Farmhouse 1121

Chapter 1121: Yue Ruxue Comes

The Emperor was over fifty years old, his hair was white with age, looking entirely different from his younger days, except for those eyes that still held the same expression as when they looked upon Xiao Qinqin.

Apart from Sheng Qiaoyue, no one knew how much this man regretted his dealings with Xiao Qinqin.

He told Jin Zijin not to ruin the grand plan for a woman, but deep down, he actually hoped Jin Zijin would do so; he dearly wished for another chance from the heavens so that he could ruin the grand plan for that woman himself.

After his brief joy, the Emperor's eyes were filled with bitterness.

He said, "Qiaoyue, if only Qinqin were still alive, how wonderful that would be. She would be a grandmother now, what happiness that would bring..."

Sheng Qiaoyue stood beside the Emperor, listening to his ramblings like a statue.

Perhaps with sadness or anxiety.

Over the years, she had gotten used to it.

At first, when the Emperor spoke fondly to her of Xiao Qinqin, she was very pleased.

The miss' death wasn't the Emperor's fault, he was helpless. He was sad, he was heartbroken, which proved that he had not wronged the miss.

But as she heard more, she became numb.

She had been comforted, angry, and even jealous.

...

When the army returned to Beijing, the leading generals also entered the city to attend the imperial court.

Celebrations and rewards ensued, causing a three-day commotion within the Imperial Palace.

Gu Youyou, being pregnant, did not plan to go, but that evening, she encountered someone familiar.

Yue Ruxue, whom she hadn't seen since being thrown into a sack on the street years ago, had changed a lot.

She alighted from her white horse that matched the snow, with a dashing and brisk demeanor.

Of course, it could also be that the battles of the past half a year had changed her.

She and her husband would be staying at the Crown Prince Residence until they left Beijing.

"Going round and round, you still ended up marrying him," she said.

Gu Youyou smiled without saying much, inviting them into the house.

Those convoluted stories were probably already told by Marquess Yue to her, so Gu Youyou didn't need to say anything more.

She might think that they had deceived her back then, but what of it? Now, Gu Youyou is already married to Jin Zijin.

Yue Ruxue's husband was Yi Qiuping, the commander of the Lingnan army.

A young and vigorous man, Marquess Yue had indeed not mistreated his own legitimate daughter. At the time Yi Qiuping held a lower rank, and Yue Ruxue marrying him was considered marrying beneath her, but now it seemed they were quite the talented couple.

"Greetings to the Crown Prince’s Consort."

"General Yi, please!"

Jin Zijin laughed, "Come in, we are all family here."

Jin Zijin and the Yue Family of Lingnan had a good relationship and always treated the Yue Family as their own.

Yue Ruxue did not immediately enter the house, but turned to look at Jin Zijin and said, "Where is my elder brother? Is he at your place?"

Gu Youyou stepped between them, smiling, "Yue Rujing is naturally not at our place, he is at Sanqing Temple. But if he hears that you are here, he will surely come."

Then Gu Youyou turned to instruct the servant at the door, "Go find Gui Yunxi, and have him make a trip to Sanqing Temple to inform Princely Heir Yue that General Yi and Miss Yue have arrived."

"Humph, stingy," Yue Ruxue stamped her foot, eyeing Gu Youyou’s round belly, and grew even more envious, huffing as she turned to enter the house.

Yi Qiuping said awkwardly to Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin, "Axue is a bit spoiled, please forgive her."

Gu Youyou laughed, "It doesn’t matter, I still see her as the young girl she used to be."

Chapter 1122: Unwilling

Everyone knew about Yue Ruxue trapping Gu Youyou in a sack back in the day, making Yi Qiuping even more embarrassed.

Returning to their room, Jin Zijin laughed, "Do you still hold that grudge? Axue has changed a lot since then."

Gu Youyou responded, "I'm just petty."

Yue Ruxue's gaze upon Gu Youyou was unmistakable.

She was not content!

However, Gu Youyou was indifferent; this was her turf, and everyone was married now, what turmoil could Yue Ruxue possibly stir?

"How long will they stay?" Gu Youyou inquired again.

The New Year was just a few days away, and it was too late for them to return to Lingnan for it. Gu Youyou anticipated a lively celebration this year.

Indeed, Jin Zijin informed her, "They won't be returning to Lingnan for the New Year. The Emperor will have them stay in Beijing, at 'our home'."

He emphasized "our home" with a certain heaviness, causing Gu Youyou to bitterly smile.

What was she being awkward about? Jin Zijin had never favored Yue Ruxue back then, and how would he favor her now?

It was just that Yue Ruxue hadn't given up yet.

Yi Qiuping also seemed to be a person of talent, more decisive than the usual scholarly types, and more delicate than typical battlefield men.

From his few words earlier, it was evident that he treated Yue Ruxue well.

If she couldn’t see the situation clearly and tried to stir up trouble, that would be utterly foolish.

Jin Zijin didn’t care what Yue Ruxue thought, nor did he pay her any attention. His focus was more on his wife.

He bent down to touch Gu Youyou’s belly, which was something he did every day.

"Being naughty today?" he smiled and asked.

Gu Youyou quickly forgot the fact that an ’old acquaintance’ had moved into her home, touching her belly happily with one hand and her head with the other, caressing the soft hair.

She said, "The baby’s movements have been quite frequent. If you want to feel it, just wait a bit longer."

"Hmm?"

The little one seemed eager to please his parents, quickly wiggling his arms and legs. In the Warm Pavilion, they had taken off their heavy cotton clothes and were in thin undergarments, even able to see the child’s tiny feet kicking.

"Did he kick my hand?" Jin Zijin exclaimed with delight.

Gu Youyou said, "He’s very healthy, his arms and legs are especially strong."

Jin Zijin was quite confident about Gu Youyou being pregnant. She was a doctor herself and knew what was best for her and the baby.

"Does it hurt?" Seeing the obvious bulge on her stomach, Jin Zijin frowned slightly.

Gu Youyou said, "No, it doesn’t hurt, the belly is elastic."

...

Tonight was Yue Ruxue’s first time in Beijing, her first night staying here.

For some reason, despite it being late at night, she couldn’t fall asleep.

Taking advantage of the moonlight, she got up, put on warm clothes, and walked into the courtyard.

This was where Jin Zijin lived. From a young age, she vaguely heard her parents mention his identity, though they never made it too explicit. Yet, she felt his identity went beyond simply being a member of the Dao Family; there was something more.

Regardless of his identity, back then she simply fantasized that he would be hers one day.

He lived in Lingnan for a few years, and she was young then, merely remembering a handsome brother who stayed at their house, leaving not too profound an impression.

It became profound when her father said that once she grew up, she would marry him.

Chapter 1123: Climbing the Roof at Midnight

This man, she didn’t have to marry him. But she couldn’t figure out how a woman like Gu Youyou could steal him away? Later on, what she competed for wasn’t just a person, but a breath of pride.

Thinking of how Gu Youyou intentionally protruded her belly today, standing smugly in the middle, she got so angry that she coldly snorted and turned to leave the yard.

She was quite familiar with the layout of a large household’s courtyard and its orientation, and soon found the master’s yard.

Relying on her decent light-body skills, she avoided the patrolling guards and maids and lightly leapt into the inner courtyard.

The people in the inner courtyard hadn’t gone to bed yet; she could see the oil lamps still lit inside the house.

She snorted coldly and muttered softly, "What are they doing up so late?"

With curiosity, Yue Ruxue approached the room with the light on.

"Miss, go to sleep now, you can continue making this young master’s clothes tomorrow." A maid’s voice came through, and Yue Rujing stopped her steps.

Gu Youyou is up so late and together with a maid? Where is Brother Zijin?

"Wait a bit more, just one sleeve left to finish."

Another woman’s voice came out, but it wasn’t Gu Youyou’s voice.

This made Yue Ruxue very puzzled, if it wasn’t Gu Youyou, then who was it?

Right, the maid addressed her as Miss.

Which family’s miss stays in the master’s courtyard of the Crown Prince Residence in the middle of the night?

No, rather, which family’s miss lives in the master’s courtyard?

The more Yue Ruxue thought about it, the more bewildered she became. She lightly leapt onto the rooftop and lifted a tile to peek inside.

The scene shocked her considerably.

Below was a pregnant woman?

There was more than one pregnant woman in Brother Zijin's residence, but who was this woman?

Under the candlelight, she looked much better than Gu Youyou, pretty, even with a big belly.

Could this woman be a consort of the residence? A concubine?

Brother Zijin's woman?

Seeing this scene, she suddenly felt so happy she wanted to laugh.

Wasn't Gu Youyou so arrogant back in Lingnan? She wanted to monopolize Brother Zijin all to herself, but now what? Isn't she just as accepting of another woman?

And looking at this woman's belly, it's not smaller than Gu Youyou's.

If she gives birth first, and it's a son, that would be even better, wouldn't that infuriate Gu Youyou?

That's what she thought.

Brother Zijin isn't an ordinary person, he will marry more women in the future, and when he becomes the Emperor, he will have a harem.

Gu Youyou, a woman without a powerful maternal family, will sooner or later exhaust that little bit of favor with Brother Zijin, and she will definitely end up a deserted wife in the Cold Palace.

The more Yue Ruxue thought about it, the more delightful it felt. Initially, knowing she had to come to the Crown Prince Residence had made her reluctant.

Because she knew Gu Youyou had become the Crown Prince's Consort, she didn't want to come here and see her face. But now, seeing the pregnant woman below, the displeasure in her heart dissipated immediately.

Such a relief.

"Ah!" Suddenly a hand reached from behind and slapped her shoulder.

Yue Ruxue was happily pondering over the satisfying situation when the sudden slap startled her.

Had it not been for the person behind immediately covering her mouth, she would have almost screamed.

"Hush, it's me!"

Yue Ruxue turned around and saw that it was Yi Qiuping.

She breathed a sigh of relief and, patting her chest, whispered softly, "You're not sleeping in the middle of the night, just to come out and scare me?"

Yi Qiuping said, "What about you? What are you doing out here in the middle of the night not sleeping?"

Chapter 1124: Discovered an Incredible Secret

Yue Ruxue smiled and pointed to the woman inside the house, "Look, another woman of Brother Zijin. Guess if she's a wife first, or is it Gu Youyou's husband? If she's a wife and even gives birth to a son, I wonder if Gu Youyou's chief wife should consider a change."

Yi Qiuping glanced at the woman inside and took a deep breath.

Indeed, she’s a pregnant woman, and quite visibly so.

And this woman actually resides in the main house, yet Jin Zijin is nowhere to be seen.

What’s going on?

He was puzzled too, he hadn’t heard anything about Jin Zijin having any concubines or similar, moreover, in his view, Jin Zijin wasn’t that type of person.

He said, "Don’t jump to conclusions. Perhaps it’s not what you think, there might be some misunderstanding."

Yue Ruxue was displeased.

"Misunderstanding? This person is living in the main house, what misunderstanding could there be? Tell me, have you ever seen a pregnant woman not living at her own husband’s house but staying at someone else’s?"

Yi Qiuping was at a loss for words, only able to sigh and say, "That is someone else’s business, it’s irrelevant to us. We are just temporary guests here, let’s not meddle too much and head back sooner."

...

At breakfast, the mood among the people at the table was somewhat eerie.

Yue Rujing had arrived early for breakfast, initially eager to catch up with his long-unseen sister and brother-in-law. The brother-in-law was quite warm, but his sister was strangely fixated today, always looking towards Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin.

He knew her little schemes well enough, looking at his fellow apprentice brother was one thing, but her malevolent glances at Gu Youyou, what was she thinking?

Yue Rujing thought: She shouldn’t still be dwelling on those unrealistic thoughts, right?

Yue Rujing was taken aback in his heart, feeling he needed to nip his sister’s unrealistic thoughts in the bud, not letting her fool herself.

He said, "Axue, when you find some time, you should also visit Sanqing Temple, listen to a sermon I’ll give."

Jin Zijin looked up puzzledly at Yue Rujing.

Gu Youyou almost choked on her porridge with a snort.

Even she knew that Yue Rujing joining Dao Family was for shirking responsibilities; could he really teach a sermon?

Yi Qiuping, watching this bizarre scene, smiled and tried to smooth things over, "Definitely, definitely. After the three-day celebration party, Qiuping will surely take Axue to listen to the big brother’s sermon."

Yue Ruxue refused without hesitation, "I won’t go, I don’t want to listen to Taoists preaching."

Yue Rujing: "..."

"You must go." Yue Rujing coldly huffed, "Seeing you partake in the Xining battle, there’s a heavy weight of murderous aura on you, listening to several sermons would help cleanse the malevolence from you."

Yue Rujing had never been stern before; suddenly getting serious and preaching this way, Gu Youyou couldn’t help but burst out laughing.

Yue Ruxue glared fiercely at Gu Youyou, then suddenly recalled the pregnant woman she had seen the night before, and burst into laughter again.

That laughter was truly eerie.

She looked towards Jin Zijin and said, "Brother Zijin, why isn’t our other sister-in-law joining us for the meal? Is she hiding in the room enjoying delectable dishes by herself?"

The moment these words came out, Yi Qiuping, sitting beside her, immediately changed his expression.

He tugged at Yue Ruxue’s sleeve, but Yue Ruxue ignored him and even pushed his hand away.

Gu Youyou’s expression stiffened, visibly upset.

Yue Rujing was filled with confusion and asked, "What other sister-in-law?"

No one had told him about Gu Youyou taking Miss Du in at her house.

Chapter 1125: Driving People Away

Jin Zijin’s expression remained calm and undisturbed as he ladled the soup and raised his head to look at Yue Ruxue.

However, his eyes slowly sunk, and those who knew him well were aware that he was becoming angry.

Yi Qiuping chuckled awkwardly, and made an apologetic gesture to Jin Zijin and Gu Youyou, "I am truly sorry, as newcomers, Axue did not sleep well last night and took a walk outside the courtyard, then she... saw another pregnant woman."

Yue Rujing was shocked and looked at Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin.

There’s another woman with a big belly in this courtyard?

Jin Zijin, unhurried, ladled the soup into a small bowl and then placed it in front of the distressed-looking Gu Youyou, gently saying, "Don’t be upset, have some soup."

Seeing that Gu Youyou did not move, he had to lift the bowl again and spoon the soup to her lips.

He fed Gu Youyou, unconcerned with the others around him, while on the other side, the schadenfreude on Yue Ruxue's face gradually stiffened.

This meal became increasingly bizarre.

Gu Youyou took a spoonful of soup and said in a low voice to Yue Ruxue, "This is our business, it has nothing to do with you."

In Gu Youyou's view, Jin Zijin would have to temporarily take the blame for this matter; she couldn't sell out Miss Du.

The incident with Miss Du was originally caused by Gu Youyou, but she couldn't be disloyal at this time.

She had thought that having Miss Du staying inside the main residence would be utterly safe, but she hadn't expected Yue Ruxue to be so undisciplined, wandering and climbing over the walls of the main courtyard in the middle of the cold night.

Such a perverse interest.

Jin Zijin put down the ladle and raised his head to look at Yue Ruxue sitting opposite.

His icy gaze made it impossible for her to smile anymore and even brought forth a sense of fear.

In her memory, Jin Zijin was always a genteel person who had never had a quarrel with anyone.

"General Yi, Miss Yue, the place here is small and I'm afraid it cannot accommodate two such prestigious individuals. After returning from the Imperial Palace today, please move to stay at an inn."

Upon Jin Zijin’s words, everyone froze on the spot.

Yue Rujing, speechless, supported her forehead with her hand and looked at her sister.

What has she done again to anger the teacher-brother so much?

Yue Rujing, having spent many years with Jin Zijin, understood his character very well.

He would not fuss over trivial matters, and to Jin Zijin, Yue Ruxue was still just an ignorant child.

But now he was angry, which meant the sister must have done something that seriously crossed his line.

"Youyou, have you eaten enough? If you’re done, I will take you back before I go to the palace."

Gu Youyou put down her chopsticks and said, "I’ve eaten enough." She stood up and again addressed Yue Ruxue, "Miss Yue, don’t talk nonsense about things you shouldn’t, it makes no one look good. After all...this is a domestic affair."

She was reminding her, so what if Jin Zijin had other women? What does it have to do with you? As an outsider, a guest, you should behave as one. Now, you can no longer even be a guest.

"Ah, teacher-brother, exactly... what is..."

Yue Rujing tried to ask further, but Jin Zijin no longer wished to speak with them and left the room with Gu Youyou.

Only Yue Rujing and his sister, along with Yi Qiuping, were left in the room. Yue Rujing, with a dark face, asked Yue Ruxue, "What exactly happened? The teacher-brother is not the kind of person who easily loses face."

Everyone knew that the Crown Prince had good relations with the Lingnan Yue Family, but to have the Yue Family's young lady and son-in-law only stay one night at the Crown Prince Residence and then be driven out, what would others say?

Isn't that tantamount to losing face?

Chapter 1126: Proposing to Take a Concubine

"I didn't say anything did I? I was just telling the truth, if I'm not welcome, I'll return to Lingnan," Yue Ruxue said angrily.

Yue Rujing then turned to look at Yi Qiuping, who said indifferently, "Last night, Axue went to the main residence but did not see the eldest Prince and his wife, instead, she saw another woman there. That woman was pregnant, her belly looked as big as the eldest Prince's wife."

"Ah...?"

Now, Yue Rujing was also puzzled and wondered what on earth the couple was up to.

A pregnant woman?

Could it be his senior brother's doing?

Yue Rujing felt certain it couldn't be; he knew his senior brother too well, and he wasn't that kind of person.

Moreover, he knew Gu Youyou too well. If it were really his senior brother's child, that woman Gu Youyou would have poisoned that woman and the child a long time ago. Would she let them stay in the house?

What baffles him is that the woman is living in the main residence. Even if she's a guest of the house, who would let a guest stay there?

After all is said and done, it's all because Gu Youyou doesn't follow the rules.

Yue Rujing really wanted to sneak over to take a look, but considering the angry expression on his senior brother's face earlier, he dared not.

After thinking it through, he said to Yue Ruxue and Yi Qiuping, "Perhaps that woman is someone important, and since they are hiding her, we must not let outsiders know. It's better for you not to stay here, to prevent Axue from causing trouble. However, you must remember, do not reveal a word about that woman."

Climbing the wall of the main residence at midnight? Didn't he know his own sister's little schemes?

It's really unsettling.

Just because of this alone, without his senior brother expelling them, he couldn't allow Yue Ruxue to stay and cause trouble in someone else's house.

With Gu Youyou heavily pregnant, if Yue Ruxue does something foolish and causes irrevocable trouble, his senior brother would definitely finish her off.

...

The three-day celebration banquet soon moved to its final day, and indeed, Yue Ruxue and her husband ended up staying in the inn arranged for them.

The celebration banquet proceeded smoothly until the last day, when the Empress proposed that King Jin take a concubine, and the candidate was the illegitimate daughter of General Lu.

Speaking of which, in the past, General Lu's illegitimate daughter wouldn't have qualified to marry into the Prince's house as a concubine, but now her status had changed. After receiving military honors and a promotion in rank, she had become a person of interest, and naturally, his illegitimate daughter was now eligible.

Yet, General Lu was puzzled; his eldest unmarried illegitimate daughter was only thirteen years old—how could she marry?

He, a straightforward man, was not as meticulous as women and didn't think too much, so he directly said to the Empress, "Your Majesty, the eldest of my unwed daughters is only thirteen years old, it will be another two years before she can be considered for marriage."

Speaking of General Lu's daughters, everyone knew General Lu only had one son and a bunch of daughters.

However, they were not worldly girls as they were suppressed by a domineering mother, making these illegitimate daughters almost like maids, serving the family matriarch.

Thus, most families wouldn't seek to marry a daughter from the Lu Family but rather hope to marry their own daughters into the Lu Family.

The Lu family had only one legitimate young master, who was good-looking, just like his father, a brave soldier on the battlefield with no one to compete for inheritance, making him a desirable match.

But now...this person seeking a daughter from the Lu Family, was it really the Empress?

Chapter 1127: Having an Eighteen-Year-Old Daughter

The Lu Family, no matter how glorious they are now, everyone feels that those poorly educated daughters of the Lu Family are not worthy of King Jin, not even fit to be concubines.

"No, you have an unmarried daughter who's eighteen," the Empress said with a smile amidst everyone's surprised gazes.

King Jin put down his wine cup and looked at General Lu, seeming somewhat excited.

Yet the Empress's words sent a shiver down General Lu's spine.

True, the Lu Family had a daughter who was eighteen and still unwed, but wasn’t she supposed to have died years ago?

Thinking of this daughter made General Lu even more apprehensive.

The deeds of that mother and daughter indeed caused him, a man who had been to battlefields, to feel fear and dread.

It really validated the saying: the overt gun is easy to dodge, but the hidden arrow is difficult to defend against. That woman had been by his side for so many years; once, he thought she was the most sensible of all the women.

Because the fierce tigress at home treated all the concubines like enemies, only she was treated with a different regard.

If she wasn’t extraordinary in some ways, how could that have been possible?

It turned out she truly was extraordinary, having schemed to hide within his household for many years,

After the incident with the poison doctor, he made the decisive move to kill them both out of fear that the aftermath of the poison doctor’s deeds would be exposed.

The punishment for the poison doctor back in the day was the execution of the entire family.

"General Lu, why keep hiding such a good daughter? Could it be that General Lu can’t bear to part with her?" the Empress asked with a smirk that was not quite a smile.

Madam Lu, sitting by his side, had already changed her expression. She looked at the Empress and guessed who the person was that had leaked the information last time.

Since the Empress had made such a remark, could it be that... it was the Empress who revealed that information to her?

What on earth does the Empress want to do?

Privately investigating the affairs of a Minister’s family?

"This daughter, no matter how much one cherishes her, cannot always remain at home. Eighteen and still not wed, in another couple of years, it will be difficult for her to marry," the Empress said, as if she did not notice the awkwardness between General Lu and Madam Lu, and just kept talking to herself.

For a moment, the atmosphere in the room became somewhat eerie.

The Emperor held his wine cup and half-closed his eyes as he watched this strange scene unfold.

The Ministers and officials in the great hall seemed somewhat at a loss.

What on earth does the Empress want to do?

Since the Empress had specifically mentioned him, General Lu could not remain silent forever. Just as he was about to say something, Madam Lu sitting beside him pulled at him and stood up herself.

After bowing to the Empress, Madam Lu said, "Empress Madam, our Lu Family indeed has an unmarried eighteen-year-old daughter. However, due to some matters in the past, she has already severed ties with our Lu Family. She is no longer a daughter of the Lu Family, and we have no say in her marriage. Empress Madam, if you have the intention to accept her as a concubine for King Jin, this is unrelated to us."

Madam Lu directly disassociated herself from Searcy; she really did not want to get involved in those murky waters.

Previously, the person who revealed to her that the lady was Gu Youyou, who now lives well under an assumed name, and now it’s being suggested as a match for King Jin – who knows what the Empress is plotting?

That harbinger of misfortune.

In any case, no matter what the Empress intends to do, it's definitely wise to keep the Lu Family out of it. There's no mistake in that.

King Jin felt a twinge of distress upon hearing these words.

The woman he liked turned out to be the daughter of General Lu; though illegitimate, she was of much higher status than the peasant girl Gu Youyou.

He thought it would be a good deal to marry her, far more advantageous than marrying Jin Zijin.

But what's the deal with the Lu Family?

Why did they kick Searcy out of the family and sever ties?

Chapter 1128: Block It Back

Thinking back to the gossip he heard earlier about how fierce Madam Lu was, he felt that Searcy must have been bullied by the family matriarch, Madam Lu.

This manly woman, really annoying.

"Madam Lu, may I ask what Miss Lu did wrong to be driven out of the Lu Family?"

King Jin started defending her, which made some Ministers feel uncomfortable.

His own daughter married into Prince Jin Residence without bearing any children, and now he was eyeing General Lu's daughter.

Did he think that just because General Lu has grown prosperous, he could disregard them?

And this matter, since the Empress had already spoken, was it appropriate for a junior to ask? How the family expels someone is their own business, do they need to tell you? This matter isn't even set in stone.

Madam Lu met King Jin's displeased gaze, saying, "This is a family matter of the Lu Family, Your Highness Prince Jin, this humble wife has nothing to tell."

Searcy and her mother have been a lifetime of pain for Madam Lu, had it not been for matters involving her and her daughter which recalled those infuriating and heartbreaking events, she would not have openly quarreled with King Jin in front of the court ministers.

King Jin became furious, feeling this manly woman was terribly hateful.

Bullying a byborn daughter, and even dared to make him lose face in front of so many people?

"How audacious, I've long heard that you are a tyrannical and domineering venomous woman, oppressing your stepdaughter..."

"Xiaoran, stop talking." Before King Jin could finish, the Empress scolded him.

Seeing him making more and more of a scene, the Empress's face turned blue with anger.

The atmosphere became increasingly strange, everyone glanced left and right, finally all eyes landed on the silent Emperor.

At this moment, the Crown Prince, who normally doesn't talk much at such occasions, suddenly stood up, bowed to the Emperor, and said, "Father, I feel such trivial matters should not be brought up on such a joyous day."

After speaking, he sat back down and continued to eat and drink as if the remaining matters had nothing to do with him.

The Emperor’s gaze darkened slightly, and he nodded lightly, saying, "Indeed, it’s just Xiaoran taking a concubine, how could one disregard the occasion and bring it up now? Empress, you seem tired too, go back and rest."

At this moment, Madam Sheng thoughtfully helped the Emperor with serving food, placing it in his bowl, and from time to time, she looked up at the Empress sitting at the neighboring table, that smile clearly provoking the Empress.

The Empress’s face turned iron blue, barely managing a faint smile, nodding slightly to the Emperor.

"Then I shall take my leave, Your Majesty, please enjoy your meal."

She glanced at Madam Sheng, then warmly smiled and said, "Sister Sheng, take good care of His Majesty."

One day, she would step on this woman and make her life worse than death.

For her son to have offspring, she endured.

Over the years, for her son, she endured too much. She should be sitting beside the Emperor, receiving the homage of the ministers, but at every banquet, it was that woman by his side while she had to sit alone at another table.

Just like doing it on purpose, she also provoked her.

And Jin Zijin, with just a word, blocked all she wanted to say. She originally intended to take advantage of this occasion to first discuss King Jin taking a concubine, and then talk about two Consorts and several esteemed concubines for Jin Zijin.

But his one word, kept all her words from being spoken.

The Empress smiled coldly, you can avoid it for now, but let's see if you can avoid it for a lifetime.

She dodged this time, but there were plenty of opportunities to place people in your residence.

...

Chapter 1129: Let me tell you some good news

Jin Zijin, once back, immediately told Gu Youyou about what happened today.

Gu Youyou was incredibly surprised. She knew King Jin had taken an interest in Searcy, but hadn't all gone quiet thereafter? She thought King Jin's interest was merely momentary, so why was it mentioned again now?

Gu Youyou narrowed her eyes and also guessed that it was the Empress who told Madam Lu about Searcy. Perhaps, the Empress knows everything about Searcy's past by now?

Fortunately, everyone from the Ghost Doctor Family has perished, and after so many years, even if she knows Searcy belongs to the Ghost Doctor Family, she has no proof, so there's no worry about her troubling Searcy because of her identity.

The problem now is that the Empress wants to arrange a marriage between Searcy and King Jin.

As an Empress, if she's determined to make Searcy a concubine for King Jin, even the Emperor might not be able to dismiss her without giving offense.

Gu Youyou's expression grew grim, and she asked, "What did the Lu Family say?"

After all, Searcy is a young lady of the Lu Family.

Since ancient times, marriage decisions of the children have always been determined by the commands of the parents and the arrangements of matchmakers. If the Lu Family agrees, then everything is really over.

Jin Zijin said, "Madam Lu does not acknowledge that Searcy is part of the Lu Family, insisting that Searcy has severed ties with them."

Gu Youyou sighed in relief; Madam Lu's response was clever.

Of course, Madam Lu simply didn't want to be involved with Searcy, but this also indirectly helped Searcy.

"That's good. As long as the Lu Family hasn't agreed, then there's still room for maneuver." Gu Youyou looked at Jin Zijin and said, "Then we have to get Searcy married off before the Empress issues her command."

Jin Zijin nodded and said, "That's what I was thinking too, but you have to talk to her about it. She's quirky and listens to you more than anyone else."

Gu Youyou laughed and said, "I know. Searcy is indeed a bit peculiar, and not many people in the residence like her, even the maids and guards are afraid of her, but she's quite smart when she uses her wits correctly."

Gu Youyou had decided to keep her around initially because she recognized her talents.

The more they interacted, the more pleased she became with her.

She is loyal and indeed had helped Gu Youyou a lot.

That King Jin, with Searcy's disposition, wouldn't appeal to him at all; if Searcy really ended up in the Prince Jin Residence, King Jin would certainly end up with no descendents.

With the noble intention of 'saving a life is greater than building a seven-storied pagoda,' Gu Youyou decided to properly handle this matter.

She found Searcy in the stable, and by this time, it was already late. Searcy had built a strong bond with the horses.

"Searcy, how’s your research on horses coming along?" Gu Youyou teased, leaning against a pillar.

Searcy glanced indifferently at Gu Youyou’s belly and said, "It’s getting dark, and you’re here at the stable with a big belly; what are you doing?"

Gu Youyou laughed, "I got some insider news and rushed to share the good news with you."

"Good news?" Searcy looked puzzled at Gu Youyou and felt that it certainly wasn’t anything good.

At that moment, Gui Yunxi emerged from behind a tall horse, holding a basket, and smilingly asked, "Crown Princess, what good news does Searcy have?"

Once everyone was present, Gu Youyou slowly said, "Today, during the victory feast, the Empress mentioned you, Searcy. She proposed marriage on behalf of your father, suggesting you become a concubine for King Jin. Isn’t that a joyous occasion for your entire life?"

Listening to this news, Searcy nearly choked.

Hearing this, Gui Yunxi’s face turned pale, and the basket in her hand clattered to the ground, then she anxiously looked towards Gu Youyou.

Chapter 1130: Pick Someone to Marry

Searcy stared blankly for a moment before responding with just one sentence: "She must be sick."

Gu Youyou spread her hands and laughed: "That’s the situation, what do you think?"

Searcy snorted coldly: "What do I think? If she’s sick, cure her sickness. I don’t mind giving her a dose of medicine."

Seeing that Searcy was once again leaning towards the extreme, Gu Youyou had no choice but lay it all out for her.

"This matter is neither too big nor too small. Your father hasn't agreed, and Madam Lu said you've long been unrelated to the Lu Family, so she hasn't agreed either. In other words, you're still single.

However, if the Empress is set on making you King Jin's concubine, once the Empress' gracious edict arrives, you'll have to marry, whether you want to or not. That's the situation at hand. I've analyzed it for you, and you have three options."

"Which three options?" Gui Yunxi seemed even more anxious than Searcy.

Gu Youyou said: "First, you marry him obediently. After all, King Jin is a prince with substantial backing. You won't have to worry about food or clothing in the Prince Jin Residence, and with your abilities, no one would dare to bully you. It wouldn't be much different from staying with me, what do you think?"

"Just say the second and third options," Searcy replied irritably.

Gu Youyou smiled and said: "Second, if you're unwilling, then you could take flight before the gracious edict is issued. You're all alone anyway, and since you have no ties with the Lu Family, you're free to go wherever you want. No one can do anything about it."

That indeed sounded like a decent choice, but on second thought, Searcy considered the biting cold weather. Why run away? Wasn't it nice to stay by Gu Youyou's side, enjoying good food and drink?

"Is there another way?" she asked.

Gu Youyou said: "There is another way, which is for you to get married right away. No matter how influential the Empress is, she can't force you to divorce and remarry, can she? At the very least, you are a doctor at Jisheng Hall, and I would not agree to her idea."

"Marry?" Searcy glanced at Gui Yunxi.

Seeing her look, Gui Yunxi’s face turned red.

Filled with a mix of anticipation and nervousness.

Gu Youyou felt it was about time and, holding her stomach, said: "That’s all I have to say. I’ll give you one night to think about it, and you must give me an answer by tomorrow morning."

After Gu Youyou left, Searcy and Gui Yunxi stared at each other.

Searcy didn’t say which option she would choose, and Gui Yunxi didn’t dare to speak up.

As the night grew darker and time slowly passed, Gui Yunxi’s disappointment grew.

She must be too formidable for him.

The thought of her potentially choosing the third option and hastily marrying someone else made him extremely uncomfortable.

Mustering up his courage, Gui Yunxi said to Searcy: "How about you escape for your life? Pack your valuables tonight and leave at dawn tomorrow. I’ll even act as your coachman."

"Wishful thinking," Searcy replied coldly. "Am I the kind of person who runs away at the first sign of fear? You think I’m like you?"

Gui Yunxi: "..."

"So what do you plan to do?"

Searcy said: "I’d rather poison and kill them all than run away."

Gui Yunxi was terribly alarmed and said: "No, that wouldn’t do. Such actions could implicate the Crown Prince and his spouse, and besides, killing is not right."

Searcy, infuriated to the point of turning ashen, found herself at a loss with such a foolish person.

"Then maybe you should marry someone."

Gui Yunxi turned pale and asked tentatively: "Then, which young master have you set your sights on?"

Searcy replied irritably: "Which young master? I haven’t set my sights on anyone. Even if I wanted to choose, there’s no time now. Might as well be you, then!"