Chapter 11 - 11 11 Getting Married

11: Chapter 11 Getting Married 11: Chapter 11 Getting Married “Really?” Gu Youyou sneered, “Why don’t you take another sip and test it for me, Second Aunt?”

Gu Youyou’s gaze was piercing and unnerving.

Already feeling guilty, the woman from the Huang Family trembled uncontrollably under such scrutiny.

“This medicine is too precious for me to dare drink it, you better finish it,” she said.

With a forced laugh, she approached Gu Youyou, holding out the medicine.

As the medicine drew closer, a chill shot through Gu Youyou’s eyes.

She suddenly flung her arm out, knocking over the bowl.

The Huang woman was caught off guard, splashed in the face, and even accidentally ingested some.

“Ah...” The Huang woman cried out in dismay, in a humiliating state, “You...

You...

You little wretch, I will beat you to death...”

As she lunged at Gu Youyou, prepared to attack, Gu Youyou retorted, “Second Aunt, don’t you want to spit out my medicine?

Such a precious potion, do you dare to swallow it?”

Only then did the Huang woman remember that she had mixed rat poison into the medicine.

If Gu Youyou didn’t end up poisoned to death, she might inadvertently poison herself.

Ignoring Gu Youyou, she hastily fetched a bucket of water from the yard, violently inducing herself to vomit and rinsing her mouth with cold water.

The sound of the bowl shattering was very loud, and since the door was open, soon a crowd gathered in the back courtyard.

Zhang the matchmaker and the woman from the Meng Family hurried in to check on Gu Youyou, who was unharmed, sitting upright on the bed.

However, the woman from the Huang Family was suffering in the courtyard, still vomiting as if about to bring up bile.

Gu Feng shouted from outside, “Youyou, are you alright?

What happened?”

The Meng woman hastily went to the doorway and responded, “Father, Youyou is fine.

She just didn’t want to take her medicine, and smeared it all over her second sister-in-law.”

Gu Feng paused, then sighed, “Well, it’s her special day, if she doesn’t want to drink it, let her be.”

As he turned to leave the yard, he saw the sickened Huang woman vomiting on the ground and scolded, “Clean up quickly after you’re done.

Were you poisoned by rat poison or what?”

His words hit the nail on the head, and the Huang woman felt a rage inside her but dared not retaliate.

She had only taken a small sip and had been vomiting for a long time, such a small amount of rat poison naturally wouldn’t kill her.

Outside, the bridegroom had arrived, accompanied by a troupe of trumpeters.

The onlookers whispered among themselves, speculating that only a wedding in the Gu Family would warrant such fanfare.

“The patriarch of the Gu Family is too biased.

When his eldest daughter married earlier this year, there wasn’t this much spectacle.”

“Exactly.

I wonder what the old Master Gu is thinking.

Let’s hope today’s wedding doesn’t turn into a funeral tomorrow.”

“Hey, careful with those words, Zhang.

Don’t let old Master Gu hear you.”

By tradition, the bridegroom cannot enter the bride’s courtyard.

He must wait outside, and the bride must be carried out by the matchmaker.

Zhang the matchmaker gathered her courage to carry Gu Youyou on her back, enduring the ordeal for the silver that Master Gu would hand her.

And as she did, she couldn’t help but feel pity for Gu Youyou, “Poor thing, she’s become so thin, she feels like I’m carrying a paper doll on my back.”

Gu Feng had been waiting outside the whole time.

Ever since Youyou entered that room at the age of seven, he hadn’t seen her.

Now as she was carried out, all he saw over Zhang the matchmaker’s shoulder was a loose robe; it was hard to believe she was carrying a person.

He couldn’t help but let his tears flow freely.

“Youyou, do you still remember Grandpa?

What happened to you, child?

You don’t even resemble a person anymore!”

The bystanders quickly tried to console him, “Oh, Master Gu, you mustn’t cry today.

It’s bad luck.”

Chapter 12 - 12 12 Jin Zijin's Home

12: Chapter 12 Jin Zijin’s Home 12: Chapter 12 Jin Zijin’s Home Gu Youyou felt a sourness in her heart; after all, Old Master Gu was the only person in this world who truly cared for her.

“Grandfather, I’m fine, don’t cry,”

Her voice, light as a mosquito's buzz, was very pleasant to hear.

Old Master Gu hurriedly responded, "Ah, yes, yes, Youyou will get better.

Zijin is a good man; he promised me he would take good care of you.

You must listen to everything he says, he won't harm you."

Gu Youyou found these words somewhat strange, but she didn't overthink it and soon was carried out by Matchmaker Zhang.

Anyway, as long as she could leave this room, it was fine.

Once her health improved, she could go anywhere.

Childish cheers followed: "Whoa, hahaha... The ghost sister of our house is being carried away to someone else's."

Gu Youyou: "..." This bratty kid.

...

Gu Youyou was carried onto a small sedan chair by two people.

This was quite rare among farming households, as most brides usually rode in ox carts.

This caused a wave of envy.

A girl around ten years old said, "Mom, I want to ride in a sedan chair when I get married too."

The people around burst into laughter.

The woman beside the girl slapped her on the forehead, scolding sharply, "You foolish girl, what are you saying?

Have you no shame?"

Unmarried girls should not talk about such things.

It was fortunate she was young; had she been thirteen or fourteen, the reaction from others would not have been limited to laughter.

Calculating the distance of the journey, it took only half an hour for the two bearers to reach the destination, not far from the Gu Family's home.

Indeed, within the same village, it truly wasn't far.

Emerging from the sedan, Gu Youyou was unexpectedly carried out by her unseen husband.

Jin Zijin only slightly furrowed his brow at her skeletal frame, showing no significant reaction as he brought her into his fenced yard.

A gust of wind blew away her bridal veil, and the strong sunlight, striking her eyes that hadn't seen light in ten years, caused her temporary blindness, compelling Gu Youyou to instinctively close her eyes.

Shouts of surprise rang out nearby; undoubtedly, they were startled by Gu Youyou's appearance.

The timid children had already been frightened to tears, and their mothers, equally scared, were trembling as they comforted their own children.

Matchmaker Zhang hastily picked up the bridal veil and covered her head again, reassuringly saying, "Don't be afraid, everyone, Youyou is just sick.

After she recovers, she will be just like the rest of us."

Only then did the crowd come to their senses.

Yes, she was just sick; it was no surprise that someone ill for ten years wouldn't look quite human.

Truth be told, the people who saw her during that brief moment were only those nearest who caught a quick glimpse before Matchmaker Zhang swiftly shielded her, the subsequent screams being purely self-inflicted fright.

The reactions of these villagers were of no concern to Gu Youyou, but she was curious as to why Jin Zijin, holding her ghost-like form, wasn't scared enough to throw her out; she had even clung tightly to Zijin's clothes, fearing she would be discarded.

She had planned to scare him when the veil was lifted, but it seemed that would not happen.

...

In the simple straw house, Gu Youyou lay quietly on the bed alone.

She observed the room: the leaky house was made of mud walls and thatched with straw, with holes everywhere, yet it was relatively clean.

Red celebratory characters for "happiness" were pasted on the windows and doors, her bridal dowry of three big red trunks sat against the wall, and a pair of red candles burned at the bedside.

However, the redness of the room clashed starkly with the shabby house, and Gu Youyou sighed to herself, thinking that this was truly the epitome of poverty.

Chapter 13 - 13 13 Jin Zijin

13: Chapter 13 Jin Zijin 13: Chapter 13 Jin Zijin The only benefit is that I don't have to worry about not seeing light anymore, and, who knows, maybe I can even watch the stars at night.

It is already getting cold at the end of September, and in a couple of days, it will be October (this September refers to the lunar calendar, and all months in this book are calculated according to the lunar calendar).

When it gets even colder, it will snow, and this thatched house is drafty from all sides.

My frail body can’t withstand it; it’s not advisable to stay here for long.

This was the first decision Gu Youyou made after assessing the house.

The noise outside was loud; the villagers of Lotus Village were outside drinking, and Jin Zijin was among them.

Every now and then, I could hear him clinking glasses with the villagers.

Of course, most of those sounds were of laughter.

Some even secretly wagered in whispers that his new bride wouldn’t live past the New Year.

Others were even more exaggerated, saying she wouldn’t make it through the wedding night.

The people nearby who heard the talk about her not making it through the wedding night couldn’t help expressing their disagreement.

“That might not be the case.

We all saw the bride this morning; like a ghost, she is.

Even if Jin the hunter is bold, I bet he won’t lay a hand on her!”

This remark successfully made several people around laugh out loud, which attracted even more attention from the vicinity.

“Wang Hai, what are you laughing at?

It’s not like you’re the one getting married,” joked a granny.

“Granny Liu, my laugh is none of your business.

If I married that bride, I would’ve...” He suddenly stopped, noticing that old Master Gu was staring at him fiercely, and even Zijin’s expression was not very pleasant.

They all quietly made jokes among themselves; it was someone’s big day, and later on, no matter how they ridiculed, it was not appropriate to cause trouble there, as it might backfire.

He quickly changed his tune, “How could I dare?

Even if I wanted to, my wife wouldn’t agree to it.”

The people next to him burst into hearty laughter, and someone teased, “Wang Hai, your life is pretty much over, you’re utterly henpecked by your wife.”

Saying this, another loud laughter erupted outside; had Gu Youyou not had keen hearing, one might have thought all the guests were so cheerful and happy.

Ever since she had acquired this sharp hearing, her inner strength grew day by day.

As for the slandering words against her, she just treated them like stories.

Without marrying, she would’ve been criticized to death; having married, the chance that people would stop the criticism was even slimmer, no telling how long the mockery would continue.

They were just strangers who had heard but never seen her; as long as they didn’t say it to her face, let them talk, what concern was it of hers?

Jin Zijin seemed to be a formidable person, possessing a substantial presence.

Listening to his voice, sometimes as soft as the warm sun, other times deep and magnetic, he was articulate and graceful.

It was hard to associate such a voice and demeanor with a rough hunter who couldn’t find a bride.

He managed the mockery from everyone with ease.

He did not lose out in his words and did not offend anyone; not everyone could do this.

Gu Youyou couldn’t help but wonder, is he really just a poor hunter?

The guests left, and Lotus Village gradually fell into nightfall.

She heard the men outside tidying up the dishes with proficiency, and soon Jin Zijin went to the river to fetch water, washing the dishes clean and stacking them neatly.

These all belonged to the villagers and needed to be returned in the coming days.

By the time he finished tidying up, the sky was completely dark.

Gu Youyou couldn’t help feeling nervous and scared; if she hadn’t frightened Jin Zijin during the day, she was even less likely to scare him at night.

Could it be true, as those grannies suggested, that at his strong and vigorous age, he actually married her just to fulfill a physical need?

Chapter 14 - 14 14 The Bridal Chamber

14: Chapter 14: The Bridal Chamber 14: Chapter 14: The Bridal Chamber Oh my god, she was nearly dying.

If the wedding night actually happened, it probably would've confirmed everyone's guesses that she wouldn't survive it.

Despite her worries, Jin Zijin eventually came.

The man was tall and imposing, dressed in simple coarse clothes, with stubble covering his face and somewhat dark skin, the spitting image of a rugged man.

Yet his eyes were deep and bright, shining with a mysterious light like stars in the vast universe, elusive and intriguing.

He just stood by the bed, staring at her, wordless.

Gu Youyou was actually very tired; on a normal day, it took a great deal of effort just for her to sit up.

But today she not only sat for half an hour in a sedan chair but also managed to complete the wedding ceremony with the help of others.

She had used up all the strength she'd accumulated over several days in just one day.

However, she couldn't sleep.

She had forced herself to stay alert all day, listening to the noises outside, and now, she had to muster the energy to prevent whatever was supposed to happen next.

She only wanted to use the marriage as a way to escape that haunted house; she never intended to actually become wife and husband with this man.

Jin Zijin didn't speak, and Gu Youyou didn't know what to say.

She had been holding herself taut like a tightly wound string as they looked at each other.

Just when she felt she could no longer hold on, Jin Zijin made a move.

But his movement might as well have been stillness because he began quickly stripping off his own clothes and shoes.

His actions were swift, smoothly executed in a few seconds.

Gu Youyou's heart rose to her throat; the string inside her finally snapped, and she fainted.

As Jin Zijin took off his clothes and saw that Gu Youyou had passed out, he was actually relieved and confidently removed his inner garment as well.

It was better for her to faint; it spared them both the awkwardness.

The skin on his body, below the neck, was white and delicate, completely at odds with his face, as if he had the wrong head attached.

He drew a small knife and cut a slit on his left wrist, then pried open Gu Youyou's mouth to let her drink his blood.

His right hand gently touched her neck to feel her pulse, his brow furrowing slightly.

After a moment of hesitation, as if making up his mind, he slid under her blankets, stripped her, and held her icy body tightly against his.

...

The next day, Gu Youyou was awakened by sunlight shining through the window.

She could finally see the sun properly, no easy feat indeed.

The sunlight fell on her blanket, making her feel an unprecedented warmth, and even her spirits seemed much uplifted.

She knew it; as long as she stopped taking those medicines and got more sunlight, she'd be able to heal herself with her knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine.

Gu Youyou tried to sit up, supporting her body, but found that her whole body ached terribly, the bed board knocking with a hollow sound.

This bed board was really hard; even just a layer of grass beneath it instead of a blanket would have been something.

Seriously.

Then she jolted, suddenly remembering that she was no longer in her haunted house.

This was Jin Zijin's home, she was in Jin Zijin's bed—where was he then?

There was no sound from outside; he wasn't at home.

She recalled last night, Jin Zijin stripping off his clothes in haste.

A man undressing hastily in front of a woman—one didn't need to think too hard to figure out what he intended.

Then she looked at herself under the blanket, oh heavens, aside from her belly band and underpants, she was bare.

In a daze, in the sunlight streaming through the window, she saw a few spots of blood on the blanket.

The blood had dried to a deep brown color, but it buzzed alarmingly loud in Gu Youyou's head.

The beast, he was an absolute beast.

Chapter 15 - 15 15 Why Marry Her

15: Chapter 15 Why Marry Her?

15: Chapter 15 Why Marry Her?

Even a nearly dying cabbage wouldn't be spared, only a beastly wild boar would have done such a thing.

It appears that not all the pain throughout her body was due to sleeping on a hard board—she had also been bumped by a pig.

She herself was not yet dead, which was indeed a miracle.

Gu Youyou quickly propped herself up, no good, she had to quickly get dressed.

If the wild boar came back and saw her undressed, what if it went into a frenzy again?

As she propped herself up, she saw a set of neatly folded clothes placed on the bedside.

Without much thought, Gu Youyou took the clothes and began to put them on.

After all the movements she had made, she was somewhat tired, but it was a lot better compared to her own haunted house.

She pondered, maybe there really was something wrong with that haunted house.

Thus, as soon as she came out, she felt so much more energetic—even being bumped by a wild boar hadn't killed her?

Just as she finished getting dressed, Gu Youyou heard footsteps approaching from outside.

The person's pace was fast and steady.

Based on her keen hearing, she judged that it was undoubtedly that wild boar.

Judging by the speed, he should reach the courtyard in a minute or two.

Gu Youyou straightened her clothes and lay back down on the bed, closing her eyes and pretending to be asleep.

The Bible says that when God closes a door, he also opens a window, and it seems there's some truth to it.

The original Gu Youyou had been locked in a dark room for many years, unable to see the outside world, so her ears had become much sharper than those of ordinary people.

Soon enough, a tall man dressed in coarse cloth entered the room—it was Jin Zijin.

He glanced at Gu Youyou on the bed, took a few steps forward, and stood by the bedside.

His angle just happened to block the sunlight coming in from the window, making Gu Youyou frown involuntarily.

Why does he have to stand there and block my sunlight!

The man stood silently by the bed for a moment before saying, "Youyou, the sun outside is very nice today.

I'll take you out to the courtyard."

Gu Youyou: "..." What does that mean?

Before she could answer, she felt a pair of strong arms lift her out of the covers and stride toward the door.

Gu Youyou could no longer pretend, and had to open her eyes.

What met her gaze was Jin Zijin's resolute face.

His features were deep and well-defined, not at all unattractive; in fact, they were quite pleasant.

However, his dark skin and the stubble on his face partially obscured these advantages.

Jin Zijin placed her on a bamboo recliner in the courtyard, then turned and went back inside the house.

Gu Youyou followed his figure with her eyes, falling into deep thought.

She was so sick that she was close to dying, and he must know it.

Her condition was known throughout the neighboring villages, so it was impossible for Jin Zijin not to know.

But why then, knowing full well that she was nothing but a sickly burden, did he insist on marrying her?

As for physical needs, Gu Youyou didn't think that was likely either.

With his stature, if he couldn't marry a good girl, he could certainly have married a healthy one capable of bearing and raising children without a problem!

A moment later, Jin Zijin came out of the house, holding a thin quilt in his hands.

It was not one from the bed—the quality looked good, and it was new, probably taken out from her dowry chest.

That made sense; if Jin Zijin could afford such a quilt, he wouldn't be living in a nearly collapsing thatch-roofed house.

Huh?

It seemed like she had just thought of something, and Gu Youyou's heart skipped a beat.

Right, these good quilts, the dowry—could it be that he married her for the dowry provided by the Gu Family?

Thinking of this, Gu Youyou felt uneasy all over, and her gaze towards Jin Zijin began to harbor ill intentions.

Chapter 16 - 16 16 The First Time Seeing Oneself

16: Chapter 16 The First Time Seeing Oneself 16: Chapter 16 The First Time Seeing Oneself If that was really the case, wouldn't she have escaped the wolf's den only to enter the tiger's lair?

Perhaps it wouldn't take long before he would kill her and then take her dowry all for himself!

Youyou couldn't be blamed for thinking this way; in her past life, she had died precisely because she had been schemed against for her family wealth.

Whenever money was mentioned, her nerves became exceptionally sensitive!

Jin Zijin didn't say anything, after covering Youyou with the blanket, he went back inside the house without glancing at her.

Youyou's eyes followed Jin Zijin, trying to read his expression, but whether it was because his stubble obscured his face or something else, she couldn't make out any expression at all—it was completely impassive!

Great, an expressionless face!

Youyou basked in the sun, feeling an indescribable comfort washing over her body.

Alright, even if Jin Zijin was coveting her dowry, he wouldn't kill her off in a short period.

At the very least, he'd wait half a year, otherwise, as a newcomer, he might be killed by her two uncles.

To dupe a dowry from a miser was not so easy a feat!

Soon after, Jin Zijin came out of the house, carrying a wooden basin and a cloth draped over the side.

It seemed he was there to help her wash her face.

Having a rough man like him help her wash her face made Youyou feel somewhat embarrassed, so she pursed her lips and said, "Put it down, I can do it myself."

This was the first time Youyou had spoken to Jin Zijin since yesterday.

Her voice was very soft but unexpectedly pleasant to the ear, causing Jin Zijin to pause slightly.

He was quiet for a moment but didn't say anything, then he brought out a stool, placed the basin on it, right beside her.

Youyou gave him a smile showing her appreciation, noticing that there was something odd about Jin Zijin's expression, as if he was struggling to bear with something.

Youyou didn't think much of it and lowered her head to prepare to wash her face.

"Ah..." A heart-wrenching scream drained all of Youyou's strength.

What had she just seen a moment ago?

It took a while for Youyou to calm down after realizing that the reflection in the water was her own.

No wonder Jin Zijin had that expression earlier—if that visage had smiled at him, it was quite enduring of him not to scream in fright.

Jin Zijin's face was flushed with effort, Youyou understood he must be wanting to laugh but was trying not to hurt her feelings, so he was desperately holding it in.

Fine, credit him with a bit of sympathy!

After holding back for a while, Jin Zijin still went ahead and wrung out the cloth to help her wash her face.

The cold water refreshed Youyou considerably, and when she saw Jin Zijin about to take the wooden basin away, she hurriedly said, "Wait!"

Jin Zijin looked slightly startled and asked, "Do you want to wash again?"

"No, I...

I want to take another look!"

Understanding what she intended to do, Jin Zijin looked hesitant.

Youyou felt a bit embarrassed and said softly, "Don't worry, I won't scream again."

Jin Zijin: "..."

Indulging her, Jin Zijin then went back inside the house.

Youyou peeped into the basin once more, and this time, although startled, she didn't scream.

The water's clear reflection showed a woman with dry and yellow hair, something Youyou had expected.

However, the thinness of it was surprising—it was almost like the sembal, Qu Qianqiu's haystack!

And she was very thin, something she had felt herself with a face all bones.

Her eyes were big, with hardly any flesh on her face, just skin wrapped around bones.

At a glance, she looked like an alien creature, an aspect she had not anticipated.

Chapter 17 - 17 17 The Diligent Man

17: Chapter 17: The Diligent Man 17: Chapter 17: The Diligent Man Such a ghastly creature, no wonder her two aunts would still frequently get scared by her.

It’s truly pitiful, oh.

A girl in her late teens, tormented into such a state, and the fact that she managed to survive until six months ago before dying is pretty impressive.

Just moments ago, she had been cursing Jin Zijin for half a day over the fact that both her chaste reputation from her past and present lives had been ruined, and that her sickness had made her an easy prey for the wild boar.

Now, she couldn’t help but feel a bit of sympathy for Jin Zijin.

How starving must that wild boar have been to so indiscriminately set his sights on a freak like her?

Soon after, clinking and clanging noises came from the house, along with the crackling sound of fire.

It seemed that Jin Zijin had gone inside to cook.

He was so poor that he had only a thatched hut with a bed on the left, a bamboo partition in the middle to divide the space, and a small stove on the right!

Billowing smoke rolled out from the hut’s thatch, giving off the impression that it was on fire!

Gu Youyou frowned slightly, deeply worried about her breakfast!

Alright then, no point in being picky in someone else’s house, just wait and eat whatever comes, and any decent meal would be considered a luxury.

It wasn’t long before Jin Zijin came out of the house, carrying a small table made of bamboo.

There was a vast bamboo forest in the mountain behind the house, so every family in Lotus Village had someone who was skilled in bamboo crafts.

Apparently, Jin Zijin was no exception!

He set down the table and said to Gu Youyou, “It’s dark inside the house, so let’s eat breakfast outside!”

“Hmm?

Sure, sure!” That was absolutely fine with her.

Gu Youyou watched as he skillfully brought out two bowls of clear porridge and a stack of wild greens.

He mindedly picked up one of the bowls and downed it in a few gulps.

Gu Youyou, despite her illness, wasn’t far behind.

She couldn’t remember the last time she had a decent meal; the poor thing, it seemed like she hadn’t had a full meal since she had arrived here.

In no time, the two of them had turned the two bowls of clear porridge into empty bowls.

Jin Zijin looked at Gu Youyou’s empty bowl in surprise, then stood up and filled another bowl.

This time, however, the bowl was only half full.

Gu Youyou was about to complain about his stinginess when she saw that his own bowl was still empty, so she said nothing.

Jin Zijin’s place wasn’t like the Gu Family; he was so poor that he probably had nothing left to eat!

Well then, in that case, she wouldn’t be shy about drinking down the remaining half bowl of thin porridge and picking up another chopstick of greens!

She was the patient, after all, so of course, she needed to eat more.

Jin Zijin, tall and strong as he was, probably wouldn’t miss half a bowl or so of porridge!

Gu Youyou got her wish to bask in the sun for nearly four hours, watching Jin Zijin busying himself cleaning around the house, even washing clothes.

Hehe, she had lived two lifetimes yet this was the first time she had seen a man doing the laundry!

By the time Jin Zijin had finished his chores, it was noon.

He walked over to Gu Youyou and said, “The midday sun is very strong, and you’re not yet accustomed to it.

Let me take you inside.”

Before Gu Youyou could respond, he scooped her up, blanket and all, and carried her straight into the house.

Gu Youyou: “...” Why was it that each time he spoke as if he was consulting her, but then he made decisions without allowing her any room for dispute?

She hadn’t seen the sun for half a year and wanted to enjoy it a bit longer, didn’t she?

Farmers only eat two meals a day to save food, so there wouldn’t be a midday meal, which meant no need to think about lunch.

Gu Youyou had only eaten a bowl and a half of porridge in the morning, and by noon, she was already hungry.

But there was nothing she could do; even at the Gu Family house, they only had lunch on exceptionally busy days.

Not to mention Jin Zijin’s house, clinking with poverty—he certainly wouldn’t begrudge her a midday meal.

Chapter 18 - 18 18 Auntie Came

18: Chapter 18 Auntie Came 18: Chapter 18 Auntie Came Well, she had gotten used to hunger over the past half year anyway.

Jin Zijin put her down and then turned to leave.

“Uncle Jin!” Gu Youyou called out to him, anxious, “Where are you going?”

Seeing that he was taking a spear and a bow and arrows, was he going to hunt??

Jin Zijin paused for a moment, pondering over the title ‘Uncle Jin.’ He turned his head to look at Gu Youyou.

“Heh heh!” Gu Youyou gave a forced laugh, knowing without looking that her laugh must be particularly frightening.

However, Jin Zijin across from her did not seem to be scared by her, and, without changing his expression, he said, “We’re running low on food at home, I’m going out to hunt!

Be careful on your own, and sleep in the house this afternoon!”

“Oh, okay!” Gu Youyou responded.

…

Lotus Village was surrounded by mountains on three sides, resembling a chair with armrests.

The mountains on both the left and right were neither high nor big, and their slopes were all cultivated fields, growing some common crops.

The mountain at the back, however, was both tall and large.

The mountain range stretched for thousands of miles, rich with game, so there were quite a few hunters in Lotus Village.

In front, there ran a clear river, on both sides of which were paddy fields that didn’t grow rice but lotus roots instead, because they were in the front.

From afar, the lotus flowers appeared in clusters, which was why it was named Lotus Village.

Gu Youyou took an afternoon nap, only to be woken by someone approaching Jin Zijin’s thatched hut.

It wasn’t long before she heard a knock at the door.

“Knock knock knock…” After a few knocks and no response, the person outside asked, “Is anyone home?”

The voice belonged to Gu Youyou’s second aunt, Huang Xiangwen.

Knowing it was her, Gu Youyou didn’t respond.

With Jin Zijin not home, she simply closed her eyes and pretended to sleep.

“If no one answers, I’m coming in?” No sooner had the voice fallen did she hear the sound of the door being opened.

Gu Youyou opened her eyes, really wanting to curse.

She was checking to see if Jin Zijin was home, wasn’t she?

Then, knowing full well that she was alone at home, she just pushed the door and came in.

Gu Youyou, eyes bleary from sleep, stared as Huang Xiangwen, large bottomed and wide waisted, walked straight to her dowry chests, eyes shining with greed.

It instantly became clear to her what Huang Xiangwen was up to.

Once a dog, always a dog, Gu Youyou thought.

The belongings had already been moved to the Jin family's thatched house, and yet she was still coveting them.

"Second Aunt, what are you doing?" Gu Youyou asked coldly.

Gu Youyou's sudden voice startled Huang Xiangwen.

She turned her slightly chubby, wax-yellow face around, glaring at Gu Youyou, "You wretched girl, you weren't asleep.

Why didn't you answer when I knocked?

Trying to scare me to death!"

Gu Youyou, thin as a ghost, with straw-yellow hair and sunken eye sockets, had large eyes that stood out even more.

Right then, she was sitting on the bed, giving Huang Xiangwen an icy stare.

It was only because Huang Xiangwen was used to seeing her all the time that she remained unstartled.

Had it been someone else, they probably would have fainted from such a stare.

Seeing Gu Youyou remain silent, just staring at her, Huang Xiangwen's hand stretched out towards the big red chest didn't know whether to reach out or pull back, and she cursed in anger.

"You wretched girl, if you keep staring at your mother like that, be careful or I'll gouge your eyes out."

Gu Youyou really wanted to get up, grab a stick, and chase this annoying village woman out, but sadly, her body was too weak to muster the strength.

She thought about arguing with her, but just sitting up suddenly had used up a lot of her energy.

A few harsh words, and she would probably be completely out of strength, which might only make Huang Xiangwen more upset.

Chapter 19 - 19 19 Watching Her Take

19: Chapter 19 Watching Her Take 19: Chapter 19 Watching Her Take Gouging out her eyes was out of the question, but slapping her a few times was definitely something she dared to do.

Now that she was the only one at home, she couldn't allow her frail body to be hurt!

After thinking it over, it seemed the most effortless resistance was to stare at her, until she was covered in goosebumps!

Huang Xiangwen indeed felt goosebumps all over from Gu Youyou's stare.

Perhaps Gu Youyou herself didn't realize how frightening her gaze could be.

Huang Xiangwen withdrew her hand and glanced at the large trunks.

But just walking away was something she could not resign herself to, so, furious, she cursed, "You dead girl, why didn't you just die earlier?

With that ghostly face of yours, can you even use these things?

They're just going to end up benefitting that poor hunter for nothing.

"Tell me, what has your old mother gained after serving you for so many years?

That poor hunter is just eyeing your grandfather's favoritism and your little possessions.

When you kick the bucket, our family will be the ones at a loss."

At this point, Huang Xiangwen switched to a smiling face and said, "Listen to your auntie, let me take these things home today.

Take as much as I can, so our family can also reduce some loss, right?"

If it were someone else, the last few sentences might seem reasonable.

After all, the dowry items of the Gu Family were indeed a significant wealth to the villagers of Lotus Village, and Gu Youyou really couldn't think of any other reason for Jin Zijin to marry her.

Unfortunately, the person saying this was Huang Xiangwen.

Every time Gu Youyou saw her face, she couldn't help but feel the urge to splash her with a bowl of sulfuric acid.

Hmph, these things, she wouldn't let Jin Zijin have them for any price, not even if she burned them to cinders herself.

"Dream on, they are mine!" Gu Youyou said coldly.

"You...

Oh!!

You devil girl, your brain doesn't work when I speak nicely to you, don't blame your second aunt for playing rough!" Looking at Gu Youyou who couldn't even get out of bed, she taunted with a sneer, "I'm going to take them, what can you do about it?

Hmph..."

Having said that, she efficiently opened the trunks and took out the best pieces of fine fabric.

She continued to curse about the unfairness in her household while doing so, saying that giving all these good things to a doomed soul was no different from giving them away for free.

The fabrics were all from Gu Youyou's deceased mother's dowry.

While they seemed a bit worn, they were much better than the coarse clothes typically worn by the common villagers.

Huang Xiangwen looked at the large trunks and wanted to take more, but seeing that her hands were already full, she had to give up in the end.

Thinking to herself, if she couldn't take more now, she would come next time!

Throughout the ordeal, Gu Youyou watched her, silent.

After getting her hands on the goods, Huang Xiangwen glanced at Gu Youyou, cursed at the bad omen, and hurriedly walked out with the items.

Just as she opened the door, she ran into someone who had raised their hand, about to knock.

The sudden appearance of a woman with an armful of items at Jin Zijin's home was, of course, quite puzzling to the visitor.

He set down the firewood on his back and asked, "Auntie Gu of the Gu Family, what are you doing?"

The visitor was also from Lotus Village, whom everyone knew.

His name was Wang Shun, and when it wasn't the busy farming season, he enjoyed going up the mountain to hunt with Jin Zijin, one of the few people Jin Zijin got along with well in Lotus Village.

Huang Xiangwen, with a guilty conscience, was at a loss for words when he asked her.

After a moment's pause, with a quick roll of her eyes, she suddenly put on a smiling face and retorted to Wang Shun, "Wang Shun, what brings you here?

The hunter Jin isn't home.

But his newly-wedded wife is lying in bed all by herself!"

Chapter 20 - 20 20 Just Showing Off

20: Chapter 20 Just Showing Off 20: Chapter 20 Just Showing Off Gu Youyou listened to the conversation outside and couldn't help but roll her eyes.

Huang Xiangwen really was too much.

With that look of hers, was she worth making up stories about?

Although Wang Shun was a young man who hadn't married yet, once she said that, he understood what Huang Xiangwen meant, and his face suddenly turned red.

"Gu Family Second Aunt, what...

what nonsense are you talking about?

Of course, I know that Big Brother Jin isn't home." He pointed to the firewood on the ground and said, "Look, this is what Big Brother Jin asked me to bring over, he'll be back soon."

After speaking, he stared at what was in Huang Xiangwen's hands with ill-intent and said, "But what about you, Gu Family Second Aunt?

Taking so much stuff from my Big Brother Jin's house, where are you off to with that?"

Gu Youyou had heard someone approaching, but wasn't sure who it was.

After hearing what Wang Shun said, she felt at ease, knowing that since he was part of Jin Zijin's crowd, he probably wouldn't let Huang Xiangwen take the items away.

Turning the topic back to the items in her hands, Huang Xiangwen's face looked somewhat unnatural, yet she still loudly and aggressively shouted, "What do you mean, your Big Brother Jin's stuff?

This is the stuff that was carried out from our Gu Family yesterday, mind you!

I'm taking things from the Gu Family, what's it to you?"

Her voice was rather loud, attracting several villagers who were busy in the nearby fields.

In ancient times, people had few entertainments.

In such villages, especially the village women, their only pleasure was to listen to gossip and watch spectacles.

It wasn't just about arguments, even if someone found a nest of mice in a house, they'd have a few words to share about it.

In response to Huang Xiangwen's outburst, Wang Shun simply said, "So that's my sister-in-law's dowry, huh?

Gu Family Second Aunt, since your Gu Family's daughter has married my Big Brother Jin, this dowry naturally counts as Big Brother Jin's now, you...

are you sure you want to take it away?"

Seeing several busybodies coming to watch the commotion, Wang Shun felt a bit more assured.

Being a young man, he had some strength, but when it came to arguing with a village woman like Huang Xiangwen, even if he had ten mouths, he wouldn't win the argument.

Huang Xiangwen had come to take someone's dowry the day after Gu Youyou's wedding, which was plainly unreasonable to everyone.

Seeing that a few villagers who loved a spectacle were looking in her direction, she could only curse under her breath and abandoned the idea of taking the items then and there.

It was just that she was too impatient.

Gu Youyou was bedridden and didn't move, while Jin Zijin was often not at home.

When would it not be okay for her to come?

It was only the second day.

After thinking for a while, she suddenly let out a wail and loudly said to the women outside, “Oh dear, it’s so pitiful.

Our Youyou has married into hardship by wedding this hunter.

This shabby house, neither windproof nor waterproof, and there she lies alone in the room uncared for.

Taking time out of my busy farming schedule as her second aunt, I came to see her and found the cloth in her room all damp, so I was going to take it out to air it.

But look at that hunter, letting that scoundrel from the Wang Family stand guard here.

As soon as I stepped out the door, he caught me, saying I was stealing these things.

What do you all think?

These were originally from our Gu Family; why would I need to steal them?

This heartless wretch, what on earth is he thinking...”

While cursing, she pushed away Wang Shun, who was standing in her way, and pretentiously began hanging up the cloth she was carrying onto the bamboo poles in the yard.

Watching her, it seemed like she had a point.

The women didn’t find the drama they hoped for began to mutter among themselves, criticizing Wang Shun for being too suspicious.