Farmhouse 1111

Chapter 1111: Return to Beijing

Jin Mocong opened his eyes and looked towards that person.

That person stopped at Jin Mocong's curved blade, lifted it, and the next moment, the curved blade had fallen back to Jin Mocong's feet, piercing into the snowy ground.

He said, "Please grant me the opportunity, Your Highness, to personally execute this man."

Jin Mocong did not recognize the person at first glance; his clothes were all stained with blood and covered with a layer of white frost.

It was only when he heard this person wanted to personally execute him that he started to scrutinize him carefully, and after a closer look, he recognized who it was amidst the frost and blood stains on his face. He asked doubtfully, "Jie Zhongsen? Do you have a personal vendetta against me?"

Jin Mocong was somewhat puzzled. In his memory, whether in the past or now, he had never offended anyone from the Jie Family.

Jie Zhongsen gripped the Long Halberd tightly and said, "Three months ago, my younger brother died in Liangcheng, his body was mutilated. Tell me, do we have a grudge or not?"

Jie's second son died in Liangcheng?

There were too many casualties in that battle at Liangcheng, making Jin Mocong grimace.

With so many dead, how could he know whether he killed Jie's second son or not?

But since Jie Zhongsen said he killed him, then it must be true.

It was not important anymore whether he killed him or not. For him, one more or one less charge made no difference.

Jin Mocong grasped the curved blade and pulled it out from the snowy ground.

Jin Zijin retracted the Long Halberd, nodded at Jie Zhongsen, then led his horse back.

The sound of weapons clashing erupted behind him, but it quickly ceased.

He did not look back, instead, he raised his head to observe the heavy snowfall.

No matter how much dirt, how much blood, it would soon turn pristine white.

The heavy snow seemed to have come specifically to cleanse this filthy battlefield. Since this winter began, this has been the heaviest snowfall.

Xiao Jinfei started negotiating with the rebel forces, some chose to surrender, others preferred death.

They laughed heartily. Over a decade ago, they had already submitted once, but this time, no matter if they bled on the spot, they swore to keep their iron backbone.

Jin Zijin said to Xiao Jinfei, "Give those who died a proper burial."

They were not from Xining, but remnants of the former dynasty’s loyalists.

It wasn’t that they were disloyal to Zhuzhao Country, but in the struggle for succession, they chose the wrong faction and their families suffered the consequences, leading to the extermination of their entire clan.

Fortunate to survive, they lived on with a relentless desire for revenge.

Though rebels, they still deserved respect.

...

As the army was returning, the year's end was approaching.

Eliminating the remnants of the King of Xining was akin to removing a longstanding cancer in Zhuzhao Country.

The Emperor was overjoyed, offering a general amnesty. This year was indeed extraordinarily lively.

The landmark building that Gu Youyou collaborated on with several major patrons had been completed, in accordance with Gu Youyou's demands, it was built with long, rectangular stones. This concept was rather unconventional for the era, as buildings of the time were generally constructed from wood, even the grand Taihe Hall was made up of various types of wood.

However, everyone had faith in Gu Youyou, so they built a stone house as per her instructions.

The colored glass had long been ready, but Gu Youyou had everyone keep it under wraps.

The better the item, the tighter it should be kept, the longer it's preserved, similar to fine wine, it would only become more mellow.

As the army was returning to their respective camps, all the commanders would return to Beijing together to receive their awards, estimating another three to five days' journey to arrive.

Chapter 1112: Xiguang Residence

Gu Youyou had originally planned to wait for Jin Zijin to return before unveiling the covering cloth from the exterior of the building for everyone to witness, but as the date for the grand opening had been set several months in advance, she couldn't whimsically change plans for him, and thus had to proceed as scheduled.

Today, the streets of Beijing were extraordinarily bustling, as everyone had long been curious about this building that had been walled off, and finally, they were going to see it.

To view this grand building, several nearby restaurants were all booked up.

Gu Youyou, wearing her thick winter clothes, wrapped herself up into a round ball, with only her face showing.

Several bosses saw her and even joked that she had put on weight.

Gu Youyou simply smiled without speaking, neither confessing nor denying.

"Xiguang Residence has taken half a year to complete, and at last, we can unveil it for everyone to see. Esteemed bosses, you must be very curious about what this building looks like. Please lift the black cloth covering Xiguang Residence yourselves."

"Alright, then we'll help ourselves."

Upon hearing Gu Youyou's invitation, several bosses rolled up their sleeves, eager to give it a try.

With the collective effort of the bosses, the black cloth concealing the building was pulled down from top to bottom, falling in a heap in front of the building, and was quickly cleared away.

At the same time, the grand building that had been hidden for half a year was now laid bare before everyone's eyes.

For a moment, everyone was stunned.

They had never seen an architectural style like this before, especially those smooth mirror-like surfaces, which were also a novel sight.

The bosses, excited, stepped forward to caress the ’walls’, each one more thrilled than the last.

"This... Doctor Gu, this must be the glazed glass produced by our factory, right?"

Gu Youyou, supported by Xiang Chun, stepped forward and nodded, "Right, this is glazed glass. However, our glazed glass is somewhat different from the traditional kind, so I call it ’glass.’"

"Glass?" Boss Hu exclaimed in admiration, saying, "Right, our glazed glass is more beautiful and easier to produce. It shouldn’t be called glazed glass. Glass is a better name, let’s call it glass."

Gu Youyou clapped her hands, and two workers pushed open the large doors.

Gu Youyou made a welcoming gesture to the bosses, "Esteemed bosses, please go inside and have a look."

The first floor was a showroom where various glass products were displayed, dazzling to the eyes.

They had never seen so many pieces of glazed glass—no, glass. Now without Gu Youyou having to say anything, they were already engrossed in looking around the showroom.

They couldn’t stop praising Gu Youyou. As discerning businessmen, they naturally understood the value of these goods.

They had found the right partner this time. Not to mention how much profit they would make in the future, just looking at this building was proof enough that their silver was well spent.

The commoners outside were craning their necks in hope; they also wanted to come in and see, as just the building’s exterior was sufficiently novel. They wondered what curiosities lay inside.

However, with guards blocking the way, they could only long to enter, managing at most to stretch their necks a bit longer.

The wealthy people in the restaurant across the street, who were watching from private rooms, were now standing up one by one, overcome with excitement.

"Using glazed glass for windows? And such large windows at that? That's quite the extravagance. Aren't they afraid of being robbed?" Someone said sardonically.

Another person chuckled, "Didn't you see who the owner is? Do you really think someone would dare to steal her things?"

Yet another added, "Exactly, and moreover didn't they say that this glazed glass was made with a new method? The cost isn't high, ensuring that even ordinary citizens in Beijing can afford to install glass windows. With that being the case, who would risk beheading just to steal someone else's windows?"

Chapter 1113: Jin Zijin Has Returned

"This saying makes sense, but I do not know if the price is really that low. If it's true, I would immediately buy a few pieces to replace the windows in my study first."

The person next to him held a white jade long smoking pipe and pushed him aside a little, pointing to the outside buildings and said, "You? By the time you get this colored glaze here, it would be at least half a year later. Inside news, the current supply of colored glaze has already been reserved by those high officials and nobles. Us, having a bit of money but no power, just have to wait."

The speaking man was helpless, but this is how society works; officials come first, then the farming citizens; wealthy merchants like them would be at the very bottom.

The hierarchical system of scholar, farmer, worker, and merchant is truly frustrating. No matter how rich you are, your social status remains low!

At this moment, Gu Youyou had already taken the various bosses upstairs, where there was a large meeting room and individual offices for the bosses.

Elegantly and grandly decorated, these patrons had spent a significant amount of silver, they should feel it was worth the money.

Then, in that largest meeting room, Gu Youyou explained to them the various pros and cons of glass—the biggest drawback of glass being its fragility. Therefore, merely selling it was not enough; they also had to provide delivery and installation services.

Since the window sizes might differ from home to home, it is usually necessary to measure the sizes at the customer's home first before making custom orders.

This service could be charged separately or included in the cost of the glass. Gu Youyou left the decision to the bosses.

The bosses felt valued and pleasantly surprised.

They also thought highly of Gu Youyou for her character. As the largest shareholder, she wasn't making marketing decisions alone but was consulting with them.

They thought about it and decided that it would be better to let customers decide on this matter themselves to prevent any feelings of being cheated.

Different thicknesses and styles of glass each had different prices, and Gu Youyou also gave them the authority to set the prices.

After all, these bosses were very clear about the costs.

They were major merchants in their regions; no one was more sensitive to pricing.

Gu Youyou touched her stomach, feeling it was about time, and stood up to leave.

"Ladies and gentlemen, due to my special status, I cannot stay out too long. Let's wrap up today's meeting here. The next seven days will be for exhibition. As glass is fragile, I ask everyone to put in a bit more effort to explain clearly to the visitors."

Everyone stood up and bowed, saying: "Doctor Gu, you have worked hard, please head back first."

After Gu Youyou left, the guests who received the first invitation were finally able to enter and visit. They could not admit too many visitors at once to ensure everyone got a chance to see; indeed, seven days was far from enough.

...

Three days later, Jin Zijin returned alone, riding back to Beijing. The army was still behind and would take another two days to return.

In the past I left when the willows were leafy;

Now I return in a snowstorm so heavy;

It's been half a year since I left when the willows were leafy; now upon my return, the entire Beijing is covered in heavy snow.

Jin Zijin rode his horse to the gate of his home, where the gatekeeper was using a shovel and broom to clear the snow in front of the gate.

Seeing the tall horse stop in front, they looked up and saw the Prince covered in snowflakes.

They were quite shocked, rubbing their eyes a few times before they dared to confirm they were not mistaken.

But why has the Prince returned in such a state?

Covered in dust and grime.

Chapter 1114: x Returning Cloaked in Frost and Adorned with Snow

When he returned to the capital, shouldn't he have come back with the grand army, then greeted personally by the Emperor, Ministers, and the citizens? After that, follow the Emperor to the palace to

celebrate with the court officials, and then finally return to the mansion in a comfortable, soft palanquin?

"How come? Don’t recognize me anymore?" Jin Zijin said with amusement.

Jin Zijin’s demeanor was naturally comforting, and with his smile, he seemed like the sun melting winter snow.

The two servants at the gatehouse hastened to say: "Greetings, Your Highness, the Grand Prince."

"The Grand Prince has returned to the mansion, go quickly to inform the Princess."

"Your Highness, you must have had a weary journey, please come inside quickly."

On hearing this news, the servants were stirred up as if a pot had been overturned. The Grand Prince’s residence had not been this lively since the day of their wedding.

A woman’s heart in a deep courtyard is wrapped in concern; she hears her lord has returned, braving frost and snow.

Hearing this news, Gu Youyou, without caring to properly cover her belly, ran out from the inner court.

It was not until she saw the man, dusted with frost and hanging with snow, standing before her, that she truly felt his return.

It had snowed in the north, and Gu Youyou had thought with the roads being difficult, it would be several more days before he could return; she did not expect him to actually make it back.

"Youyou!"

Jin Zijin opened his arms wide, waiting for her to fly into them like a swallow returning to the forest.

Naturally, Gu Youyou couldn’t disappoint him and threw herself straight into his embrace.

Only, the bulging belly was a bit awkward, getting in the way in the middle.

Having carried the baby for several months, this was the first time Gu Youyou found the little one between them to be a nuisance.

The servants gathered around, finding the sight quite odd.

Since Gu Youyou’s pregnancy had not been announced publicly, only a few trustworthy maids in the inner court knew about it.

The people surrounding them were unaware of Gu Youyou’s pregnancy.

Gu Youyou customarily wore loose clothing, and with the onset of winter, she wrapped herself up like a rice dumpling; they merely thought the Princess Consort was sensitive to cold, hence the attire.

And Gu Youyou’s cold sensitivity was no secret.

But now... the more they looked at her belly, the stranger it seemed.

Jin Zijin bent down, caressing her belly, and asked, "Is the child giving you trouble?"

Gu Youyou patted her belly, saying, "Very well-behaved, just like you."

With this peculiar scene, everyone finally confirmed something: their lady master was pregnant after all.

But they were not aware.

To not know that the female master was pregnant, the servants felt they had indeed failed miserably.

What should they do now? Seize this chance to show their loyalty, or stand far away, not to disturb them?

The servants in the mansion were in a quandary and had not yet resolved it when their master had already carried the mistress into the inner court.

Under the broad daylight, as if in a world with no others, they were caught off guard and showered with a heavy dose of public affection, which hurt their feelings quite a bit.

Xiang Chun, elated, held her chin high following them into the inner court, inducing envy amongst everyone.

This was the head maid of the lady master; look at how glorious she was, apparently aware of the lady master’s pregnancy.

Gu Youyou, carried over the threshold by her husband, was very happy indeed, but the sudden recollection that Miss Du was still in the residence shocked her greatly, prompting her to push and say, "No, no, put me down."

Jin Zijin paused slightly, not putting her down, but instead stopped and asked, "What’s wrong?"

Gu Youyou, both embarrassed and flustered, said, "Don’t ask right now, put me down first, I’ll tell you in a bit."

Chapter 1115: Embarrassment

It seems it’s already too late; Miss Du had already emerged, aided by Cuiya upon hearing the noise.

But seeing the intimate manner of the two people in the courtyard, how could those young ladies raised in the inner chambers understand?

A blush creeps onto her thin face, and she hurries back with her maid in tow.

How embarrassing!

Returning to her room, Cuiya feels a burst of envy.

"Why has the Prince returned so suddenly? The Prince and his wife indeed share a deep affection."

Everyone else marries so well, why is her own mistress so unfortunate?

Cuiya sighs wistfully.

In the past, when Master Xie treated his lady well, it seemed just as nice?

No—not quite as good.

The Prince, covered in snow and wind, must have rushed back, not even having time to change his clothes, he first seeks out his wife.

No one is as good to their spouse as the Prince to his wife.

Caught by Miss Du, Gu Youyou feels some embarrassment on her face, Jin Zijin didn't know there was someone else in their inner quarters, Xiang Chun was guarding outside, yet unbeknownst to them, Miss Du was inside.

"What's happening? Why is she here?" he asks in surprise.

Gu Youyou, biting her lip, says, "You're still holding me; it's not nice to be seen by others. Let's quickly go inside, and I'll explain slowly."

The cold wind in the courtyard still bites bitterly.

Weary from days of travel, Jin Zijin changes and washes properly, the warm bath relieving his fatigue, and then he heads to the Warm Pavilion to see his beloved.

"You've worked hard, handling so much business alone, gathering provisions for us, and even... raising the children so well."

He lies with his head in her lap, embracing her stomach, content like a child.

This isn't usual for him, and Gu Youyou pauses in mild shock.

At this moment, Xiang Chun brings in a plate with a clean towel on it.

Seeing this scene, she blushes, lowers her head, hastily sets down the plate, and leaves.

Seeing their masters being so affectionate makes the maids feel awkward.

Their masters sure are thick-skinned.

Gu Youyou takes the towel from the plate to dry his damp hair, saying, "Why didn't you dry off before coming out? It's so cold; don't catch a chill."

"I wanted to see you sooner." He yawns.

The iron-clad man is also worn out from constant travel.

Gu Youyou pauses her movements, smiles sweetly, and says, "There's no rush. Go lie on the bed and sleep; I'll dry your hair for you."

"Mm, I'll just sleep for a bit." Jin Zijin doesn't refuse, as he is indeed very tired.

A heater, a clean towel, and a comb.

Gu Youyou sits by the bed, while Jin Zijin lets his hair down from the bed. She dries it gently and then by the heater.

At this moment, she dearly misses a hairdryer.

Washing hair in the northern winter is indeed the hardest challenge.

Ancient people had long hair, and if not dried quickly, it would freeze into a block of ice.

Wealthy folks had it better with heaters at home, and the richer ones even had floor heating.

But for ordinary people, it was miserable; often, to save on coal, they wouldn’t wash their hair or bathe all winter.

Once his hair is dry, Gu Youyou removes the heater and towel, undresses, and climbs into bed next to him. She wraps an arm around his, the other resting on her stomach.

She dearly wishes life could always be as peaceful as this moment... serene and tranquil.

...

Chapter 1116: Another Little Wretch

Lun Yu heard that Jin Zijin had come back, so he rushed over to look for him, but Xiang Chun blocked the door, adamantly refusing to let him in.

Lun Yu was so anxious, he angrily said: "Xiang Chun, move aside, I have important matters to discuss with Jin Zijin."

Xiang Chun suddenly startled, her face turned livid with rage, and she cursed loudly: "You little vixen, what urgent matter requires seeing our Prince at this time? How dare you call the Prince by his name? I

think you just want to take advantage of the Prince’s wife’s pregnancy to seduce the Prince. Don’t think you can act so arrogantly just because the Madam is fond of you, forgetting your status. I must teach you a lesson today."

Xiang Chun picked up a broom that was lying by the door and was about to hit Lun Yu with it.

Lun Yu slapped his forehead, feeling an extreme headache.

How was he supposed to explain to this stubborn girl that he wasn’t trying to seduce Jin Zijin? He isn’t gay!

"Are you going to get lost?" Xiang Chun raised the broom high.

The Prince had just returned, and at this moment, the couple were bonding inside the house. And this brazen little thing dared to disturb them now?

As a loyal maid, she would never allow such a thing to happen.

"Are you going to move or not?" Wasn’t Lun Yu just like someone with urgent matters bothering him? Otherwise, why would he court trouble at this moment?

Xiang Chun never expected this wretched girl to be so bold, seducing the master while his legitimate wife was pregnant; such vixens were abundant. Xiang Chun had heard many such gossips during her years at the Lin Residence.

And those who seduced the master were mostly the maids highly favored by the mistress.

For some reason, the Princess was very unusual towards this little wretch, not allowing her to do any chores, idling around all day; Xiang Chun had long been displeased by her.

And such people weren’t limited to just this one; there had been another one at the Lin Family, but that one had already been driven out by the Madam, thanks to the heavens.

But she hadn’t expected another troublesome wretch to appear.

"I’ll kill you, you little wretch!"

The more Xiang Chun thought about it, the angrier she became, and in her fury, she swung the broom towards Lun Yu.

Lun Yu, feeling completely powerless, reached out his hand and firmly grasped the broom about to hit him, his face trembling with anger, he gritted his teeth and said: "Come with me to the study, hmph."

He threw down the broom, and Xiang Chun along with the broom fell to the ground.

Xiang Chun was momentarily frightened by his force, forgetting to follow him.

Heavens, was this girl even fiercer than himself?

What right did she have, I, Xiang Chun, am the top maid here.

After a while, Lun Yu came out of the study, holding a letter he had just written.

He tossed the letter into Xiang Chun’s hands and said: "Give this letter to Jin Zijin. No, you’ll probably say I used this letter to seduce your Prince. Better give it to Gu Youyou instead. Of course, you can also choose to throw it into the furnace, provided you can guarantee that Gu Youyou won’t kill you."

Xiang Chun was dumbfounded by his intimidation, his demeanor, unlike usual, not quite like the ordinary maids, even different from ordinary women.

Lun Yu left shortly after saying that, and it took a while for Xiang Chun to recover.

She went out to follow him, only to hear from the gatekeeper that she had already left, apparently in a hurry.

Earlier, Gu Youyou had instructed that Lun Yu could come and go from the residence freely, unlike ordinary maids, so when he wanted to leave, no one stopped him.

...

Chapter 1117: Hard to Arrange

Inside the Warm Pavilion, Jin Zijin had rested for four hours and was fully revived.

It was Gu Youyou, accustomed to sleeping for a few hours during the day after becoming pregnant, who had not woken up.

He turned his head and saw her in deep sleep.

Her neat nose and lips like cherry blossoms, her face had gained a bit more flesh than before. Though not as delicate as previously, it now had an added touch of naive charm.

He couldn’t help but reach out to pinch her cheek, not expecting that this would awaken Gu Youyou.

Blinking her groggy eyes, she mumbled, "What time is it now? Have you woken up?"

With a doting smile, Jin Zijin said, "If you want to sleep more, then sleep a while longer."

Gu Youyou propped herself up and glanced at the hourglass in the room, estimating that it was now noon.

Jin Zijin had come home early, freshened up, and by the time he took a nap, it was already midday.

No wonder she felt a bit hungry.

Oh right, he had rushed back home through the heavy snow, but had he had anything to eat?

"Did you have breakfast?" Gu Youyou asked worriedly.

Jin Zijin hesitated before replying, "I did, I ate at the station."

In truth, he hadn’t had a proper meal for two or three days, subsisting on just bites of tough bread.

Gu Youyou sat up and declared, "It’s almost time for lunch; I won’t sleep anymore."

Thinking of Miss Du... Gu Youyou felt a bit troubled.

These past few months, she had always dined with Miss Du because, as pregnant women, they ate differently from others, sharing a special prenatal meal.

It was simpler for the two pregnant women to eat together.

Gu Youyou got up and dressed, saying, "Miss Du is at our home, I need to tell her that I won’t join her for lunch and we won’t go out. We’ll just eat here in the Warm Pavilion."

"Why is Miss Du in our house?" Jin Zijin asked while getting dressed.

Gu Youyou paused, not sure how to explain it.

She was truly uncertain how men of this world viewed women who were pregnant before marriage; such a woman, once exposed, would either be drowned or paraded down the streets for people to throw rotten eggs at, wouldn’t they?

Even though Jin Zijin wouldn’t actually throw rotten eggs at Miss Du, she was afraid he would look down upon her and send her away. What then?

After the battle of Xining that lasted six months, the children in their wombs were already seven months along.

The other woman was nearly due to give birth.

After much thought and carefully choosing her words, she said, "Miss Du has some troubles and needs to stay with us a few more months. Only I and a few maids from the inner court know about this, you must not send her away."

Jin Zijin frowned, not quite agreeing with her decision.

Their inner court was a private space for the two of them. It might have been okay when he wasn’t around, but now that he had returned, how could he tolerate an outsider living there?

No matter how close this outsider was to Gu Youyou, it wouldn’t do.

He said, "Since she’s in trouble and is your friend, naturally I won’t send her away. But it’s inconvenient for her to stay in our courtyard. With so many courtyards in the mansion, we’ll arrange another one for her."

Originally, Gu Youyou had arranged for Miss Du to stay in her own courtyard for safety and convenience.

Having two pregnant women living together allowed for the sharing of child-rearing experiences.

Now that it was inconvenient, she supposed mentioning it to Miss Du and changing courtyards shouldn’t be an issue.

But it was not about moving Miss Du; instead, she planned to switch with Jin Zijin.

Chapter 1118: How did Jie Zhonglin die?

After all, there are still many eyes of the Empress in this residence. With so many people watching, it would be terrible if word got out.

"Okay, let’s find another courtyard to live in," she said.

Jin Zijin raised his eyebrows, his heart suddenly filled with doubt.

"Why is it that we are changing courtyards?"

The ancients were rather scrupulous about this; they had a clear distinction between hosts and guests. Since he was a guest, in his view, he should stay where a guest was meant to stay. How could he allow the host to change courtyards?

Gu Youyou, however, didn’t think so much. In her position, there were not so many cumbersome protocols; she just did whatever was convenient.

Considering that Miss Du’s pregnancy could not be kept secret anyway, she could only tell him the truth, saying, "Miss Du is pregnant, and it must not come to be known by others. And in this residence, there are too many eyes of the Empress that have not been dealt with. I can’t let her take that risk."

Gu Youyou bit her lip, troubled, "This matter actually does have something to do with me; had I not let her go to Xining, she would not have encountered such a thing."

Jin Zijin expressed surprise, asking, "The bandits?"

Because the people he sent had reported back that Miss Du had been captured by bandits, even to become the bandits’ leader’s wife.

"Of course not," Gu Youyou sighed. "Though she hasn’t said so, I guess it’s Jie Zhonglin’s. The sinful bond between the two of them is indeed strange. Let’s wait until she gives birth to the child before discussing what to do next... We’ll talk about it later."

Gu Youyou was thinking about the fact that Jie Zhonglin was already dead. She really didn’t know how to break this news to Miss Du.

Jin Zijin gasped, saying, "The matter is difficult yet easy to discuss. The posthumous child of Jie Zhonglin, as long as Miss Du is willing to step forward and acknowledge it, the Jie Family will naturally believe and gladly accept them. They were previously husband and wife, and with the Jie Family patriarch’s capabilities, it wouldn’t be difficult to manage the situation in a way that allows the child to be legitimately recognized as a member of the Jie Family bloodline. The difficulty lies in whether Miss Du is willing."

Gu Youyou nodded gently. The Jie Family patriarch grieved for the loss of his son. As long as he could retrieve the marriage contract and adamantly deny that they had divorced, he could claim they had a spat because of a concubine at home, who would dare to provoke the Jie Family patriarch at such a time?

But the key point was, Miss Du would not return to the Jie Family as a widow. She had always wanted a child, and she would definitely want to keep this child with her.

Truly headache-inducing.

"How did Jie Zhonglin just die?"

The letter from Jie Zhongsen was not very clear, mostly consisting of words comforting the Jie Family patriarch not to feel sorrowful and admitting his own mistakes.

Regarding the death of Jie Zhonglin, it only mentioned that they had disguised themselves as merchants entering Liangcheng, and later on, when the two armies began fighting, Xining was recruiting soldiers everywhere, and they had infiltrated the enemy’s army. Before the Xining Army invaded Liangcheng, they transmitted messages to Jie Zhongsen’s troops and were caught by the Xining Army, then hacked to death in the chaos.

Jin Zijin glanced at Gu Youyou and said in a low voice, "By the time Jie Zhongsen received the message, they were already dead. Their bodies were discarded in the wilderness, and from the remains retrieved from the jaws of wolves, they found an arm chewed by the wolf pack. On that arm, half-eaten by the wolves, they discovered a jade thumb ring belonging to the Jie Family, which was indeed Jie Zhonglin’s."

Gu Youyou took a deep breath, feeling horrified just by hearing about it.

Jie Zhonglin actually died so tragically?

Meals had been called for, and Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin stayed inside the Warm Pavilion to eat. Taking advantage of the break for the morning meal, Gu Youyou went to see Miss Du.

She also needed to talk to her about the matter of where to stay.

After Gu Youyou left, Xiang Chun came in, bringing a letter from Lun Yu.

Chapter 1119: Empress Anxious

Jin Zijin looked at the letter and didn't say anything, just casually put it into the drawer.

Xiang Chun, puzzled, mustered the courage to ask, "Where did she go? She always takes advantage of being the Crown Prince's wife to deceive and be slippery, wouldn't she have run off to play again?"

Xiang Chun didn't know Lun Yu's true identity; in her view, Lun Yu was just a wild girl without manners.

Jin Zijin replied indifferently, "She may not come back in the future, just tell people... she redeemed herself and returned to her hometown."

"Huh?" Xiang Chun looked completely baffled, but did not say anything further, gave a bow, and then left.

Gu Youyou mentioned to Miss Du that she had decided to move with Jin Zijin to another courtyard.

After all, the residence was large enough, with plenty of courtyards for them to live in.

Miss Du naturally felt that it was inappropriate, saying, "How could I let you, the hosts, move places? I should be the one moving instead."

Gu Youyou said, "Why bother with so many rules? To me, your safety is more important. Tomorrow, I will find two craftsmen to come, and say that the house needs some repairs. Oh, right, change the windows of the study room to glass ones."

Although Miss Du still felt that this action was inappropriate, Gu Youyou insisted, and she could only comply with her arrangement.

...

Two major events occurred in the Crown Prince Residence: one was the Crown Prince's sudden and dusty return, and the other, their mistress, did not gain weight but was pregnant.

The child was already seven months old, yet no one knew about it.

It was deeply hidden, truly making people sigh endlessly.

This was a great joy, why hide it? Not disclosing this early, the reasons are clear to the discerning, but no one mentions them.

The Crown Prince was not in the capital, and she, a common woman with no background, naturally had to be cautious regarding such a significant matter of pregnancy.

The Empress hadn't even gotten a grandchild yet.

Meanwhile, the Empress was furious.

"Gu Youyou is pregnant? She is a weakling, barely holding onto her own life, and now she is pregnant? Mdm. Li, such a big matter, why has no one informed me? Was nurturing them all in vain?"

The Empress was so angry that she smashed her favorite glazed vase.

Now, she gets irritated whenever she sees glaze.

Mdm. Li, who was usually very composed, could not maintain her composure this time.

She said, "Empress, Gu Youyou herself is a doctor, she was pregnant and did not seek pulse diagnosis, and now that the weather is cooler, she always wraps herself like a rice dumpling when she goes out, everyone thought she gained weight because a hen flew into a phoenix nest and ate well, no one suspected she was pregnant."

"With so many people watching, didn't anyone notice?" the Empress threw a stack of papers into the furnace, all reports sent back by her spies.

All trivial matters, not a single spy hit the mark.

Mdm. Li wiped the sweat from her forehead and said softly, "Gu Youyou hid it very tightly, she even went to Xiguang Residence a few days ago, with so many people watching, yet no one noticed her pregnancy."

And it's been seven months, the child could survive if born.

The Empress knew too, just thought she had underestimated Gu Youyou. She had even summoned her to the palace before, and hadn't noticed her pregnancy.

This woman was truly a thorn in her heart, one that must be removed for relief.

"What now? Even Gu Youyou, that weakling, is pregnant, and there's still no news from King Jin's place. The Emperor is getting older, this palace has fought for a lifetime, surely it cannot lose to them because King Jin might be infertile. Mdm. Li, you have been by my side for decades, the longest one, and the one I trust most, you know how heartbroken and unwilling I am..."

Chapter 1120: It Spread

Madam Li appeared dejected, kneeling at the feet of the Empress, lamenting, "My Lady, there is no choice but to let that poison doctor try. Whether he can become the Emperor or not, King Jin must not be left without an heir. Although that female poison doctor is dangerous, it's better than having no hope at all, right? All medicine has a poisonous side, even ordinary sickness can have risks when taking medication."

Gu Youyou was pregnant, and naturally, the Empress could not stay calm. Hearing what Madam Li said, she was very tempted.

Although it was dangerous to place the poison doctor near her son, the thought of possibly holding her grandson made her disregard the risks.

The Empress's eyes darkened, saying, "Very well, let's do as Madam Li suggests. However, we need to think about how to do this legitimately, asking Gu Youyou for someone doesn't seem appropriate."

Madam Li smiled slyly, saying, "Your Highness, you're thinking too hard. Don't forget, Searcy was previously known as Lu Xueying. It's not up to Gu Youyou to agree, but Madam Lu and General Lu.

General Lu is returning to the court in these two days, why not bring this up during the victory feast when everyone is in high spirits?"

The Empress brightened up, feeling that Madam Li was getting shrewder with age.

Indeed, she proved the saying true that experience comes with age.

...

The Empress was infuriated upon hearing about Gu Youyou's pregnancy, while the Emperor was overjoyed beyond measure.

Eunuch Wan, seeing this, understood clearly.

Among the three Princes, it seemed the eldest Prince was most favored by the Emperor.

Even when the Prince Qin’s Consort gave birth to twin boys, he hadn’t seen him this happy.

The Emperor was so pleased he even ate an extra bowl of rice.

"Wan Decheng, proceed to Chengqian Palace."

Eunuch Wan was confused again. The Emperor, whether happy or not, headed for Chengqian Palace. The eldest Prince’s Consort being pregnant was naturally a joy for the Emperor, but how is this good news for the Noble Consort at this time, running to Chengqian Palace to announce happiness, what does this mean?

After the Emperor had a few words with Noble Consort Sheng, he dismissed everyone around.

Behind closed doors, the atmosphere of affection between them disappeared, immediately presenting a different scene.

"Your Majesty!" Noble Consort Sheng knelt down.

The Emperor was genuinely very happy today, yet it also reminded him of some past regrets.

He said, "Prepare incense and paper offerings. Tomorrow we set off for the Imperial Mausoleum to share this happy news with Qinqin. She will be very pleased. Tell her that I cannot visit her right now, but after the New Year, I will personally go to see her."

The New Year was approaching fast, yet the Emperor could not wait that long; he was eager for her to know this happy news.

"This servant obeys."

Joy tinged with a trace of loss and worry filled Noble Consort Sheng.

Although Prince Qin was not her biological son, to make the act more realistic, she truly treated him as if he were her own.

Caring for a little cat or dog sparks affection, let alone genuinely cherishing a son for so many years.

She just hoped that he was as he appeared outwardly, without any intentions of challenging the Emperor.

No matter how well the Emperor treated them, it was only to suppress the Empress and King Jin. May he never aspire for things that do not belong to him because he thinks his mother is a favored consort and he is the most beloved child of the Emperor.

The Emperor did not notice Noble Consort Sheng's unusual demeanor, here in her presence, it was his world with Xiao Qinqin. He unreservedly expressed a man's love for a woman, a husband's yearning for his late wife.