Farmhouse 1071

Chapter 1071: Finding Someone to Annoy

Even if someone were to criticize her background, it would only be said that the Crown Prince has good taste, picking Gu Youyou from among so many people.

Such words would praise her, not demean her.

This made the Empress feel very uncomfortable.

If only she had known earlier how capable Gu Youyou was, she should have bestowed her upon her own son.

A humble background would at least have made her son appear very prestigious in the eyes of the common people.

Now that Gu Youyou has married into the Crown Prince Residence, she could only become an enemy to her.

Stuffing a few more maids into Jin Zijin's household to vex her seemed a fine choice when idle.

According to her years of experience, even the most elegant and noble women, once jealous over their husband's other women, would turn shrewish.

"Have those young ladies arrived?" The Empress asked with a dignified smile on her lips, like a kind and elderly relative.

"Empress, the young ladies are all waiting in the Jiaotai Hall."

"Oh? Then go tell them I will be there shortly."

One month after the Crown Prince’s grand wedding, they were all out providing disaster relief, so this matter was delayed. Unexpectedly, the delay lasted for several months.

And those palace maidens she arranged for the Crown Prince Residence couldn’t serve their master closely, so despite there being many of them, due to their status, they might not even enter the inner courtyard, let alone bring back any reliable information.

This Gu Youyou, whether deliberately or not, the several head palace maidens she assigned had become the level of head maids in the residence, and she had firmly arranged for them to be in the outer courtyard.

What use was that?

So, she still had to rely on some intelligent women.

In the Jiaotai Hall, the Empress arrived fashionably late.

Seeing the Empress, the sprightly young ladies stopped their chatter and rose to greet her.

"Greetings to the Empress!"

Outside, the Empress was known to be very kind and amiable.

She smiled and said to everyone, "Please, there’s no need for formalities. Have a seat, young ladies."

Everyone thought: The rumors that the Empress is kind-hearted, amicable, and down to earth seem to be true.

"What were you chatting about just now? Care to share with me?" the Empress asked with a smile.

A young lady in green said somewhat shyly, "We were discussing the Crown Prince and wondering what kind of woman he likes."

"Oh, is that so?" the Empress laughed, "Miss Ji, at your tender age with beauty blooming like a flower, every man would like you!"

The young lady in green, Miss Ji, blushed at the Empress's words and was too shy to speak.

Another lady with a hint of worry said, "I've heard that the Crown Prince is very fond of Doctor Gu. It seems he likes women like her. But we've all been raised in seclusion. We neither know the Qihuang Technique nor how to manage a business. Would the Crown Prince like us?"

The Empress kept smiling but said, "It's only right to treat her well. Don't forget, she just gained the upper hand in the disaster area not long ago. Would the Emperor agree if the Crown Prince ill-treated her? Even if the Emperor agrees, the Ministers and the common people would not.

So, some things are just for show, to be seen by others. You young ladies just need to tell me if you are willing. If so, I will see to it that you enter the Crown Prince Residence. All you need to do is serve the Crown Prince well. Those matters of face, could they really last a lifetime?"

Hearing the Empress speak so, everyone felt she made sense.

Chapter 1072: Losing Virginity

Currently in the Crown Prince Residence, there is only one woman, Gu Youyou, who spends all day just making money. It is said that she has opened quite a few shops recently, such as dessert shops and glassware shops, she only cares about earning Silver now. How can she take good care of the Crown Prince?

This moment is a great opportunity to please the Crown Prince.

Thinking of this, everyone was stirred.

The Empress watched and understood clearly in her heart.

These girls were eagerly desiring to go.

Seeing that the time was almost right, the Empress's expression turned solemn and she said, "Go, this palace can help you get in. However, a woman's life is not just about revolving around a man, but also children and your families.

To have security for the latter half of your life, you must have children, have sons. To make your family respect you once again, you must strive to gain your husband's favor.

The men of the Jin Royal Family value benefits, this is an opportunity for you. Because your maternal families are much stronger than the legitimate wife Gu Youyou, if you bear children before Gu Youyou, that will be the basis for your standing in the Crown Prince Residence.

You are all outstanding daughters of your families, given the best upbringing and status by your parents. You must not disappoint them, understand?"

Struck by the Empress's righteous and stern words, everyone became solemn again.

Indeed, they were all daughters from major families, how could they not know the survival tactics in those deep and grand courtyards?

Moments later, the young ladies who had been chatting and laughing with each other before now looked at each other, their eyes filled with full hostility.

Their enemies were not only Gu Youyou, but also the ones sitting here.

...

When Miss Du woke up, she was already in a carriage, still in a foggy state due to the drug, feeling weak and dizzy, suffering severe pain in her arms and legs.

She vaguely remembered being forced last night by the maids to drink a bowl of soup, then her body felt abnormal, subsequently she was tied to the large bed, and then the disgusting-looking bandit came, lifting her head cover.

Thinking of this, she felt a pang of fear and suddenly sat up in the carriage, grabbing Cuiya, who was sitting in the corner with red eyes.

"Cuiya, what happened to me?"

Seeing her young mistress awake, Cuiya was both shocked and overjoyed, and quickly said, "Miss, you finally woke up, Cuiya was so scared."

Miss Du was urgently distressed and inquired, "What exactly happened to me? Did I... did I..."

Miss Du couldn’t continue, pulling open her collar.

There were large areas of bruising on her snowy skin, marks left behind from intimacy.

Instantly, Miss Du’s head buzzed, her face turning ashen.

Was she defiled by that disgusting man?

"Miss, what happened to you?"

Cuiya, frightened by Miss Du’s despairing demeanor, understood her situation.

However, her thoughts differed from Miss Du’s; Miss Du thought she was violated by that disgusting scar-faced man, while Cuiya knew it was Jie Zhonglin who suddenly appeared and took advantage of her.

Cuiya sobbed, her nose turning red.

She grasped Miss Du’s arm, crying indignantly, "Miss, please don’t take it too hard. That faithless man did you wrong by taking advantage when you were vulnerable, but this is not shameful, it won’t tarnish your reputation.

After all, he is your ex-husband, no one knows you didn’t have marital relations before. There was none before, last night made up for it. Losing your honor to him doesn’t ruin your reputation, Miss, just think as Cuiya has told you, please don’t despair."

Chapter 1073: Stranger Paths

Women’s reputation is treated with utmost gravity; seeing Miss Du looking as if she had lost the will to live, Cuiya feared she might contemplate suicide.

That despicable Jie Zhonglin, Cuiya now hated him to the core, gnashing her teeth in anger.

Back when they were still with the Jie Family, Cuiya used to wish night and day that her son-in-law would spend a night in Miss’s courtyard, but he never came, so what did it mean now?

A damned man, deserved to die a terrible death.

Cuiya hadn’t closed her eyes since last night, cursing Jie Zhonglin countless times in her heart.

Miss Du, however, was bewildered, ex-husband? What ex-husband?

The carriage entered the station, and Jie Zhonglin had the caravan stop for a rest at the station while sending people to get supplies from the inn.

The carriage stopped, and a familiar voice outside pulled Miss Du back to reality.

"Xintong, we will rest here for a while, would you like to get off?"

Just now, he had heard Cuiya’s voice, although it was not loud, he couldn’t catch what they were talking about, but he was sure that Miss Du had woken up.

It was time for her to wake up.

Remembering last night's madness, he felt both shocked and delighted, yet also fearful and apprehensive.

It seemed... there was also some anticipation.

If Xintong accepted him and they could let go of their grievances, they definitely could start over.

Then he wouldn't need to return to the military; he would go back to Beijing with her and find a new position at the Ministry of Personnel.

But... it might also be possible that she hated him even more, that in her heart, he might fare worse than a stranger, viewed as an enemy.

If that were the outcome, he would accept it with resignation; whatever she gave, he would accept with resignation.

Such a result meant that he, Jie Zhonglin, was destined to have no fate with her in this life; he would respect her wishes, and if necessary, he was ready to die to atone.

Living a miserable life, dying to atone would also be a release.

Miss Du sat in the carriage, raising her hand but then pulling it back.

It was him, unbelievable? How could it be him? Such a coincidence, why was he here?

Du Xintong's mind was full of questions, wanting to ask yet unsure where to start.

Could she pretend that nothing happened last night? Certainly not.

The two of them were already strangers; even though her feelings for him had cooled, why were they entangled like this again?

Miss Du bit her lips tightly, shaking her head at Cuiya.

Cuiya understood and hoarsely shouted at Jie Zhonglin outside: "Not getting off!"

Her miss became what she is now all because of that damned man; since he had saved them, he had paid his debt to Miss Du, and Cuiya would not show a good face when seeing Jie Zhonglin again.

Maybe in the future, they might even be friends.

But this treacherous man acted no different than a bandit, robbing Miss Du of her chastity.

What if Miss didn't handle it well?

Jie Zhonglin didn't hear Miss Du's voice as he hoped, only Cuiya's angry voice, and he could only give a bitter smile and headed to the nearby inn.

His wine had run out; perhaps he should get some from the inn.

The soldiers chattered among themselves.

"What's with the general? Who exactly was the lady last night?"

"Who knows? Doesn't matter who she was before, now she's the general's woman, and that's that."

"True, but the general seems unhappy; maybe that beauty is still angry?"

"She’s definitely angry; the others don’t know we’re soldiers disguised as merchants, they probably think we’re bandits disguised as merchants. For that lady, she’s merely a captive taken by one bandit from another."

Chapter 1074: She Left

"Oh dear, so pitiful!"

In the carriage, Cuiya was quietly telling Miss Du about last night’s events.

"I was let out from the storeroom, initially thinking they were ordinary merchants based on their attire. These bandits often kidnap merchants, so it’s quite normal for them to be enemies with merchants. But then I saw someone I recognized, it was Young Master Jie Zhonglin, and realized they might not be ordinary merchants."

She lowered her voice and said, "I remember after Young Master Jie left Manxiu Building, he went to East Sea to join his elder brother and enlisted in the military. Their ruthlessness in killing doesn’t seem like that of ordinary merchants, so..."

"Get to the point," Miss Du interrupted her impatiently.

Cuiya, with tearful eyes, said: "Miss, later I entered the room you were in with Young Master Jie. I saw you tied up on the bed in such an embarrassing pose. I tried to untie you, but those bandits had tied the ropes in a way that the more I tried to loosen them, the tighter they became.

Then Young Master Jie sent me out to fetch some hot water. But I was unfamiliar with the village, everyone alive was locked up, where was I supposed to find water? So I just drew some from the well myself, lit the firewood, and boiled water for you.

But when I came back, many people were guarding outside the room, firmly prohibiting me from entering. I could faintly hear your voice continuously calling for Young Master Jie throughout most of the night. The water cooled down, and I had to reheat it before finally bringing it in."

She secretly glanced at Miss Du, who was close to dying from shame, and whispered softly: "You were carried into the bathtub naked by Young Master Jie, he bathed you and then sent me out, don’t you remember any of this?"

Inside the carriage, there was silence for a long time until the merchants finished restocking and planned to resume their journey. Only then did everyone see the two women come out one after another.

Jie Zhonglin hurriedly stuffed a packet of pancakes into a nearby soldier’s hand and strode towards Miss Du.

"Xintong, I..."

"Don’t speak, don’t talk to me." Miss Du, with a pained expression, didn’t look at him and quickly walked towards another merchant caravan at the station.

"What’s wrong?" Left with no choice, Jie Zhonglin had to grab Cuiya.

Cuiya, looking at Jie Zhonglin as if he were an enemy, angrily said: "My mistress will not travel with a shameless person like you, we should each go our own way, goodbye! Oh no, never see you again."

Miss Du traded a jade bracelet from her wrist for acceptance into the merchant caravan.

This caravan was heading to Liangcheng in Xining, which was exactly where Miss Du also intended to go.

"Store Manager!" A soldier, somewhat worried, looked at Jie Zhonglin; that’s how they addressed him outside since they were part of a merchant group.

"No worries, let’s move on."

Miss Du had already started traveling with Cuiya following the merchant caravan ahead.

Their general is pitiful indeed!

The soldier sighed helplessly.

"Who exactly is that girl?" Still, there were those who were overly curious and couldn’t help but ask.

Thinking about the perilous nature of his current mission, unsure if he ever would have another chance to talk about her, Jie Zhonglin bitterly smiled and said, "She used to be my wife, officially married. But I didn’t treat her well, and she ended up divorcing me. Now that I want to treat her well, she no longer gives me a chance."

...

Chapter 1075: Dealing with the Informant

It was the end of the month again, and one by one the Store Managers brought their account books to Gu Youyou.

She sat in the bamboo forest, enjoying the breeze while flipping through the account books in her hand. But at that moment, she noticed a maid by the distant lotus pond eyeing her sneakily.

Gu Youyou’s lips curled into a smirk, and she said to Searcy, "Don’t you like conducting experiments on living people? Here’s your chance."

"Hm? What?" Searcy looked up and followed Gu Youyou’s gaze.

The maid by the pond, realizing they were looking her way, quickly withdrew her head, but not before Searcy caught sight of her and recognized her.

Searcy’s smile turned sinister as she said, "This is on you, remember."

Gu Youyou usually used only actions for experiments and had long since forbade Searcy from using living people. What wind blew today?

Gu Youyou said, "Indeed, it’s on me. Take care of that girl, until she becomes honest. But after all, she is the Empress’s person, so don’t go too far, and don’t kill her!"

Searcy winked at her conspiratorialy, "Don’t worry, I know my limits!"

Xiang Chun hurried to the backyard to find Gu Youyou, her face a picture of panic.

Gu Youyou put down the account book and furrowed her brow.

"What’s the matter? Haven’t I told you not to panic when you encounter problems?"

"But, but the matron from the palace has come. She says it’s an imperial command from the Empress herself, summoning you to the palace."

Gu Youyou paused for a moment, glanced in the direction where Searcy had departed.

She had just let Searcy deal with the person arranged by the Empress, and now in the next second the matron was at the door. What a coincidence.

"Let’s go and see!"

Ever since she married Jin Zijin, it seemed that the Empress had stopped troubling her, but Gu Youyou knew it wouldn’t be that easy, and she wanted to see where the Empress was planning to wait for her.

Jin Zijin had gone out today and wasn’t at home. Was the Empress calculating to find her during this time to dispel her good luck?

"The Prince isn’t here, the Empress must be up to no good. Why don’t we just not go?" Xiang Chun said worriedly, almost in a state of panic.

"Shall I go tell the matron that you’re sick?"

Gu Youyou rolled her eyes and replied, "If it were that easy to fool her, could she become the Empress? Don’t worry, she can’t blatantly devour me."

The visitor was a middle-aged woman in palace attire, whom Gu Youyou had seen before; she indeed was one of the Empress’s people.

Strictly speaking, she was not the kind of matron who served others, but a female official, directly under the Empress.

She came with all seriousness to summon Gu Youyou to the palace. Since it was a female official who came, it would be recorded officially.

It seems that the Empress was also telling Gu Youyou that she wouldn’t harm her.

With that thought, Gu Youyou chuckled speechlessly.

The female official respectfully saluted Gu Youyou, then read the Empress’s imperial command, which wasn’t much actually, simply saying that she was to be summoned to the palace for a reunion—not only Gu Youyou but also the official wives of the three Princes were required to enter the palace.

That made Gu Youyou even more puzzled. What was this? Trying to improve mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relations?

Did they have a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship to improve?

Of course, Gu Youyou could not refuse. She quickly got ready and followed the female official into the carriage.

Xiang Chun, pale as a ghost, stood at the gate watching Gu Youyou’s carriage disappear into the distance, feeling much like the moment Gao Jianli bid farewell to Jing Ke on his mission to assassinate the Emperor of Qin.

Once the carriage was out of sight, she hurried back into the residence and went to the stables in the outer courtyard to find Gui Yunxi, anxiously asking, "Do you know where the Prince has gone?"

Chapter 1076: Invited into the Palace by the Empress

Gui Yunxi was grooming a horse when he noticed Xiang Chun in such haste, a rare sight. He asked, "What's the matter? The Crown Prince should have gone to Sanqing Temple by now."

Sanqing Temple? Fortunately, it's not far.

Xiang Chun hurriedly said, "Stop grooming the horse, hurry to Sanqing Temple and find the Crown Prince. Our Crown Princess has been summoned into the palace by the Empress."

Gui Yunxi was shocked and quickly led out a fast horse with strong legs, heading for Sanqing Temple outside the city.

Everyone close to Gu Youyou knew to guard against three things: fire, theft, and the Empress!

...

Gu Youyou entered the palace, finding Lin Qianqing and Huang Family, the wife of Jin Tingyu, already there.

Lin Qianqing seemed much thinner. Due to the need to avoid impropriety and because Gu Youyou had been so busy lately that her feet scarcely touched the ground, it had been a long time since she last saw Qianqing.

The look of Qianqing's wan and haggard face suggested she had encountered some trouble recently, wearing her down completely.

Upon seeing Gu Youyou, she managed a faint smile.

The other lady, King Jin’s wife, looked even more unwell compared to Qianqing. It was said that she had depleted her health giving birth, and had been ill and not recovered since.

Her sickly appearance now was probably also due to the Empress, who had forcibly summoned her into the palace.

"Pay respects to Mother Empress!"

This phrase "Mother Empress" disgusted Gu Youyou for a long time.

"No need for formalities, offer a seat to the wife of the Crown Prince!"

The Empress’s smile was the same as when Gu Youyou first saw her.

Her makeup and noble appearance exuded a charitable charm, and coupled with her just-right smile, it was entirely unimaginable that she could be a person of malice.

"Today, I’ve invited you here to inquire about the Princes’ daily lives. Though they are Princes, they are also sons of this palace and the Emperor. As parents, we all hope our children have good lives. They’ve grown up and no longer share confidences with Mother Empress, I think it’d be easier for women to talk about these things, so I called you over to have a chat."

Gu Youyou’s mouth twitched fiercely, thinking that this act must be tiring for her, but she endured and just listened.

"Youyou, you are the eldest sister-in-law, you speak first."

Speak? This puzzled Gu Youyou; she really didn’t know what to say.

The Empress said considerately, "You need not be nervous, just talk about what the Crown Prince usually does, whether he’s the only one attending to his needs, or if he lacks people to serve him."

Gu Youyou had an epiphany, tasting the hidden meaning behind the Empress’s words.

Lack of servants?

You might as well say outright that he lacks intimate companionship.

On this matter, Gu Youyou adopted a resolute stance of resistance. If you want to force concubines on Jin Zijin, you can forget it right now.

Gu Youyou said, "The Crown Prince is different from King Jin and Prince Qin. He was born into the Dao Family, practicing purity and having few desires, and he enjoys tranquility. You cannot guess his preferences with the mindset of ordinary people.

He likes to read books when he’s free, mainly Daoist scriptures, which I presume most women wouldn’t understand. Fortunately, I also have my own affairs to attend to, and I won’t bother him too often either."

The Empress frowned slightly and said, "You mean to say that the Crown Prince is pure and disinterested and dislikes being attended to."

Gu Youyou replied, "Exactly."

The Empress’s gaze turned colder, thinking to herself: Don’t think that I don’t know, how can someone practicing purity spend every night in your quarters?

Today she was determined to introduce several women into the Crown Prince Residence; she couldn’t just let it go.

The Empress said, "His disposition favoring purity and disinterest should change; it is not conducive to carrying on the lineage. Youyou, you have been frail yourself, and I never wished for you to marry into the Crown Prince Residence. It’s not that you’re not good, but I feared that with your frailty, you cannot continue the bloodline.

Chapter 1077: Prone to Jealousy

Now what? You've been married for so long, and the Crown Prince dotes on you alone, yet there's no joyous news from you. Could it be that your body is simply incapable of bearing children?

If you can't have children, it's not a big deal. The Imperial Family chose you and will naturally not mistreat you, but you must not delay the continuation of our lineage because of this. I, the Empress, will decide to select one Consort and two Noble Concubines for the Crown Prince. That way, the Crown Prince Residence will also be a bit livelier. What do you think?"

She was quite thoughtful in arranging a mahjong game for her.

Lin Qianqing was anxiously wringing her handkerchief, looking at her. She knew that among the people chosen by the Empress, one of them was the second daughter of Prime Minister Zhang. That woman's literary grace was not as good as her sister's, but she had far more cunning schemes—it was troublesome.

Cousin, you must never agree.

The wife of Prince Qin had an expressionless face. It was someone else's affair and had nothing to do with her; she simply rested lightly against the back of her chair.

Gu Youyou respectfully said to the Empress: "This is not something I can decide. You should ask the Crown Prince if he agrees."

The Empress smiled and said: "Of course I will ask him, but I didn't want to upset you, so I'm telling you first. Don't worry about what the Crown Prince thinks for now. You tell me, are you willing?"

Heh heh...

Gu Youyou chuckled dryly: "If Mother is only asking for Youyou's opinion, then Youyou will boldly speak her mind. If it's about accepting concubines for one's own husband, if Youyou were to accept happily, there must be something wrong with my head.

I used to have some health issues, but my mind has always been very clear, so I'm unwilling."

"You... How dare you!"

The Empress had calculated everything but never expected Gu Youyou to outright refuse, and to do so in such a rebellious manner.

If it were an ordinary woman, even unwilling, she would nod in agreement. Just pushing this trouble onto the man would be considered bold, but Gu Youyou isn't just pushing this trouble onto a man, she's also rejecting so... directly and angrily.

With each of these statements, she could be labeled jealous. Isn't she afraid of that?

"Mother, Youyou is just telling the truth!" Gu Youyou responded calmly.

The Empress snorted coldly and said: "Such jealousy, it's a disgrace to be the daughter-in-law of the Imperial Family. For the princes to continue the imperial bloodline is of utmost importance, so it's not for you to be unwilling.

The Crown Prince Residence has been lacking for so long, and the legitimate wife has been infertile for a long time, so I will make the decision for you and grant the Crown Prince one Consort and two Noble Concubines."

Gu Youyou looked at her indifferently, without retorting.

Wanting to stuff people into the residence, you might ignore me, a principal wife with no backing, but Jin Zijin is not afraid of you. If you have the guts, try forcing a few women on him in front of his face?

Pushing back is a minor issue, but causing the Empress to lose face wouldn't look good.

The Empress glared coldly at Gu Youyou a few more times, and seeing that she did not oppose any further, temporarily let her be.

Then, she turned her gaze to Lin Qianqing, and her look suddenly became a few degrees colder.

"Wife of Prince Jin, since you were young, I have been especially fond of you. But do tell, why is there still no news of pregnancy among the concubines in Prince Jin Residence up to now?"

This question puzzled Gu Youyou as well. It had been over two years, hadn't it? Prince Jin had married such a big group of women, yet not a single one had become pregnant.

It's quite possible that Prince Jin himself has problems. There are various causes of infertility, and without modern technology, it's hard to diagnose. Perhaps Prince Jin's lineage will end.

Chapter 1078: Both Suffer From Infertility

Thinking of this, Gu Youyou couldn't help but laugh out loud.

It's laughable that the Empress would ask Lin Qianqing about such matters. What could she possibly know?

Clearly, she was just looking for trouble.

"I, your daughter-in-law, don't know," Lin Qianqing replied softly.

"You don't know? As the principal wife, have you not fulfilled your duties? Or are you tired of being the principal wife and want me to find someone else for the position?"

"I..." Lin Qianqing was about to argue, but the Empress interrupted her.

"This Palace has decided, in Prince Jin Residence, regardless of status high or low, whoever gives birth to a Prince first shall be the principal wife."

Lin Qianqing was instantly stunned, and after a moment, she let out a bitter laugh and whispered, "Yes, as Mother Empress wishes."

This was indeed a perfectly reasonable excuse to remove her from the position of principal wife, and she couldn’t say anything against it.

Gu Youyou took a deep breath and stood up to speak for Lin Qianqing.

"Mother Empress, since none of the women in Prince Jin Residence can conceive, how can it be the fault of the Prince Jin’s wife? Perhaps the problem lies with King Jin!"

Such words were unbearable for any mother to hear. As soon as Gu Youyou spoke, the Empress exploded with rage, completely disregarding her image. She stood up abruptly and pointed at Gu Youyou, berating her furiously.

"What did you say? You insolent wench, how dare you slander a Prince, who gave you such audacity?"

The Empress’s reaction shocked Lin Qianqing and Consort Qin; they had always known the Empress to be gentle and reserved. How could she lash out like a shrew and use words like ’insolent wench’?

The Empress froze for a moment, and seeing their astonished looks, she realized her own loss of composure.

She hurriedly sat back down, reined in her anger, and scolded Gu Youyou, "Even though you were once a village girl from the wilds, you are now, after all, the principal wife of the Crown Prince, and you must not be without decorum as before. Speaking such words brings shame upon the Imperial Family."

Gu Youyou scoffed and replied indifferently, "I am a doctor, and I have spoken my piece. Whether you believe it or not, Mother Empress, is entirely up to you. Of course, it’s also possible that I am mistaken, and it might well be that the women in Prince Jin Residence all suffer from infertility. Why not have Your Majesty the Empress send a few more beauties over to Prince Jin Residence?"

This sounded well-meaning, but how could it be that all the women in Prince Jin Residence suffered from infertility?

By now, the Empress's face was extremely unsightly, and she was in no mood to pick a quarrel with Gu Youyou.

No women had become pregnant for so long, and coincidentally, her son had indeed consulted the doctor for that particular issue. Imperial Physician where, Madam Li had even inquired last time, King Jin is truly infertile.

What to do? She only had this one son, and if he truly could not produce offspring, what hope would she have for the rest of her life?

Let alone striving to secure the position of Crown Prince for her son, just the fact that he couldn't have children would be enough for her to be laughed at by everyone.

With a cold laugh at Gu Youyou, the Empress then turned her gaze to Lin Qianqing and Consort Qin.

Consort Qin seemed listless and half-dead. Although she could only bear daughters, at least Prince Qin was capable of siring children.

And wasn't that Consort in Prince Qin Residence about to give birth, too? And to twins, it was said?

Her own son was superior to that illegitimate one in every way except for siring children, where he was far lacking.

No, she couldn't just sit by and do nothing; this issue needed to be resolved promptly.

Furthermore, this matter must not reach the Emperor's ears. If the Emperor learned that King Jin was infertile, he could forget about being Emperor in this lifetime.

Even if the Emperor were to yield to the pressure from the Ducal Residence and agree to let him be the Crown Prince, the ministers would never consent.

"Consort Qin, you must take good care of yourself and bear another Prince for the Emperor."

Chapter 1079: No Offspring

The wife of Prince Qin stood up and nodded softly, her figure looked as if it were about to collapse.

She certainly wanted to, but she needed an opportunity!

"Yes, Your Majesty the Empress!"

"Hmm, you may leave. I am tired today!" The Empress supported her head with one hand, looking exceptionally weary.

Gu Youyou left Jiaotai Hall with a clear head and an indescribable sense of comfort in her heart.

In the Empress's bedchamber, those several misses had waited until the chrysanthemums had wilted, all awaiting the summons, but no one came.

"Could something unexpected have occurred?"

"What sort of unexpected event could occur? Surely Gu Youyou wouldn't dare to disagree?"

"Why hasn't Her Majesty the Empress summoned us after all this time?"

"If you're not summoned, just wait. Her Majesty the Empress won't ask you to stay overnight."

Meanwhile, the Empress had clearly forgotten about those misses. Her son was infertile and sick; it was a great shame. How could she sit still?

She hurriedly sent someone to Prince Jin Residence and summoned Prince Jin to the palace.

"Mother, what is it that you summon your son for?" Prince Jin, puzzled, had only recently sent his wife to the palace, and she had just returned when he was summoned to the palace.

He thought: Could it be that Lin Qianqing caused him trouble?

The Empress had a drained look, dismissed everyone around, and asked, "Tell me honestly, are you impotent?"

"What?" Prince Jin had no clue what she was talking about.

The Empress had no choice but to press on: "There are so many women in your household, you've been married for such a long time, why is it that no one is pregnant? Honestly, tell me, is there a problem with you in that regard?"

"Ah?" Prince Jin's face turned a dark navy color, anxious, he said: "Mother, who told you this?"

"Don't ask who told me. Just tell me, is it true?"

"I...how could I be impotent? Mother, you worry too much, your son is in very good health." Speaking of such matters would make any man feel awkward. Prince Jin was both angry and embarrassed.

Wondering who could have spread such rumors to his mother, he thought it must be Lin Qianqing. All right, wait until I return and see how I deal with you.

"But why is it that none of your consorts are pregnant? Look at Prince Qin, although his firstborn is a daughter, the daughter of Jie Family is about to bear him twins. Xiaoran, your father will not hand over the throne to a Prince who has no heirs. The reason your father hesitates to appoint you Crown Prince might well be this."

Once she started thinking this way, the idea in the Empress' heart ran wild, and she couldn't find any other reason why her son wouldn't be fit to be the Crown Prince other than his lack of heirs.

Yes, it must be so.

Thinking of this, she felt as if the heavens were about to collapse.

There was nothing lacking that she couldn’t compete for on his behalf, but as for giving birth to a son, how could she possibly assist?

"What should we do? What should we do... Xiaoran, your mother has always been so strong, never lost to anyone, if she loses because you have no heir, how can I face the Ducal Residence that has always supported us? Your maternal grandfather is old, how can he bear such a blow?"

King Jin’s mind was racing, and hearing the Empress say this, he realized this issue was extremely serious.

Could it be that he truly couldn’t have children?

Yet he was clearly capable of performing his marital duties?

But if he could, how then could he explain that no one in Prince Jin Residence was able to conceive?

This problem was very serious and must not be leaked out.

After several turns of thought, an idea suddenly lit up in King Jin’s mind.

Chapter 1080: Only Female Doctors Can Have Children

He took a deep breath and said to the Empress, "Mother, do not be anxious. Childbearing is a matter of fate. Previously, when I was providing disaster relief in the afflicted area, I encountered an old beggar. Before the flood, he made his living by telling fortunes, and was reputed to be quite accurate. Out of curiosity, I had him cast a divination for me."

"What did he say?" The Empress stared at King Jin as if he was a lifeline.

Fortune-telling sounded absurd, but given the circumstances, she was willing to listen to anything absurd if it meant her son could be capable of having children.

King Jin let out a sigh of relief and said with a faint smile, "That old beggar said that the mother of my firstborn son must be a female doctor, and that I wouldn't have the fortune of children until before my eldest son is born. At first, I thought he was spouting nonsensical drivel, but now it seems there might be some truth to it."

"A female doctor?" The Empress was taken aback for a moment before her voice grew shrill.

Now, the very word 'doctor' set her off, since her royal son had just claimed the mother of his eldest child would be a female doctor?

A sudden shock ran through the Empress's heart, "Xiaoran, you better not tell me you have taken a fancy to Gu Youyou."

Isn't Gu Youyou a female doctor? And wasn't it just this morning that Gu Youyou had infuriated her, which is why she got angered the moment she heard the word 'doctor'?

"I would rather you remain childless than take a fancy to Gu Youyou," the Empress said with animated agitation, rising to her feet abruptly.

What kind of woman would that be? If it were her, wouldn't she die of rage?

"Mother, what are you thinking about?" King Jin sighed helplessly, "They said a female doctor, not necessarily Gu Youyou. There are other female doctors in the world apart from Gu Youyou!"

The Empress's thoughts spun, and then struck by an idea, she said excitedly, "Right, the Cui Family's daughter, the niece of Dr. Cui, Cui Yingying who is always with Jin Liuying. Her family background is not bad, but... she is too young, it won't do; you can't wait for her to grow up."

King Jin felt his heart rise and fall as he listened to the Empress's words, like riding a roller coaster.

He had his own considerations, who would want to marry such a young girl, not yet mature?

He wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to bring Searcy into his home. He had thought it over; since he had that particular issue, it definitely wouldn't do to have outsiders look at it; he didn't want such a matter to become public knowledge throughout the city.

But it would be different with Searcy; he trusted her and believed in her medical skills. If she could cure him, then let it follow naturally that she would bear his firstborn son. No one could have any objections.

Fortunately, the Empress was impatient and didn't suggest waiting for that young girl to grow up and then marrying her off to him.

The Empress continued to rack her brains trying to find a suitable match for King Jin among the official families. There were no shortages of women who could read and write, but finding one with medical skills turned out to be quite difficult after much thought.

It seemed that only the Cui Family had female practitioners, but the Cui Family had no unmarried daughters left, the eldest being Cui Yingying. What to do in such a case?

Should she send someone to inquire in other provinces to see if there are suitable candidates?

The Empress said, "For now, go back. Do not tell anyone about this. I will find you a woman of good family who is also skilled in the medical arts."

King Jin reminded her, "She must be a legitimate doctor, just any woman with a bit of medical knowledge won't do. Mother, be careful not to be deceived by someone."

"I have my own judgment," the Empress replied irritably. Could someone like her be easily deceived?

Seeing that the Empress was truly not taking the bait, King Jin had to remind her.

"If we are speaking of women with excellent medical skills, that would be Jisheng Hall. Mother, why not consider a female doctor from Jisheng Hall?"