

I. Dynasty 245

Chapter 245: A Stunning Impact

“Dear heavens, Your Highness—is this really me?!”

A voice rang out as Lu Tong’s slightly grubby face appeared in the mirror’s reflection.

Even bronze mirrors were considered a luxury in the Great Yu Empire. Producing one required repeated polishing until it could reflect a passable image, making them far too expensive for commoners to afford.

Most ordinary people never owned mirrors and could only catch vague glimpses of themselves in still water. The effect, of course, couldn’t compare to the shock of seeing oneself clearly in a glass mirror.

“Who else would it be? Look—there’s a booger hanging off your lip. You gonna wipe that or what?” Xiao Ming said.

“Where?!” Lu Tong grabbed the mirror and inspected himself more closely.

He picked at his nose and began making faces at the mirror—widening his eyes, raising his brows, totally immersed in amusement.

Behind him, the students had already grown impatient and began calling out, “Let me see! I want a look too!”

Overwhelmed by their demands, Lu Tong reluctantly handed the mirror to the next group.

The classroom instantly erupted. Students jostled for position, taking turns in front of the mirror, exclaiming things like, “Damn, I’m handsome!”, “You look awful!”, “Ugh—I forgot to wash my face!”

Watching the commotion, Xiao Ming allowed himself a smug smile. It was clear that this mirror would become the next sensational product in the empire—following in the footsteps of soap, Drunken Qingzhou wine, and perfume.

Lu Tong sighed in awe and said, “Your Highness, I truly admire you. How do you even come up with these ideas?”

Xiao Ming chuckled lightly. This was nothing. Just the beginning. In the future, world-shaking inventions would keep coming—one after another.

As each student took their turn experiencing the mirror’s charm, Xiao Ming turned to Lu Tong and said, “The remaining glass is yours to work with.”

Lu Tong nodded and rallied the students. The group quickly divided into trios and began manufacturing more mirrors using the materials on hand.

Xiao Ming stayed in the lab while they worked. Once twenty mirrors were produced, he had the surface of the tin-mercury alloy coated with a layer of black lacquer—a natural varnish made from lacquer tree sap.

This layer protected the reflective surface from damage. The mirrors were then framed in carved wood, giving them elegant, luxurious appearances.

After all, products needed good packaging to sell well.

Once the chemical lab work was done, Xiao Ming brought the mirrors to the carpentry division for framing. The entire process took three more days to complete.

At last, twenty beautifully crafted glass mirrors were born.

When the finished mirrors were delivered to the Prince's Manor, Ziyuan and Lülao instantly fell in love.

"Ahem, you two have been staring at that mirror for half an hour. Haven't you had enough?" Xiao Ming teased.

Among the mirrors was one that Xiao Ming had specially commissioned—a full-length mirror two meters tall and fifty centimeters wide, placed in his bedchamber.

After returning from the textile workshop, Ziyuan and Lülao caught sight of it and were instantly mesmerized. After finding out what it was, they refused to leave the room, completely absorbed in admiring their reflections.

“Your Highness, please give us a mirror too! It’s incredible. After seeing ourselves in this glass mirror, how could we ever go back to bronze ones?” Ziyuan said, clinging to Xiao Ming’s arm and begging with childlike insistence.

Meanwhile, Lüluo was still smiling foolishly into the mirror, utterly oblivious to the world around her.

Feeling the softness of Ziyuan’s body pressing against him, Xiao Ming’s eyes curved into a crescent-moon smile—but he maintained a serious expression and said, “That’s easy. You can just share mine. These mirrors are expensive, and I’m basically broke.”

Ziyuan was utterly hooked—like a bee drawn to honey. What woman didn’t love looking pretty, especially lively young maids like Ziyuan and Lüluo?

Ziyuan clung even tighter, her bold and fiery nature on full display.

Xiao Ming’s grin grew more mischievous. Teasing his two lovely maids was one of the rare indulgences in his hectic life. He took the opportunity to pull Ziyuan into his arms.

Caught off guard, Ziyuan squealed in surprise. Her cheeks flushed bright red. “Your Highness—you’re terrible!” she pouted, playfully pushing him away.

Lüluo finally turned her head and asked innocently, “What’s going on, Sister Ziyuan?”

But when she saw how Xiao Ming was holding Ziyuan, her face turned red as well. Still, she seemed far more used to Xiao Ming's antics than before.

Ziyuan continued pleading, "Your Highness, please just give us one mirror!"

Seeing the two girls look at him with such hopeful eyes, Xiao Ming playfully gave Ziyuan's plump rear a squeeze and chuckled, "Fine—consider that payment."

Ziyuan let out another startled yelp, blushing like a cherry blossom.

As Xiao Ming walked past Lüluo, he gave her the same treatment, earning himself a dramatic eye roll in return. Laughing heartily, he left the room, saying, "Your mirrors are already on the way to your rooms."

"Ah!" Ziyuan stomped her foot. Once again, she'd been outwitted and teased by Xiao Ming.

Still savoring the soft feel on his fingertips, Xiao Ming left the manor and headed straight to the Chamber of Commerce. Now that the mirrors were finished, it was time to use them to ease Qingzhou Prefecture's silver shortage.

He had high hopes for the glass mirror's market potential. After all, the tech archive had once recorded a fascinating story.

When French Queen Marie de Médicis got married, the King of Venice gifted her a tiny glass mirror as a wedding present. Its value? 150,000 francs.

At the time, only Venice could manufacture glass mirrors. Their production facility was located on the isolated island of Murano.

In fact, France had even kidnapped several Venetian mirror craftsmen in a covert effort to steal the secret.

The French franc at the time had a gold content of 0.3 grams per coin—so 150,000 francs represented an astronomical fortune.

For that reason, Xiao Ming intended to position his mirrors as high-end luxury goods—the Rolex, Chanel, or LV of the Great Yu Empire.

Every mirror's backing was also engraved with: Made in Qingzhou—a subtle move to begin cultivating the Qingzhou brand.

Arriving at the Chamber of Commerce, Xiao Ming hadn't even stepped fully inside when Li Kaiyuan dashed up to him like the wind.

"Your Highness—the mirror?! Where is it?" he asked eagerly.

Whenever Xiao Ming showed up at the Chamber of Commerce, it almost always meant a new product was about to launch.

With a signal from Xiao Ming, a servant brought forward a mirror covered in fabric.

When the cloth was removed, Li Kaiyuan gasped and took a step back in shock.

He thought there was a person inside—but on closer inspection, he realized it was... himself?

His jaw dropped as he leaned in close, staring at the reflection.

“Your Highness... we’re about to strike it rich again!” he muttered in awe.