Farmhouse 1131

Chapter 1131: Marry Her Off

Gui Yunxi’s head suddenly went blank, followed by great joy.

Searcy continued, "I’m just using you as a shield and to humiliate King Jin a bit. I’d rather marry a coachman than go to Prince Jin Residence, so don’t get too smug."

Although Searcy’s words weren’t pleasant to hear, Gui Yunxi indicated that he was already not listening.

The only thing he could hear was that phrase, "Why not just you!"

He was as excited as a stallion in the spring, disregarding Searcy’s endless chatter, no matter how ugly or disdainful her words were, he boldly rushed over and scooped her up in his arms.

Searcy screamed at the top of her lungs, "What are you doing? I’m only temporarily using you as a human shield, you toad, you really think you can eat swan meat? Let go of me."

But someone simply refused to let go!

Gui Yunxi expressed that this toad had to have a taste of swan meat no matter what.

...

The next day, Searcy told Gu Youyou of her decision, to which Gu Youyou was not surprised at all.

She even felt that the Empress had done a good deed with this trick; if she hadn’t done this, Searcy wouldn’t know when she would have gotten married.

"Alright, since you’ve decided, we will arrange the marriage in the residence. It’s all so sudden, we can’t have a grand affair, we can only keep it as simple as possible."

Searcy impatiently said, "Fine, fine, just handle it. As long as it can deter the Empress from her suicidal thoughts, that's enough."

Searcy didn't care about those conventional ceremonies anyway.

However, although Gui Yunxi's family were commoners, they owned a coach business as individual entrepreneurs, and his parents felt that when marrying off their son, they should go through the necessary formalities.

Gui Yunxi had already gone home to inform his parents of the matter, and since it was Gu Youyou who made the decision, they naturally had no objections.

Having a son working at the Crown Prince Residence was already a great honor for them, and now with a daughter-in-law also working there, they were naturally even happier.

But Gui Yunxi had explained to his family that the wedding was sudden; it couldn't be like his elder brothers' weddings at home, there was no need for an elaborate betrothal, everything would be arranged by Gu Youyou, and reluctantly, they had to accept it.

After giving Gui Yunxi the proper betrothal gifts, he drove the carriage back to the Crown Prince Residence.

Their wedding was very simple. They bought ready-made bridal clothes, did up a courtyard hastily, and that was that.

However, after Searcy got married, she couldn't continue living in her old courtyard, as it belonged to the inner court and it was inappropriate for a man to live there.

Gui Yunxi's male dormitory was too shabby and also unsuitable, so in the end, they decided to clear out an isolated courtyard near the inner court for their bridal chamber.

To avoid any crazed actions from the heartbroken King Jin, she dared not let them move out of the Crown Prince Residence.

The happiest person when Searcy got married and moved out of the inner court was none other than Xiang Chun.

She was more eager than anyone to leave, eagerly helping Searcy move her things to her new home.

Wearing her red bridal gown and hands on her hips, Searcy said, "Hey hey, what are you doing? Put that down."

Xiang Chun smiled broadly, "Helping you move stuff? After all, we've been sisters for a time. It's only natural for me to help you on your wedding day."

"Go away, who's your sister? It insults my intelligence."

"Hey, what are you saying? I'm helping you move your things, if you don't thank me, that's fine, but why say things to annoy me?"

"Who asked you to move them? Put everything back, I'm coming back tonight anyway."

Chapter 1132: Sending the Imperial Decree

Xiang Chun was fuming with anger, thinking to herself: You still come back? You still expect to return?

Since the wife of the Crown Prince has assigned you to the coachman, you'd better prepare to sleep in the stables for the rest of your life.

"What's going on?" From a distance, Gu Youyou heard Xiang Chun arguing with Searcy.

Xiang Chun immediately tattled.

"I was helping Searcy move things, and she wasn't even happy about it, criticizing me instead."

Gu Youyou looked at those items; they were all for Searcy’s work.

It was enough for some of Searcy’s personal items to be moved. Were these things necessary to be moved as well?

Gu Youyou looked at Searcy, who had a face full of schadenfreude.

Gu Youyou had no choice but to say to Searcy: "Don’t move these things, put them back, okay?"

"Ah?" Xiang Chun held those items, at a loss.

Gu Youyou then said, "If you really have nothing to do, go and check if everything is ready in the kitchen."

After speaking, she addressed Searcy, "And you, you are the bride. Shouldn’t you be sitting in your room waiting for the groom to come fetch you, instead of running out to the courtyard? What are you doing?"

Really a headache.

...

While Gu Youyou was busy arranging the marriage here, the Empress’s informants had already reported the matter to her.

She thought to herself, how terrible, just half a day late, and it’s already too late.

"Nurse Li, Nurse Li, hurry and take my decree to the Crown Prince Residence."

The decree was just finished, ready to be proclaimed by Nurse Li in the afternoon; she didn't expect that before lunchtime, they would already begin the wedding ceremony.

Nurse Li, troubled, took the decree and said, "Empress, it's already too late to proclaim your decree. They have already started the wedding ceremony. Even if they haven't, we can't just snatch away a bride dressed in her wedding gown. Neither the Crown Prince nor Gu Youyou are easy to provoke. Especially the Crown Prince, you see, last time just a few words from him made you lose face, and even the Emperor scolded you."

The Empress miscalculated once again, leaving her infuriated.

They only spoke about the wedding yesterday, and today they are so eager to carry it out—as if they're racing for reincarnation. Obviously, they did it on purpose.

She took a deep breath and said, "Then you... then just send a gift over, and by the way, see who that poison doctor married?"

She was furious, eager to see who it was that could possibly be better than her King Jin.

Nurse Li obeyed the Empress's command and hurried out of the palace.

When she arrived at the Crown Prince Residence, they were in the middle of the wedding ceremony.

Nurse Li arrived out of breath; her presence was anticipated by Gu Youyou.

"Crown Prince, wife of the Crown Prince, the Empress heard that there's a joyous event in your residence today, and especially sent this servant to deliver a wedding gift."

The Palace Maiden following her presented a gift.

Xiang Chun, by Gu Youyou's side, took the gift, and Gu Youyou stood up, smiling at Nurse Li: "Please convey Youyou's thanks to the Empress Mother!"

Since a gift had been sent, she might as well accept it.

"Xiang Chun, later send this to Searcy’s bridal chamber."

"Yes, wife of the Crown Prince," Xiang Chun complied.

After instructing Xiang Chun, Gu Youyou turned to Nurse Li and said, "Since you have come, Nurse Li, please have a cup of wedding wine before you leave. Someone, escort Nurse Li to the guest seats!"

Nurse Li’s face was slightly cold, as she looked up at the man in the groom’s attire.

Skinny and so unpleasant to look at, he was far inferior to their King Jin.

Moreover, someone who could marry so hastily, and even in the Crown Prince Residence—it was likely not from a reputable family.

She was startled, thinking to herself: Could it be that he is a servant of the Crown Prince Residence?

Chapter 1133: Breaking into the Mansion

This is really too much, Gu Youyou has gone too far, to actually point out the person favored by the Empress and King Jin to a servant in her household. Does she want to tell the Empress that His Highness King Jin is inferior to a servant in the Crown Prince Residence?

Madam Li grew angrier the more she thought about it, she grabbed the maid leading the way and said, "Miss, can you please inquire who this groom is?"

The guiding maid honestly told her, "His name is Gui Yunxi, he’s a coachman in the stables."

Madam Li’s head buzzed with a loud explosion, feeling immense shame and humiliation.

So he really is a servant, and even a coachman at that?

How could their King Jin be inferior to a coachman?

Could it be that Gu Youyou forced this girl into marrying him?

If that was the case, she must report to the Empress and ask her to make decisions for Miss Lu.

She’s a young lady, although born from a concubine, but still shouldn’t be marrying a coachman.

Thinking this, Madam Li held onto her last bit of hope and asked, "The bride is said to be a capable person, could she really be willing to marry a coachman?"

The maid replied, "She’s willing, Searcy and Master Gui were already very close before."

Madam Li’s heart chilled a bit, yet still, not giving up, she asked, "Is it really not that the wife of the Crown Prince forced her into this marriage?"

The maid looked at Madam Li oddly and said, "How could that be? Searcy’s personality is such that if she doesn’t want to, no one can force her. Moreover, our wife of the Crown Prince is very kind, she wouldn’t force anyone into doing something they don’t want to, let alone a matter of lifelong commitment."

Madam Li’s heart cooled completely.

The wedding banquet tasted like chewing wax; in fact, there were not many distinguished guests, just a few servants from the Crown Prince Residence to liven up the place.

The meal at least saved face and allowed her to report back to the Empress.

However, just as Madam Li was about to go to the outhouse, a maid suddenly followed her. Seeing no one around, the maid whispered to Madam Li, "There’s something strange about the main courtyard."

With just that sentence, the maid hurriedly left.

Madam Li’s heart jumped, she paused for a moment, then headed into the outhouse.

This maid was arranged by the Empress; Gu Youyou certainly knew the Empress had placed many people around her, thus whatever was fed back was useless.

If it had been useful, Gu Youyou wouldn’t just watch them passing the information out.

It was good that she had come herself, it seemed not a complete waste of effort.

...

After Madam Li returned to the palace, the news quickly reached King Jin’s ears.

King Jin was furious, and while it was still not dark and before they had consummated the marriage, he gathered a large group of people and was determined to storm the Crown Prince Residence to snatch the bride.

"Jin Zijin, Gu Youyou, come out. You two despicable villains, stealing my woman, I will not let this go."

The gatekeeper hastily reported to Jin Zijin. Gu Youyou frowned and said, "I knew King Jin would come to cause trouble, hmph, but the ceremony is completed, let’s see what he can do."

Jin Zijin said, "You stay inside, I’ll go take a look."

But as soon as Jin Zijin stepped out of the door, he heard King Jin’s yelling.

He had already led his men into the residence.

Jin Zijin’s face darkened further and immediately took action himself, capturing the trouble-making King Jin on the spot.

King Jin, with a face flushed red from anger, was held down on the ground by Jin Zijin in a strange posture, in unbearable pain.

"You... Jin Zijin, what do you want to do? Let me go, release me..."

Jin Zijin coldly said, "You bring people to storm my residence, what do you think I am going to do?"

Chapter 1134: Accountability

After speaking, he punched King Jin in the face, turning his handsome face immediately into a patch of purple and blue.

Gu Youyou still stepped out, took a deep breath upon seeing King Jin’s miserable state, and said, "Your Highness King Jin, why must you do this? Prince Xiang has no affection for the Goddess of Dreams; forcing it will not yield sweetness."

King Jin, enduring the pain, cursed, "Very well, I thought you were too scared to show up. Isn’t this all your doing, forcing Searcy to marry a coachman, right?"

"No," Gu Youyou immediately denied.

"Hmph, don’t deny it. I know for sure you forced her into it."

"You’re thinking too much. I’m not that kind of person."

At that moment, Searcy came out in a red bridal outfit, speechless upon seeing the scene.

Upon seeing Searcy, King Jin got overly excited, hurriedly calling her name and asked, "Searcy, tell me, did Gu Youyou force you to marry a coachman?"

Searcy calmly replied, "You're thinking too much. It was my own choice."

King Jin, however, didn't believe it, questioning, "How is that possible? You are after all the daughter of General Lu, how could you marry a servant, a coachman no less? Did Gu Youyou blackmail you by holding something over you? Tell me the truth, I will definitely stand up for you."

Searcy, massaging her forehead, said, "You really are thinking too much. I'm not General Lu's daughter; I'm just a doctor. A doctor marrying a coachman is not inappropriate."

After that, she didn't look at King Jin anymore and turned to leave the yard.

"Ah... Searcy, don't go. Tell me clearly, were they threatening you or not?"

King Jin couldn't believe he was being bested by a coachman.

King Jin's roaring echoed throughout the courtyard.

Jin Zijin had someone stuff cloth into King Jin's mouth to shut him up.

Then they had King Jin bound with ropes and took him to the Imperial Palace to meet the Emperor.

After such a commotion, the Emperor, who was always strict with King Jin, certainly wouldn't let him off.

...

Shortly after Lady Lee reported the situation within the Crown Prince Residence to the Empress, news came that King Jin had been beaten up by the Crown Prince and then bound and thrown in front of the Emperor.

The Empress, upon hearing this, no longer had any thoughts of troubling Gu Youyou, and hurriedly rushed to the Qianqing Palace.

King Jin, kneeling on the ground, his cheeks swollen, struggled to speak clearly and winced with pain at every word.

Seeing the Empress arrive, he could only look at her tearfully.

The Empress, heart aching, trembled with distress. This was her son; no matter how irresponsible he had been or how angry she had been at times, she had never hit him like this.

Yet why should Xiao Qinqin's wretched son be so bold toward him?

Unable to contain her rage, the Empress even forgot to salute the Emperor and pointed directly at Jin Zijin accusingly, "What unforgivable crime has Xiaoran committed for you to treat him this way?"

Jin Zijin calmly replied, "He led men to attack my residence, and when people fight, bumps and bruises are inevitable. My guards fared no better."

King Jin shook his head frantically.

The Empress, choked with fury, stepped backward and pointed loudly at him, "Can those servants compare to my son? Those guards' lives are cheap; if they are killed, what does it matter? How can they hurt King Jin?"

Jin Zijin, undaunted, said, "My guards didn't recognize that he was King Jin. He led a mob into my residence, and the guards thought that bold bandits had stormed in. He was lucky they didn't strike him down right there."

Chapter 1135: We Can't Calculate This Way Anymore

King Jin felt both aggrieved and choked with frustration, murmuring through the pain unclearly, "Nonsense, they hit me even after I said I am King Jin."

"How come? Jin Zijin, you did that on purpose," the Empress angrily said.

Jin Zijin sneered, "So if you say you are, you are? Does that mean anyone can claim to be some king and just bring men to storm into my residence?"

The Empress and King Jin were at a loss for words.

After a moment, King Jin, still enduring the pain, added, "Also, this punch on my face was from you."

The Empress looked at Jin Zijin in shock and angrily said, "You are brothers; how could you bring yourself to do this?"

Jin Zijin hesitated for a moment, then a short while later said, "Sorry, my hand slipped."

"You..." the Empress was beside herself with frustration and turned to address the silently seated Emperor, "Your Majesty, look at the attitude of the Crown Prince; he has beaten King Jin to this state, what do you think should be done?"

The Emperor then shifted his gaze to Jin Zijin and asked him, "What do you think should be done?"

Jin Zijin smiled and said, "Didn’t I already apologize to him just now? My apologies."

"You...you think an apology is enough to settle this?" the Empress insisted urgently.

Jin Zijin said, "Of course, it can’t just be settled like that. After all, King Jin led men into my residence, and many people saw it. My own people were also injured; I have to give them an explanation, right?

Let’s do this, as brothers after all, we are family. Let’s dismiss the personal grudges with an apology to avoid awkwardness. Since King Jin brought men into my house, the dignity of the Crown Prince Residence must be upheld, no matter what, and the injured guards also need to be consoled; how about... let King Jin compensate them with eight or ten thousand silvers and then confine him in Zongrenfu to reflect properly?"

Hearing Jin Zijin’s words, the Empress nearly fainted from anger.

What kind of talk is this?

King Jin gets beaten, and an apology is supposed to be enough, lest it becomes awkward.

But King Jin still has to pay reparations and be confined to Zongrenfu?

Confinement in Zongrenfu, is face no longer a concern?

The Empress and King Jin were so stunned they were momentarily lost for words.

The Emperor glanced at them and said indifferently, "Then let it be so. Bringing men to barge into the Crown Prince’s residence is indeed inappropriate. Empress, go to Zongrenfu with him and personally discipline him."

What?

The Empress couldn’t believe her ears. Has the Emperor gone mad? How could he treat her like this?

Jin Zijin said with a light smile, "Father Emperor’s decision is extremely fair; your son is grateful."

Jin Zijin left with ease, triumphant.

The Empress and King Jin slumped in the main hall of Qianqing Palace, their minds buzzing.

The Empress asked in a low voice, "Your Majesty, do you think your concubine is useless, that’s why you..."

"Silence," the Emperor reprimanded loudly: "Do you also fail to distinguish right from wrong like Xiaoran? Think for yourself why he led men into the Crown Prince Residence. For a woman, a woman cast out by her family, a King Jin loses his senses and order.

What would the people think? What would the court officials think of such a person? To say nothing of the Crown Prince, if he weren't my son, he wouldn't even be qualified to be King Jin.

This time, we're just teaching him a lesson in manners, to understand what he should and shouldn't do. If there's a next time, you might as well not be King Jin."

The Empress was momentarily dazed and overwhelmed; upon reflection, what King Jin did this time was indeed too much.

Chapter 1136: The End of the Year

She knew her son had taken a liking to that female doctor and thought that for the sake of her grandson, she could accept her son taking her into the Prince Residence as a concubine.

But she never anticipated such a debacle.

With this thought, she felt relieved that the woman did not marry into Prince Jin Residence. A person like Xiaoran should not fall for a woman; he should be like the Emperor who uses women for his purposes, only then can he ascend to the Emperor's throne.

The Empress wiped away her tears, took a deep breath, and reached out to help the collapsed King Jin from the ground.

To achieve her goals, she could endure anything.

She agreed that King Jin was in the wrong, but she did not think that the Emperor's punishment was right either.

You could have him reflect on his actions within his own estate, but you sent him to Zongrenfu to learn discipline? What kind of idea is that?

But thankfully, the Emperor was not yet ready to completely break ties, for he had arranged for her to supervise.

...

The New Year was upon them, and to avoid any mishaps, Gu Youyou decided not to go anywhere this year. She prepared New Year gifts and sent them to relatives—that would be enough.

She wanted to stay at home for her childbirth in peace; her belly was eight months along, and with heavy snow outside, there could be a risk of premature birth.

The Lin Family, her maternal grandmother, sent back a reciprocal gift on the second day of the new year, indicating that they would visit her at the Crown Prince Residence after the busy holiday period.

By the third day of the new year, someone from the Gu Family had come.

Huang Xiangwen brought Sanya with her, while Dabao and Erbao, being busy, did not come.

Erya and Shunzi's family lived in Beijing and would usually come to visit when they were not busy. Knowing that Huang Xiangwen would come from Jinxiu City today, they also came over.

Sitting together once again, they reminisced about how years ago Gu Youyou and the Gu Family had been at odds with each other, as if separated by a whole century.

If grandfather were still alive, he would surely be very comforted.

Huang Xiangwen presented some gifts, seeming a bit embarrassed.

"These are some small tokens from your second aunt, and this package is from Shunzi's mother. We know you lack nothing, so it's just a little thought; don't look down on it."

Gu Youyou smiled faintly as she received the two packages: "They are all gifts from my elders, of course, I like them—why would I look down on them? Second aunt, have you adjusted to living in Jinxiu City?"

Huang Xiangwen replied: "I've gotten used to it, but now that it's New Year's, we cannot go back to the village to pay our respects with incense. I came today to tell you that we plan to return to Lotus Village after the snow melts to see what the village is like now and to offer incense for your grandparents and second uncle."

Gu Youyou nodded and asked Xiang Chun to bring out some silver, saying: "It's not easy for me to leave Beijing now, so I can't go with you. Take this silver for the trip and burn more paper money. Before you leave, send someone to let me know, and I'll arrange for the residence's coachman to take you there."

Huang Xiangwen repeatedly declined, saying: "No, no, we have our own silver; your help to our family has been ample, we can't take your silver as well."

Gu Youyou insisted: "This is my sentiment towards my grandparents and second uncle."

The amount of silver that Gu Youyou offered was not excessive, and seeing this, Huang Xiangwen could only accept it.

After lunch, Gu Youyou sat with them and chatted. After experiencing many changes over the years, Huang Xiangwen became much more reflective, and spoke a lot more.

She kept talking about past events, current happenings, and future matters.

Chapter 1137: Brief Calm

"Dabao got a job at the pharmaceutical factory, far away from the environment of Lotus Village, and indeed, he became much more cheerful. We've never mentioned Lei Qianqian in front of him, and he, too, has stopped recalling those matters. Shunzi's dad told me he's got a girl in mind, someone who divides medicine at Jisheng Hall.

Now he's saving silver with the girl, waiting until they have enough to buy back her servitude contract, and then they'll bring up the engagement."

Gu Youyou was slightly surprised and was about to say something, when Huang Xiangwen hastily added: "You must not mention the matter of giving them the servitude contract, the reason I'm telling you this isn't to save the money from the contract. We still have some savings at home, they haven't told the family because they don't want to trouble anyone, they can solve it on their own."

Gu Youyou smiled: "That's good then."

After saying this, Huang Xiangwen looked at Gu Youyou's belly and said: "It's gotten so big, you must be due soon?"

Gu Youyou said: "There's a little over a month to go, but it's hard to say, could be sooner."

Huang Xiangwen said: "I'll tell dad about this when I get back, and burn more paper money for him, he'll be sure to be happy. Dad was most fond of you when he was alive, he always worried what would happen if he couldn't outlive you. Now it's all good, you've got married, and the husband he picked for you is such a good man, he can finally rest assured."

Erya didn't get along with Huang Xiangwen before, but now that Huang Xiangwen had become the only elder left alive in their family, people change, and her previous grudges slowly dissipated.

Erya said: "Auntie, I'm taking care of two kids, and Shunzi is too busy with the business to leave the store, so we're not returning to Lotus Village. Please burn incense for grandpa and grandma for me, and for my mother, and also..."

She thought of a father whose fate was unknown.

In such a great flood, everyone was only trying to save themselves – a condemned prisoner like him was probably not cared for by anyone, likely long perished by drowning, not even laid to rest in peace.

She glanced at Gu Youyou, then said to Huang Xiangwen: "My dad's probably gone too. Let it be, he was in such a state, death would've been a release for him."

Huang Xiangwen said: "People say that once someone dies, the light goes out. Indeed, the things the third brother did while he was alive were detestable, but now that he's gone, there's no use holding onto hatred. I'll burn more paper for your mother at her grave. If your dad can take it, he takes it; if he can't, then let it be."

He killed his own brother and sister-in-law and caused the death of his father, treating him this way was already more than merciful.

Sanya was outside playing with Erya's two children, and once they tired from playing, they came inside. Gu Youyou gave each of the three children a big red envelope.

Seeing as it was getting late and snow had fallen in the north making the roads difficult to navigate, Huang Xiangwen took Sanya and headed back to Yijinxiu City ahead of time.

On the fourth day of the Lunar New Year, the Lin Family came to visit.

Madam Lin brought Old Madam Lin in a horse carriage to see Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou was utterly astonished and said: "Grandmother, why have you come? You are an elder, and of such an age, it should be me visiting the Lin Residence to see you."

Old Madam Lin laughed heartily: "Look at this, acting all distant aren't we?" She reached out to touch Gu Youyou's belly, saying: "What's snuggled in your belly are direct descendants of the dragon and phoenix, how can we allow you to exert yourself? I've been in Beijing for so many years with no relatives to visit, and only when you younger ones got married did I finally have places to go to.

Since I can still get about now, I should visit more often. Today, I'm here to see you first, and later, I must also make a trip to Prince Jin Residence to see how Qianqing is doing."

Chapter 1138: To Prince Jin Residence

King Jin was previously imprisoned in Zongrenfu due to an incident at the Crown Prince Residence, with the Empress personally overseeing the matter until the Emperor released him on the day before the new year.

Everyone knew that it was due to the Crown Prince's affair that he was imprisoned, but outsiders did not know the specifics.

Madam Lin seized the opportunity to ask: "Youyou, what exactly happened? Being locked in Zongrenfu is no small matter, it's the first time the Emperor has punished King Jin by imprisoning him there."

Gu Youyou sighed, "He had been feeling unwell before and went to Jisheng Hall for treatment, and then he took a liking to the female doctor who treated him. You know this doctor, it's Searcy who used to live in my courtyard."

"Searcy?" Madam Lin expressed immense surprise.

Searcy, that unruly maid, was still fresh in Madam Lin's memory. King Jin really had... peculiar tastes.

At the same time, she felt somewhat angry.

King Jin had already taken quite a few concubines, was he still not satisfied? To think he even flirted with a female doctor, let alone one who was such an unruly maid.

"What happened then?" she asked.

Gu Youyou said, "Searcy is skilled and daring, doing things as she pleases. She wouldn't treat you nicely just because you're King Jin. It turns out Searcy didn't favor King Jin but instead took a fancy to a coachman employed at the residence. It was said that the Empress intended to marry her to King Jin as a concubine, but she rushed to marry the coachman. This angered King Jin, who then led a band of men to storm the residence. Later, Jin Zijin captured her and brought her directly to the Emperor just like that."

Gu Youyou's words turned into a puddle.

Madam Lin and Old Madam Lin sighed incessantly, thinking that King Jin was too reckless in his actions. No matter what, you shouldn't lead a group to storm the Crown Prince Residence, especially over a female doctor?

Madam Lin paused, a bit puzzled, and asked, "Wait a minute, I heard from your uncle that the Empress wanted to find a concubine for King Jin, but wasn't that supposed to be General Lu's daughter?"

Gu Youyou also paused, then hurriedly said, "Aunt, I didn't tell you the truth before. That Searcy is actually General Lu's daughter, her real name is Lu Xueying."

"Ah...? How did General Lu's daughter end up becoming a doctor with you?" Madam Lin was immensely surprised.

"Ah! Those Lu Family matters, aunt, we shouldn't lightly discuss other family's affairs. Anyway, she was beaten half to death by Madam Lu and thrown out."

What Gu Youyou said was half true, half fabricated, and the two Madam Lins understood.

They knew a bit about Madam Lu's notorious reputation, dealing with General Lu's concubines and their daughters had always been her forte.

Thinking this way, this Miss Lu seemed to be a person of hard fate, a pity she even ended up marrying a coachman.

...

Gu Youyou had few female guests to entertain, as everyone knew she was pregnant and should not be overworked, so most just sent servants to deliver gifts.

There were more people at Jin Zijin's side. This was his first New Year since returning, and many wanted to establish a good relationship with him, especially before the new year, as the King Jin incident made everyone feel the Emperor favored the Crown Prince even more.

Compared to that, the King Jin Residence was much colder.

Every time Madam Lin saw Lin Qianqing, she kept saying how thin she had gotten. This time, she and Old Madam Lin went to see her at King Jin Residence because she hadn't returned to her maiden home on the second day of the new year, saying King Jin was sick.

Madam Lin could understand, after all, King Jin had just been confined.

But what she didn't expect was that King Jin, despite being sick, still vented his anger on Lin Qianqing.

Chapter 1139: What Kind of Life Is This?

"Get out, I don't need your fake concern. It must be you, you cheap woman, who secretly communicated with Gu Youyou, marrying the woman I liked off to a coachman, just to humiliate me."

Through the walls of the inner courtyard, Madam Lin and Grandmother Lin could hear the furious voice coming from Prince Jin's quarters.

Madam Lin has only one daughter, Lin Qianqing, and upon hearing this commotion, she immediately started to cry.

"What sins have I committed to let my daughter suffer like this?"

After saying this, she wanted to enter the inner courtyard.

The maids leading them were in great difficulty, not knowing what error they had made; at this moment, Grandmother Lin pulled Madam Lin back and sighed, "Let it be, grandchildren have their own fortunes. This is not something you can manage, let's just go and wait in the reception hall."

Madam Lin was escorted by the maids to the reception hall, complaining all the way.

"Mother, I knew something was wrong when that Consort took charge. How can a family matriarch allow a Consort to take over? Is the legitimate wife dead? Look what a mess everything has become. Every time Qianqing comes home, she reports only the good news and hides the troubles, who knows what kind of days she's having."

Grandmother Lin comforted her: "Don’t be anxious just yet, let’s see what Daya has to say when she arrives. Prince Jin was punished a few days ago and is understandably upset; sadly, he took this punishment at the Crown Prince Residence, and since Qianqing is close with Youyou, his taking out his frustration on Qianqing is to be expected."

Madam Lin angrily said, "How can he blame others for his own misconduct?"

Lin Qianqing quickly came to the reception hall after receiving a message from a servant.

Her eyes were still red as if she had just been crying.

Madam Lin, unable to contain her anger, pulled Lin Qianqing aside and asked, "What happened? Tell me everything. Usually, I would let it slide, but this time I saw it myself, and I must stand up for you."

Lin Qianqing shook her head and said, "It’s nothing, mother, grandmother, why did you come in this cold weather? I was thinking of visiting you in a few days."

Madam Lin said excitedly, "If I didn’t come, how would I know what kind of life you are having? Did Prince Jin make you upset? And what’s the deal with that Consort?"

Lin Qianqing paused for a moment, then sighed softly, "Mother, it’s better if you don’t get involved. This concerns the Prince Jin Residence; even if you wanted to intervene, you couldn’t."

"You..."

"Just leave it be, it’s the same anywhere, and I am not upset."

Seeing Lin Qianqing like this, both Madam Lin and Grandmother Lin could only sigh.

Grandmother Lin asked, "How come Prince Jin is now interested in a healer? What’s this all about?"

Lin Qianqing glanced at them and then outside the door before whispering, "It's all because Prince Jin still has no offspring, despite it being so long. Not one of the many women in his residence has shown any signs of pregnancy. Recently, the Empress summoned me and Prince Qin's wife, including my cousin, to the Imperial Palace. She reprimanded my cousin and me fiercely, blaming us for not having children.

My cousin retorted that it might be Prince Jin who has issues, not us. Since then, Prince Jin has firmly believed that Searcy can bear him children. I know that Searcy cured him when he fell ill; whether he genuinely likes Searcy or just wants to secretly solve his illness by marrying her, I can't tell. Anyways, his plans were ruined, and now he's like a lit firecracker, ready to explode at any touch."

Madam Lin and Grandmother Lin could only sigh deeply after hearing this.

Chapter 1140: Return to Lingnan

Indeed, there has been no news of pregnancy in Prince Jin Residence for a long time, and so many women have not conceived. Who says it's a problem with the women? More likely, the problem lies with Prince Jin himself.

So, they could say nothing. Madam Lin told Lin Qianqing, "You need to be more clever, don't provoke Prince Jin at this time, keep your distance. Daya, your husband is not like other men. If you were married to an ordinary man and were bullied, your mother could still help you get revenge. But the Imperial Family's men are noble, and we who are their subjects can only acquiesce."

Lin Qianqing managed a strained smile and said, "Mother, rest assured, I will."

Consort Zhang was busy managing the affairs of the residence, even for meals she needed to arrange things. Madam Lin was annoyed by how Consort Zhang dominated over the legal wife, so when Lin Qianqing asked them to stay for a meal before leaving, she refused.

Lin Qianqing could only sigh helplessly.

After sending off the two Madams from the Lin Family, Consort Zhang leaned on the Shuixie where Lin Qianqing had to pass on her way back to her own courtyard, and took delight in misfortune, saying, "Sister Wangfei, why didn't you keep Madam Lin and the old Madam Lin for a meal before letting them leave? Do you despise the food from Prince Jin Residence so much?"

Lin Qianqing scoffed, "The meals you arrange, of course they wouldn't eat."

Consort Zhang's face stiffened, and as she watched Lin Qianqing's retreating back, she snapped angrily, "Are you dissatisfied with the fact that Prince Jin bestowed upon you the title of legal wife? If you can, try taking it back."

Lin Qianqing stopped, turned her head, and said, "Shouting and screaming—is this the upbringing of a Zhang Family daughter?"

Consort Zhang was rendered speechless, comparing upbringing? Comparing upbringing with her? The education of the Zhang family had never been inferior to any house in Beijing.

Lin Qianqing said with a faint smile, "You can hold on to that title for now, but take care, don't damage it. If it gets damaged, you won't be able to afford it."

Consort Zhang clenched her teeth and snorted coldly, "Lin Qianqing, don't be smug, one day I will have my name stamped on that title."

Lin Qianqing laughed and said, "Great, I'll be waiting for that day. I'm generous, so I'll share a piece of news with you. The Empress said that whoever gets pregnant first in this courtyard will become the legal wife. You're wasting your time squabbling with me. You'd better go see what those noble concubines are up to; it'd be really funny if they beat you to it and you end up being overtaken by a lesser concubine."

Upon hearing that, Consort Zhang's face lit up with excitement and she turned towards Prince Jin's courtyard.

...

A month after the new year, the spring snow began to slowly thaw. Yue Ruxue and Yi Qiuping were also about to return to Lingnan. Before they left, they made a visit to the Crown Prince Residence to bid farewell to Jin Zijin.

Jin Zijin’s relationship with the Yue Family couldn’t be strained because of Yue Ruxue.

Thus, Jin Zijin still generously held a farewell banquet for them.

Yue Rujing was there too—he had to keep an eye on his sister, lest she cause any more trouble.

"Big brother, Crown Prince, then your servant and Axue will return to Lingnan," said Yi Qiuping.

Jin Zijin held his cup and smiled, "Good, let’s have one more drink."

Jin Zijin normally didn’t drink, so his offering a toast to Yi Qiuping was a great honor.

Yue Rujing smiled and said to Yi Qiuping, "Axue has been spoiled by our parents and can be thoughtless. Please be more forgiving."

Gu Youyou didn’t come out today, and Yue Ruxue seemed to be in a good mood. Without Gu Youyou’s pregnant belly to provoke her, she was quite normal. Hearing her big brother speak ill of her, she didn’t get angry; instead, she just smiled, "Big brother, hasten your handling of the Dao Sect affairs. Our parents are both waiting for you back in Lingnan—they want to hold grandchildren."