Farmhouse 1091

Chapter 1091: Open a Small Kitchen

So, the baby was not born from there, but directly taken out by cutting open the stomach?

Oh, heavens!

Lady Cui emerged, her complexion deathly pale.

The Imperial Physicians hurriedly gathered around, asking, "What happened?"

"How was it done?"

"Is the Consort still alive?"

Lady Cui, the female doctor, nodded blankly and said, "Alive, but the child was not born from the Consort."

"Ah...? Not born from the Consort, then where did it come from?"

The Imperial Physicians instinctively glanced at the small white hut set up in the middle of the room, feeling that under everyone’s watchful eyes, it was impossible for Gu Youyou to sneak a child inside.

No, there were two.

Lady Cui swallowed, saying, "It was... it was directly taken out by cutting open the stomach."

With a loud bang, the Imperial Physicians seemed to be struck by a paralyzing spell, standing speechless on the spot for a long while.

Taken out directly from the stomach?

Could the child really be directly taken out from a pregnant woman’s stomach?

But Lady Cui had just gone inside to see, it was not possible for her to deceive them. Although not seen with their own eyes, it was almost as if they had seen it themselves. They couldn’t believe that childbirth could be done this way.

Another Imperial Physician asked again, "Is the Consort really still alive?"

Lady Cui replied, "Of course it’s true. If something happened to the Consort, the Prince’s principal wife couldn’t just leave like that."

A little while later, Prince Qin returned, glanced at the Imperial Physicians, and coldly said, "Please continue to stay here until the Consort wakes up."

He still had many things to do, the soup from this morning, and to bring the good news to the emperor.

...

On the way, Searcy couldn’t help asking, "How did you think of using this method to help her deliver?"

Gu Youyou said with a faint smile, "There are many circumstances under which women can’t give birth naturally, such as improper fetal position, umbilical cord wrapped around the neck, oversized fetus, and so on, like today’s situation with Xie Qinyun. Especially with twins, even without someone drugging them, it is very difficult to give birth. But the pregnant woman can’t just watch herself and the fetus die from pain and suffocation, can she? We had to find a way to save them, right?

Thus, cesarean section, in actuality, is a very safe way of childbirth. Of course, natural childbirth is the best; this is to be used as a last resort. It’s better than suffocating! Today, you saw it clearly. If next time I can’t have a natural birth, your knife skills better be precise."

"You giving birth?" Searcy shivered with surprise, his face full of astonishment.

Gu Youyou, seeing his reaction, wasn’t pleased and said, "Can’t I give birth? What kind of remark is that?"

Uh...

"Hehe, yes, you can give birth."

Only Xiang Chun knew about Gu Youyou’s pregnancy, and she was considering whether she should find a reason to announce it publicly.

Now, in her courtyard, there were already two pregnant women, both with enormous appetites consuming only food for pregnant women, wouldn’t it raise suspicions?

But soon she had an idea, and once back at the mansion, Gu Youyou instructed Xiang Chun, "Find someone to build a small kitchen in our courtyard; I want to research new dishes."

"Ah...?" Xiang Chun was startled and asked, "Are you planning to open another restaurant?"

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "Not necessarily, but I am considering it."

Though she didn’t open a restaurant, Shunzi indeed opened one.

He didn’t open it in Jinxiu City but in Beijing.

Because Gu Youyou had found him a house in Beijing, right next to the landmark building she was about to finish constructing.

Since Beijing and Jinxiu City are close, less than an hour’s journey, it wasn’t much for them, even a trip to the mountains takes more than an hour.

Chapter 1092: Opening a Restaurant

The restaurant is under renovation but Shunzi didn’t remain idle. Recently, he moved into Gu Youyou’s house, under her guidance, to focus solely on making various spicy fish dishes.

Gu Youyou asked, "Chilies are hard to come by since nobody has grown them before. Have you solved this problem?"

Shunzi chuckled and said, "The chili peppers have already been planted. When we escaped, the most we brought with us were chili pepper seeds. I mentioned this to Miss Du last time, and she generously rented a small manor for me. It’s not far from both Beijing and Jinxiu City."

Gu Youyou burst into laughter, praising him, "Well done, Shunzi, you’ve learned to plan ahead. I’d forgotten to mention this to you before and thought you had forgotten about it."

"How could I?" Shunzi replied. "If the fish doesn’t have chilies, the flavor is never quite right. I’ve been using chilies for the fish, and Erya absolutely loves it."

"Alright, then I’m relieved. Today, sister will teach you to make sauerkraut fish. Some people’s palates aren’t suited to very spicy flavors but enjoy that sort of taste, so you can serve them a less spicy sauerkraut fish."

With Gu Youyou’s help, Erya’s Fish Manor successfully opened.

Since Shunzi’s way of making fish was not yet widely accepted, Gu Youyou suggested that he prepare some small dishes for customers to sample first. If they liked it, they could then go inside to order.

The opening day had a 50% discount, the second day a 60% discount, and the third day a 70% discount... until the original price was restored. This approach was very enticing and, since there was no shortage of wealthy individuals in Beijing, they would come to the restaurant out of curiosity to try the novelty.

The first day was fully booked, the second day required customers to wait, and by the third day, reservations were needed.

Erya’s Fish Manor was busier than they had anticipated.

Shunzi alone could not keep up, and fortunately, Sanbao also knew how to make fish. After three days, they realized that just the two of them was unsustainable and would exhaust them sooner or later. This could not go on.

Gu Youyou had the kitchen built large, and Shunzi finally understood her careful consideration. Building it so big meant she had foreseen this; with so many stoves, they'd need to hire more chefs.

Gu Youyou said, "Either post a notice to recruit chefs to work for you or see if any brothers or sisters are willing to endure hardship and wish to get rich together."

Shunzi thought for a moment, then said, "I'll ask if my second brother is willing to join."

Shunzi's parents had both found employment through Gu Youyou's arrangements, so his younger brother stayed home to care for his sister. Shunzi's family was full of boys, but this younger sister was still little, and she was the precious jewel of the entire family.

Gu Youyou asked, "What about your sister then?"

Shunzi replied, somewhat embarrassedly, "Then, we can only ask Erya to help look after her together."

Gu Youyou wasn't willing to agree, Erya had two children of her own to care for, how could she manage that?

She said, "How about this, I'll assign a maid to help out, solely to assist Erya with the children. Your brother is also not young anymore, in another two years, he should be considering marriage. He indeed can't remain at home forever looking after his little sister."

Shunzi was overjoyed, thanking Gu Youyou repeatedly.

Gu Youyou said, "Don't thank me, after all, I invested silver to start this Fish Manor, and I'm also entitled to a share of the profits."

...

The war between Xining and the Imperial Court had already begun. Jin Zijin sent a family letter mentioning the detailed situation.

Four armies advanced in four different directions.

The Yue Family from Lingnan had broken through Yulin Mountain and was now heading towards the desert nearest to the palace of the King of Xining.

Jie Zhongsen’s troops from Dongzhou were attacking the strongly fortified Liangcheng.

Chapter 1093: Identifying Searcy’s Identity

General Lu shone brilliantly this time, capturing Xiyue City in one fell swoop. Aside from the city of Xining, it is the most important and second strongest city in Xining.

Gu Youyou smiled and thought to herself: General Lu must be basking in glory right now. Logically, the Emperor has always favored the Grand Master Residence’s Xiao Family the most, yet for some reason, he didn’t send Xiao Jinyan or Xiao Jinfei to seize such an opportunity for merit. Instead, he gave it to General Lu, whom the Ducal Residence has been eager to win over.

"What are you looking at with that silly smile?" Searcy, seeing Gu Youyou smiling foolishly, couldn’t help but ask.

Gu Youyou said, "Your dad has won a great victory and is going to be promoted. Aren’t you looking forward to it?"

Searcy’s face turned dark, and with a snort, she went out.

Most unexpectedly, the troops from the Ducal Residence of Beiping suffered the worst this time.

Out of four armies, three reported victories, but theirs was unlucky and faced the enemy's desperate resistance.

It wasn't just resistance; the Beiping Army was defeated and then pursued by the victors. It seemed as if the fifth Prince treated the route through Beiping as an escape route. If things came to the worst, he planned to carve out a path through Beiping to flee to the lands of the Barbarians.

The Ducal Residence really had rotten luck, because among several directions, that indeed was the best escape route.

After reading through, Gu Youyou started to pick up her pen and write a reply to Jin Zijin.

She wanted to tell him that they were going to have a child, and also urge him to come back earlier, so he must witness the birth of the child himself.

...

General Lu fought a splendid battle, news of which had already reached the court above. With the Emperor's dragon heart greatly pleased, he waved his hand, and various rewards were bestowed. Although General Lu hadn't returned yet, this did not delay the bestowal of gold, silver, and jewels; Madam Lu could gladly accept them.

For a time, the General Residence became the most sought-after place, and the ladies of the officials naturally would not miss such an opportunity. Women who had never interacted with Madam Lu in the past were now eagerly seeking her acquaintance.

At the same time, Searcy's true background was also uncovered, not only hers but her mother's as well, clearly and thoroughly.

Mammy Li said to the Empress, "Searcy's mother is not of simple status. She was the sole heir of the Ghost Doctor Family. Back when the Ghost Doctor Family was wiped out, a young lady escaped, and that was Searcy's mother. When Searcy's mother was alive, she taught Searcy all her skills. Searcy fully inherited the bloodline and sinister temperament of the Ghost Doctor Family. At a very young age, she is

already very cruel. Saying she heals people may not be all that impressive, but she’s definitely a master when it comes to poisoning others.

Empress, please consider carefully. You wouldn’t want something to happen to King Jin before your grandson is even born."

Hearing what Mammy Li said, the Empress also became worried.

It was indeed necessary to be cautious about such a woman.

She said, "Given this, why did Gu Youyou keep her by her side and even make her a sitting doctor at Jisheng Hall? Isn’t Gu Youyou afraid that she will poison the patients to death and ruin her own reputation?"

Mammy Li said, "If it wasn’t for Gu Youyou who demanded her from Madam Lu’s side back then, she would have been beaten to death by Madam Lu long ago. The old servant guesses that Searcy stays with Gu Youyou as a way to repay her kindness. Of course, it also doesn’t rule out the possibility of other deals between them."

After listening, the Empress rested her chin on her hand and pondered. Moments later, she suddenly laughed and instructed Mammy Li, "Spread the news of Lu Xueying to Madam Lu’s ears, but be careful not to let her find out that the news came from our palace. Let’s see how she reacts."

Chapter 1094: Sent a Beauty for Training

Madam Lu has recently become a high-profile figure, and it is said that many people are trying to win her favor, making her extremely pleased. However, one wonders whether she would still be able to smile if she heard that her enemy’s daughter is still alive.

...

Everything proceeded methodically, and Shunzi’s restaurant opened successfully and quickly became popular.

Now, the dignitaries of Beijing would feel embarrassed to admit they hadn’t eaten at Erya’s Fish Manor.

Youyou's landmark building is under construction, and the dwelling where Madam Du is hiding is also very comfortable. Good news has come from Xining (even the defeats suffered by the Beiping Army are good news). The baby inside her belly is also growing day by day.

But just at this moment, the Empress stirred up trouble again.

For some inexplicable reason, the Empress issued a decree directly to annoy Youyou, sending a beauty to her residence and telling Youyou to train her well, and after the training, send the beauty to serve Jin Zijin in Xining?

Damn it, do they think I'm easy to bully?

Youyou knew this woman, apparently found by the Empress from somewhere, was definitely no ordinary lady from prominent Beijing families, and was much more capable than the mindless maids in the residence.

Why guess she wasn't one of the prominent ladies of Beijing?

Because the prominent ladies wouldn't be so foolish. The Crown Prince wasn't around, and they hadn't agreed to anything. Sending her to be trained alongside the Crown Prince's wife? That's like offering herself up to be skinned.

So, this woman must be no ordinary figure to boldly seek training from Youyou.

Youyou told Searcy about the matter, and with a dark chuckle, Searcy said, "Just the other day, those maids were trained well. Why not send them to serve her?"

Youyou said, "You handle it, I need to take care of my pregnancy!"

"Take care of your pregnancy?"

Youyou, touching her own belly, said puzzled, "Shouldn’t I take care of my pregnancy?"

"...Alright, you take care of your pregnancy."

So, she could openly ask for help in dealing with this little bitch?

The Empress was swift in her actions, and soon, that woman was sent over. At dusk, an inconspicuous sedan chair entered the Crown Prince Residence through a side gate.

Out of curiosity, Youyou went to see her. In a secluded courtyard, lit by red candles, when Youyou arrived with her attendants, the woman was still dressed in her wedding gown, sitting on the bridal bed with a red veil over her face, and beside her, there sat a rooster tied with a red string.

Youyou couldn’t help but burst into laughter.

The Empress really knows how to play - even using a chicken.

Did she think I was too bored and wanted to amuse me?

Youyou gave Xiang Chun a meaningful look, who, understanding the hint, gritted her teeth, stepped forward, and yanked off the woman’s red veil.

The woman looked up at Youyou.

She was quite beautiful, although her makeup was a bit too heavy, which fits the ancient aesthetic, but to Youyou, it seemed too exaggerated.

Her face was expressionless, lacking the expected surprise or panic, just looking at Youyou indifferently.

Xiang Chun, feeling suffocated, slapped her on the face and snapped, "Don’t you know the rules? Do you not greet the Crown Prince’s wife when you see her?"

The woman smiled faintly, stood up, and greeted Youyou.

"Crown Prince’s Wife!"

"Hmm, stand up." Youyou looked at her and then at the rooster, instructing the maid behind her, "Go, kill this chicken and stew it. Give it to Miss Song to nourish her body. Seeing how thin she is, how can she withstand any hardship?"

Chapter 1095: The Chicken is Stewed, Send a Dog Over

The girl remained unfazed and said lightly, "Prince Consort, you mustn’t." Lifting her head, she embraced the rooster, stating, "Today is a day of great joy for Song Lianjun, with the Prince absent, this rooster represents the Prince, how could you bring yourself to stew the Prince?"

Gu Youyou’s gaze gradually turned icy.

She knew the Empress meant no good; how could she have been assigned someone that would simply allow herself to be bullied?

This woman, seemingly fragile and in a very disadvantageous position, had not a trace of fear in her eyes. Instead, she was utterly calm.

Gu Youyou raised an eyebrow and said, "Do you intend to keep this rooster to accompany your wedding night?"

The maids behind Gu Youyou couldn’t help but cover their mouths and giggle softly at these words, but Song Lianjun’s lips curled into a hint of a smile. She said, "As per tradition, this rooster, representing the Prince, is to be placed beside the bed to spend the night with Lianjun. Prince Consort, surely you are aware of such customs?"

Gu Youyou let out a haughty laugh and looked down at her, speaking indifferently, "Now that you’ve entered these doors, I’ll teach you your first lesson. Outside rules do not matter here; in this residence, once the doors are closed, I am the rule."

Song Lianjun’s expression changed, her eyes now carrying a hint of frostiness.

Gu Youyou huffed and ordered one of the maids behind her, "Take the rooster to the kitchen and have them stew the bird as quickly as possible."

"Yes, Prince Consort."

The maid immediately stepped forward, snatching the rooster from Song Lianjun’s arms, and took it to the kitchen.

Gu Youyou then said to another maid, "Go to the outer room and find a guard dog, a male one. Since the rooster will be stewed, we can’t let Miss Song spend the night alone, can we?"

The maids shivered collectively at this; it was too... They wondered whether the new Miss Song was afraid of dogs.

Song Lianjun’s expression grew even colder as she glared steadfastly at Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou actually preferred this direct approach; if you kept up your defenses, it would hardly be appropriate for me to strike. But once you’re enraged, wouldn’t that provide an opportunity?

Gu Youyou returned to her courtyard, ready to retire for the night, when Searcy came running.

All excitement, she said, "I heard you visited that wretched girl’s room, had the rooster stewed, and even sent a male dog to her room?"

Gu Youyou responded nonchalantly, "Xiang Chun told you?"

Searcy replied, "Yes, that maid Xiang Chun isn’t sleeping and is spreading the word everywhere. She’s even arranged with several other maids to go watch the excitement tonight."

"Watch what excitement?" Gu Youyou raised an eyebrow.

Searcy chuckled mischievously, "To make it more thrilling, I added a little something to that chicken soup."

"Hm?" Gu Youyou suddenly had a bad feeling.

Searcy burst out laughing, "Still want to spend the wedding night with a rooster? Such a little wh~re deserves to be dealt with by dogs. I've seen it; that dog is big enough, barely any weaker than your Abao."

Oh, my...

Gu Youyou hastily put her coat back on, slipped on her shoes, and hurried out of her chamber.

She only wanted to intimidate the woman, to give her a fright so she'd behave. She had instructed the maid to secure the dog with a sturdy rope, but she hadn't expected Searcy, a woman this cruel, to concoct such a scheme.

She added something to the chicken soup, even a fool knew what that would be.

The woman might not consume it, but that's no guarantee the dog wouldn't.

Chapter 1096: A Ruthless Character

If Song Lianjun were to be killed by a dog on her first night at the manor, and the news spread, it would be the end of her.

The Empress would undoubtedly seize this horrifying event and make a big issue of it, condemning her as jealous, mean-spirited, and vicious to an appalling degree. Such labels could crush her, drowning her in spittle alone.

The Empress would indeed wish for such an incident, so this woman, truly, must not be killed.

Gu Youyou hurriedly entered Song Lianjun's courtyard, and from afar, she could hear sounds emanating from the house.

It was not the terrified screams of a woman, but the mournful wailing of a large dog.

She quickly pushed the door open with her people, only to see Song Lianjun covered in blood, her hands clutching a hairpin, glaring at her with a fierce look reminiscent of Yama.

The large dog, however, was lying on the ground, convulsing in pain.

A bloody hole in its neck kept bleeding; it seemed it would not survive.

Gu Youyou was startled and suddenly felt a chill in her heart.

This woman's eyes were too familiar; it was the ruthless gaze only possessed by assassins they had trained.

She had instantly pierced the neck of that formidable large dog, and her movements were very adept; she was not an ordinary person and was most likely an assassin nurtured by the Empress.

Such a person with uncertain background in the house was more troublesome to deal with than those ladies with powerful backers.

Searcy, who was following behind Gu Youyou, also got a shock upon entering and seeing this scene. She said, "You're quite ruthless, but that dog was a gift from the Prince's wife; how do you plan to explain having killed it?"

Song Lianjun's cold gaze shifted to Searcy, who, undaunted, sarcastically returned her look.

In Searcy's view, anyone less clever than her was worthless.

This slightly startled Song Lianjun.

It seemed that Gu Youyou was indeed difficult to handle, which was why the Empress had sent her.

She sneered, loosening her grip, and the hairpin clattered to the ground.

She laughed, "Thanks to the Prince’s wife for gifting Lianjun some dog meat."

Gu Youyou coldly watched her, snorted, and turned to leave the courtyard.

Searcy, following behind Gu Youyou, looked rather solemn, saying, "This woman doesn’t seem easy to deal with; she’s quite capable in both wit and bravery."

"I know," Gu Youyou stated indifferently.

She planned to write another letter to Jin Zijin, informing him of this woman’s circumstances, asking him to have someone investigate her background.

Walking ahead, Gu Youyou suddenly stopped and said to Searcy, "You go to Sanqing Temple tomorrow morning, first inform Yue Rujing of the situation."

Informing Jin Zijin would take too much time, and besides, he was fighting in Xining.

Although Yue Rujing was also quite busy, searching for the Heavenly Master and guarding against the people from Xuanzong, asking him to help investigate this woman’s history shouldn’t be a problem.

The next day, Searcy left early in the morning, and suddenly someone came to report that Madam Lu sought an audience.

"What does Madam Lu want?" Miss Du asked softly.

Gu Youyou, after finishing a glass of milk, tapped her fingers on the tabletop, frowning slightly.

Madam Lu’s health was no longer an issue; Gu Youyou didn’t know why she had come.

Recently, Madam Lu had been busy as General Lu fought a brilliant victory in battle, with minimal losses and maximum enemy casualties, achieving the quickest city capture, earning the highest commendation. The Emperor praised General Lu in person, presenting him with gifts, making many eager to curry favor with Madam Lu.

Why would she think of visiting here?

"I’ll go out and see," Gu Youyou said.

Miss Du was staying with Gu Youyou to nurture her pregnancy, and with the endless account books sent by various prefecture governments, she could help alleviate some of Gu Youyou’s burdens.

...

Chapter 1097: Madam Lu Pays a Visit

"Pay my respects to the Consort of the Crown Prince!" Led by the maid, Madam Lu entered the parlor to meet Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "Madam Lu, no need for such courtesy. You’re now a highly sought-after madam, how do you find the time to visit me?"

Madam Lu’s complexion did not look too good, but since Gu Youyou was her benefactor, she still spoke to her with utmost respect.

"The Consort of the Crown Prince, you have done me a great favor. I won’t beat around the bush with you; I have something to say straightforwardly."

Gu Youyou’s expression grew serious. Judging by Madam Lu’s demeanor, something significant must have happened.

"Please speak, I always appreciate directness like that of Madam Lu."

Madam Lu nodded and said, "I’ve recently heard a piece of news. They say that the scourge of our Lu Family is still alive and is serving as a doctor by the Consort of the Crown Prince’s side?"

Searcy?

Gu Youyou looked at Madam Lu momentarily, probably understanding the situation.

Clearly, someone knew Searcy’s identity and disclosed it to Madam Lu.

Gu Youyou had asked Searcy in the past. She said she had lived in the Lu Family since she was a child, and no one outside of the Lu Family’s inner court recognized her.

Yet under Madam Lu’s tyranny, the women of the Lu Family’s inner court were never allowed to leave the Lu estate; thus, the only people Searcy needed to avoid were the few from the Lu Family who had access to the outside world.

But from Madam Lu’s current state, it was clear that Searcy was not identified by any of the few who could leave the Lu Household.

Gu Youyou asked, "Does Madam Lu know who revealed this information?"

Madam Lu shook her head and said, "I do not know who leaked this news. I dare to ask the Consort of the Crown Prince, is this matter true?"

Gu Youyou fell silent for a moment, thinking to herself: it seems someone is indeed trying to stir up trouble!

After a while, she said, "It is indeed true. Lu Xueying identified the poison in your system and also worked with me to create an antidote. She is a doctor with decent Medical Skills, a quick learner. The reason I kept her was because I valued her talent!"

Hearing Gu Youyou say this, Madam Lu became anxious and somewhat agitated. She said, "Ah, you've been deceived by her. Consort of the Crown Prince, to be frank, I trusted her mother for the same reason, because of talent. But what happened later? Look at how she treated me. You must not keep her around; people with such a malicious mind can be very dangerous. If she harms you, then my sin would be great.

Ah! Look at this mess. If I had known you wouldn't have the heart to kill her, I shouldn't have brought her to you. What if something were to happen to you? Wouldn't I be harming my benefactor?"

"Madam Lu, you are too serious," Gu Youyou said. "Her temperament may be fierce, but she's not beyond salvation. She enjoys studying various medications, and I was in need of such a person. Keeping her by my side, as long as she is employed properly, she could be a boon to the wellbeing of the people. I earnestly request Madam Lu to pretend to be unaware of this matter. She is no longer called Lu Xueying; I have given her a new identity and have named her Searcy."

"You... sigh!"

Although Madam Lu was not a good person herself, she was clear about gratitude and grudge. Back when everyone looked down on her, it was Gu Youyou who treated her like an ordinary patient and saved her; otherwise, even if her husband had earned his merits now, people would not treat her like they do today.

Now fully integrated into the circle of noble ladies in Beijing, her past experiences drew sympathetic glances from those who had once mocked her, and no one laughed at her anymore.

Chapter 1098: Dealing with Her

Moreover, after her husband found out that she was harmed by others and became like that, his attitude towards her was no longer as disgusted as before, especially her son, who always felt embarrassed by her situation, became much more filial once he learned that his mother should not have been like that.

"Madam Crown Prince, you've gone too far with your pleas. I am merely a woman of humble station; I cannot bear such earnest requests from you. My visit today isn't to blame you for keeping Lu Xueying, but rather to express my worry that you might be deceived by her, fearing she could harm you. Since you have spoken thus, I have nothing more to say.

However, I must still remind Madam Crown Prince to be merciless if you discover any duplicity in her. My entire family has been terrorized by this mother and daughter duo!"

Gu Youyou earnestly replied, "Alright, I will be sure!"

Seeing Madam Lu's demeanor, she was indeed terrified of Searcy and her daughter, having been frightened by them.

"Very well!" Madam Lu stood up, gave Gu Youyou another bow, and said, "Madam Crown Prince, with that, I shall take my leave. Please do take care, and be wary of her."

Gu Youyou nodded, stood up as well, and said, "Madam Lu, thank you for your concern. If you have the chance, you might as well inquire about who has passed this information to you and what exactly they are planning to do?"

Madam Lu was startled and nodded seriously in agreement.

...

Yue Rujing, upon hearing Searcy's words, did not hesitate, and the next day he personally came to the Crown Prince Residence, bringing Abao with him, under the pretense of delivering the dog.

He complained, "As a mother, have you forgotten about Abao? He's been staying at my place all this time."

Gu Youyou retorted with a smile, "Seeing how close you two are, I just couldn't bear to separate you, brother and dog."

Yue Rujing: "..."

To be ridiculed as dog brothers, yet she managed to exploit it to her advantage, acting as a son for once.

He really shouldn’t have attempted to challenge Gu Youyou.

"Ahem!" He lowered his voice to discuss serious matters, "Just keep Abao here, he’s very sensitive to danger. If anyone wishes to harm you, he will surely know at once. With your teacher brother not around, I should have brought Abao to you sooner."

Gu Youyou also put aside her smile, nodding earnestly, "For the Empress, with Zijin away, it’s a great opportunity to target me. This smart and beautiful woman with skills must have been cultivated by her for a long time."

"Oh...?" Yue Rujing smiled, saying, "Since you’ve already guessed as much, why do you still want me to investigate?"

Gu Youyou replied irritably, "My guess is just that, a guess, and not necessarily accurate."

"Then let me go see that woman, perhaps I could deal with her directly," Yue Rujing added.

Gu Youyou was utterly surprised, "She was sent by the Empress, can you really deal with her directly?"

Yue Rujing confidently patted his chest, assuring, "If you say so, I’ll deal with this woman for you today. Just you watch how I do it."

Gu Youyou was half-convinced and had Xiang Chun call Song Lianjun to join them for lunch, with Yue Rujing sitting next to Gu Youyou.

Song Lianjun entered with decorum and paused momentarily upon seeing Yue Rujing.

She did not say much and merely greeted Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou said with a light smile, "Please have a seat. We have a guest today, so we need not stand on ceremony."

Song Lianjun took a seat next to Gu Youyou, across from Yue Rujing.

Yue Rujing picked up some fish with his chopsticks, smiled as he put it in his mouth, chewed a few times, and praised, "The flavor is excellent. The chef is truly skilled."

Chapter 1099: To Sanqing Temple

Gu Youyou said, "This is made by Shunzi, specially brought here for you to taste."

"Wow, it’s so kind of brother Shunzi. Speaking of which, his Erya Fish Manor has been open for a while now, and I haven’t had the chance to visit yet."

"Don’t be too busy, take some time to visit when you can!" Gu Youyou said with a smile as she served him another piece of fish.

Standing by, Song Lianjun suddenly stood up, bowed respectfully to Gu Youyou, and said, "Your Highness, having an outside man dine in the inner court privately might be a bit improper, don’t you think?"

Gu Youyou and Yue Rujing both put down their chopsticks, and Gu Youyou wiped her hands with a handkerchief, while Yue Rujing looked at Song Lianjun with a half-smile, saying, "What’s improper about it? Hey, Gu General, who is this?"

Gu Youyou introduced with a smile, "This lady here is a beauty awarded to your senior brother by the Empress, for me to properly train for a few days before sending her to warm his bed in his military camp."

Yue Rujing was taken aback, and, losing his composure, spurted out a mouthful.

Gu Youyou’s expression darkened, and she glared at him. He quickly straightened up and said to Song Lianjun, "Miss, perhaps you should save your breath. My senior brother practices abstinence, and besides, he doesn’t fancy someone like you... someone with so many strictures and rules around her."

Then he pointed at Gu Youyou and said, "She’s the jealous type. Staying here for her tutelage, you’ll either die or at the very least lose a layer of skin. Plus, a woman like her, it’s bad enough she makes you lose a layer of skin, but the key point is she won’t train you into someone my senior brother would like. She’ll definitely train you the opposite to whatever he detests about her."

Song Lianjun also looked at Yue Rujing with a half-smile, and asked, "So what?"

Yue Rujing was momentarily stunned; this woman was really... he didn’t know quite how to describe her.

After all, she was supposed to be undercover, shouldn’t she be acting fragile and scared, seeking peace? Yet, here she was, so brazen.

Of course, what Yue Rujing didn’t know was that she had intended to play the role of a delicate little flower, but had been provoked by Gu Youyou to the extent that she had blown her cover on the first night.

That ferocious big dog, if she hadn’t shown some fierceness, she was sure she’d be tormented to death by Gu Youyou and that female poison doctor.

At least after the night she ’dealt with’ the dog, Gu Youyou no longer bothered her with troubles.

"So!" Yue Rujing let out a sly chuckle, picked up his chopsticks again, and took a bite of the fish, shaking his head as he looked over the spread of fine dishes on the table.

What a waste!

He said, "How about I take you to Sanqing Temple instead? I’m the one who knows my senior brother’s likes the best. I’ll personally train you, and I guarantee he’ll like you. What do you say?"

Train her? Gu Youyou stiffened, barely holding back her laughter.

What was he planning to do by taking her to Sanqing Temple? Turn her into a Taoist nun?

Seemingly, Sanqing Temple didn’t accept nuns.

Song Lianjun was also taken aback, her beautiful eyes gradually showing a cold glint. She said, "I fear that may be inappropriate. I am a woman after all..."

Yue Rujing cut her off, "Ah, there’s nothing inappropriate. Gu Youyou stayed at the Sanqing Temple before marrying my senior brother, and afterwards, she even went to Qi Mountain. Oh right, if you don’t like Sanqing Temple, I can send you to Qi Mountain as well. Any woman who wants to marry my senior brother must be trained in a Taoist Temple.

Look at her, she’s got nothing going for her, so why would she be worthy of marrying my senior brother? Isn’t it because she stayed in a Taoist Temple? Let me tell you, if you don’t go, my senior brother will definitely not accept you. If you want to be his woman, you first need to serve in Sanqing Temple."

Gu Youyou’s mouth twitched, and she glared fiercely at Yue Rujing.

Can’t you just speak properly for once, without degrading me?

Chapter 1100: They Started Fighting

Song Lianjun’s expression turned even colder, she looked at Yue Rujing, who was smiling yet not smiling, and gritted her teeth saying, "What if Lianjun is unwilling?"

Yue Rujing put down his chopsticks, wiped his hands with a cloth, and slowly said, "You have no choice, since you were given by the Empress to my senior as a concubine, you must do as we request."

As soon as the words fell, Gu Youyou was flung away forcefully by Yue Rujing.

And Yue Rujing had already started fighting with Song Lianjun, the table was flipped over, and bowls and chopsticks scattered all over the floor.

Gu Youyou was scared half to death, quickly using her hands to protect her belly.

Fortunately, the force used by Yue Rujing in this shove was just right.

Gu Youyou backed away about two zhang, but didn't fall to the ground; instead she staggered back a few steps and stopped.

Xiang Chun, who had been standing not far behind Gu Youyou, was terrified, her face drained of color. She knew Gu Youyou was pregnant and if she fell, the child would be doomed, luckily it was just a false alarm.

She hurriedly supported Gu Youyou, helping her out the door.

Such commotion should not be watched; Yue Rujing was indeed too reckless. What if the wife of Prince was injured?

She was carrying the royal grandchild, after all.

"Let's go, let's quickly get out," Xiang Chun said with a pale face, pulling Gu Youyou away from the battlefield.

People who heard the noise all craned their necks to look into the courtyard, Gu Youyou shouted at them loudly: "What are you looking at? Go about your business."

A huge figure ran towards Gu Youyou, it was Abao.

It had just been sent by the servants to eat, and from its appearance, it had finished eating, its mouth corners still stained with some blood traces.

Abao nuzzled against Gu Youyou, who petted the top of its head and said, "Your brother is inside fighting with someone, do you want to go help?"

Abao glanced inside the courtyard, then ran towards the room.

Gu Youyou felt distressed, Yue Rujing really should have mentioned if he intended to fight, so she could have secured the valuables first. Now, as they fought in that room, her room was likely to be destroyed too.

Inside the room, Song Lianjun and Yue Rujing were evenly matched.

Yue Rujing drew the Soft Sword from his waist, his expression growing more solemn.

It was good that he personally came to handle this; having such a formidable person around Gu Youyou was indeed frightening.

In a flash, the two had exchanged over a hundred moves. The items inside were broken in a scattered mess, Yue Rujing's white clothes bore some bloodstains, of course, Song Lianjun did as well, small bloodstains blooming like red plum blossoms; it was just unclear whose blood was shed more.

As the two were locked in combat, a dog-like wolf leaped through the window, bolted towards Song Lianjun with the speed of lightning.

Abao, personally trained by Yue Rujing, was extremely fierce and now in his prime. His pounce caught Song Lianjun off guard and pinned her to the ground.

By the time she reacted enough to handle Abao, it was too late.

Yue Rujing's Soft Sword swiftly moved in front of her, now resting at her neck.

Abao stared with its watery big eyes at Yue Rujing making strange sounds, as if asking for recognition of its deed.

Yue Rujing smiled and said, "Abao, well done, your brother’s love was not in vain."

Hearing the noise inside, Gu Youyou knew Song Lianjun had been subdued by Yue Rujing, and immediately called several guards to go in with ropes.

The guards acted quickly, and Song Lianjun was tied up in no time.