Farmhouse 1181

Chapter 1181: King Jin’s Conditions

All her years of effort had been in vain. Those ministers who supported King Jin would immediately distance themselves from them, and she could almost foresee the decay of the Prince Jin Residence in the future.

She would not allow such a thing to happen.

"This is the only way to save you," the Empress said with tears in her voice: "You are not an ordinary person, you are King Jin, the future Crown Prince Emperor. From the moment you were born, you became the hope of many. The Ducal Residence has supported us, mother and son, for many years, all their hopes are on you. Without doing this, how could you live up to them? They are also your family, can you disregard their life and death?"

The depths of King Jin’s dark eyes were already filled with tears; he was the Empress’s son, the most noble person from the moment he was born. Laughter was all he ever knew in his life, never tears. In his memory, he had never cried, but at this moment, he wept like a child.

Surrogacy?

That meant watching his own women making merry with other men, then giving birth to sons for him to raise.

Was he to put a cuckold’s cap on his own head?

No man could possibly agree to such a thing.

Yet the Empress continued to cry before him, pressuring him.

"If you are all my family, why can’t you think for me? The world is so big, I am not the only man unable to sire children, why must I endure surrogacy?"

"We cannot only think of ourselves, we are not ordinary people, we are not alone. Xiaoran, from the moment you were born, you were different from ordinary people. You must bear what ordinary folk cannot, do you understand?"

Every word of the Empress struck deep into King Jin’s heart, and at the same time, tore her own heart to shreds.

A mother, to do such a thing to her own son, except for her, probably no one else could do it.

Outsiders would only say this mother was cold and unfeeling, but who knows the bitterness in her heart.

Seeing that the Empress had made up her mind, King Jin gradually gave up the struggle and slumped to the ground.

After a prolonged silence, he asked with a trembling voice, "Did you already plan this, that if I was truly infertile, you would..."

The Empress’s face was streaked with tears as she said, "Mother has no choice, Xiaoran!"

She comforted her son like any ordinary mother would.

"If this gets out, how am I supposed to live?" The color in King Jin’s eyes was fading, turning into a lifeless gray.

The Empress shook her head: "No, Xiaoran, no one will know, mother empress will handle this flawlessly, no one will know."

The Empress assured him with all her might.

Another long silence ensued, and after a while, King Jin’s voice could be heard again.

"If that is the case... then you arrange it, mother empress."

"Yes!" The Empress cried bitterly, covering her mouth.

"However, I have one condition," King Jin suddenly added.

"You say it. Mother empress will definitely comply," said the Empress.

"Anyone is fine, but don't let the queen consort... don't let Qianqing go," King Jin said.

The Empress's face changed, "She is the legitimate consort, if the child were born by her..."

"No, she can't," King Jin stated with unusual determination, "She is my wife, married through a proper wedding, the last piece of dignity I have as a man. The other women, I can treat as gifts given away to others, or sold off. But have you ever seen anyone selling off or giving away their own wife?"

The Empress was speechless, then after a moment, she nodded lightly.

"Alright, I agree to it."

...

Chapter 1182: Several Major Events Happened in Beijing

Several major events have occurred in Beijing, one of which is the poisoning by Consort Zhang. This incident quickly spread throughout every street and alley in Beijing; no one was unaware of it.

There had been no news of pregnancy from the women of Prince Jin Residence, the reason being one of King Jin's Consorts, ruthlessly and cruelly poisoned all the women in the residence, just so she could give birth to the first son herself.

This woman was also once the most famous top talent from Chancellor Zhang's family in Beijing, extensively praised by the scholars in the Women's Academy.

The former belle of Beijing, now turned into a condemned poisoner whom everyone yelled at and beat—this can't help but make one sigh at the fickleness and cruelty of fate!

Consort Zhang was handed over to the Ministry of Justice, and soon after, Madam Zhang confessed.

Madam Zhang was also arrested, and under great pressure, she did not implicate anyone else, taking full responsibility for the crime. Soon after, she died in prison.

Consort Zhang was sentenced to the most severe punishment. Committing such a grave crime, she was supposed to be executed publicly on the streets.

But since she was, after all, someone who had been married into the Imperial Family, public execution was deemed indecent, and so she was sentenced to execution by the prison guards in the Ministry of Punishment's Prison instead.

The once arrogant and domineering Zhang Family has become very low-key, with Chancellor Zhang claiming illness and no longer attending morning court sessions.

Because Madam Zhang took the blame for all charges, Chancellor Zhang only faced a demotion from a first-grade official as the left Chancellor to a second-grade left Chancellor, without much personal impact.

Nevertheless, due to this incident, a rift with the Ducal Residence, which had good relations with the Zhang Family, was inevitable; the extent of this rift remains to be seen.

All of this will only become clear when Chancellor Zhang returns to court sessions.

The second major event in Beijing is the birth of the first legitimate grandson to the elder Imperial Prince, an occasion far more noble than Prince Qin's twin illegitimate sons.

The Emperor personally named him Jin Xuyao.

The rising sun, under the sage kings Yao and Shun.

The Emperor’s intentions could not be clearer; by naming him Yao, which implies monarch, does the Emperor intend for this child to be the Son of Heaven??

This has placed intangible pressure on King Jin’s faction.

Although King Jin married first, his residence has now been disrupted by a poisoner, resulting in no offspring to date.

Especially those whose daughters are married into Prince Jin Residence, they wish they could drag Chancellor Zhang out for a beating, yet he is conveniently absent.

Now, envy and resentment are useless; all they can do is hope that the elder Imperial Prince’s Consort, being a healer by nature, will save those poor women.

After all, a woman’s life is destroyed if she cannot bear children.

The third matter doesn’t count as a major event but can certainly be considered gossip material over tea or meals.

The affairs of Official Xie’s inner courtyard have always been of interest to the noble ladies there.

"Although the second son of Official Xie is dead, he left behind a seed. That seed is now in Miss Du’s womb!"

"Didn’t they divorce? How is there a son out of nowhere now that he’s dead?"

"Alas, Official Xie said they were merely quarreling and had been angry for years; shouldn’t they be allowed to reconcile?"

"Hey! I really can’t understand these young people nowadays."

"But now that the second son of Official Xie is dead, it would have been better if they kept quarreling. How pitiful is Miss Du? And that child who has never even seen his father."

The fourth event leaves many shaking their heads in dismay.

That is the sudden death of Imperial Physician Cui, the most skilled doctor of the Imperial Medical Bureau.

He was really too unlucky; he had just traveled to Jinxiu City for a diagnosis.

An old friend of his in Jinxiu City had fallen seriously ill, beyond the help of the local doctors, so he was called from Beijing to Jinxiu City. Unfortunately, on the way there, his carriage was involved in an accident, and both Imperial Physician Cui and the carriage driver were killed.

...

Chapter 1183: The Woman Yue Rujing Took Away

Lin Qianqing knew about Gu Youyou giving birth to a child, and the very next day, she brought gifts to visit her, seizing the opportunity to also bring up the poisoning incident.

The Empress must be held accountable in some way.

Never before had life been so difficult, requiring her to tread so cautiously.

"Your Highness the Great Prince Consort, the consort of King Jin is here."

Jin Zijin had originally refused all visitors so that Gu Youyou could rest properly. However, when Xiang Chun knew it was Lin Qianqing who had come, she could not stop her from visiting.

After all, back in the days at the Lin Family, Lin Qianqing was the legitimate lady of the house.

"Oh, then let her in quickly!"

Gu Youyou put on a coat and got up.

The happenings within the Prince Jin Residence were abuzz, and even she, who was convalescing post-childbirth, had heard about them.

Xiang Chun went out to invite Lin Qianqing in, while Jin Zijin carried a food container into the room.

Seeing Gu Youyou getting out of bed again, dressed so thinly, his handsome eyebrows knit together once more.

"Didn’t you agree to rest properly? Why are you up again?"

Gu Youyou held her forehead in slight discomfort, saying, "Didn’t I tell you that I don’t need to lie in bed all day during confinement? Why do you never believe me?"

"You are too stubborn. The day before yesterday, you sneaked off to Xiguang Residence again. Don’t think I don’t know about it!"

Gu Youyou smiled sheepishly and added another layer of clothing, saying, "Lin Qianqing is here, most likely because of the poison on her body. I need to check on her."

"It can wait a few days." Jin Zijin took out a small jar from the food container, inside was a fragrant soup, meant to stimulate milk production, because Gu Youyou insisted on breastfeeding herself.

"Drink this soup first, or we will have to call the wet nurse back."

Since Gu Youyou insisted on breastfeeding herself, so did Miss Du. Consequently, all the wet nurses they had prepared were sent away.

Gu Youyou still drank the soup but insisted on seeing Lin Qianqing.

She said, "The matter of the poisoning is neither trivial nor can it be ignored. I can't rest easy without seeing for myself. All things can wait, except illness. If the next few days lead to permanent infertility, it would be troublesome."

Helpless, Jin Zijin sighed, "There's really no way to deal with you. I'm going to the study. If anything happens, you must call for me."

He glanced at the pigeon-delivered message he'd received that morning, then turned back and said, "Stay home properly, don't go out. I have to leave the city for a bit."

"What happened?" Gu Youyou asked as she sipped the soup, looking up.

Jin Zijin said, "The woman that Ajing took away from here has disappeared, I fear there may be trouble!"

"Which woman?" Gu Youyou thought for a moment before she remembered. Yue Rujing had taken a woman from her place, a woman the Empress had sent to the residence for Gu Youyou to discipline. "Her?" She hadn't really remembered until now.

Jin Zijin nodded, "I haven't had the time to take care of her, and now she's had the chance to flee."

Hearing the word "take care of," Gu Youyou felt a tremor in her heart, saying, "You want to kill her? After all, she was sent by the Empress. If she dies without a clear reason..."

Jin Zijin rubbed her hair and smiled faintly, "Why worry about so much? Your top priority is to get through your confinement well and try for another child next year."

Gu Youyou: "..."

My goodness...

After instructing her carefully and ensuring everything was set, Jin Zijin finally left the house. With their situation, he became much more cautious in his actions.

He had planned to stay with her through the entire confinement period before leaving home, but one month was too long, and there was much he had to attend to.

Lin Qianqing soon entered, following Xiang Chun, who was incessantly chatting and comforting her.

Chapter 1184:

"Miss, don’t rush and don’t be angry anymore. Fortunately, the little bitch from the Zhang Family met a miserable end. You’ll definitely be able to cure the poison in you, cousin is so amazing, isn’t she? You’re bound to give birth to a big, chubby boy..."

"Xiang Chun, shut your mouth!" Lin Qianqing couldn’t listen anymore and said, "You’re becoming more and more talkative. Is it because you also want to get married?"

"Ah...?" Xiang Chun widened her eyes, then her face suddenly blushed as she said, "Miss, what are you talking about? Xiang Chun was appointed to cousin by the old madam. I’m not getting married."

"Then why are you so nosy? Even managing to comment on my childbearing."

At this point, Xiang Chun didn’t dare to speak and just honestly led Lin Qianqing into the house.

The floor heating in Gu Youyou’s Warm Pavilion was burning vigorously. The weather was no longer cold, and coupled with the floor heating, a wave of heat greeted her upon entering the room.

Lin Qianqing took off her coat and said, "Cousin, you’re still burning the floor heating so vigorously with this weather?"

Gu Youyou came out from the inner room, wearing only a thin spring garment that Lin Qianqing had never seen before. Her hair was clumsily tied up and rested on her shoulder, adding a few touches of lazy allure to her appearance.

"I'm in my postpartum confinement, and there's also a child in the house, naturally it can't be compared with you," said Gu Youyou with a light smile.

Xiang Chun made faces on the side, thinking to herself: Miss came to you precisely because of infertility, and here you are, bringing up children, isn't that akin to stabbing someone in the heart with a knife?

However, she was wrong. Lin Qianqing was not angry. Gu Youyou knew she wouldn't get angry over this.

Childless? She would have preferred that!

"Having a child really is different, I'll go see the little prince first."

Lin Qianqing tossed her coat to Xiang Chun and, with a hint of excitement, walked swiftly towards the inner room.

As she passed by Gu Youyou, she playfully pinched her waist and said, "You've really gained weight, even the Empress thought you used some trick to have a surrogate."

Gu Youyou gritted her teeth and said, "Are you mocking me for gaining weight?"

Lin Qianqing laughed and said, "Gaining a bit of weight is good, it shows nobility!"

The aesthetic at the time wasn't about being as skinny as possible, but rather, slightly plump and fair-skinned was considered beautiful.

Gu Youyou, having just given birth and having been nourishing herself during the confinement month, now belonged to the slightly plump category.

Others thought she became more charming as she grew, it was only herself who couldn’t accept it.

Anyway, she had decided that she would start losing weight after her confinement was over and get her figure back to a state she was satisfied with.

The child in confinement usually just ate and slept. Jin Xuyao was quite good at these two things, which for two years were the big events of his life: eating and sleeping.

Just over ten days after his birth, his facial features had developed, unlike when he was just born with a wrinkled appearance. His skin was plump and fair. When he opened his eyes, those were the signature starry eyes of the Jin Family men.

Lin Qianqing sat beside the little bed, her eyes sparkling with surprise as she stared at the little guy sleeping soundly.

"So tiny, and all soft and squishy." She reached out to pinch Jin Xuyao’s face.

Gu Youyou hurriedly pulled her hand back and said, "Don’t wake him up, or he’ll have to eat again. He just drained me dry, and my milk hasn’t come back yet."

"Ah...?" Lin Qianqing looked at Gu Youyou’s... bosom in surprise. The thin, loose-necked nightgown couldn’t hide Gu Youyou’s proud bust, but instead made them look as if they were about to burst forth.

"Eh?"

Gu Youyou: "..."

Chapter 1185: Song Lianjun Ran Away

"Didn’t you say you were just drained? How come it’s still so big?" She really wanted to poke it.

Gu Youyou slapped away her "devil’s claw" and held her forehead, saying, "Be serious, let’s talk about what matters."

She glanced at her son, who was deep in sleep, and said, "Let’s go outside to talk."

Once he wakes up, she would no longer be able to get things done properly.

"Why don’t you hire a wet nurse?" Lin Qianqing was surprised that Gu Youyou was breastfeeding on her own. In her impression, prominent families would never breastfeed their own children; they always hired wet nurses.

Gu Youyou was so wealthy, surely she could afford to hire a wet nurse, right?

Gu Youyou replied, "The milk from those wet nurses isn’t exclusively for one child, it lacks nutrition. How could it compare to mine?"

Lin Qianqing thought it best to keep quiet about professional knowledge in this area.

For instance, wet nurse’s milk and Gu Youyou’s milk were all just milk to her—was there really such a difference between good and bad?

Moreover, professional wet nurses had astonishing quantities of milk and could feed several children without any issue. Wealthy families would compete for such wet nurses. It seemed that Gu Youyou disdained such a type.

Lin Qianqing chuckled awkwardly, deciding to turn the page on this issue and discuss what was important.

"Cousin, you probably know about my situation. I had no choice but to come here because the Empress has her eyes on me."

Gu Youyou sighed lightly, pulled her arm up to the table, and gently pressed on her pulse, saying, "Whether the Empress is watching or not, you still had to come. Being a mother is your sole responsibility; it has nothing to do with them."

Gu Youyou looked for a while and then called Xiang Chun to summon Searcy.

Gu Youyou was not skilled with the various poisons used by the people of ancient times, but she happened to have a pioneering poison physician living in her house.

Searcy's family specialized in poisons, and she had come to understand a lot about common and uncommon toxins.

"Once your health is restored, just live your life well with King Jin. Sometimes, you have to yield to destiny."

Gu Youyou had been in the ancient times for many years; what hadn't she come to terms with by now? She knew her cousin appeared to have given up on the surface, but deep down there was always a bit of rebellion.

But, it wasn't just about her; behind her stood the Lin Family. Even if not for herself, for the peace of mind of her grandmother and her maternal uncle's wife, she should live her life well.

And she had to admit, in this era, children were everything.

If you couldn't produce children, no matter how powerful your family was, you would not have a good life.

Moreover, Lin Shenxing wasn't, in fact, a brother born of the same mother as Lin Qianqing. After the uncle and his wife passed away, whether the Lin Residence could still fully support Lin Qianqing was uncertain.

Lin Qianqing nodded gently, seemingly thinking of some sad memories. She stealthily turned her head to the side and wiped away a tear that had fallen down her cheek.

Searcy was proficient with detoxification. After chatting with Lin Qianqing for a while, Gu Youyou let her follow Searcy.

On the other hand, Jin Zijin had already arrived at the Sanqing Temple.

"How did she escape?" Jin Zijin frowned.

Yue Rujing said, "I've been using the Soft Muscle Powder that Searcy provided, and according to the schedule, it was due for use today. But this morning when I came with the medicine, I found she had already run away."

Jin Zijin walked around in a dilapidated room, picked up the broken rope, and his brows furrowed tightly.

"This was broken by Inner Strength, she doesn't seem like she's under the effects of the Soft Muscle Powder."

Yue Rujing immediately raised her hand, "I swear, she really was affected."

Jin Zijin waved his hand, saying, "I know you gave her the medicine, but it seems the effects have worn off."

Chapter 1186: Blocking the Door

"That's not right." Yue Rujing stroked her chin in confusion and said, "Searcy mentioned taking it once every half a month, and I've been keeping track of the time."

Jin Zijin pondered for a moment, squinting his eyes and said: "I remember Youyou once mentioned that when a person takes a certain medicine for a long time, their body gradually develops antibodies to it, and the effectiveness of that medicine on her would get weaker and weaker..."

"Ah...?" Yue Rujing nodded and said: "So you mean to say, the effects of the medicine has passed, so..." Yue Rujing suddenly slapped her forehead and exclaimed, "Ouch, this is my fault, Senior Brother, what should we do now? This woman is extremely dangerous."

At the corner of Jin Zijin's mouth appeared a cold smile, and he said: "No rush, since she has escaped, she must show up eventually, if I am not mistaken..."

He paused then suddenly changed the subject: "By the way, do we have all the evidence we need?"

Yue Rujing was used to Jin Zijin's habit of abruptly changing topics, and after a brief moment of being taken aback, he understood Jin Zijin had shifted gears.

He said: "We have everything, just waiting on you now."

"Hmm!" Jin Zijin nodded and said, "Let's go, hand me all the items; once Youyou is out of her confinement, we will settle this matter."

"Alright!" Thinking that Gu Youyou would not finish her confinement for another month or so, Yue Rujing once again furrowed her brows nearly imperceptibly, commenting: "There seems to be news of Yu Jizi in the south, Senior Brother, I know that confinement is important, but you also need to hurry."

Jin Zijin paused for a moment, then said: "These matters need to be addressed one by one, whether they succeed or not, I am not concerned."

Yue Rujing nearly spat out blood in frustration, angrily retorting: "The brothers have been working themselves to death; you can't say you don't care whether it succeeds or not; we must succeed!"

Jin Zijin just gave a mysteriously elusive smile without responding to his words.

Taking the items he needed, Jin Zijin then came back.

Just as expected, at the main gate, he saw a strange woman, dressed in tattered clothes, as if she had just escaped from a prison.

And around her, a crowd of people had gathered.

To be precise, those people were gathered at the entrance of his mansion to watch the excitement.

At this moment, that woman was kneeling in front of the main gate of his home.

Gu Youyou hid inside the house, angry and fearful, cursing Yue Rujing thoroughly in her heart.

Couldn’t you handle matters a bit more carefully? You actually let Song Lianjun return, and now even the neighbors know about it.

They say Gu Youyou is heartless, actually sending her away and allowing such a frail woman to suffer unbearable torture, but luckily she fought to escape back home.

Just now, the people have blocked her door and plan to use the power of public opinion against her.

Gu Youyou hesitated in her room, debating whether to go out or not, when at that moment, Xiang Chun, who had gone out to gather information, returned.

"The Princely Heir is back, we don’t have to be afraid of her anymore," Xiang Chun said excitedly.

"He’s back so soon?" It didn’t seem like Jin Zijin had been gone for long, Gu Youyou quickly said: "Come on, let’s go out and have a look."

Gu Youyou haphazardly threw on a coat and headed out, while Xiang Chun shouted from behind: "Wait, wait, bring your headscarf, you can’t catch a cold."

Gu Youyou ran out even faster. She would rather not wear that ridiculous red strip on her head, a bizarre custom for confinement.

Outside the main gate, Song Lianjun was kneeling at the doorstep when she saw Jin Zijin descending, and immediately fell to her knees before him, loudly pleading: "Princely Heir, you must advocate for your servant. Ever since I entered the mansion, the Princely Heir’s consort has continually tormented me. Unexpectedly... unexpectedly, she even conspired with Princely Heir Yue to send your servant to Sanqing Temple, and with great difficulty, I’ve managed to run back here."

Chapter 1187: Confident and Fearless

Someone took Jin Zijin's horse away, as he stepped back two paces with disgust looking at the unfamiliar woman kneeling before him, and then passed by her to enter the main gate, leaving behind a sentence.

"Bring her in."

The people around were whispering and pointing, with more of them confused, not understanding what was happening.

Gu Youyou's name was very well-known among the common people, a civilian who married into the Imperial Family, relying on her own strength, surpassing the many talented young ladies.

Her shrewdness was also commendable; she made money and did not forget to distribute it for disaster relief when the people were in trouble, and provided food and fodder during wars.

About her various legends, she became a model of the common people's counter-attack against fate.

But what's with this woman who suddenly appeared?

She even said she was a concubine from the Crown Prince Residence and that she had been bullied by Gu Youyou?

Gu Youyou's fans were certain that it must be the concubine's fault for doing something wrong to anger their idol, and it served her right.

Gu Youyou, standing in the courtyard, then saw Jin Zijin walking in with a not-so-pleasant expression, followed by a timid Song Lianjun.

From behind Jin Zijin, Song Lianjun looked towards Gu Youyou, casting her a meaningfully deep smile.

Although her actions did not earn public support or overflow the bystanders with sympathy...

...everyone saw her follow Jin Zijin into the Crown Prince Residence, making it known that there was such a concubine inside, and they dared not to treat her lightly anymore.

As long as she could stay properly, she felt that there was plenty of time to deal with Gu Youyou slowly.

Gu Youyou was livid, her face turning iron cyan as she said, "Why did you let her in?"

Song Lianjun followed behind Gu Youyou, smiling and bowing in greeting.

"Greetings to the Crown Prince's wife!"

Greetings my ass.

Gu Youyou glared at Jin Zijin, full of anger, waiting for his explanation.

Jin Zijin just looked at Gu Youyou and sighed lightly, "Why did you come out? The wind is strong outside, go back in quickly."

Go back my ass.

Gu Youyou anxiously said, "What about her? You're not really going to bring her back home, are you?"

"I'll handle it, go back first, be good." Jin Zijin gently spoke to her, the faint smile on the corner of his mouth, the lifted trace of a smile, was like the warm sun of a clear day in the spring.

This made Song Lianjun's heart feel warm, and she was immensely envious.

As a death warrior, she had no right to refuse a mission, but this mission, she accepted willingly.

For such a man, even if it meant being his concubine, she was willing.

At that moment, Xiang Chun came up with a headscarf, and upon seeing the situation, she too was anger personified.

But in her mind, no matter how angry you are, you must finish sitting out the month properly, because if you don’t and end up with some lingering illness, it would be troublesome.

She advised Gu Youyou, "Let’s go back first, we can be angry when we’ve taken good care of our health."

Gu Youyou still trusted Jin Zijin, but she didn’t like the smugness on Song Lianjun’s little scheming face, right now, staring at her with a provocatively triumphant smile.

Fine, you smile, let’s see how long you can keep that smile.

Gu Youyou thought about whether the plan she got from Searcy to deal with her would be useful now.

"Fine, take your time sorting it out." Finishing her words, she cast Song Lianjun a smile suggesting she wish for her own good fortune, then turned and walked back to her own courtyard.

"Tell Searcy, Song Lianjun has run back here." Back in the Warm Pavilion, Gu Youyou said to Xiang Chun with a faint smile.

At this moment Searcy must be concocting an antidote for Lin Qianqing, it seems not bad to send her a bit of amusement during her spare time.

Chapter 1188: Fortunately, Killed Her

On the other side, Jin Zijin personally escorted Song Lianjun back to a secluded courtyard, where the leading maid explained that this was the courtyard where Song Lianjun had lived before.

The courtyard remained as she had left it, with a pair of red candles burnt halfway still inside the house, untouched.

The bed was also covered with a red brocade quilt.

Song Lianjun’s face flushed with shyness as she gave a small curtsy to Jin Zijin and said, "Since the Prince has not returned, Lianjun has kept the room in the state of a bridal chamber, thinking that someday the Prince would come back, and then..."

Before she could finish her sentence, she suddenly saw a red dagger slashing toward her.

Song Lianjun’s complexion turned to one of shock. Being a well-trained assassin, she was highly sensitive to danger, quickly dodging the moment she saw the sharp blade thrusting at her.

But it was Jin Zijin’s move; how could she possibly dodge it so easily?

Her evasion merely bypassed a fatal blow, but the armpit near her heart was still stabbed by the dagger, blood gushing forth.

"Why... why?" Song Lianjun, watching her own fresh red blood flowing out, looked at Jin Zijin incredulously.

Jin Zijin spoke indifferently, "As an assassin, you are unqualified."

"I..." Song Lianjun suddenly felt something was wrong with the wound. Besides the pain, why was it so burning hot?

It felt as though a fire was burning straight through the wound into her heart.

Jin Zijin had a cold look in his eyes, like a millennia-old ice cave.

In the midst of the coldness, there was also a hint of ironic intent.

"Failure of a mission means death; do you need a reason?"

Song Lianjun’s face turned to horror. Now when she looked at Jin Zijin, it was as if she saw a completely different person.

She forgot that his previous gentle smile was for Gu Youyou, having nothing to do with her.

And at his core, he was a man full of malevolence.

"You... you’re going to kill me?" Song Lianjun said in disbelief, then shook her head, "No, you can’t kill me. Everyone saw you bring me here. I am your woman..."

Hearing this last sentence as if it was a great insult, Jin Zijin, without uttering another word, drew his blade and ended her life.

Looking at Song Lianjun lying in a pool of blood, with eyes wide open in death, he said plainly, "Killing you simply required a reason, and I happened to have plenty."

Jin Zijin pulled out a white handkerchief to wipe the blood off his dagger, stepped over the corpse, and walked out of the courtyard.

He said to the two guards, "Go in and bring the person inside out, and follow me to the palace."

"Your Highness...?"

The two guards, having heard the noise inside, were now staring at each other in confusion.

They wanted to say something, but Jin Zijin had already left.

Helpless, they could only obey his orders, lifting Song Lianjun’s body, ready to proceed to the palace.

"Alas! Is this really okay? Killing her and then taking her to the palace."

"Who cares, we just follow orders."

Gu Youyou was pondering how to deal with that woman when she saw Jin Zijin had already returned.

She put on a stern face and said, "What? Didn’t you go to accompany your new bride?"

"Oh, jealous?" Jin Zijin teased her with interest before turning serious and said, "These people are reckless with their lives. I cannot allow her any chance to harm you or Xuyao, so I simply killed her."

"Killed... what?" The change of subject was so swift, Gu Youyou couldn’t react for a moment.

Chapter 1189: Reporting a Complaint

After a brief pause, she finally faced the issue head-on: "You... you killed her? Song Lianjun?"

Jin Zijin nodded and said, "Yes, just now."

"Why? Then..." Gu Youyou swallowed the rest of her words back down.

Her thoughts were actually the same as Song Lianjun’s; her high-profile return, making such a scene at the main entrance, was all to ensure everyone saw that she had arrived at the Crown Prince Residence and that she was a concubine of the Crown Prince Residence. Besides, Gu Youyou disliked her. If she were to die inexplicably, it would surely be blamed on Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou was known to be jealous.

But now, she truly was dead.

Jin Zijin said with a smile, "I’m here to tell you, I’m about to enter the palace. Don’t act rashly, just stay at home safely. Don’t catch a cold, they say that women in their postpartum period shouldn’t be exposed to the wind!"

Good grief, is he seriously concerned about whether one catches a cold in postpartum right now?

"Fine, you go ahead, I'm not going anywhere!" Gu Youyou held her forehead.

...

Right when the Empress was worrying over the matter with King Jin, someone had already reported that Jin Zijin had brought a corpse to the Emperor to lodge a complaint.

"Complaining against whom?" The Empress asked in surprise.

God knows how she has been surviving these days; she had lost weight, the whole person looked ten years older. Before, if there was a white hair, she would have it plucked, but now with bunches of white hair, if she plucked them all out she'd become bald, so she had resigned herself to it.

"Complaining against Your Majesty." That little eunuch was extremely anxious.

"Complaining against me?" The Empress was both shocked and furious; it seemed that one thing after another kept coming without an end.

"Complaining about what?"

The little eunuch said, "Seems like the concubine you sent to the Crown Prince Residence earlier this year has gotten into trouble!"

Half an hour later, the Empress arrived at Qianqing Palace, where the body was covered with a white cloth and lying there, with two coroners examining it.

Only someone as audacious as Jin Zijin would dare to bring a corpse into Qianqing Palace and frighten the Emperor.

"Zijin is really out of line. I sent you this concubine, if you didn't like her, just kill her, but why bring her into the palace? What if you frighten your father the Emperor? Your father the Emperor isn't young anymore."

Jin Zijin said indifferently, "This matter is of great importance, I had to do it."

The two coroners had almost finished their examination, and the Emperor merely glanced at the Empress before turning his eyes towards the coroners, asking, "How is it?"

The coroners bowed and said, "This girl is indeed no ordinary person; she has been strictly trained since childhood. From the flexibility of her bones and muscles, as well as the deliberately concealed scars on her body, one can tell she was professionally trained as a samurai."

The Empress's face suddenly changed, angrily exclaiming, "What are you talking about?"

Jin Zijin sneered and said, "Saying that you sent an assassin into my residence, attempting to harm Youyou and my child. If it weren't for my timely return, where I happened to encounter her, Xuyao would have suffered at her hands."

"You..." The Empress felt as if she'd swallowed a fly, stifling uncomfortable; she knew perfectly well that Jin Zijin was talking nonsense. Death soldiers were the most obedient; she hadn't issued the order to kill Jin Xuyao, how could she have acted on her own?

"This is impossible." The Empress said angrily, "The one I sent you was just an ordinary woman, this is not the woman I sent you."

"Oh? So you say it's not and it's not? Then I have nothing more to say." Jin Zijin snorted coldly, "Please let the father Emperor decide."

The Emperor looked impassively at the Empress, saying, "Whether this is the person you sent or not, it can eventually be investigated. Are you truly denying it? Or are you saying... you didn't look at her closely?"

The words of the Emperor caused the Empress’s heart to tremble, he was right, sooner or later it would be investigated, so what’s the use of not admitting it?

Her mind swiveled, and she realized that she had no choice but to admit to it.

"Yes...it was sent by your servant, your servant did not see clearly earlier, only now have I seen clearly."

The Emperor hummed in acknowledgment and said, "Don’t blame yourself, a person looks somewhat different after death than in life."

The Emperor waved his hand and said, "Take it down, Zijin, do not bring such things into the palace in the future, it’s ominous."

Jin Zijin bowed and said, "Yes, Father Emperor’s lesson is correct."

The Empress’s face turned pale, standing aside, waiting for what the Emperor might say next.

She felt that this time the Emperor would not let it go so easily; with matters concerning Jin Zijin, she always ended up at a loss.

Is it because he is the son of Xiao Qinqin, or is it due to the fear of the Dao Family?

The scene was quickly cleared, and with the removal of the dead air, the room became more stifling.

Jin Zijin looked towards the Empress and said, "You placed such a person in my residence to harm my son, how should this account be settled?"

The Empress tugged at her lips, making a feeble struggle.

"Ridiculous, why would I harm your son?"

Jin Zijin responded coldly, "King Jin cannot bear children, and you cannot bear to see me have a son."

King Jin cannot bear children?

Recently, she had been tormented by the news that King Jin could not bear children; now suddenly raised by Jin Zijin, it provoked a throbbing pain in the Empress's brain.

"Do not speak nonsense, my son was just framed, how could he not bear children? "

Jin Zijin snorted coldly, "I'm not interested in whether your son can bear children or not, I ask Father Emperor to grant me justice."

"You..." the Empress said angrily, "Even if her identity is special, it doesn't mean she wants to harm your son. And you, how can you kill someone without any reason?"

"Are you making excuses for her?" Jin Zijin asked with a faint smile, "Or do you think I wronged her?"

"You, huh, she's already been killed, so whatever you say about how she was killed goes," the Empress retorted.

At this moment, the Emperor, sitting at the head of the room, threw an inkstone at the Empress.

Shocked, the Empress stepped back several steps and was immediately unable to speak.

"Emperor... Emperor?"

"Hmph!" the Emperor snorted coldly, "Do you really think I am so easily fooled each time? I've tolerated you again and again because I thought what you did was minor, and as an Empress, to denounce you would disgrace the Imperial Family.

But this time you actually arranged for a female assassin to enter Zijin's residence, and my legitimate grandson is not from King Jin, I know you are angry, but this time you've gone too far."

"I...that's not it, Emperor, Song Lianjun was sent to Jin Zijin when he went to Xining to fight; at that time we didn't know Gu Youyou was pregnant. Your servant, as capable as I am, cannot foresee..."

"Shut up, no matter what your purpose was, sending a female assassin into the Crown Prince Residence is overstepping. I say you have sinister intentions, do you admit it or not?"

"No..." the Empress shook her head and said, "Your servant does not admit!"

"Good..." the Emperor exclaimed angrily yet mockingly, "Very well, you do not admit, very well you do not admit. Think about how you dealt with those stubborn women before!"

"Ah, Emperor..." The Empress's expression drastically changed, her face ashen, even terrified.

"Someone, seize the Empress's Phoenix Seal and take her to Yeting, let her reflect well!"

The Emperor had already given the order.