

All Hail 81

Chapter 81: Humiliation of the Ancestors

Xia Tao was a smart girl. She had a pair of ears that listened to the wind. She had not been doing anything serious the entire day and had only been keeping an eye on the situation in the residence. At this moment, she was leaning in front of Yu Youyao to report what happened.

“Just now, Master ordered someone to call Fourth Miss over and teach her a lesson. Not only did she cry, but she was also punished to copy the ‘Disciple’s Rules’ a hundred times, and Fourth Miss was sent to the ancestral hall to kneel and reflect on her mistakes.” As she spoke, she smiled gloatingly. “Fourth Miss, you haven’t even finished copying ‘Female Virtue’ and the ‘Three Principles and Five Commissions’. You even have to copy the ‘Disciples’ Rules’. I’m afraid you’ll break your arms.”

Although the Yu Clan did not have the rule that women were not allowed to enter the ancestral hall, the ancestral hall was not an ordinary place. However, being punished to enter the ancestral hall was a form of humiliation to their ancestors. It was a serious punishment.

Yu Youyao was shocked.

Madam Yu had been a scholar for generations, and she valued rules and upbringing the most. Yu Qingning had just violated her father’s taboo, so Madam Yang had no choice but to speak up in front of her father.

Her father did not know much about ordinary affairs, and he still had some authority in the imperial court. However, when he arrived at the residence, he listened to everything Yang Shuwan said.

Her father was angry with Yu Qingning and Concubine He, so he directed his anger at them.

Only then could Yang Shuwan take this opportunity to express her virtuous and magnanimous nature in front of her father. In comparison, her father’s dissatisfaction with Yang Shuwan dissipated.

This was called letting others bear the losses on your behalf!

The next day, Yu Youyao went to school as usual.

Today, Ms. Ye had given a lecture on “Courtesy” and “Mannerisms” which were similar to the “The Book of Rites” and “The Young Master’s Ceremony.” It consisted of some trivial etiquette, such as meeting people, handing over guests, sweeping, serving food, asking questions, and charioting. It was more detailed than “The Book of Rites”.

Ms. Ye paid a lot of attention to Yu Youyao. During the lecture, she would slow down when she saw Yu Youyao engrossed in copying. When she saw that Yu Youyao was deep in thought, she would repeat herself.

Gradually, even Yu Jianjia realized this, and her heart felt stifled.

Among her sisters, she was the only one who had done her homework the best. Usually, when Ms. Ye attended class, she would match her progress to hers.

Now, Mentor had given Yu Youyao the attention that originally belonged to her.

The progress of the class also began to lean towards Yu Youyao.

This made Yu Jianjia feel the difference. How could she feel comfortable?

After finishing a chapter of “Mannerisms”, Old Madam Su, who was in the side room, hurriedly brought over a cup of tea. Ms. Ye took a few sips to moisten her throat, and saw that Yu Jianjia, who was usually very diligent in class, was a little distracted.

Ms. Ye’s expression was calm. “Third Miss!”

Yu Jianjia was stunned. She quickly stood up and bowed to Ms. Ye.

Ms. Ye said, “The beauty of words, magnificent and beautiful; the beauty of the imperial court, helping the people fly; the beauty of sacrifices, helping the emperor; the beauty of chariots, moving in a neat line; the beauty of the Luan [1.Luan, also known as luanniao, is a mythological bird in East Asian mythology.], chirps harmoniously. What does this mean?”

She had not heard this clearly.

Yu Jianjia’s breathing froze, and the blood drained from her pale face bit by bit. She forced herself to remain calm and said, “The beauty of words lies in their calmness, kindness to others, and the beauty of the Imperial Court...”

She gripped the hem of her dress tightly, her palms sweating. It was wet and cold. She racked her brains, trying to recall what her teacher had said previously.

Fortunately, there were similar answers in “The Book of Rites” that she had just learned yesterday. Although there were some bumps, after putting together her thoughts, she finally managed to get the answer.

Yu Youyao listened and felt that it was not bad.

However, Ms. Ye did not show any emotions. She only said calmly, “Sit down!”

Yu Jianjia suddenly heaved a sigh of relief. With a pale face, she sat down as instructed. Just now, she had broken out in a cold sweat, and now, her body was also feeling a little weak.

At this moment, Ms. Ye looked at Yu Youyao. “Eldest Miss, get up and answer.”

Yu Youyao stood up and bowed to the man before replying, “The beauty of words lies in their calm tone and concise meaning. The beauty of the imperial court lies in its dignity and neatness, and manners. The beauty of sacrifice lies in its cautious sincerity and its connection to ghosts and gods. The beauty of carriages and horses lies in their orderly march...”

Yu Jianjia, who had thought that she had answered well, felt the blood drain from her face. She could no longer suppress the itch in her throat. Clutching her handkerchief, she lowered her head and coughed twice.

Ms. Ye tilted her head to look at her, then retracted her gaze and nodded at Yu Youyao. “Your words are shocking. It’s obvious that you’ve understood it. Sit down!”

Yu Youyao secretly stroked her chest to calm herself down. Then, she felt a piercing gaze on her.

She turned her head to look, and Yu Jianjia’s pupils suddenly constricted. Her gaze, which had not been retracted in time, was slightly wet, cold, and flustered.

Immediately after, Yu Jianjia blinked, and a thin layer of mist gathered in her eyes, making her look even more watery.

Yu Youyao's gaze paused for a moment, and she turned her head.

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Early in the morning, Nanny Liu left for the Education Bureau.

Since Yu Zongzheng was injured, Yang Shuwan did not go to Old Madam Yu's house to set up rules.

After breakfast, Yang Shuwan went to An Shou Hall to greet Old Madam Yu and mentioned that she wanted to prepare a new courtyard for Yu Qingning to move into.

Old Madam Yu had a clear understanding of Yang Shuwan's little scheme. However, Yu Qingning was indeed not young, and it was not good for her to stay with her mother all the time, so she did not say anything.

The Hanlu Courtyard was packed yesterday. With Old Madam's permission, Yang Shuwan immediately brought Nanny Li to the Clear Autumn Courtyard to pack Yu Qingning's things and ordered someone to move them into the courtyard.

Concubine He wanted to stop her, but she did not dare to say anything.

She could only watch helplessly as Madam Yang strutted around arrogantly with a group of maidservants. "Master said that although you're a member of the family of a criminal official, you're also well-mannered and sensible, which is why he allowed Fourth Miss to stay by your side to be educated. I didn't expect you to teach Fourth Miss to be so unruly and ill-mannered."

When Concubine He heard this, she was so angry that her heart ached. However, she had no choice but to lower her head and grit her teeth respectfully. "Madam, you're right. I was negligent in the past."

Yang Shuwan acted as if she hadn't heard her. "But you've taught Fourth Sister how to be a concubine. Do you want Fourth Sister to be like you in the future, becoming someone's concubine and serving a man?" At this point, she chuckled. Looking at Concubine He's pale face, she felt a sense of relief. "That won't do. There's no precedent in our Yu Clan for a sister to be someone's concubine. You have to save your energy."

"You..." Concubine He felt dizzy. She held onto the edge of the table and almost gritted her teeth.

Yang Shuwan pinched her handkerchief and gently pressed it against the corner of her mouth. She smiled gloatingly. "Master said that you don't have to interfere in Fourth Sister's upbringing in the future. Let me, as her mother, do my best."

Concubine He's eyes darkened. "How, how is that possible? I want to see Master..."

Master had asked Yang Shuwan to discipline Fourth Miss, so there was no way Fourth Miss would not suffer.

In the end, she was still at Madam Yang's mercy!

Now that Fourth Miss had moved into the Hanlu Courtyard, it would be too late for her in the future.

Chapter 82: The Nanny from the Education Department

Yang Shuwan couldn't stop laughing. "That won't do. Old Madam has grounded you. At the very least, you won't have the chance to see Master for the next month. The nanny from the Education Department will be entering the residence soon. You have to learn the rules of being a concubine from her."

At noon, Nanny Liu led the two nannies back to the residence and brought them to Old Madam Yu.

Old Madam Yu sat on the couch and sized up the two nannies in the hall.

One of them had a long face and was in his fifties. His surname was Qian, and his hair was combed into a neat bun. He was wearing a dark blue floral jacket, and his entire body was meticulously groomed. He looked serious and stiff.

The round-faced woman, whose surname was Jin, was in her early forties. She was dressed in bean-green clothes and had a smile on her face. She looked very gentle and kind.

With just a glance, Old Madam Yu nodded in satisfaction. She sent the older Nanny Qian to the Clear Autumn Courtyard to specially teach Concubine He the rules. Then, she looked at Nanny Jin and said, "Third Miss in the residence has had a weak constitution since she was born. Eldest Madam Yang is taking care of the house while taking care of Third so, but she doesn't have the time. That's why Fourth Sister has been growing up by her mother's side since she was young, so she's a little out of shape. Nanny Jin, please take care of her and teach her more of the rules."

Nanny Qian's eyebrows moved slightly. Old Madam Yu had only asked her to teach Concubine He the rules, so she did not say anything else. It was obvious that she did not take the concubine seriously.

However, Nanny Jin's heart was as clear as a mirror.

Old Madam Yu had asked her to spend more effort teaching Fourth Miss the rules, so she could be stricter. However, her words also subtly reminded her to watch her words.

The two of them usually walked around other houses, and with just a few words, they understood Old Madam Yu's thoughts.

After making arrangements for the two nannies, Nanny Liu wanted to send them to the Clear Autumn Courtyard.

On the way, she bumped into Yang Shuwan. "Nanny Liu left early in the morning, but she didn't know that Fourth Sister had moved into the Hanlu Courtyard this morning. I'll make arrangements for the two nannies. Old Madam can't be without you. Hurry back and serve her."

"In that case, thank you, First Madam," Nanny Liu agreed with a smile.

First Madam was in charge of the household, so it was only right for her to arrange this matter. As for what happened after that, it was not something a servant like her should be in charge of.

After watching Nanny Liu leave, Yang Shuwan politely said to Nanny Jin and Nanny Qian, “The Yu family has been educated for generations and values rules and upbringing the most. I’ll have to trouble the two of you in the future.”

With that, she glanced at Nanny Li.

Nanny Li hurriedly bowed and quietly stuffed two thick pouches into the hands of the two nannies. “Eldest Madam is a kind person. Fourth Miss has been pampered since she was young and has never suffered. Concubine He is also soft and tender, so I’ll have to trouble you two nannies to discipline them in the family. Teach them more about rules and principles. If they have offended you in any way, please take the responsibility to educate them.”

Nanny Jin and Nanny Qian accepted the pouches and secretly weighed them in their hands. Immediately, they beamed and said, “Eldest Madam, don’t worry. Since we’ve been entrusted by Old Madam to come here, we’ll teach the sister and concubine in the residence well and share the burden with you.”

It wasn’t the first time that Nanny Qian and Nanny Jin had been invited into the residence. They had seen this kind of thing many times. They didn’t have much to gain in the Education Department, so they were hoping to be invited into a residence to make a fortune.

They were the ones who had the final say on how to teach the concubine and sister in the residence. They had plenty of ways to torture others. They would definitely be taught a lesson, but they would still find it difficult to speak.

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After the morning class ended, Yu Youyao packed her things and prepared to return to the Jade Courtyard. However, she was called into the inner room by Ms. Ye.

When Yu Jianjia saw this, her throat felt a little itchy again. She took a handkerchief and covered her mouth to cough. This cough was unstoppable, but the more she coughed, the itchier it became, the more uncomfortable she felt and the more she wanted to cough. She just couldn’t stop coughing.

Hui Xiang was shocked and quickly poured a cup of hot tea. “Young Miss, what’s wrong? Have some water.”

Yu Jianjia hurriedly picked up her teacup and took small sips. Only when she finished the cup of hot tea did her throat feel a little better.

Yu Shuangbai and the others came over and asked with concern.

Yu Jianjia’s face was abnormally red. She only shook her head and said, “I’m probably a little tired. I’ll be fine after resting for a while. Don’t worry.”

The population of the Yu Residence was considered small, but there were still six young misses from both houses. Each of them had different aptitudes, so it was inevitable that the teacher would be a little biased when teaching. She would choose those with good aptitudes and focus on nurturing them. Those with poor aptitudes would just have to follow along. How much they could learn depended on their own abilities.

Usually, when Ms. Ye was in school, she would be called into the inner room to be tested on the courses she had learned on that day. It could be considered as giving her special training and nurturing her.

But now, Mentor had already called Yu Youyao to the inner room for two consecutive days.

It seemed like she wanted to focus on nurturing her?

Thinking about Yu Youyao's performance in class over the past two days, Yu Jianjia felt extremely depressed. She kept feeling that Yu Youyao had become a little different after being sick. Now that she had a formidable nanny who had come from the palace, she had become much smarter.

Ms. Ye called Yu Youyao into the room and asked her to memorize "Mannerisms".

After Yu Youyao finished reciting it fluently, Ms. Ye asked her to take out her writing.

At the thought of her handwriting, Yu Youyao was a little reluctant and dawdled.

Even though Ms. Ye was mentally prepared, the corners of her mouth couldn't help but twitch when she saw this word. She stared at Yu Youyao, swallowing the words of reprimand that were about to come out of her mouth.

Yu Youyao was embarrassed by her stare. She quickly lowered her head and hid her hands behind her back, as if someone was about to hit her.

Ms. Ye did not know whether to laugh or cry. She had not wanted to hit her, but now her hands were itching. She could not help but glance at the long ruler on the table.

Yu Youyao lowered her eyes and looked very obedient, but she kept stealing glances at Ms. Ye. When she saw Ms. Ye looking at the ruler at the side, she recalled how painful it was when it hit her palm, and she shrank her neck nervously.

All of her small actions fell into Ms. Ye's eyes. She was speechless for a long time. She took a deep breath and looked at her notes carefully, then pointed out a few mistakes and ambiguities.

Yu Youyao understood immediately.

After that, Ms. Ye instructed her to practice her calligraphy well. "Words are like a person's reputation. If you don't write well, no matter how well you learn, you will still be mocked in the future."

Yu Youyao nodded repeatedly. "Thank you for your guidance, Mentor."

Chapter 83: Cousin Is Really Amazing

On the way back to the Jade Courtyard, Yu Youyao saw that not far away, Yang Shuwan was talking to two well-behaved women. Seeing that the two of them were unfamiliar faces, she guessed that they were the nannies that Nanny Liu had hired from the Education Department. She was a little curious and couldn't help but take a few more glances.

Nanny Jin was not as rigid as Nanny Qian. Instead, she had a lively personality. At a glance, she saw a lake-green figure not far away. She was young and her body was slender and delicate.

Her exquisite oval face had some baby fat, but it made her look even more innocent and delicate. In particular, every move she made was graceful, and not pretentious. She exuded an indescribable sense of nobility and beauty.

However, she was ignorant. She actually did not know that there was such a delicate person hidden in the Yu Residence. She could not help but ask, “May I know who the lady in front is?”

Yang Shuwan glanced at her casually. Although there was a smile on her face, her voice was a little lighter. “It’s the Eldest Miss of the residence.”

After saying that, she did not say anything else.

Nanny Jin suddenly understood.

So she was the eldest daughter of Eldest Madam Xie.

Madam Xie had a good reputation in the capital back then.

Unexpectedly, her daughter was also a precious beauty. In a few years, who knew how many people in the capital would be attracted to her?

She had heard some rumors about Eldest Miss Yu’s arrogance in the past. Now that she saw Eldest Miss Yu, she could sense that something was amiss. She quietly looked at Madam Yang, who had the mouth of a Buddha but the heart of a wolf, and swallowed the praise that was on the tip of her tongue.

Nanny Jin was used to entering and leaving wealthy families and was used to observing people’s appearances. How could she not tell that Yang Shuwan did not like the eldest daughter?

Not long after Yu Youyao left, Yu Jianjia appeared.

She saw that this little girl had a delicate figure and looked extremely weak. Her little face was pale and clear, and her eyebrows were furrowed. There was a fog in her eyes, and she looked delicate and sickly.

Nanny Jin couldn’t help but take a few more glances. “This must be the Third Miss of the residence. I’ve often heard that she’s intelligent and kind-hearted. Now that I’ve seen her today, she’s indeed a delicate beauty.”

Hearing this praise, Yang Shuwan couldn’t help but raise her eyebrows a little. “She doesn’t deserve such praise.”

Yu Jianjia also saw Yang Shuwan and walked over.

Yang Shuwan hurriedly stepped forward and asked, “Why are you here?”

Yu Jianjia’s face was pale, and even her voice sounded a little weaker. “I’m not feeling well, so I asked for leave. I won’t be attending the talent class this afternoon.”

With that, she coughed lightly into her handkerchief.

Previously, in class, her limelight was stolen by Yu Youyao. She had felt so stifled that she couldn’t even sit still. In order not to ruin her teacher’s impression of her, she had simply applied for leave.

When Yang Shuwan heard this, she immediately panicked. “What’s going on? You were fine this morning. Why did you suddenly...”

Yu Jianjia hurriedly said, “Mother, don’t worry. It’s probably just that the weather is a little hot today. I just feel suffocated, but it’s nothing serious.”

Only then did Yang Shuwan feel a little relieved. She thought of Nanny Jin, who was beside her. “This is Nanny Jin, who entered the residence today. From now on, your fourth sister’s upbringing will be in her hands. You can rest assured now.”

Yu Jianjia hurriedly stepped forward and bowed. She said gently, “My fourth sister was a little rash, so I’ll have to trouble Nanny Jin to teach her a little more.”

Her attitude was very sincere, and her tone was also very sincere. When Nanny Jin heard this, she couldn’t help but sigh with emotion. This Third Miss was indeed kind-hearted, so she said politely, “Third Miss, you’re too polite.”

On the other hand, after Yu Youyao had walked a little further, she instructed Chun Xiao, “When we return to the courtyard later, get someone to send some supplements and brocade to the two nannies who have just entered the residence. I’ll have to trouble them to take care of Fourth Sister.”

Chun Xiao nodded in agreement.

When they returned to the Jade Courtyard, Dong Mei smiled and walked forward. Before she could say anything, Yu Youyao’s eyes lit up and she asked impatiently, “Is Cousin here?”

Dong Mei nodded. “He’s waiting for you in the drawing room.”

Yu Youyao picked up her skirt and ran to the living room. She saw that her cousin’s book was still in his hand. “Cousin, you have a lot of work to do. You can’t keep running to the Jade Courtyard. You won’t have to go back and forth, and you’ll be exhausted.” Thinking of how tired Cousin looked yesterday, she pursed her lips. “Cousin, you have to take care of your health.”

Zhou Linghuai’s lips curled up slightly. “The lessons that Mr. Hu Shan is teaching now are all things that I’ve learned in the past. It won’t take much effort to learn them again. Besides, I don’t need to take the imperial examination, and Mr. Hu Shan isn’t that strict with me.”

Thinking of her cousin’s leg, Yu Youyao felt a little sad, but she quickly cheered up. “Cousin, you’re really amazing.”

It could be seen that her cousin had also learned his imperial examination syllabus very well in the past. If it weren’t for the fact that it was inconvenient for his legs, he would definitely have made it onto the Imperial Rankings this year.

Everyone said that the heir of the Marquis Zhen was talented, but she felt that her cousin was the most talented. Visit www.v31b.com for new *novels*

Zhou Linghuai took the calligraphy piece from Chang An’s hand and handed it to Yu Youyao. “Cousin said yesterday that she wanted to practice calligraphy. I’ve prepared a few books for her.”

Yu Youyao’s eyes lit up, and she quickly took the calligraphy. There were a total of five books, including the Three Character Classic, the Thousand Character Classic, the Hundred Family Surnames, the Disciples’ Rules, and the Analects of Young Learning. “Did Cousin specially write this for me?”

Zhou Linghuai nodded.

Yu Youyao flipped through the calligraphy pieces page by page.

At the side, Chun Xiao couldn't help but interject, "Young Master's calligraphy is really timely. It's like a pillow when you're sleepy. Yesterday, Miss didn't practice her calligraphy well and was so angry that she almost cried. When I saw this, my eyes turned red."

Yu Youyao felt embarrassed, and her fair face turned red. She glared at Chun Xiao. "You talk too much!"

Chun Xiao hurriedly lowered her head. She had said this despite being blamed by the young mistress because she was worried that she would not be able to practice her calligraphy well in the future. She felt terrible and wanted Young Master to help persuade her.

Zhou Linghuai's expression froze. The young lady was smart and usually learned everything quickly, but practicing calligraphy was not something that could be done just by being smart. After all, she was still a child. Once she had a roadblock, she could not take it anymore and became furious. "It takes more than a day to practice calligraphy. Cousin, you don't have to be too anxious. In the future, I'll take an hour every afternoon to guide you in practicing calligraphy. When you've mastered the technique, it'll be easier."

When Chang An heard this, he wanted to say something but hesitated. However, Zhou Linghuai glanced at him indifferently, so he didn't dare to say anything else.

Seeing the little girl's stunned expression, Zhou Linghuai asked, "What do you think, Cousin?"

What did she think? Yu Youyao avoided his gaze and mumbled, "Of course it's great that Cousin is teaching me how to write, but, but the way Cousin is going back and forth..."

Chapter 84: Cousin Is Deliberately Attacking Me

Zhou Linghuai interrupted her. "It's fine. I also have to practice my calligraphy for an hour every day. I'll practice with Cousin instead of in the courtyard."

Yu Youyao rejected him tactfully. "D-Forget it. I'll practice my calligraphy by myself and slowly master it. How can I trouble Cousin to run to the Jade Courtyard every day?"

The corners of Zhou Linghuai's mouth twitched slightly. "I'm not tired. It's just that I'll have to trouble you in the future to prepare an extra set of food for lunch. Please forgive me for disturbing you."

At this point, what else could Yu Youyao do? She could only lower her head and agree.

In the past, she had never liked to write. After practicing for a while last night, she felt that practicing calligraphy was boring, so she was even less interested. She had originally planned to just practice casually and get by. However, her cousin wanted to teach her how to write, so she had no choice but to work hard.

Zhou Linghuai asked Yu Youyao what class she had attended today, so he explained "Mannerisms" to her. The complicated and trivial etiquette and standards were much simpler after her cousin explained them.

Not long after, Nanny Xu ordered someone to prepare dinner.

After lunch, the two of them went to the study.

Thinking about how her cousin would be coming to the Jade Courtyard to teach her calligraphy for a long time, Yu Youyao got someone to move a table and pick out the best Four Treasures of the Study, placing them in the small study room.

Thus, there was a place for Zhou Linghuai in the small study.

The afternoon sun shone brightly on the windows of the study, illuminating everything. On the antique shelves, there were a few pots of orchids with long, dark green leaves. They were long and beautiful, and the light green buds sprouted, adding to the elegance.

Zhou Linghuai sat in front of the desk and drank his tea. "Write a few words for me first."

Yu Youyao sat in front of the desk with a long face as she spread out the paper. She used the white jade Qilin paperweight to flatten it. Her tender hand held a brush as she took out her most serious stance and wrote the words "Yu Youyao" one by one.

"Cousin, I'm done."

Zhou Linghuai put down his teacup and leaned closer to take a look. There was no expression on his face as he said calmly, "Pour the ink away. We'll start by grinding the ink."

Yu Youyao's face fell again. "What does bad handwriting have to do with the ink?"

She also knew that the quality of the ink would affect her handwriting, but the ink she used was the old ink that her grandmother had sent over yesterday. It was the best inkstone.

Glancing at old ink on the inkstone, even someone as calm as Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but hold his breath. This girl was really reckless. "Do as I say first."

Her cousin's tone was indifferent, as if he was no different from usual. However, when Yu Youyao heard this, she felt a sense of fear in her heart. This was probably what people often meant when they said that one should not be angry.

"Got it, Cousin!" Yu Youyao shrank back. Although she was full of questions, she still poured out the remaining ink in the inkstone and washed it with clean water.

Zhou Linghuai did not say much. He held a bowl in one hand and slowly dipped it into the water. With the other hand, he held the ink stick and slowly grounded it.

Yu Youyao had a sharp mind, so she could tell at a glance that when her cousin was grinding the ink, not only did it move quickly and slowly, but it also revealed a neutral and peaceful rhythm. Moreover, the ink strips were flat, not crooked, and slanted. They formed circles vertically in the inkstone.

There was a faint fragrance of ink, and it filled the study room, making it smell even more elegant.

Yu Youyao was embarrassed for a moment. Previously, when she was studying ink, she had only rubbed it casually. The ink that was rubbed out always had a smell of oil and ink. It wasn't a pleasant smell, nor was it unpleasant. However, after smelling it for a long time, it became annoying and unbearable, so even practicing calligraphy felt unbearable.

Zhou Linghuai tilted his head and saw that the little girl was deep in thought. The corners of his lips curled up slightly, and he let go of the ink stick. He picked up a full brush from the brush holder and dipped it into the ink.

It was extremely difficult to control all the bristles, but it was suitable for calligraphy, cursive calligraphy, and even paintings. There was softness in its firmness, sharpness in its strokes, and a hidden aura.

The Great Zhou Dynasty was very popular. The sheep's hair emphasized wrist strength and internal energy, so it was called the "Hidden Edge." Only very few people who had mastered calligraphy would use it.

As soon as the words "Yu Youyao" were formed, Zhou Linghuai put down his pen. "Take a closer look." Explore new *novels* on [novelbin\(.\)com](http://novelbin(.)com)

Yu Youyao took a look and saw that it was written by her cousin on the left. The words "A Dragon Leaps Through the Heavenly Gates, A Tiger Rests in the Phoenix Tower" were written in bold and bold strokes, yet they did not lose their elegance.

She had written the words on the right. The handwriting that she had originally thought was decent, now that she compared it, was simply tragic.

Seeing that she was looking at him carefully, Zhou Linghuai asked, "Did you notice anything different?"

Yu Youyao pouted and threw away the brush in her hand. "Cousin, you're doing this on purpose!"

Zhou Linghuai said helplessly, "I'm not asking you to read the words. I'm asking you to observe the ink. Take a closer look at the difference between the two."

Yu Youyao was a little unhappy, but she still lowered her head to take a closer look. Soon, she could tell what was going on.

The words she had written were dark and lusterless. The pen was paper-thin and weak, and there were still water stains seeping through the edges of the ink.

On the other hand, her cousin's handwriting was deep and shiny. The brush stroke was strong, but the ink did not seep through the paper. The handwriting looked neat and clean, and the ink was faint.

No matter how stupid Yu Youyao was, she still understood. "Was it because my ink wasn't polished thoroughly, causing the ink to not mix well?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Ink quality is also important. Do you want to know more?"

Yu Youyao's interest was piqued. She quickly said, "Yes!"

Zhou Linghuai chuckled. "If you want to know the ink grinding, you can tell from the handwriting. Cousin's ink was uneven, and the color was too thick. It wasn't delicate enough. The words she wrote looked crude, impatient, and untidy."

Yu Youyao took a closer look at the words she had written previously. They were indeed filled with an impetuous aura.

Zhou Linghuai continued, "To grind ink, you have to be neutral and calm. The process of grinding ink has to be heavy and slow. Make a circle vertically on the inkstone. Don't grind it diagonally or push it straight. The color of the ink has to be moderate in darkness. It doesn't matter if it's too thick or too light. As a woman, the ink should be dark."

At this point, when he saw Yu Youyao's puzzled expression, Zhou Linghuai added, "What do I mean by dark? When it is appropriately dark, it will look beautiful and clean. Cousin, why don't you try it again?"

Yu Youyao's knowledge had really increased. She did not expect that grinding ink would be so meticulous. She held the ink stick and began to grind slowly according to her cousin's instructions. "Cousin, is that so?"

After watching for a while, Zhou Linghuai came up behind her and covered her hand that was holding the ink stick with one hand. "I'll grind it with you first."

Her cousin's chest was pressed against her back. She could even feel his slightly rugged chest under his thin shirt. He wasn't as thin as she had imagined. Instead, he looked strong and firm. Yu Youyao was stunned.

Chapter 85: So Spoiled

Zhou Linghuai said in an elegant voice, "Why are you distracted?"

Yu Youyao immediately snapped out of her daze and sat up straight. "Cousin, let's begin!"

"Relax your body a little. Don't make your arms so stiff. Your fingers will naturally tighten." Zhou Linghuai gently supported her waist and then her arm, helping her adjust into a more natural posture.

Yu Youyao followed her cousin's instructions and adjusted herself, almost leaning into Zhou Linghuai's arms behind her without realizing it. "Is this okay?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded. He held her hand and led her to slowly grind the ink. He even instructed, "You have to control the strength of your hands properly. This way, you have to be careful with your strength. It's suitable for you to be slow and fast. You can't be anxious, and you have to be steady."

There was a faint fragrance of ink and pine on her cousin's body. It seeped into her mind, like pine trees in the snow, exuding a cold and refreshing aura.

His breath was slowly by her ear, and it was slightly warm and moist. Yu Youyao felt a little itchy and couldn't help but tilt her head. Then, she heard her cousin's calm voice. "Be serious. Don't move around too much. Be careful not to break the inkstone."

Yu Youyao did not dare to move anymore, but after a while, she could not help but tilt her head slightly.

The side of her cousin's face was by her neck, as strong and warm as carved jade. His long and narrow eyes were slightly narrowed, revealing a hint of coldness. His dark eyes were lowered, revealing an unfathomable depth from the gaps of his eyes. His slightly pursed lips were thin and pale, making him look even colder.

Sensing that the person in his arms was distracted again, Zhou Linghuai felt a little helpless. "What are you thinking about again?"

"Cousin is so handsome!" Yu Youyao couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

Zhou Linghuai's expression froze, and he let go of her hand.

Only then did Yu Youyao realize that she had probably said what she was thinking earlier. She couldn't help but cover her mouth with her hand. Her eyes widened as she looked at her cousin with clear and innocent eyes.

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but curl his lips and knock on her little head. "What are you talking about? Did you remember the method and rhythm of grinding the ink?"

"I remember, I remember," Yu Youyao said as she hugged her cousin's arm and pouted. "But I don't remember clearly. Cousin, teach me again. I'll definitely remember it more clearly the next time."

How was this remembering? This was clearly cheating!

However, when Zhou Linghuai saw the little girl pouting and acting like a spoiled child, he immediately had no choice but to hold her hand. "Then I'll teach you again. Don't let your mind wander again this time."

"Got it, got it." Yu Youyao nodded vigorously, and couldn't help but turn to look at her cousin.

Her cousin raised his eyebrows slightly, his gaze focused intently on their intertwined hands. Her cousin's hands were large, with well-defined knuckles. They were as long and slender as jade, and wrapped around her small ones. The thin calluses on his palms gently caressed the backs of her hands as he led her through the grinding process, explaining the details and rhythms that needed to be noted when grinding.

She liked being close to her cousin like this!

Yu Youyao felt very relieved. She couldn't help but wonder if her second sister, Yu Shuangbai, was usually this close to her eldest brother.

Yu Youyao, who was letting her imagination run wild, sensed that her cousin was looking down at her. Startled, she quickly composed herself and did not dare to be distracted anymore.

A trace of a smile appeared in Zhou Linghuai's dark eyes. He taught her to grind the ink three more times before letting go of her hand. "Try it yourself."

Yu Youyao straightened her posture and slowly grounded it according to her cousin's instructions.

Zhou Linghuai nodded. "Promising."

After learning how to grind ink, Zhou Linghuai began to guide her on how to write. "I noticed that you used to practice Hairpin Flower Small Script. The handwriting of Hairpin Flower Small Script needs to be gentle, beautiful, and elegant. It doesn't have a high requirement for wrist strength. Ordinary women from noble families don't have good wrist strength, so it can also save wrist strength and speed up the writing. However, Cousin, your handwriting is slightly stronger, so it's not suitable."

Upon hearing her cousin's words, Yu Youyao understood why she had always felt that writing was awkward when she was practicing calligraphy previously. It was because she was not suitable to write small calligraphy characters.

Zhou Linghuai glanced at the little girl's slender wrist. He really hadn't expected that such a slender wrist would contain such flexibility and strength that was stronger than many men. "I usually write Wang Xizhi's script. In the future, you can learn it from me. With your talent, you'll be able to master it in less than a month."

So soon? Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. "Really?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded slightly. "The premise is that you have to practice well and not slack off for even a day."

Yu Youyao nodded vigorously and boasted to her cousin, "Cousin, don't worry. I'll definitely practice my calligraphy well and not embarrass you." Then, she stuck out her tongue at her cousin and said mischievously, "Mr. Zhou, please enlighten me!"

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but laugh at the little girl's delicate appearance. "I'll spread a new piece of paper."

"Yes!" Yu Youyao blinked and replaced the messy paper on the table with another one. With her cousin teaching her how to write, she didn't seem to dislike it so much anymore.

Zhou Linghuai helped her pick another one. "This is called the Seven Wolves and Three Sheep, and it is both strong and soft. It's most suitable for beginners. The one you picked previously was Seven Purple Three Sheep and was seven parts purple rabbit fur and three parts wool. It was a little too soft."

Yu Youyao nodded and held the brush in her hand.

Zhou Linghuai helped her adjust the way she held the brush and asked her to write in ink. The tip of the pen was slightly harder, and it was indeed easier to control than before.

Seeing that she was using it appropriately, Zhou Linghuai held her hand and guided her to write. "Scholarly writing is suitable for men and women. There's no need to be reserved and rigid when writing..."

After writing a few words, Yu Youyao gradually got the hang of it.

Zhou Linghuai let go of her hand and let her write on her own. "...Write long strokes, long strokes, needle points, and other sharp strokes. When you put away the brush, it has to be sharp and full of strength and momentum. Don't exhaust yourself..."

When the piece of paper was full, Yu Youyao finally stopped writing. The words looked quite ugly, but at least the handwriting was neat and tidy, unlike before when it was messy.

Rubbing her sore wrist, Yu Youyao said happily, "Cousin, look, I'm done."

The corners of Zhou Linghuai's mouth curled up slightly. "It's much better than before, but you have to remember not to be greedy for improvement in the future."

Encouraged, Yu Youyao felt like she had been injected with ecstasy. "Then I'll practice a little longer. Cousin, don't worry about me. Go practice your calligraphy on your own!"

Zhou Linghuai looked at the little girl's excited expression and couldn't help but smile again. He looked at the little girl's lowered eyebrows. Her curved eyebrows were very detailed, and they were

as dark as ink. There seemed to be smoke in them, and when he looked at them carefully, they looked like layers of mist. From afar, they looked like layers of mountain mist, gathering the beauty of the mountains and rivers.

Chapter 86: Cousin's Smile Is Really Good

Why did she write the word “Jiao [1. Jiao means charming]”?

He could almost imagine that in a few years, when the little girl grew up, how could the word “Jiao” compare to her?

Zhou Linghuai suddenly recalled the scene of the little girl's petite body being wrapped in his arms like a bean pod. His grip on the teacup tightened.

It wasn't until a chill spread across his wrist that he lowered his head to take a look. Only then did he realize that he had unknowingly spilled the tea in his hand. The tea had accidentally wet his sleeve, and even the rice paper on the desk was wet.

Zhou Linghuai took a sip, put down the teacup in his hand, and laid out the paper again. He picked up a brush and began to practice his semi-cursive script. He practiced with sheep wool bristles and his strokes were continuous. The words were wild, but the calligraphy was messy, majestic, and unrestrained.

If Chang An was around, he would have known that Young Master only wrote cursive calligraphy when he was upset.

However, at this moment, Chang An and Chun Xiao were both in the outer room beside the study, listening to the commotion in the room. They did not dare to disturb Miss from practicing her calligraphy.

After he finished writing, Zhou Linghuai felt refreshed. Even his body was covered in sweat. His pale face was slightly red, and there was a thin layer of sweat on his forehead.

He took a deep breath and immediately felt his mouth go dry. He raised his hand to get some tea, but a cup of tea was delivered to him in time. Without thinking, he lowered his head and took a sip.

After drinking a cup of tea, Zhou Linghuai tilted his head and saw that his cousin had sat down beside him. She was holding her cheeks with both hands and looking at him innocently.

Looking down at the teacup in his hand, Zhou Linghuai suddenly realized that this tea had been sent to him by his cousin.

Yu Youyao pointed at Zhou Linghuai's handwriting. “I don't even know what Cousin wrote.”

“It's a semi-cursive script.” Zhou Linghuai paused for a moment and suddenly looked down. For a moment, he forgot what he had written. He hurriedly looked at the words. After reading for a while, he realized what he had written. “Cao Zhi's ‘Ode to the Goddess of Luo’.”

He suddenly remembered that there was a prime minister in history who liked to write in cursive. Once, when he got a good sentence, he picked up his pen and quickly wrote it down. The entire paper was filled with cursive calligraphy.

He asked his nephew to copy it down.

When they reached the place where the penmanship was strange and was difficult to copy, his nephew stopped in a daze and asked him, "What words are these?"

The Prime Minister looked at it seriously for a long time. He didn't know what he had written, so he blamed his nephew. "Why didn't you ask earlier? I'd even forgotten what I had written."

Yu Youyao's eyes lit up. "I know the 'Ode to the Goddess of Luo.' It describes a woman's beauty."

The young girl's clear voice was very pleasant, but it stunned Zhou Linghuai. He did not expect to write this. He looked down and was speechless for a long time.

Yu Youyao pointed at the 'Ode to the Goddess of Luo' and asked, "Cousin, can you give this calligraphy piece to me?"

Zhou Linghuai couldn't help but ask, "I thought you didn't recognize the words on it?"

Yu Youyao waved her hand. "I just think that Cousin's handwriting is very beautiful. I want to frame it and hang it in the house. It doesn't matter if I can't read it!"

Zhou Linghuai found it funny. She didn't even know how to read it, yet she said that it was well-written. He couldn't help but want to tease her. "Oh? What's well-written? Don't you think that the handwriting is messy?"

Yu Youyao shook her head and looked at the calligraphy carefully. "I can't tell. I just feel that Cousin's calligraphy is impressive and unrestrained. Although there's no order to it, it's mixed and detailed. Although it's not as rigorous as ordinary calligraphy, it's a kind of state of mind that surpasses the law." After thinking for a while, she racked her brains and continued, "If I have to say what's good about it, it should be that when it's written quickly, it's done according to one's heart and will. Fortunately, the artistic conception isn't in the words."

When Zhou Linghuai heard this, he smiled. It was not his usual faint smile, which was like the cold spring wind. Although his smile was cold, it was clear and bright, like a flute in the forest. He laughed loudly, and his laughter was low and pleasant, with a hint of the sound of a flute.

Chang An, who was guarding the outer room, suddenly heard a burst of clear and bright laughter. His eyes widened in shock, and he hurriedly craned his neck to look into the study. However, the screen blocked his vision, so he could only see vague figures inside.

Chun Xiao, who was doing needlework at the side, couldn't help but ask. "What are you doing?"

Even with squinted eyes, she couldn't see clearly. Chang An was scratching his heart. "Didn't you hear my young master laughing just now?"

Chun Xiao couldn't help but roll her eyes. "That's it?"

Chang An sank back into his chair. "What else?"

Chun Xiao was a little speechless. She picked up the embroidery and continued to sew. "What's so strange about that? My young mistress has been likable since she was young. Old Madam is such a serious person, but she's often made her laugh non-stop. Everyone says that my young miss is a blessed person."

Chang An thought to himself, "That's because you don't know how difficult it is for my young master to smile."

However, on careful thought, ever since Young Master had gotten to know Eldest Miss Yu, he had indeed smiled more often. However, this was the first time he had laughed so happily.

In the past, he still had a lot of opinions about Eldest Miss Yu and felt that she was too troublesome. However, as time passed, he realized that even though Eldest Miss Yu was too troublesome, Young Master was willing to indulge her. Now, she was getting more and more popular.

In the study, Yu Youyao tilted her head to look at her cousin. "Cousin, you look really good when you smile."

Zhou Linghuai stroked her hair and said in a clear voice, "You can't even memorize 'Born in Troubles and Die in Peace'. It's rare that you can think of the saying, 'When the wind blows and the rain blows, the brush will swallow everything before it reaches its target'."

Yu Youyao glared at him angrily. "Cousin, don't laugh at me."

Zhou Linghuai laughed.

"Don't laugh." Yu Youyao was furious. "Am I wrong?"

"No, you're right." Zhou Linghuai stopped laughing and stroked her soft head again. "Legend has it that Boya's ambition lies in the mountains. Zhong Ziqi said, 'Goodness, it's as high as Mount Tai.' Boya's ambition is like flowing water. Zhong Ziqi said, 'Goodness, it's as vast as a river.' What Boya wanted, Zhong Ziqi would get."

Thus, Boya made Zhong Ziqi his confidant!

Yu Youyao was a little confused. "This is an allusion to 'High Mountains and Flowing Water.' I've heard Ms. Ye mention it before. Why are you suddenly talking about this?"

Zhou Linghuai smiled again. "It's nothing. I was just expressing my feelings."

Yu Youyao nodded in confusion. "Cousin, can you give me this calligraphy piece?"

She did not know much about cursive calligraphy, but she felt that the cursive calligraphy that her cousin had written was his true nature, unlike the hidden and sharp nature of the books he copied.

"Do you really want it?" Zhou Linghuai's eyes were smiling, and there was a hint of mischief in the depths of his eyes.

Chapter 87: There's always someone inferior

Yu Youyao hummed and nodded vigorously. "Since I want it, give it to me. I'll embroider a fan for you another day. Just treat it as a change of calligraphy. What do you think?" Geett the *latest novels* on [no/v/elbin\(.\)c/om](http://no/v/elbin(.)c/om)

It didn't seem to be a loss to exchange a piece of calligraphy for a fan. Zhou Linghuai smiled and said, "I'll be waiting for you, Cousin. Don't make me wait too long."

Yu Youyao was overjoyed. "Cousin, don't worry. I won't make you wait too long this time."

Nanny Xu had asked her to practice needlework for an hour every day, so she treated it as practicing needlework.

Zhou Linghuai took out a small and exquisite sandalwood box from his sleeve. Inside was a thumb-sized seal.

He picked up the seal and let out a light breath. Then, he pressed down hard on the upper left corner of the 'Ode to the Goddess of Luo'. The words written in cinnabar appeared on the paper. It was his name, 'Linghuai'.

Yu Youyao was extremely shocked. "This is the first time I have seen a private seal carved on Huangjie stone in Shoushan Field. It's indeed completely transparent, like cream, and extremely moist."

Although the Xie Residence in Quan Zhou was wealthy, such tributes were not easy to obtain.

"Do you like it?" Zhou Linghuai asked her as he placed the seal back into the box.

Yu Youyao nodded vigorously. "I do!"

Zhou Linghuai asked casually, "Cousin, do you have a name?"

It was said that there were "20 crowns for men" and "15 crowns for women." However, many brothers from wealthy families had to enter school and participate in the imperial examination, so they had long obtained scholarly honors. However, the 13th male was named "Biao" by respected elders in the family or in the family. When he reached the age of 20, it was widely known.

Women were not so particular when it came to choosing their names. They were all given their names by the elders in their families. In fact, many women in their families did not even choose their names.

Yu Youyao sounded a little down. "Grandmother said that before she died, Mother had given me her courtesy name—Zhiyao."

The little girl's dejected expression made Zhou Linghuai feel stifled in his heart. He said gently, "An orchid by the shore is peerlessly graceful. Her appearance is excellent. Not only is her character as elegant as an orchid, but she also has outstanding qualities."

Yu Youyao smiled. "Grandmother said that when I reach adulthood, I should use the courtesy name my mother gave me."

The corners of Zhou Linghuai's mouth twitched slightly as he changed the topic. "How's Cousin's calligraphy progress?"

Only then did Yu Youyao remember that she had been so focused on watching her cousin's calligraphy that she had forgotten to practice writing. Now that her cousin had asked, she panicked and quickly said, "I did, I did..."

The little girl was quietly practicing her calligraphy, sitting upright and very focused.

There was a vine outside the window, and it poked its branch into the house mischievously. There was a pink and white flower on the branch. It was beautiful and unrestrained, and the faint fragrance of the flower seeped into the air.

All was well with time!

In An Shou Hall, Old Madam Yu was talking to Nanny Liu about the nannies from the Education Department when she received the news that Zhou Linghuai wanted to teach Yu Youyao how to write.

Old Madam Yu couldn't help but laugh. "Your son's handwriting is good. With him teaching Yao Yao, I don't have to worry. In the future, Yao Yao will become a laughing stock because of her ugly handwriting."

Nanny Liu also smiled. "Isn't that so? Eldest Miss didn't even take a nap. She practiced calligraphy for more than an hour until her hands were sore. Only then did she realize that Young Master had already gone to study. It can be seen that Young Master is very good at teaching."

Old Madam Yu nodded. "As the saying goes, there's always a weakness to everything. Yao Yao doesn't like to practice calligraphy, but I couldn't do anything about it in the past. I didn't expect her to submit to Cousin's teachings."

What was even rarer was that Zhou Linghuai treated Yao Yao very well. In the future, with his guidance, she would be much more at ease.

Nanny Liu agreed wholeheartedly.

Old Madam Yu changed the topic. "Is Boss's injury better?"

Nanny Liu replied, "Just now, Old Master had a check up. Just as Imperial Physician Li said, he's fine. He'll be fine in a few days. Eldest Madam is waiting for him in the front courtyard."

Old Madam Yu was relieved and asked, "Is Fourth Sister still kneeling in the ancestral hall?"

Nanny Liu nodded. "Master is really angry this time."

Old Madam Yu's expression darkened a little. "Just teach her well. Why is he punishing him in the ancestral hall? Eldest Son is getting more and more tactless. He doesn't know how to plan carefully for his child."

Of course, Nanny Liu could tell that the Old Madam was saying this openly. Old Master was easily convinced by Madam Yang. He didn't have much to say and just listened to her.

After this ordeal, the Yu Residence finally calmed down. Yu Youyao went home to study every day and practiced calligraphy with her cousin for two hours at noon.

On the 29th of February, the imperial examination results were finally released.

The capital was in an uproar.

The officials in the government office knocked on the gong and spread the news in the various residences. The candidates all crowded under the Imperial Rankings to watch.

After passing the general examinations, it would be time for the students to become scholars. The scholars would not fail in the palace examination. After the palace examination in April, when the emperor arranged the rankings, they would be able to become official scholars.

In other words, the current results were an intermediate step.

Some of the younger generations in the family were on the list, so it was inevitable that there would be a round of celebration. There was immediately another round of discussion in the capital, and most of them were on the list this time.

Yu Shande had obtained 29th place in this examination. This ranking was quite good. Yu Shanren was not famous in the rankings, and he felt a sense of loss. However, he was still young, so his failure this time could be considered as accumulating experience. Even if he retook the examination three years later, he would still only be in his prime.

In addition, there were three other people in the clan who had also won a place in the rankings, but their rankings were not high.

However, to the Yu Clan, as long as they could pass the examination, their future would be bright.

Yu Shande and the others came over to greet Old Madam Yu.

Old Madam Yu was overjoyed. "Don't be complacent even if you pass the examination. After the examination, there's still the second examination before the palace examination. There's still a long way to go. You should stay in the residence these few days and study hard. Recently, there's been a lot of commotion in the capital, and people are getting restless. Don't gather together."

Yu Shande agreed repeatedly. Before entering the capital, the chief had spoken to them. After they entered the capital, they were to listen to the Third Grandmother's arrangements.

Old Madam Yu was very satisfied when she saw that Yu Shande was very calm at such a young age. She then looked at the disciples who had not passed the examination and said, "Don't be disheartened even if you didn't pass. You're still young. Take this as an opportunity to accumulate experience. There are many people in this world who have matured late. During this period of time, you can stay in the capital in peace. Even if you can't take the examination, you can still broaden your horizons. After the imperial examination is over, I'll send you back to the clan to continue working hard."

Everyone was originally feeling uneasy, but seeing how kind Old Madam Yu was and how she treated them just like Yu Shande and the others who had passed the examination, their frustration dissipated greatly.

Chapter 88: Jinxiu Manor

Yu Shanren stepped forward and said respectfully, "I will follow Third Grandmother's instructions."

Old Madam Yu smiled. After these few days, the impetuosity in Yu Shanren's eyes had dissipated a lot. He looked more shrewd and capable.

Old Madam Yu asked Yu Shande, Yu Shanren, and the others to stay for dinner.

The house was also bustling with activity. Although they did not celebrate openly, they had a sumptuous meal.

In March, the popularity of the examination had not faded, and the capital was still bustling with activity.

The weather was getting warmer by the day. On this day, Ms. Ye was on break. It was rare that Yu Youyao did not have to go to school, so she stayed in the embroidery pavilion to embroider a fan.

Yu Youyao had asked her cousin to draw the patterns on the fan.

Worried that it would be difficult for her to embroider, Zhou Linghuai did not draw too complicated patterns. There were only two bamboos, a few branches, and more than ten leaves, but they were very elegant.

It didn't take much effort for Yu Youyao to embroider them.. She planned to embroider one side of it with bamboo and the other with orchids.

The second time she sent her cousin some needlework, she had to embroider more carefully than the first time. That way, her cousin would know that her needlework had improved.

Nanny Xu guided Yu Youyao on her needlework as she chatted with her. "Master can already walk around today. I reckon he'll be going to the government office in two or three days."

Yu Youyao nodded. "Father has been recuperating for five to six days as his bones were dislocated. He'll be fine after resting for a few days and paying more attention in the future." At this point, she paused for a moment before continuing, "I'll go visit Father tomorrow."

That day, when her father had asked someone to carry them back to the residence, her grandmother had not allowed them to go forward. She had guessed that her father had hurt his face, so naturally, he would not go forward to make trouble.

However, in the past few days, she had also sent Qiu Xing a lot of expensive medicinal herbs and tonics. The calming incense that she made, the medicinal tea that nourished her body, and the medicinal materials that she had not used were naturally not as effective as what her cousin and grandmother had drunk.

Fortunately, her father knew that she was really learning from Nanny Xu and had also learned some real skills.

Nanny Xu nodded in relief. She wasn't really chatting when she suddenly mentioned Master. Instead, she was trying to remind her that it was time to be filial.

At this moment, Xia Tao's voice came from the door. "First Madam is here."

Yu Youyao put down the embroidery and asked Nanny Xu to put away the basket. Then, she stood up and tidied her clothes. She saw Yang Shuwan, who was wearing a knee-length red jacket and a light golden peony blouse, walk in.

Her hair was combed into a graceful peony bun, and there was a big hairpin flower with red gems on it on her head. When she walked, the big peony flower swayed, looking dazzling and rich.

Yang Shuwan did not come alone. Behind her was a round-faced woman in her forties. She was wearing a purple jacket, looking old-fashioned but dignified.

Surprised, Yu Youyao stepped forward and bowed. "Mother!"

Yang Shuwan quickly held her hand and said with a smile, "Our family doesn't accept such formalities."

Yu Youyao followed suit and let Qiu Xing serve some warm tea.

Her stepdaughter, who she had looked down on in the past, now had a formidable nanny by her side. However, she had a good demeanor. According to Jia Jia, she had been very outstanding in her studies recently.

Yang Shuwan immediately felt that the tea in her mouth did not taste good.

After putting down her teacup, Yang Shuwan introduced him to Yu Youyao. “This is Manager Sun of the Jinxiu Manor. It’s getting hotter by the day, so I specially invited her over to take your measurements and make some clothes for you.”

Jinxiu Manor was the largest silk manor in the capital. It also made clothes, and was filled with fashionable materials. Not only did it have many different designs, but it was also very popular. The embroiderers and tailors all had top-notch skills, and the clothes they made were very shiny.

Yu Youyao nodded. “Thank you, Mother.”

While her father was recuperating in the residence, Yang Shuwan was constantly juggling work. She had to do everything herself to show her capabilities as the manager of the family.

However, wasn’t it a little too late to make clothes?

Manager Sun took a ruler and walked up to Yu Youyao with a smile. “I apologize for offending Eldest Miss.”

Yu Youyao shook her head. “Manager Sun, you’re too polite.”

Manager Sun first measured the width of Yu Youyao’s shoulders and reported a number. The young maidservant behind her took notes, then measured her arms, waist, and finally her height.

Manager Sun was an efficient person. Without touching Yu Youyao, she finished measuring her. “Eldest Miss, your shoulders, waist, hands, and legs are long. You’ll look good in anything.”

She had been learning tailoring from her master since she was six years old and had been taking measurements for most of her life. It was rare to see someone with such good bones.

In another two years, Eldest Miss Yu’s body would grow, and she would definitely look great.

Yu Youyao thanked her.

However, Yang Shuwan’s smile faded a little. She picked up her teacup and drank some tea. “Usually, we have to make spring dresses before February, but this year, the weather is colder than usual, and it’s also the year of the imperial examination. The Jinxiu Manor has been busy, so we’ve been delayed by a month.” [Find new updates on n\(o\)v\(e\)lbin\(.com](#)

Yu Youyao nodded. “Now is a good time to make clothes.”

After making the spring clothes, it was time to make the summer clothes.

There were many impressive clothing houses in the capital. The clothes in the residence were usually made by the Jinxiu Manor. They were experienced and they could tell everyone’s preferences, style, and needs. The clothes made were also more to their liking.

Moreover, the clothing house wasn’t something that could be changed easily. The measurements of the masters were all extremely private, so naturally, they had to find someone they could trust to do it.

Yang Shuwan smiled and nodded. “I’ve already made an agreement with Jinxiu Manor. We’ll make a few sets. You girls can wear them first.”

Yu Youyao said, “Thank you, Mother!”

Manager Sun took out a thick book, opened it, and placed it on the table. "These are the patterns of the Jinxiu Manor. Eldest Miss, you can choose from it. If you don't like them, you can also make one yourself and ask the Jinxiu Manor to replicate it."

Yu Youyao saw that there were many different patterns in the book. There were indeed many categories. It could be seen that the status of the Jinxiu Manor was indeed well-deserved.

At this moment, Nanny Xu brought some tea and snacks into the house.

Yu Youyao quickly said, "Nanny, come and help me pick out some patterns. I'm almost dazzled."

When Sun Jiazhu heard this, his smile deepened. She saw Nanny Xu, who was wearing a dark green knee-length jacket and had her hair combed into a bun. She looked very kind, but she also had an imposing aura. Even she was shocked.

It was obvious that this match was extraordinary.

Nanny Xu stepped forward and greeted Yang Shuwan first. Yang Shuwan waved her hand. "Hurry up and help Yao Yao pick out the patterns. The reputation of the Jinxiu Manor isn't for nothing. Anyone would be dazzled by it. You have to help take a good look."

Her polite words revealed a hint of caution.

This was not the role that an ordinary nanny should have. Manager Sun's eyes flickered.

Chapter 89: Requests that are too big

Nanny Xu agreed and walked up to Yu Youyao to look at the samples with her.

The two of them gathered together and discussed a little from time to time. In less than ten minutes, they had picked out the best patterns in Jinxiu Manor.

Yang Shuwan frowned. The master and servant pair had actually picked seven or eight items. Every season, the residence would add some fashionable clothes for the young mistresses, and each of them would have three or four sets of clothes. As the eldest daughter of the first wife, Yu Youyao was doted on by Old Madam, so it was reasonable for her to have one or two more sets of clothes, but this was too much.

Nanny Xu also thought of this, so she said, "Sister has been sick for a while and some time has passed. Her old clothes are no longer suitable for her. These days, the clothes she's wearing have been altered by the embroiderers in the residence, so it's not appropriate for her to wear them all the time."

It was only then that Yang Shuwan was in a daze. In just a month, Yu Youyao had actually lost weight. She didn't look any worse than Jia Jia, and her heart skipped a beat.

She quickly said, "It's my fault. It's the Spring Buddha Festival in April, and Old Madam wants to worship Buddha. I've been helping to copy Buddhist scriptures recently, and I've also asked Nanny Liu to help manage the matters in the residence. It's been hard on Yao Yao. She has to pick out a few more sets of clothes."

No matter what, it was her fault for this sister to wear clothes that had been altered in the past. If word got out that she had treated her first wife's eldest daughter harshly, it would be much more serious than treating a daughter from a concubine badly.

It was clearly her oversight, but she insisted on using “filial piety” to cover up the truth. Yu Youyao lowered her eyes.

“Mother, don’t say that. I used to have many clothes that I hadn’t worn before. It would be a pity if I didn’t wear them. I didn’t have to let you worry about such a small matter, so I asked the embroiderer to change the sizes. However, I’ve grown a little taller now. The weather is cold, so it’s better if I have more clothes on. Now that I’ve taken off my thick clothes, the length of my clothes doesn’t seem suitable anymore.”

After saying that, she picked two more types of patterns. Including the previous ones, there were a total of ten.

Not only did she save her mother’s face, but she also explained why she was making more clothes. Even Manager Sun couldn’t help but praise the Eldest Miss of the residence for being generous and proper.

No wonder Old Madam Yu favored her.

Yang Shuwan felt uncomfortable and disgusted, as if she had just swallowed a fly. “Yao Yao, pick another style. The tailors and embroiderers in the Jinxiu Manor are very skilled. I guarantee that the clothes they make won’t be identical.”

Yu Youyao nodded.

Manager Sun said solicitously, “This year, the trend in the capital is wearing a loose-fitting dress with a short jacket on the top and a flowery skirt on the bottom. It’s both modest and appropriate. There are many styles of tops that have different criss-cross necklines. There are also dresses that cover the chest or start from the waist. There are also skirts with different types of pleats. Each of them has its own unique characteristics. You can also mix and match them...”

Hearing Manager Sun’s endless introduction, Yu Youyao and Nanny Xu quickly finalized the designs.

Then, Nanny Xu instructed Dong Mei to pick out five high-quality materials from the box. “Thank you, Shopkeeper Sun, for making these materials into clothes.”

When Manager Sun took a closer look, her eyes immediately widened.

Heavenly Water Jade, Soft Smoke Net, Plain Brocade, Cloud Brocade, and Snow Satin were all extremely precious tribute materials. How could they be easily seen outside?

This was really a huge move!

Manager Sun quickly said, “Eldest Miss, don’t worry. I’ll definitely hire the best tailors and embroiderers in the manor. I won’t let this great material down.”

Yu Youyao nodded in satisfaction and thanked her. Nanny Xu took a bulging pouch and stuffed it into Manager Sun’s hands. “Thank you, Manager Sun.”

Since Yu Youyao was making her own clothes, Yang Shuwan didn’t have much to say. However, when she saw the high-quality tribute materials, she was envious.

She had high-quality snow satin in her house and she had originally planned to make two sets of clothes for Jia Jia which were expensive and outstanding.

However, Yu Youyao's requests completely exceeded Jia Jia's, and she felt sick of it.

Seeing that Nanny Xu had finished giving her instructions, Yang Shuwan stood up. "Yao Yao, you're done choosing. I'll bring Shopkeeper Sun to Fourth Sister's room."

Yang Shuwan wanted to show that she was virtuous and magnanimous. Everything that concerned her and Yu Qingning came first, and Yu Jianjia always came last.

But who had the final say in the end?

In the end, when Yu Jianjia had a lot of choices, no one urged her to pick faster. Wasn't that as good as them?

After Yang Shuwan sent her out, Yu Youyao returned to her house and said to Chun Xiao, "Go to Cousin's room."

Mr. Hu Shan was on break today, so Zhou Linghuai did not go to school. He was finally free, so he instructed Chang An, "Find the Longevity peach blossom stone I brought from Youzhou."

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Chang An was confused when he heard that. "Why does Young Master want the peach blossom stone?"

Zhou Linghuai ignored him and took out a big box carved with red flowers and birds from the cabinet. His expression suddenly became complicated.

When his father was young, he liked lacquer carvings, so he had learned this skill. According to his father, he had relied on this skill to please his mother and marry her smoothly.

This box was the birthday gift his father had made for him when he was ten years old.

Just the top had been painted with more than a hundred layers. One layer was applied, and another layer was applied after it was dried. Two layers were applied a day. After that, it took half a year to carve on the paint.

His father was very proud of this skill. Afraid that he wouldn't be able to get a wife, he had even taught him it. However, he felt that it was troublesome and after learning for a few days, he was unwilling to learn anymore. His father was very disappointed.

Thinking about the past, Zhou Linghuai's gaze landed on the uneven upper left corner. There was originally a line of words here, and it said, "Grant my son the seal on his birthday. May my son live well."

Later on, he was also the one who personally held the Kunwu Knife and carved these words on the hundred layers!

Chang An turned around and left the study. Not long after, he returned with a palm-sized ebony box.

At this moment, Zhou Linghuai's expression returned to normal. He opened the lacquered box in front of him. Inside was a set of carving tools of various sizes, including a secret jar, a Kunwu Knife, a small diamond, a bow, and so on.

He had been a little demon king since he was young, and he was a headache to deal with. Even his father couldn't control him, so he found a Daoist priest and asked him to learn some Daoist classics so that he could cultivate his mind and body.

In the end, although he knew the Daoist scriptures by heart, his personality remained the same. His father then gave him this set of carving tools on his birthday so that he could learn how to carve, and possibly change his personality.

Chang An couldn't help but ask, "Young Master, are you going to carve a seal?"

Zhou Linghuai nodded and took out a thumb-length, slightly thicker jade material from the ebony box. It was light red in color and looked delicate and beautiful. It was fine and smooth like fat.

It was the longevity peach blossom stone that he had kept for many years.

Chapter 90: A Dragon In A Shallow Pool Is Laughed At By Shrimp

Chang An was a little curious. "Young Master, this peach blossom frozen stone was won from Mr. Xian Yun when you had a discussion with him back then. It has always been very precious. Even when Eldest Miss asked you for it and wanted to carve a seal on it, you rejected her. You said that this peach blossom frozen stone was for collection. Why do you suddenly want to carve a seal on it?"

At the mention of this, Zhou Linghuai was reminded of another incident.

When he was eleven, Mr. Xian Yun traveled to You Zhou.

When his father found out about this, he had visited several times, wanting to ask Mr. Xian Yun to take him in as a disciple, but was rejected.

He was young and arrogant. When he accidentally found out about this, he disguised himself and visited in the name of Yang Mu without revealing his name.

Mr. Xian Yun was famous throughout the world, but there were countless students who wanted to visit him. He had set up a chess game at the entrance. Whoever could solve it would be able to meet him and receive his guidance.

In the end, he had cracked this seemingly unbreakable chess game.

As he wished, he saw Mr. Xian Yun. "I've heard that you're quite knowledgeable in Confucianism and Buddhism, so I want to learn from you. If you lose, I'll make a request of you. If I lose, I won't go over today."

When Mr. Xian Yun heard this, he stroked his long beard and smiled.

Other people had tried all sorts of ways to meet him, all hoping that he would guide them in their studies and teach them. However, this kid was really arrogant and interesting. "Sure!"

Zhou Linghuai proposed a thesis discussion.

In the end, he won by a little.

Mr. Xian Yun asked, "What do you want from me?"

Zhou Linghuai recalled that Mr. Xian Yun had rejected his father time and time again. "I just wanted to ask you for something so that I could prove that you were not as skilled as me and lost to me."

When Mr. Xian Yun heard this, he laughed loudly. "Kid, you're really arrogant."

Then, he asked the servant boy beside him to give him a Longevity peach blossom stone that he had kept for many years.

How could Zhou Linghuai not like such an expensive jade material? He immediately accepted it with a clear conscience. Just as he was about to leave, he heard Mr. Xian Yun say something.

“Kid, I still lack a disciple who serves me tea and works for me. I like you very much. Although you’re a little arrogant, you’re still young. Why don’t you follow me?”

When Zhou Linghuai heard this, his mouth twitched. If this old man found out that he was the “disciple” who had been repeatedly rejected by this old man, he wondered what he would think.

“I’m not interested in being your slave.”

Mr. Xian Yun was so angry that his beard trembled. “Kid, you don’t know what’s good for you. You have to know that there are countless people in the world who are doing everything they can to beg me to be their master.”

Zhou Linghuai sneered. “Why didn’t you accept it?”

Mr. Xian Yun was stunned. He put down the teacup in his hand and looked at him seriously. This old man who wasn’t serious had turned into an otherworldly expert. He exuded a sense of virtue and importance.

Zhou Linghuai’s right eyelid twitched.

Mr. Xian Yun had an unfathomable expression. “Kid, I learned some physiognomy skills from Grandmaster Hui Neng of the Precious Peace Temple in my early years.”

Zhou Linghuai had a bad feeling. He had a nagging feeling that this old man was up to no good.

Sure enough, Mr. Xian Yun said with a smile, “Rhinoceros bones cover the central courtyard, and their foreheads are facing the sky. According to the Natural History, there’s something between the two sharp ages of the golden dragon head, like the shape of a mountain. The essence of its spirit is completely condensed here. Only with this spiritual object can one breathe and soar into the sky, ascending to the Nine Heavens. This is an especially expensive item, so it’s ranked first.”

The rhinoceros bones referred to the frontal bones that protruded from the middle of the forehead. The more plump and square they were, the better.

“Don’t say anything.” Zhou Linghuai cursed the old man in his heart.

The art of physiognomy originated from the Daoist school. It was said that in order to verify the Buddhist teachings, Grandmaster Hui Neng had once discussed Daoism with a Daoist expert. Grandmaster Hui Neng’s art of physiognomy was taught by that Daoist expert.

Zhou Linghuai was familiar with Daoist classics, so he naturally knew a little about these mystic techniques.

There were three bones— Checkk new *novel chapters* at [novelbin\(.\)com](http://novelbin(.)com)

Sky Facing Rhino Bone (aka: Fuxi) is the most expensive. It can enjoy the blessings of the emperor and his great name.

Juao Rhino Bones were scholarly and noble, and were extremely important officials.

Wuku Rhino Bones were highly respected, and were conferred titles.

Mr. Xian Yun changed the topic. “Not only that, but your forehead has rhinoceros bones that form a square seal. It’s like an imperial jade seal. It’s the fate of a true dragon that’s destined to live forever.”

At this point, Zhou Linghuai felt that something was amiss. “Old man, didn’t I just win a longevity peach blossom stone from you? Do you have to spout nonsense and make it unfair for me? It’s fine if you say this here, but after this, I won’t be able to keep my head.”

Mr. Xian Yun said with a faint smile, “However, there’s a saying that goes, ‘When a dragon is trapped in a shallow pool, it will be laughed at by shrimp.’”

The root of the mountain indicated health!

Zhou Linghuai covered his ears and shook his head. “I can’t hear what you’re saying.”

Mr. Xian Yun laughed and shook his head. “Kid, ordinary people don’t have your reputation. You don’t want to reveal your name, but you won’t be able to escape the word ‘Yin’.”

Just the word “Yin” was enough to reveal his identity.

Zhou Linghuai said with a cold expression, “Old man, you’re really interesting. Others have come to beg you to take them in as your disciple, but you don’t accept them. Now, you’re begging to take them in instead.”

Mr. Xian Yun smiled in understanding. “You don’t know this, but taking in a disciple depends on fate. Fate also depends on the right time, place, and people. Those who come knocking on my door to ask for it have nothing to do with me. You deliberately came knocking on my door to ruin my reputation, but it suits my taste.”

Zhou Linghuai was born to be rebellious. The more others begged him, the more they fawned on him. Instead, they couldn’t do anything good in front of him, so he pulled a long face and said, “Fate matters when it comes to acknowledging someone as your master. If you defeat me today, it’s fine for me to acknowledge you as my master, but you’re inferior to me and have lost to me. How dare you ask me to acknowledge you as my master? How shameless are you?”

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These words were indeed not pleasant to the ears, but Mr. Xian Yun was not angry. “Kid, you came prepared with the intention of winning this time. Ever since you entered my sect, you’ve been scheming. Your sword moves in an unorthodox manner. Winning is not based on real talent or knowledge, but on calculation.”

Zhou Linghuai said nothing.

However, Mr. Xian Yun changed the topic. “However, you’re already a great talent like Duke Zhou at such a young age, but the heavens are jealous of such a talent. Listen to my advice. If you plot too far, it will harm your life, and if you’re too wise, you’ll definitely be hurt. Hurry up and follow me. Cultivate your body and mind. I’ll guarantee you a long life.”

Zhou Linghuai said calmly, “A loss is a loss, and a win is a win. You can’t be a sore loser, right?”