

Rebirth as the Richest Woman in the World

Chapter 26: 026 Birthday Gift

The Pine and Crane Longevity Painting was entirely embroidered with gold thread. The stitching was intricate, the colors harmonious, the lines lively; it was apparent that the master embroiderer was also a woman of delicate grace and pure heart.

Such a work couldn't possibly be completed without a decade of embroidery experience.

Not only that, but some sections of the painting were adorned with sapphires, rubies, and agates.

Under the light, that Pine and Crane Longevity Painting was shimmering with dazzling brilliance.

Majestic and splendid without losing a touch of classical elegance, it was flamboyantly luxurious yet conveyed a refined subtlety.

Most importantly, the painting was personally embroidered by Zhao Yiling herself. In today's society, people willing to do hands-on work are scarce, not to mention that Zhao Yiling came from a prominent family. Being able to embroider such an exquisite work truly was admirable.

This was, without a doubt, the most thoughtful birthday gift of the evening.

An elderly man with gray hair bowed his hands toward Zhao Hai and said, "Miss Zhao truly embodies delicate grace and a pure heart. Mr. Zhao, you are indeed fortunate."

Another elder nodded in agreement, "Such embroidery skills, I fear, cannot be found elsewhere in the Capital City. Miss Zhao is truly gifted. If my own granddaughter possessed half of Miss Zhao's sensibility, I would be content."

Zhao Yiling stood by Zhao Hai's side, her face always adorned with a faint smile, dignified and proper, not showing off despite the crowd's praise.

She conducted herself with humility and grace, poised and unpretentious.

Before long, even more people offered their compliments.

It could be said that Zhao Yiling stole the show at tonight's banquet.

First, she stepped in to rescue Zhou Keting, showcasing her role as a magnanimous hostess.

Then, she stood shoulder to shoulder with the most esteemed man in the Capital City, attracting countless eyes.

Lastly, her unique choice of a heartfelt birthday gift earned her widespread acclaim.

After tonight, there was probably no one in the Capital City who didn't know the name "Zhao Yiling."

Qian Jiayi clutched a gift box on the side, her face growing paler and her grip tightening as she listened to the praise heaped upon Zhao Yiling. With such a precedent set by Zhao Yiling, any valuable gift she might bring would likely seem insignificant to these people.

Why should Zhao Yiling come up with all the good ideas?

Everyone only saw what was good about Zhao Yiling.

She was jealous, she was indignant!

Was it just because her surname was Qian, not Zhao?

No, she had to make Li Hanjiang notice her tonight; she was determined to outshine Zhao Yiling.

To stand out, she needed to find a foil to highlight her own presence.

With that thought, Qian Jiayi's expression softened slightly. She raised her hand to straighten her hair and looked around. Finally, her gaze settled on Chu Jin not far away.

That nobody, she thought, was fit only to be a stepping stone for herself.

Qian Jiayi's lips curved slightly, and a spark of cunning lit her eyes.

Qian Jiayi, carrying the gift box, took a few steps forward and flattered, "Cousin, not only are you beautiful, but your hands are also so skilled; you really make me envious as your younger cousin."

Zhao Yiling was very modest, "My insignificant skills must be amusing to you, third cousin."

As Qian Jiayi watched Zhao Yiling's pretentious display, she felt utterly disgusted.

Yet she still struggled to suppress the discomfort in her heart, forcibly squeezing out a sliver of a smile, "Cousin, you're too modest."

Zhao Yiling smiled gently, her tone indifferent, "What did you prepare for Grandpa as a gift, third cousin?"

"I prepared an ordinary antique for Grandpa, which simply can't compare to cousin's embroidery," she said, shifting her gaze to Zhao Hai with a mischievous smile, "Grandpa, you mustn't disdain the gift Jiayi prepared for you."

"This child, what are you talking about? All gifts are the same, it's the thought that counts," Zhao Hai scolded gently.

"Grandpa, knowing your love for collecting antiques, I prepared a Qing dynasty vase for you, wishing you fortune as vast as the eastern seas and a life of prosperous longevity." As she spoke, she opened the gift box, and inside lay a cyan porcelain vase.

Looking at the color and quality, it seemed to be genuine, but unfortunately, anyone with discerning eyes could see that it was from the late Qing period. If it were a bit older, it might have been more valuable for collecting.

Compared to Zhao Yiling's Pine and Crane Longevity Painting, the difference was like night and day.

Even so, Zhao Hai nodded with satisfaction, "Very good, very good, Grandpa is very pleased, you've been thoughtful."

He wasn't really expecting his younger relatives to give such important gifts, it was the sentiment that mattered most.

"Thank you, Grandpa." With a glance, Qian Jiayi's eyes fell upon a pair of eyes as warm as the spring breeze.

Those eyes were too warm and too profound.

Seeing them made Qian Jiayi's face flush red, and she hastily lowered her head.

By the time she looked again, the owner of those eyes had shifted their gaze elsewhere.

Following that gaze, she saw Chu Jin not far from her.

Gradually, a smile curved on Qian Jiayi's lips, feigning surprise as she said, "Oh, isn't that little sister Jin?"

At that, Zhao Hai also turned his attention to Chu Jin, instructing a servant nearby, "Indeed, it's little Jin. Hurry, Old Wang, call her over."

Because of Chu Jin's background, Zhao Hai had always doted on her, and even mentioned bringing her to live with him multiple times, but Zhao Shendong and his wife firmly refused, fearing that the Chu Group might fall into the hands of others.

Chu Jin's perception was far beyond ordinary, and hearing Zhao Hai looking for her, she set down her wine glass and walked toward the main table.

As soon as Qian Jiayi saw Chu Jin, she swiftly rose from her chair and affectionately linked arms with her, assuming the role of a loving older sister, "Little sister Jin, you've arrived."

Chu Jin nonchalantly withdrew her arm, her tone indifferent, "Has third cousin's amnesia been cured?"

At this remark, Li Hanjiang across the room glanced up at Chu Jin, a trace of a barely-there smile curling on his lips. This girl really knew how to settle scores without giving the slightest face to others.

Furthermore, all the distinguished young ladies present wished they could glue their eyes to him, yet she always remained so aloof and indifferent, as if she didn't see him at all.

A single light-hearted remark left Qian Jiayi smiling stiffly, her previous demeanor instantly frozen.

She started to wonder whether calling Chu Jin over had been a wise decision, especially since Li Hanjiang was sitting opposite her.

At a time like this, nothing should go awry.

Qian Jiayi quickly regained control over her emotions, her gaze shifting to Chu Jin who had come empty-handed, then spoke up, "Today is Grandpa's birthday, I wonder what gift little sister Jin has prepared for him?"