared to the Second and Third

Princes, the Fourth Prince is more in line with the interests of the Yu Clan. The Yu Clan might know what the Empress Dowager is thinking. It's very likely that they will cooperate with Empress Nings scheme."

In the nightmare, Yu Shuangbai's "phoenix fate" was the result of Empress

Nings scheme and the Empress Dowager's tacit approval. Madam Yao and Madam Yang cooperated and the Yu Clan helped to encourage her.

In the end, Yu Shuangbai became the empress, and the Yu Clan became a relative of the emperor.

From the looks of it, there was no point in reminding the Yu Clan.

Yu Youyao was surprised, but she was also surprised. From the day she left the capital, her relationship with the Yu Clan had completely been severed. All she had was endless gratitude and benefits.

She wouldn't force everything that had happened in the nightmare into reality.

"It's fine. Soon, they won't be able to take care of themselves."

Unknowingly, they had already walked for a long time. Yu Youyao's feet were a little sore, and her calves were a little numb. There was a thin layer of sweat on her nose. Yin Huaixi naturally held her shoulders and let her lean against Yu Youyao's heart trembled. "Is there another commotion in Quanzhou?"

Yin Huaixi smiled. "King of Liangs army has already gathered in Quanzhou. In a few days, other news will spread in the capital." Yu Youyao suddenly felt that he was finally here..

Chapter 955 - 955: At Death's Door

After returning to the Jiushao Courtyard, Yu Youyao dismissed the servants. From the secret compartment at the head of the bed, she took out the ebony box inlaid with treasures that the Empress Dowager had sent over and solemnly handed it to Yin Huaixi.

There were nine dragons and nine phoenixes carved on the box. On the top lid of the box was a huge dragon head. The dragon head bared its teeth and glared at him. Its whiskers danced wildly, and its two scaled toes tore forward.

At a glance, it was as if a huge dragon was tearing over with monstrous might. Coupled with the golden patterns on the ebony, a suffocating divine might surged over, almost making people not dare to look at it directly.

Yu Youyao urged, "Open it."

Yin Huaixi tore open the lock on the box and lifted it. He saw the "privilege proof" in the box. The heavy page exuded a heavy aura.

"Is this why you urged me to come back?!" Yin Huaixi picked up the privilege proof and looked at the contents. He raised his eyebrows in surprise.

Yu Youyao nodded. "You're implementing the national policy in the North. This is an extraordinary contribution to stabilizing the country and assisting the country. Even if the Empress Dowager wants to give you the privilege proof, it's only logical. Why should she keep it a secret and make the additional move of sending the privilege proof to you through me?"

Yin Huaixi placed the privilege proof back into the box and locked it. "Of course it's to avoid attention.'

What the Empress Dowager wanted to avoid was Empress Nings eyes and ears. Yu Youyao was still puzzled. "Could it be that Empress Ning still has the ability to stop the Empress Dowager from giving you the privilege proof?"

That was unlikely.

Yin Huaixi said meaningfully, "Previously, Eunuch Zhu sent news that the Empress Dowager's condition had worsened and no one was allowed to enter or leave the Longevity Palace. Even the palace guards were secretly mobilized.

I think that she's at death's door.'

She had mobilized the imperial guards and palace guards to prevent anyone from stealing power and messing up politics when she was sick.

Yu Youyao gasped. "So— So, is the Empress Dowager..." As she was too shocked, her voice subconsciously trembled, and she couldn't even speak properly. She couldn't help but clench her fists tightly. She took a deep breath and forced herself to calm down. "Is the Empress Dowager making arrangements for her funeral?!"

She couldn't tell what she was feeling.

She and the Empress Dowager were only involved in endless schemes and benefits, but it had been a long time. She had indeed received the Empress Dowager's protection to reach this point step by step.

Yin Huaixi nodded and continued, "Instead of saying that she's making arrangements for her funeral, it's better to say that the Empress Dowager is arranging a backup plan."

Yu Youyao came to a realization. Yin Huaixi was the backup plan. He needed to deliberately avoid Empress Nings eyes and ears. It was obvious who this backup plan was targeting.

Yin Huaixi continued, "The privilege proof is very rare in the Great Zhou Dynasty. It has the privilege to refute the holy will and kill traitors. It has very great power. Generations of emperors almost never give it easily, in case the ministers use the privilege proof to coerce the emperor and order the vassals to steal power and mess up politics." At this point, he paused for a moment and

smiled playfully. “The Empress Dowager is worried that Empress Ning will fight for the throne and mess up the court. She’s also worried that the Great Zhou Dynasty will be entrusted to an inhumane person. Thus, she gave me the privilege proof.”

Yu Youyao’s heart trembled. She thought of the contents of the iron contract. “On the basis of privilege, the privilege proof emphasizes the ‘orthodox’ lineage. It even provides the privilege of calming the chaos and enforcing justice on behalf of the heavens.”

Since ancient times, the only person who could enforce justice on behalf of the heavens was the emperor. As the saying went, the authority of the sovereigns was determined by the heavens.

If there was a conflict in the harem, and the three princes were not worthy of their positions, then Yin Huaixi would be the only legitimate one. At that time, it would be even more logical for the privilege proof to appear...

“Put it away.” Yin Huaixi pushed the box in front of Yu Youyao. “The privilege proof isn’t very useful to me, so you don’t have to care too much.” Yu Youyao only took a glance. “Since it’s given to you by the Empress Dowager, you...”

“You’re wrong.” Yin Huaixi shook his head. “On the surface, the privilege proof was given to me by the Empress Dowager, but in fact, it was given to you in my name.”

Yu Youyao looked confused. “Why is that?”

Yin Huaixi held her hand. “You’re a descendant of loyalty and ferocity. You’re famous for being kind and benevolent. You’ve been raised by Grandmother since you were young and have inherited her chastity. You’re a rare virtuous woman in the world. You have the kindness to help the world, and you also have the intention to do nothing to manage it. You’re a person with virtue. The Empress Dowager knows very well that only when the privilege proof is in your hands will you treat it carefully and play its true role. You won’t be driven by selfish motives and use it to scheme for benefits.”

In other words, the future of the Great Zhou Dynasty depended on Yu Youyao, and Yu Youyao was not alone. She had the loyal Yu Clan behind her. Even if there were thousands of schemes, she could always ask for justice for the people. There was also King Yue Fei, who had been given a marriage. Although his contributions were great, he was still her strongest support.

This was what made the Empress Dowager so brilliant.

Yu Youyao was enlightened. The battle for the upper position was simply breathtaking, especially the use of power and the calculation of the human heart.

There were too many trade-offs.

The Empress Dowager had clearly taken a fancy to the Fourth Prince, which was why she had allowed Empress Ning to get involved in the royalist party. She hoped that she could use Empress Ning to let the Fourth Prince fight for the opportunity to stabilize the royal court.

With a heir to the throne in the Great Zhou Dynasty, there was no need to hide the emperor’s illness. It was only logical for the crown prince to supervise the country and rule the world.

As the Empress, Empress Ning was superior to Concubine Lan and Imperial Concubine Xu in terms of status. With her methods and the support of the royalists, Concubine Lan and Imperial Concubine Xu were not her match.

However, due to the old matter between the Ning Residence and the emperor's eldest son, the Empress Dowager did not trust Empress Ning.

She did not even hesitate to give Yin Huaixi a privilege proof to guard against Empress Ning.

Yin Huaixi changed the topic. "The Dragon Boat Festival is in two days. At that time, I'll accompany you to watch the dragon boat race."

Yu Youyao suddenly thought of the first Dragon Boat Festival that "Zhou Linghuai" had celebrated in the Yu Residence. She couldn't help but laugh. "I remember that you promised me back then that you would personally bring me to watch the dragon boat race after your leg recovered."

At the mention of what had happened back then, she couldn't help but smile.

All the secular etiquette in her heart — either because she was getting older, or because she was wary of men and women, or because of that betrothal — suddenly reduced the distance she felt towards Yin Huaixi.

With the Dragon Boat Festival approaching, there was a strong festive atmosphere in Xiangping City.

The Xie Residence had joined forces with the Bai Residence and a few rich families in Xiangping City to hold the Dragon Boat Festival's "spring talent competition" and "Hundred Herbs" activities. Under the rule of Xiangping City, all unmarried women who had reached the age of 11 and men who had reached the age of 15 could sign up to participate. All participants would be given the Dragon Boat Festival sachets for free. The winners would also be rewarded with food, medicinal herbs, and money..

Chapter 956 - 956: Women Put On Makeup for The Person They

The men and women were divided into two groups — the "talent competition" group and the "Hundred Herbs" group.

Those who had talents competed in the talent competition.

Those who were good at picking medicinal herbs participated in the "Hundred Herbs" event.

In order to ensure that the competition was fair and square, the Xie Residence had also invited the teachers of the Lushan Academy and a few respected old physicians in the city as examiners.

Considering that there were also unmarried women among the participants, Madam Huang, General Ning Yuan's wife, and Madam Ye were intentionally invited to be witnesses for the women's group.

After Yu Youyao received this news, she also sponsored a large batch of medicinal fragrances as one of the rewards for participants.

Xiangping City was in an uproar again.

No matter if they were men or women, they fought to sign up.



As the event was held in a hurry, it seemed a little rushed.

However, with the strong support of the government, the Yue Fei Kings Residence, and Eldest Princess Shaoyi, as well as the financial, human, and material resources of the wealthy families in the city, everything was also carried out in an orderly manner.

In addition to the special events of the Dragon Boat Festival, many rich local families had joined forces with the businesses under Eldest Princess Shaoyi's name in the refugee resettlement area, as well as some foreign merchants to distribute festive gifts to the various refugee resettlements. The various shops and shops also gave corresponding discounts, gifts, and preferential treatment.

After the national policy was implemented, the entire Liaodong did not fall into chaos because of the influx of huge foreigners. Instead, it displayed strong inclusiveness and cohesion, as well as the responsibilities that local people deserved.

In the blink of an eye, it was the Dragon Boat Festival.

Before dawn, the Yu Garden was already busy sweeping, inserting mugwort, hanging calamus, weaving mugwort, hanging sword-shaped bags of aromatic herbs, tying the acacia rope, and hanging the portrait of Zhong Kui... It was very busy.

All of these were done to avoid disasters, dispel poison, ward off evil, eliminate filth, and get rid of disasters. The five blessings were complete.

Yu Youyao got up at dawn. After a simple wash, Dong Mei picked out a heavenly water jade dress with narrow sleeves. "Young Miss, you're going to the Goddess Peak for a walk today. Your clothes have to be brighter. This heavenly water jade cloth was rewarded by the Imperial Court when they conferred you with the title of County Head last year. Old Madam made the decision to send it to the Jinxiu Manor to tailor a set of clothes. It's a pity not to wear such a good tribute. In another year, once you grow up, you won't be able to wear it anymore."

After the clothes were done, the Matriarch's health deteriorated every day. Young Miss often went to An Shou Hall to attend to her illness, so it wasn't appropriate for her to wear clothes that were too bright. Such good clothes would be kept to herself.

Chun Xiao also advised, "The heavenly water jade is bright and pure. It's flawless and doesn't look ostentatious."

Yu Youyao was a little hesitant. "Last year, there was a water disaster in Zhejiang, and the entire Jiangnan was affected. The northwest also suffered a hundred-year drought, causing the production of the heavenly water jade to decrease. The reward sent by the Imperial Court earlier did not have the heavenly water jade. It's a little ostentatious after all."

The heavenly water jade was green. After being dyed with the morning dew, it revealed a bright and clear color.

Dyeing required the right time, place, and people. It could only be dyed during the Bailu and Hanlu seasons every year. As the weather and temperature were different every day, in addition to a certain chance, the dyeing of the heavenly water jade cloth also required superb skills.

As a result, the heavenly water jade was even rarer and more precious than snow satin.

At this moment, Auntie Xu lifted the curtain and entered. She smiled and said, "I think this outfit is suitable. Ordinary colors are suppressed as soon as they enter the mountains. Only the Heavenly Water Jade is bright and clear. It's suitable for taking a youth trip." As she spoke, she took the clothes from Dong

Mei's hand and praised, "You've improved."

Dong Mei pursed her lips and smiled at the praise, clearly encouraged. Yu Youyao blinked. "Auntie, why are you here?"

As Auntie Xu helped Yu Youyao change her clothes, she smiled and teased, "It's rare that Your Highness is free to accompany you for a walk. You have to dress up well. You can't go out without makeup like in the past."

If it was really like before, where she went to appointments without makeup, to a couple who was discussing marriage, it would be less ceremonial. Once it became ordinary, how could their relationship progress?

"Nineteenth Brother isn't an outsider, so there's no need to deliberately..." Towards the end, she couldn't continue. Yu Youyao suddenly felt a little uncomfortable. She didn't know where to put her words. She stood stiffly on the spot like a puppet, letting Auntie Xu fiddle with her.

This was a little like going on a "date."

"Women put on makeup for the person they like." As Auntie Xu smiled, she asked Dong Mei to pick out another small sky-green shirt and put it on Yu Youyao. "It's already the Dragon Boat Festival, and it's already alternating between spring and summer. The temperature in Xiangping City is still like March and April. It's warm and cold at the same time. It's better to wear more. Your body, which was frozen when you were young, will suffer when you're old."

The color of the Heavenly Water Jade was fresh and green, making Yu Youyao look elegant. She was bright and flawless. Her very beautiful appearance also complemented the color.

At this moment, Xia Tao entered the house with a smile. "His Highness sent Chang An over to deliver a message. It's humid in the morning, and it's still cold in the mountains. Tell Young Miss to wear more clothes and be careful not to fall sick from the cold. It's best to bring a cloak to block the wind and stay warm."

These were very ordinary words of concern. It turned out that in the Yu Residence, the "cousins" had already said a lot of caring words to each other.

Logically speaking, Yu Youyao was already used to it and only listened.

However, at this moment, for some reason, a surge of heat rushed to her face.

Yu Youyao immediately felt her face heat up. Her eyes were watery, and ripples appeared in them. She couldn't help but scold, "You're worrying too much, as if everyone knows. It's not the first time I've gone out. Why do I need his reminder?!"

Dong Mei quickly picked out a cloak and came over. Unexpectedly, Auntie Xu's smile deepened, but she shook her head. "That's good. Let's not add a cloak." Dong Mei was a little confused and wanted to say something but hesitated.

Didn't Auntie Xu always say that spring was cold? Spring hadn't passed yet, and the weather in Xiangping City was a little wet and cold. The material of the Heavenly Water Jade was already very thin, so it would definitely be cold to dress like this.

Auntie Xu glanced at her and smiled until her eyes narrowed. "Don't worry, your Young Miss won't be cold."

Even though her clothes were thin, there were six layers of clothes inside and out. Now that she was in the house, Yu Youyao did not feel cold. She thought about how she would have to ride in the carriage for a long time later. The road was bumpy. If she was wearing clothes that were too heavy, she would feel a little suffocated and uncomfortable. When she reached the Goddess Peak and the sun came out, she would not be cold.

Dong Mei looked suspicious. Auntie Xu smiled and did not explain. She pushed Yu Youyao to the glass mirror. "It's rare for you to go out today, so let's comb your hair into a bun, shall we?"

The Feitian bun was similar to the Feixian bun. One's hair was divided into three sections that were tied into a diagonal bun at the side of their head. Long and short tassels fell from the bun. It was more complicated and luxurious than the Feixian buns, making it look even more delicate and mellow.

There was no need to put on makeup. After Auntie Xu's wonderful hands and a little embellishment, Yu Youyao seemed to have shed her immaturity, making her look even more elegant and revealing the gentleness and beauty that a young woman should have.

Chapter 957 - 957: Traveling Together

Yu Youyao did not hide the matter of the Empress Dowager's secret decree bestowing a marriage from the Xie Residence. Not to mention Yin Huaixi's various schemes, the marriage was more logical.

Therefore, when Yin Huaixi asked Yu Youyao out on a trip, Madam Wang gladly took over all the trivial matters in the Yu Garden and came over early in the morning to help.

When everything was ready, Yu Youyao went to visit Madam Wang.

"Our Yao Yao is already a big girl." Madam Wang observed her with a smile in her eyes and held her hand happily. "It's rare for you to go out to play, so you have to have fun to your heart's content. Don't worry about your family. There are often snakes and insects in the mountains. You have to bring insect repellent powder with you. Be careful. Don't be alone..."

After explaining the safety matters, she also explained some things that a woman needed to pay attention to when she was outside. Moreover, she was traveling with a man as a woman. There were details that needed to be avoided.

Yu Youyao listened carefully. She thought of Yin Huaixi with every word and sentence.

Only then did she realize that the person she was meeting, whom she had meticulously dressed up for, was not the former “Cousin Zhou” or the nominal “Nineteenth Brother”, but her fiancé who had been bestowed by the Empress Dowager.

Her heart felt like it was twisted like dough. Suddenly, she felt a little awkward and subconsciously lowered her head. She listened to whatever her Eldest Aunt said like an answering bug.

After rambling for ten minutes, Madam Wang changed the topic. “King Yue Fei is waiting in front of the flower gate. Let’s go over!”

Yu Youyao was finally relieved of this awkwardness. She couldn’t help but heave a sigh of relief. She held Madam Wang’s arm and the two of them chatted and laughed until they arrived at the flower gate.

There were four low-key carriages parked inside.

Yin Huaixi stood at the side and waited for her. He took off his heavy armor and changed into a sky-green cape.

It was like the moment when the east turned white and the sun rose above the horizon. The sky appeared and dispelled the gray and heavy smog, making one’s eyes light up.

There was an elegance and tallness to it.

Yu Youyao couldn’t help but pause for a moment before retracting her foot back under her dress.

When Yin Huaixi saw her coming over, he couldn’t help but be stunned. A

trace of amazement flashed across his eyes, but because his elders were present, he didn’t dare to be too impudent. He quickly lowered his eyes and went forward to greet Madam Wang.

Madam Wang did not accept this bow. She dodged to the side and only said, “Yao Yao is mourning. After her Grandmother passed away, in order to mourn for her, she has been living in seclusion at home and rarely goes out. The Old Master and the others are always worried that she’s still young and will be cooped up at home like this, causing her body to be suffocated. Today is the Dragon Boat Festival, and it’s rare that Your Highness is free to ask Yao Yao out for a walk, so I hope you can take care of her more. Yao Yao is young and doesn’t go out much in the past. If there’s anything lacking in terms of her etiquette, please put in more effort and forgive her.”

It was just a polite sentence, but when one opened it and crushed it, one would realize that there was a deeper meaning.

First, it was mentioned that Yu Youyao was mourning. Then, Old Master Xie was mentioned as a warning to Yin Huaixi. He had to be more careful in everything. He couldn’t mess up the rules just because he was close to Yu Youyao.

The last sentence seemed to be because she was worried about Yu Youyao’s etiquette mistakes.

However, in fact, she was also warning Yin Huaixi not to lie to Yu Youyao and do anything rude and out of line just because she was young and ignorant.

Yin Huaixi was a smart person, so how could he not understand what she meant? He quickly agreed and even promised in person, “... Don’t worry. It’s also because I’ve been busy with work since

Yao Yao came to Xiangping City that I didn't have time to bring her around to see the terrain and relationships in Xiangping City. It's rare that I'm free, so I naturally have to let her have fun.'

The meaning between the lines made it clear that he placed Yu Youyao first. In addition, his humble and respectful attitude was filled with sincerity.

After their elders' enlightenment, everything made sense.

The carriage slowly drove along the street. There were people coming and going on the street. People had acacia rope tied to their arms. There were also sword-shaped bags with herbs to ward off poison. It was noisy and lively.

Both sides of the street were filled with a dazzling array of goods. From time to time, a team of patrolmen in armor and holding sabers walked past in unison. The surrounding commoners retreated, their eyes filled with reverence.

There was a public stage in the city, and 'Qu Yuan's Lost River' was playing on it. There was a crowd around them, and from time to time, they would erupt with cheers and applause.

Many rich families had built sheds at the city gate. The commoners were in a long line, waiting to receive the festive dumplings.

This peaceful scene was under Yin Huaixi's protection.

In the future, if the Great Zhou Dynasty was in chaos, the North would become the only pure land of the Great Zhou Dynasty. More and more commoners would escape to Liaodong because of the war.

Yin Huaixi had long expected this. Even before the chaos arrived, he had taken advantage of the fact that the Imperial Court was implementing a national policy in the North to gather resources wantonly.

First, by taking in refugees and settling them down, most of the Great Zhou Dynasty's supplies would be biased towards the North.

With the help of the Xie and Bai Residences, they spared no effort to dig out the wealth of the local nobles. The money and supplies that the soldiers and nobles had accumulated for generations were in their hands.

He used the case of the Han family in Xian to suppress the local noble forces wantonly. The huge connections and resources in the hands of the soldiers and nobles were in his control.

As a result of the wanton suppression of the nobles, the merchants in the other areas coveted the trade routes in the North. They were like cats that had smelled blood and rushed to the North to seek opportunities.

In order to have better development opportunities, the merchants had brought most of their resources to the North. These resources formed complete production chains in the North, injecting endless fresh blood into the North. Agriculture, industry, and business were thriving and prosperous in the North.

Yin Huaixi was in charge of all of this.

After an unknown period of time, the carriage gradually stopped.

Yu Youyao alighted from the carriage, and immediately, everything opened up in front of her. The sun had just jumped out of the horizon, and the brilliant light dyed the clouds in the east red. The layers resembled fire and were extremely beautiful. In the distance, mountains were surrounded by fog and bathed in the color of the morning light.

She finally couldn't help but praise, "It's so beautiful!"

She was admiring the beautiful scenery, but someone was admiring the beautiful woman. Before the little girl left, she had deliberately dressed up and drawn between her eyebrows. The brow powder, which was rarely used, was of a brighter color. It was the light green of the fog in the mountains when heavy rain was about to arrive. It dyed the area between her eyebrows, making her eyebrows look even more green and beautiful.

The collar on her neck was not as tight as usual. It was deeper and formed a V- shape, revealing her thin and beautiful swan-like neck, as well as the deep collar bones under her neck. The bottom was sealed, as if she was trying to

cover it up..

Chapter 958 - 958: Eating Chinese Goldthread in Silence

The more he thought about it, the more Yin Huaixi couldn't help but look down along her collarbone.

Women's belts gradually went lower with age. When they were young, most of them wore chest-high dresses, where the belt was above their chest. When they were older, they had to wear high-waisted dresses. The belts were level with their chests, or below their chests. Most women who married had to wear waist-high dresses, and the belts usually at their waists.

In the past, the little girl had always been wearing a high-waisted dress with a belt that was level with her chest.

However, today, her dress had moved down a little. The belt was tied under her chest, revealing her beautiful figure.

Her once wide dress had also become a flared dress.

The skirt of the wide dresses was rather broad.

However, the skirt of flared dresses had to be fixed around the waist. Thus, the skirt seemed a little narrower, and the waist seemed tighter, revealing one's figure.

Of course, the daughters of wealthy families were worried that a flared dress was not dignified enough, so they would usually wear a thin shirt that reached the bottom of their hips. The thin shirt reflected their hazy figures. As the woman took small steps, the belt at her waist swayed slightly, revealing her lithe and beautiful figure. This made her look even more unforgettable. The once petite and tender little girl seemed to have become a big girl in an instant.

In terms of overall dressing, she had actually not changed much.

However, it was this subtle change that was often the most fatal. According to

Uncle Sun's most common saying, "Young man, you're still too young and inexperienced! "

Yin Huaixi rubbed his face and calmed down a little. For some reason, he remembered that in the few days since he had returned to Xiangping, he had been taking all kinds of medicine and food. He suddenly had a bad feeling. He quickly reached out to touch his nose and heaved a sigh of relief when he did

not feel anything messy.

At this moment, Yu Youyao turned around. "Let's go up the mountain!"

Yin Huaixi suddenly heaved a sigh of relief and nodded quickly. "In the morning, the mountains are humid, and the roads are slippery. You have to be careful."

The maidservants did not disturb their masters and all fell far behind them. They played with their own things and only needed to be ordered around enough when their masters instructed them.

In the beginning, the two of them still maintained the rules of men and women traveling together. They maintained a distance of one step. They were close but not intimate enough.

However, there was dew in the mountains, so it was inevitable that the stone path was a little wet and slippery. It was a little difficult to walk. From time to time, Yin Huaixi would pull Yu Youyao along.

As he pulled her, he felt as if his guts were getting fatter. He also felt that the small hand in his hand was as smooth as jade, like a ball of cream. Worried that he wouldn't be able to hold it if he made a mistake, he couldn't help but tighten his grip.

After holding it tightly, he felt that the mountain path was steep. The higher they went, the harder it was to walk. It was better to hold her hand and walk. This way, she would have less difficulty.

Usually, when Yu Youyao went out, she always felt that it would take a lot of effort. In addition, her grandmother had passed away less than a year ago, so it wasn't appropriate for her to travel everywhere,

In order to avoid some unnecessary trouble, she would rather stay in the Yu Garden.

However, after coming out, it was a different world.

Hundred Herbs was a tradition since ancient times. Yu Youyao had never participated in it before. Along the way, she picked a lot of wild flowers, vanilla, and some common herbs. She even made an appointment with Auntie Xu and the others to play Hundred Herbs together after picking the flowers and plants.

Yin Huaixi followed behind her. Ever since he returned to Liaodong, he had been busy all day. It had been a long time since he had accompanied her as well as he had in the Yu Residence. It had also been a long time since he had seen her so happy.

At this moment, he suddenly understood.

Ever since he and Yu Youyao had made their intentions clear, the two of them had been spending less time together and more time apart. Their relationship had not progressed for a long time. The

two of them had been in a state of ambiguity where they had not reached mutual love for a long time. Yu Youvao had no choice but to return to the oast. when the two of them interacted like “cousins”. She couldn’t improve further to really treat him as her fiancé.

With such a neutral relationship, there was always a sense of distance when they interacted.

To put it bluntly, it was because they were spending less and less time together.

Yin Huaixi suddenly said, “The situation in the North is set. I’ll stay in Xiangping City for a long time.”

When Yu Youyao, who was picking a yellow cypress, heard this, she quickly looked up with joy in her eyes. “That’s great. After being busy for so long, you can finally stop. I’ll arrange some food carefully later and nourish you.”

Yin Huaixi thought of the various medicinal cuisine and soup that had been sent into The Green House incessantly over the past few days. For some reason, he felt his nose heat up, and his expression stiffened. “My health is quite good, so it’s not...”

“Yes, yes.” Yu Youyao interrupted him. “In the future, you’ll have to go into battle to kill the enemy. It’s necessary to nourish your muscles, bones, and blood. I heard from Madam Huang that many soldiers in the army have hidden injuries accumulated because they go into battle all year round to kill the enemy. When they’re young, they won’t be able to tell. When they’re old, all kinds of illnesses and pain will gradually show. They won’t be cured and you can only suffer on your own. General An Yuan has a problem with internal bleeding and often has a headache. Earlier, Madam An Yuan asked me for incense medicine and medicinal recipes that can relieve it.”

Yin Huaixi was speechless. There was nothing wrong with this.

However, the problem was that he was only 19 years old and was in his prime. He was already taking Essence Nourishing Pills and Bone Strengthening Pills every day. If he continued to nourish his body, would he really not go overboard?!

Yu Youyao said righteously, “It’s very difficult to notice some hidden injuries in the body. When the hidden injuries flare up, it’ll be too late. Although your body has recovered, you were so seriously injured back then and delayed for five to six years. Who knows if there are still some hidden injuries inside that haven’t completely recovered? You still have to nourish yourself.”

Yin Huaixi opened his mouth but hesitated.

However, Yu Youyao glared back at him. “You have to listen to me about this. I’ve been learning pharmacology, food, and nourishment from Auntie Xu since I was young. I’m a professional.”

Yin Huaixi rubbed his nose. Which professional would make someone’s nose bleed?!

It was like eating Chinese goldthread in silence and experiencing bitterness but not saying it. What did this mean?

This was it.



The little girl's eyes did not look big or small, but when her eyes widened, the whites of her eyes looked clear and innocent, and they were inlaid with agate eyes. She looked angry yet happy, and her eyes were filled with emotions. His body was numb, and he wished he could give her his life. How could he dare to refute her?

After picking the cypress, Yu Youyao took a few steps forward and suddenly said in surprise, "Nineteenth Brother, look, I found a Japanese gentian." Yin Huaixi hurriedly stepped forward.

Yu Youyao looked at the Japanese gentian on the ground with a disappointed expression. "What a pity. The harvesting season of the Japanese gentian is in February, August, November, and December. If we harvest it now, the medicinal properties will be greatly reduced.."

Chapter 959 - 959: What My Sword Points At

Yin Huaixi said, "This area of Xiangping is one of the places where the Japanese gentian is produced. It's not a problem to pick one for the occasion."

Yu Youyao shook her head firmly. "There are many medicinal herbs collectors at the foot of the mountain. When they pick medicinal herbs, no matter how precious the medicinal herbs are, they won't pick them unless it's time to pick them. Even if they know, perhaps someone else will beat them to it. They'll miss out on this precious medicinal herb that can allow the family to live a good life. However, they can still restrain the greed in their hearts."

Yin Huaixi's heart skipped a beat. "The herb gatherers who rely on the mountains are given gifts by nature, but they also strictly abide by the rules of nature."

It was very admirable.

Yu Youyao nodded. "Not only that, but during the process of picking medicinal herbs, they will collect the seeds of the medicinal herbs and preserve them. Every year, when everything recovers, they will enter the mountain and sprinkle the collected medicinal herb seeds into places suitable for every medicinal herb to grow. The seeds will take root on the ground under the wind, rain, and dew of nature. Therefore, the herb collectors will live in one place for generations, but the medicinal herbs in the mountain can be endlessly sent to the pharmacy."

The rules set by their ancestors had supported thousands of herb gatherers.

They knew more about gratitude and reverence for the world than most people in the world. Nature gave them gifts from nature, and at the same time, they did things to repay it.

For example, after cutting down a tree, a woodcutter who specialized in logging would plant a tree on the spot. They had a rule that if they cut down a tree, they had to plant ten trees.

Hundred Herbs also extended people's reverence for nature.

Yin Huaixi suddenly remembered that in the past, the North lacked supplies, and many soldiers had died from serious injuries because they lacked medicinal herbs. Every time there was a war, groups of herb gatherers would rush into the mountains to pick medicinal herbs. They carried herb collection baskets and sent the medicinal herbs to the nearby garrison. The garrison would deal with the medicinal herbs and send them to the battlefield.

Although it was a drop in the bucket, it was undeniable that these medicinal herbs had saved many soldiers who could not be treated because they lacked medicinal herbs.

At that time, he was very puzzled. How could the herb gatherers send an endless stream of medicinal herbs to the garrison?

Yin Huaixi squatted down and straightened the grass that Yu Youyao had dug out. The weeds around him became a natural hidden barrier for the Japanese gentian. In August, when it was time to harvest the Japanese Gentian, there would be a herb gatherer with a medicinal basket on his back and a medicinal hoe. He carefully dug out the weeds around him and harvested a stalk of good-looking and medicinal Japanese Gentian. It would be sold for a good price.

He suddenly smiled.

Yu Youyao also smiled. "I heard that the flowers of Japanese gentians are very beautiful. Unfortunately, the Japanese gentian won't bloom until August or August."

"There are medicinal farmers planting the Japanese gentian at the foot of the mountain. When the Japanese gentian blooms, I'll bring you over to take a look." The Japanese gentian could get rid of heat and dampness, and it could relieve pain. It was very practical and was used in large quantities. It was an indispensable herb. Furthermore, it was of the best quality in Liaodong, and the price of the Japanese gentian was not bad.

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. "Let's pinky swear."

As she spoke, she showed her little finger. Her white jade-like little finger was as tender as a bamboo shoot that had just been peeled from a bamboo.

Yin Huaixi's throat moved, and he inexplicably felt an appetite. He wanted to lower his head and take a bite.

"You're already so old. Why are you still so childish?" Although he said that,

Yin Huaixi did not slow down and stretched out his little finger cooperatively.

Yu Youyao said self-righteously, "You're so busy every day now. Who knows when you'll forget?" Just like then, she hooked Yin Huaixi's little finger and shook it gently twice. She reached out her thumb and stamped it against him. "Now that we've pinky sworn and stamped our thumbs, you're not allowed to forget!

Yin Huaixi opened his mouth, wanting to reply, "When have I not done what I promised you?"

However, just as he was about to say it, he remembered that ever since they left the capital, they had been separated more and more. Moreover, every time they met, they would come and go in a hurry.

"I'm sorry." The words that rushed to his mouth suddenly turned to an apology.

“Huh?” Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment, not understanding what he meant. “Why are you apologizing for no reason?” At this point, her eyes widened. “Did you do something to let me down behind my back?”

Yin Huaixi’s heart was in turmoil. There were many things that one felt were only right and proper if one didn’t think about them. However, as long as one thought about it more deeply, they would realize that there was no such thing as being right and proper in this world.

However, some people were willing to pay without asking for anything in return and swallowed all the grievances and bitterness.

Yu Youyao had left the family with his support and followed him all the way to Xiangping.

What she had done in the North had a profound and huge impact on the entire North. She had changed the structure and history of the North alone.

However, behind all of this, she had spent a lot of money and almost all the money under her name. Only then did she carve out a blood path from the nobles’ control of the silkworm industry, bringing a new opportunity for the silkworm industry in Liaodong.

She was the one who was willing to take the risk that women could not interfere in the court’s politics and schemed with the Empress Dowager. That was why the Imperial Court had issued a national policy in the North.

She was the one who had risked her life to enter the stronghold and face those desperadoes who would do anything. That was why she had given the You army a chance to suppress the bandits.

It was also her who did not hesitate to destroy her reputation and scheme against the Han family of Xi’an.

He was the one who had promised to protect her for the rest of her life.

He had planned for her to come to Liaodong because it was his territory. He could naturally protect her so that she did not have to live a life that was as hard as before in the Yu Residence and could feel more at ease.

He had carefully built the Yu Garden into a place to “nourish her life” so that she could recuperate in peace.

He was self-righteously certain that Yu Youyao was doing well in his territory.

However, in the end, he realized that that was not the case.

Yu Youyao was lazy and delicate. She was not a very ambitious person. When he thought about it, she only wanted to live a good life. However, with his protection, he had pulled her into a strange situation.

Yin Huaixi suddenly took a step forward and pulled her into his arms. “It’s been hard on you during this period of time.” He pulled her closer. “Although I can’t give you the days you want for a while, protecting you for a lifetime is the goal I’ve worked hard for my entire life. What you want will be what my sword points at.”

First, he had to be a living person to forge the strongest armor for her.

Yu Youyao was stunned for a moment. She pursed her lips slightly. After a long while, she said softly, "I used to be very afraid of nightmares. Every time I had a nightmare, I would always have lingering fears. For a long time, I would feel uneasy..."

At this point, she could not help but pause..

Chapter 960 - 960: Not Ashamed

She felt the arm around her waist tighten. "So, when the truth of the nightmare surfaced, I often compared the nightmare to reality. Suddenly, I wasn't so afraid. I wasn't as alone and helpless as the adult Yao Yao in the nightmare. No matter what happens, you will always be by my side."

Yin Huaixi, who was serious and wanted to confess his feelings, was speechless.

"Yin Huaixi." The little girl looked up and called out to him softly.

Her slender eyebrows were like the mountain mist in the distance. They were beautiful and clear. Meanwhile, her eyes were filled with the brilliance of mountains and rivers, revealing a spiritual divine light.

Yin Huaixi saw his figure in her bright eyes.

"Stand there and don't move." Her voice was soft and the last syllable rose slightly. Her words carried a bit of arrogance as they suddenly entered his ears.

It was just like in the past. In the Yu Residence, there was once when he was reading under the Parasol Tree. For some reason, he fell asleep leaning against the small couch. In his half-asleep state, he kept feeling an itch in his ears.

At first, he thought that the wind was blowing at the loose hair by his ear, making it itch.

Later, he could vaguely hear giggling. He suddenly woke up and saw a mischievous little girl moving closer to him. She was holding a pure white feather and teasing his ears. She tilted her head and smiled until her eyes curved into crescents, her eyes filled with the slyness of a successful prank.

Yin Huaixi's body suddenly stiffened and he stood rooted to the ground.

The hand trapped in front of his chest suddenly climbed onto his shoulder. Yu Youyao slowly leaned forward, approached him, and stood on her tiptoes.

Yin Huaixi was stunned, not knowing how to react.

His mind was blank, and all he could see was her lips, which were getting closer and closer. He could almost smell the faint fragrance of flowers on her lips.

The little girl was wearing a fresh and pure green dress. In order to match the color of her clothes, she had applied pink lipstick.

It was as pink and tender as a cherry blossom. It was like a peach blossom that had just bloomed. At a glance, it was as brilliant and beautiful as a peach.

Perhaps it was because she was too close, or perhaps he had forgotten to blink, but Yin Huaixi's eyes gradually blurred.

Just as he was hesitating if he should blink...

Yu Youyao closed her eyes, stood on her tiptoes, leaned forward, and quickly kissed him.

A gentleness suddenly came from the corner of his mouth. Yin Huaixi's eyes suddenly widened. Before he could react, the gentleness that made his heart palpitate had already left him.

There was a faint pink petal at the corner of his mouth.

After the kiss, Yu Youyao quickly took a step back and pressed her back against a crooked tree behind her. She glanced around guiltily. When she saw the corner of his mouth, her face immediately turned red and she felt so awkward that she felt awkward.

She quickly lowered her head and stared at her toes, which were in her small boots. She couldn't help but dig into her shoes awkwardly. She couldn't control her toes and drew circles on the ground.

Actually, she just wanted to kiss his face.

Why did she kiss the corner of his mouth?

She had clearly tiptoed?!

Furthermore, she tiptoed twice.

That shouldn't have happened!

Ahhh! Yu Youyao, you're really not ashamed at all!

She was too ashamed to face anyone. Would Yin Huaixi think that she was frivolous and not solemn?! Why did he not say anything? Could it be that he had been frightened by her just now?

Her mind was in a mess, and all kinds of messy thoughts appeared in her mind. She hesitated for a while, but still did not hear him speak.

Yu Youyao looked like she was about to break down. With the intention of dying early and reincarnating, she put on an expression of facing death calmly. She gritted her teeth and looked up. However, she only had time to see the face that had suddenly enlarged because of the sudden approach.

It was too sudden.

Everything happened in a flash.

"You... Wu wu... Wu wu..." Yu Youyao took a step back anxiously. Her heel pressed against the tree, making it impossible for her to retreat. Just as her back was about to touch the tree, a firm and strong arm wrapped around her shoulder forcefully. His tall body trapped her in front of his arms and chest.

The sound that came out of Yu Youyao's mouth was swallowed.

Her heart was beating wildly, and her curled eyelashes were like butterflies whose wings had been drenched. After a while, they seemed to have exhausted all their strength and drooped weakly, trembling.

Yu Youyao realized that she was a little breathless. She subconsciously opened her mouth to breathe. However, she gave Yin Huaixi the chance to drive straight in and attack. When she wanted to close her mouth, it was too late.

She tried to open her eyes with all her might, but her eyelids were heavy, as if she had fallen asleep. Her eyelids kept closing, and her eyelashes trembled so much that she felt dizzy. Her eyelids, which had just opened, fell again.

Before the last gap in her eyes closed, Yu Youyao saw Yin Huaixi lift his wide sky-green cape and cover her entire body.

Yin Huaixi held her shoulders with one hand to prevent her from leaning against the rough tree and hurting her. He lifted his cape with the other to block her from anyone spying.

The sun rose higher and higher, casting mottled shadows through the gaps in the trees. The temperature also rose higher and higher, bringing with it an airtight sultry heat that made one's heart restless.

In the silent forest, the flowers, plants, and trees did not move at all, as if they had stopped moving. Only wisps occasionally leaked out from under the big tree. They were sometimes rapid, sometimes mellow, sometimes sweet, and sometimes charming.

The cries were soft and mellow, as if they were connected.

Some were weak, some were strong, some were heavy, and some were light. They intertwined and lingered.

After an unknown period of time, a bird on the tree suddenly flapped its wings and flew high into the sky. A green leaf fell and landed on Yu Youyao's head.

"No, uh, no more." Finally, a weak and slightly panting voice came from the silent forest. "Don't, 1—I feel terrible and can't breathe,"

"Try again. I'll definitely remember to breathe this time." The man's voice was not any better. His rapid breathing was drawn in through his nose and spat out from his mouth like a bellows.

"But, but." Yu Youyao's voice was trembling and she was sobbing. She was delicate and timid, making people pity her. "But my... My mouth hurts. You bit me so hard just now..."

Yin Huaixi's eyes were shockingly bright, and they were burning with passion. He looked at her fair face, which was completely dyed red and beautiful. Her eyes were shy, and her eyes were watery. The lipstick on her lips had been eaten clean by him, and the sweet taste was still lingering between his teeth and cheeks, leaving a rich aftertaste. The fragrance faded from her delicate lips, making them even more beautiful.

A vicious aura suddenly rose in her heart, wanting to ravage her.

However, when he met the little girl's delicate gaze, Yin Huaixi subconsciously lowered his voice and coaxed, "I promise that I'll be gentle this time..."