Farmhouse 1231

Chapter 1231: Why Don't You Come Back?

They all experienced life and death and were reborn.

So why couldn't they start their lives anew?

As Searcy expected, Jie Zhonglin woke up in pain.

The agony after the anesthesia was unbearable for an ordinary person; he was sweating cold sweat from the pain.

Miss Du changed a clean towel and wiped the sweat off his forehead, and only then did he notice he was no longer in that dilapidated beggar's hut.

Every time he woke up, his leg hurt, but this time it was especially painful, immobilizing him. He looked down to see that his leg was fixed with several straight wooden boards.

Miss Du exclaimed in surprise: "Don't move, Youyou said your leg can't be moved; otherwise, it would be ruined."

"I… did you bring me back?"

This was a familiar place, the Jie family's house.

Miss Du nodded: "Yes, you fainted in the snow, and I brought you back."

So he had come back after all.

A tear slid from Jie Zhonglin's eye as he closed his eyes.

Miss Du also began to sob, and after a moment she asked, “If you were alive, why didn’t you come back? Why would you rather disguise as a beggar and hide in Jinxiu City, and even deliberately avoid us?”

“I… why?” His voice was weak, reminiscing about the time in Xining.

The group of men with him, the brothers who were bonded with him by life and death.

But they all died, really hacked to death by chaotic blades, while they desperately carried him out.

Those memories were something he no longer wanted to recall; he had collapsed with severe injuries at a herdsman’s home.

He said to Miss Du, “I narrowly escaped death with serious injuries. Later, I fainted at a herdsman’s house, where I recovered for a long while before I could barely walk. I left all my valuable possessions with them. After leaving their home, I found the war had already been over for quite some time.

I started wandering towards Beijing with nothing valuable on me and handicapped, naturally becoming a beggar.

After arriving in Beijing, I found out that I had been declared killed in action. At that time, in that state, I really felt that it would have been better if I had died, at least to fulfill the camaraderie of my fellow soldiers.”

Looking at Miss Du, he continued, “I didn’t dare to see you, with the way I am… I didn’t know how to face you…”

Miss Du, covering her mouth, sobbed softly, saying, “So you actually wanted to just die? Do you know that I had a son for you?”

“I…” Jie Zhonglin’s face was filled with pain as he said, “I know, his name is Jie Yi, and he’s really adorable.”

He would often hide near Manxiu Building and watch secretly; of course, he knew.

Miss Du cried out, “Then how could you bear not even letting him have one glance at you before fulfilling your soldier’s camaraderie?”

Jie Zhonglin was left speechless, feeling waves of sourness in his heart that were more unbearable than the pain in his leg.

Hearing footsteps outside, Miss Du stood up and said in a low voice, “Your dad is here; you’d better talk to him.”

She got up and walked out with a basin.

Though not very old, Elder Jie already had white hair.

Most of that white hair had probably grown in the last two years. Seeing his father again, Jie Zhonglin felt that his father truly had become an old father, aged at least ten years.

“Dad, I’m sorry to have caused you worry, I…”

Elder Jie gestured with his hand to stop him from continuing, not approaching Jie Zhonglin but standing at the door, his eyes full of vicissitudes.

He said, “Being alive is good; I just wanted to see you, you rest well!”

…

Chapter 1232: Jin Fengzhao Comes Looking

The Lady from Prince Jin Residence gave birth, and it was a boy, delighting the Empress beyond measure.

Of course, whether she was genuinely happy or not is hard to say; as per tradition, the birth of a first son or legitimate heir usually calls for a grand full-moon celebration by the Imperial Family.

And Jin Zijin planned to expose their scandals during the child's full-moon celebration.

Now with only a month left, he was busy preparing the necessary arrangements.

For years, the Ducal Residence had established deep roots in the court; uprooting them would not be easy.

Their tangled web of relationships, if not handled properly, could potentially bring disaster to Zhuzhao Country.

Being able to remove them all at once would be ideal, but achieving that was easier said than done; thus, managing these relationships properly was a significant challenge.

In terms of balancing the power of various families, the emperor was an expert in this area; hence, these past few days, Jin Zijin frequently traveled to Beijing, and even Gu Youyou seldom saw him.

But today, an unexpected visitor came to the house, leaving Gu Youyou uncertain about what to do.

"Jin Fengzhao?" It was only upon seeing the person in the flower hall that Gu Youyou remembered there was such a person in Zhuzhao Country—she had almost forgotten.

"Greetings to the Grand Princess!" Upon seeing Gu Youyou, Jin Fengzhao hurriedly stood up to salute her.

Indeed, how fortunes change; the last time she saw her, Gu Youyou was bowing and scraping before her, even being slapped and stripped by her.

Today, their roles were reversed.

Gu Youyou gave a wry smile, “What are you seeking the Grand Prince for?”

Jin Zijin was often absent from home lately, difficult to see during the day, and sometimes even at night.

“I have an important matter to discuss with him, please grant me convenience, Madam Grand Princess.”

Jin Fengzhao no longer exhibited her previous arrogance; two years had passed, and she seemed very changed.

She no longer had the majestic elegance of before, and looked much older, her previously well-maintained skin had turned sallow, and her body much thinner, making her clothes appear too large and ill-fitting.

The clothes she wore were still luxurious but seemed somewhat old – in the style of past seasons.

Previously, she would never have worn old clothes, but now her status had changed.

Gu Youyou looked her over, slowly withdrawing her gaze, and said, “It’s not that I’m not willing to help, but he genuinely isn’t here in Netherworld.”

“Where did he go?” Jin Fengzhao hurriedly asked.

Suddenly realizing her tone was too urgent, she quickly lowered her head and timidly added, “I… I indeed have a very important matter, could you please let me see the Grand Prince?”

Gu Youyou, seeing her pitiful state, felt a touch of sympathy; although she did not deliberately inquire about Jin Fengzhao’s life at the General Residence, her current appearance spoke volumes.

Gu Youyou sighed, “He’s truly not here; if you don’t believe me, you can wait here for a while. It’s getting late, and if you’re lucky, perhaps he will return sooner.”

With that said by Gu Youyou, Jin Fengzhao, despite her urgency, had no more to argue.

Gu Youyou had a maid invite Jin Fengzhao to wait in the guest room, but Jin Fengzhao declined.

“Thank you for your kind retention, Grand Princess, but I shall not wait. I will return another day.”

Gu Youyou found it odd but did not thank her further and had someone escort her out.

It was late at night when Jin Zijin finally returned, arriving back rather late, and Gu Youyou had already gone to sleep.

To avoid disturbing her, he slept in the outer study.

So she didn’t get a chance to talk to him about this matter.

Chapter 1233: A Chance Encounter with King Jin

But on the second day, Jin Fengzhao came again, seeking an audience with Jin Zijin. When asked what was the matter, she hesitated and didn’t answer.

To Gu Youyou’s surprise, she noticed some scars on her arm.

Gu Youyou paused for a moment and asked, "Are you injured?"

Jin Fengzhao instantly turned pale and hastily covered her arm with her sleeve, saying, "No, not at all!"

It was her private affair, so since she didn’t wish to speak, Gu Youyou didn’t press further.

Gu Youyou had thought she would stay until evening like the day before, but today she bid her farewell much earlier.

Gu Youyou was just about to visit Xiguang Residence today, so she left the residence right after her.

It was then she discovered that Jin Fengzhao had not returned to the General Residence near Jinxiu City, but instead was staying at an inn in Beijing.

She was very discreet, entering a modest and inconspicuous third-rate inn in Beijing carried by a small sedan.

"Great Prince’s consort, what do you think she is really up to?" Xiang Chun followed Gu Youyou and tracked Jin Fengzhao.

"I don’t know," Gu Youyou shook her head and said, "Forget it, let’s go to Xiguang Residence first."

As she turned a corner, Gu Youyou saw a familiar figure.

"King Jin?" she exclaimed in surprise.

This place was secluded, and encountering King Jin here was rare indeed.

A person of King Jin’s status should not be in these alleys.

"Gu Youyou?" King Jin was also quite astonished, "What are you doing here?"

King Jin was surprised to encounter Gu Youyou here not because of the area’s seclusion, but because in his opinion, a woman ought to stay at home behave decorously, not wander in the streets.

The sight of Gu Youyou walking boldly on the street was certainly strange.

But he quickly remembered that Gu Youyou was not like other women; she even conducted business in public and thus let it go.

King Jin paused briefly, then turned to leave.

He had little to do with Gu Youyou, except for a heap of grievances.

"Hey, wait a moment," called out Gu Youyou suddenly.

"What is it?" King Jin asked with a hint of impatience.

Gu Youyou quickly pulled out a letter from her sleeve and said, "This is written by Lin Qianqing for you, warm it by fire to read it. Keep it safe."

"What?" King Jin raised an eyebrow in surprise and added, "Was it you who rescued her?"

Gu Youyou shook her head and said, "Not me. She was lucky, encountered a righteous hero who could not stand by. Now she is safe and in contact with me."

King Jin stood there stunned for a moment, then nodded lightly, "Good, that’s good!" He took the letter from Gu Youyou and added, "Do you know everything?"

Gu Youyou nodded without denying, "She told me everything, even asked me to check your illness. Of course, if you don’t want to, that’s fine. I’m a doctor with medical ethics, I won’t go spreading it around recklessly."

King Jin’s face showed surprise. She knew about it?

He wondered how much she knew.

A moment later, he scoffed coldly, "You are a doctor with medical ethics? I haven’t forgotten that it was you who told the Emperor about my health issues."

Gu Youyou sighed and said, "You are overthinking it. I didn’t say you definitely had an issue; it was merely a speculation."

"But the Emperor believed it, didn’t he? Otherwise, why would he have the Imperial Physician come? Could the subsequent events have occurred?"

Gu Youyou looked at him with sympathy and said, "Why the futile denial? Such matters can be concealed temporarily but not forever. It’s bound to be uncovered sooner or later. Isn’t it good to be aware earlier? At least due to an error, the person who planned to poison everyone was caught much earlier."

Chapter 1234: Seeking His Help

King Jin did not deny it, clenching his teeth as he nodded.

Gu Youyou said, “Never mind, I’ve told you what I have to say, if you wish, you can come to me at any time. This is what my cousin wanted, if it wasn’t for her, I would not have accepted you as a patient even without considering medical ethics.”

That’s how Gu Youyou is, clear about favors and grudges, which indeed made King Jin feel a sense of admiration for her.

…

Jin Zijin came back early that evening, to whom Gu Youyou recounted the events of the past couple of days, including Jin Fengzhao’s visit, and he didn’t know what to expect from her.

“She hasn’t had it easy these past couple of years in the General Residence, Xiao Jinfei never liked her, even hated her a bit, keeping her around was probably just out of pity.”

Gu Youyou did not deny, saying, “She is indeed quite pitiable now. People say it’s easy to go from simplicity to luxury but hard to revert to simplicity from luxury. She’s fallen from a high place and is being trampled on all sides; her life must be tough.”

“Alright, I’ll stay behind tomorrow to meet her and see what this important matter really is.”

Just like the previous days, Jin Fengzhao came to the Crown Prince Residence early.

Today, she finally got her wish to meet Jin Zijin, the person who had switched identities with her since childhood. It was only upon seeing him that she truly felt the vast difference between heaven and earth.

She sighed with some emotion, saying, “You really look like the Emperor, but me, the imposter, probably doesn’t resemble anyone, right?”

Although Gu Youyou had never seen Xiao Xinxin in person, she had seen her portrait at the Marquess’s place and had drawn her herself. Based on that, Jin Fengzhao indeed didn’t resemble anyone.

“What is it that you want to find?” Jin Zijin asked indifferently with pursed lips.

Jin Fengzhao bit her lip, speaking softly, “I do have a favor to ask of you, and also some information to share, which might be helpful to you.”

“Oh?” Jin Zijin raised his eyebrows, “What matter?”

Jin Fengzhao said, “I know you have been searching for the person who switched our identities back then, perhaps what I have to say could be of some assistance to you.”

“Go on.”

“Actually, I have some memories before entering the palace; I vaguely remember coming from the Han family, my father was very fat and would often beat and scold us, I was likely sold by them. The one who took me away was the nanny who had been with me from the start.”

“Is that all?” Jin Zijin asked.

Jin Fengzhao timidly nodded, replying, “That’s all I can remember.”

“Then what do you hope I can help you with?”

Jin Fengzhao sighed, “In my life, I consider myself luckier than the average person. No matter what, I spent over thirty years as a princess, enjoying over thirty years of glory and riches undeservedly. Falling from the status of a high and mighty princess to the dust, at first I might have been unwilling to accept it, but now, I’ve come to terms with it. What’s not yours will never be yours.

It’s said that leaves return to their roots; at this point, if I were to say I still harbor any regrets, it would be that I could not find my origin. I want to ask them why they gave me away, I want to meet them.”

The understanding and resigned Jin Fengzhao truly inspired sympathy; she was, after all, an ordinary person. If fate hadn’t taken her into the palace to become a princess, perhaps she would have been just a regular woman today, living an ordinary life of marrying and teaching her children.

Even without the luxury and riches of a princess, she would undoubtedly be happier than she is now.

Gu Youyou looked toward the silent Jin Zijin and spoke up for him.

“We will try our best to help you find your family, but it’s been so many years, it’s uncertain whether they can still be found.”

Chapter 1235: King Jin Understands

Jin Fengzhao, with tears of gratitude, said, "It’s okay, as long as you agree to help with this matter."

"Alright, you go back first. I’ll have someone notify you once there’s news," Jin Zijin said.

"Thank you, Prince, and thank you, Princess Consort."

She looked at the silent Jin Zijin and added, "I, I also wish to see His Majesty." As she spoke, her eyes filled with tears, and she cautiously defended herself, "I don’t mean to cling to him, it’s just that for

many years, I truly believed I was his daughter lost amongst the commoners, and I truly regarded him as my father."

"I'll ask for you," Jin Zijin said indifferently, with a bitter smile on his lips.

Jin Fengzhao once again thanked Jin Zijin before turning to leave.

Jin Zijin appeared somewhat dejected, prompting Gu Youyou to ask worriedly, "What's wrong? Have you recalled something?"

Jin Zijin bitterly smiled and said, "She probably doesn't know yet, that the person who switched us was His Majesty himself."

"His Majesty?" Gu Youyou was incredibly surprised.

Jin Zijin said, "I was also very surprised that it was him."

Gu Youyou poured him a cup of water.

He sighed, "In my eyes, Jin Fengzhao doesn't owe him anything; on the contrary, he has been using Jin Fengzhao to suppress the Empress, deliberately showing her excessive affection, and using her as a shield that ultimately protected me. I feel guilty towards her!"

Is that how it is?

Gu Youyou was taken aback and fell silent.

So it seems, Jin Zijin indeed intends to help her find her relatives.

"What about her wish to see His Majesty?"

"I'll ask for her. It's up to him whether to meet her or not. If he still has a conscience, perhaps he will agree to see her," Jin Zijin replied.

...

King Jin had someone send an invitation to Gu Youyou, calling her out for a meeting. Fearing she might be apprehensive, he chose Xiguang Residence as the location.

It was quite normal for Gu Youyou to visit Xiguang Residence, and it was normal for King Jin as well.

For it was a public visit to Xiguang Residence for shopping.

Xiguang Residence's glass windows and glasshouse were so famous, and naturally, he wanted to build a glasshouse of his own.

He had just received a firstborn son, and he planned to reward his son with a beautiful house as a full-month gift.

"His Highness King Jin, please come this way to the private room," an attendant said.

Gu Youyou generously served him high-quality tea and pastries.

The décor in their client room was exceptionally exquisite, and as it was King Jin's first visit, he was quite impressed.

He took the design plans for the glasshouse, pointed to one of them, and said, "I want this one, and I'll have someone send the deposit later."

"Very well. We'll note it down for His Highness King Jin," she responded.

After the attendant left, Gu Youyou began to discuss the real matter at hand with King Jin.

"Have you come to a decision?"

King Jin’s face grew somber, and he nodded, "Yes, please take a look for me."

Seeing Madam Zuo’s child, he suddenly thought the child was incredibly cute. But knowing the child wasn’t his own, he wished to have a child like that himself. *

So, regardless of whether it was Gu Youyou’s trap or not, he was determined to have Gu Youyou check for him, to grasp this last chance.

But Gu Youyou said, "I can’t guarantee I’ll be able to help you. You should be prepared for that."

King Jin replied, "I understand. Such matters cannot be forced. If this life is destined to be childless, then so be it."

"Alright, let me take your pulse first," Gu Youyou suggested.

However, King Jin shook his head, "There’s no need, it won’t come out."

"Hmm?"

Chapter 1236: Indescribable

King Jin forced a smile: "You have said that before a doctor, there is no distinction between male and female. I don’t know if you are willing to let me examine you, and I won’t insist if you really don’t want to."

"What do you mean?" Gu Youyou was somewhat puzzled and vaguely felt that King Jin knew something about her infertility.

King Jin awkwardly shifted his gaze and went to close the door of the room securely.

This made Gu Youyou somewhat nervous.

What is he trying to do?

Anyway, Gu Youyou was not afraid; she could never fully trust King Jin, and naturally, she was well-prepared with her own weapons.

After closing the door, King Jin returned to his chair opposite Gu Youyou and sat down. He looked somewhat uneasy, legs together, hands decorously placed on his thighs, such a posture made him look like a shy teenage girl, and Gu Youyou could hardly restrain a laugh.

Usually, patients like this are suffering from hidden ailments, and of course, King Jin's infertility is a hidden ailment itself.

Thinking of his embarrassing secret, as a doctor with medical integrity, Gu Youyou knew she must restrain herself from mocking him, or else he might turn around and leave.

After all, a patient's spirit is very fragile.

"Tell your doctor all about your illness without reservation, so that the doctor can recommend the best treatment for you. Rest assured, I only see you as a patient, and don't overthink it, I'm just a doctor."

It is necessary to provide psychological support to such patients, as a doctor, the most feared situation is when a patient holds back part of their troubles.

King Jin nodded slightly, gathered up his courage, and started hesitantly unfastening his belt and removing his trousers.

Gu Youyou gasped in astonishment.

This is way too risky, if someone sees it, she wouldn’t be able to explain it even if she grew mouths all over her body.

If it were in modern times, she wouldn’t blink an eye at a bunch of men stripped naked on the operating table, but this place was different. King Jin daring to take off his pants in front of her meant he completely abandoned his propriety, it’s imaginable the immense pressure and courage needed to make this decision.

"Wait a moment!" Gu Youyou decided that since King Jin was going all out, she would do her best to handle this matter properly for him.

"What is it?" King Jin’s hands, halfway through removing his trousers, froze in mid-air, his face quickly turning red.

As a feudal ancient, one can only imagine how much courage he needed to strip in front of a female doctor. If they hadn’t pressured him to the point of contemplating suicide, he wouldn’t have taken this step.

Yet just as he finally resolved himself, why did Gu Youyou halt him halfway?

Gu Youyou felt this was an important matter, so she said to him: "Just wait a moment, I will go get some tools."

Ignoring King Jin’s blushing look, Gu Youyou clattered down the stairs, and told the service staff, "The esteemed King Jin in room ’Jia’ on the second floor is our major client, the garden blueprint of room number six needs to be redesigned, I need to have a good discussion with King Jin, it will probably take a couple of hours! Order some signature dishes from Erya Fish Manor, and make sure to deliver them in exactly one hour, remember, on time, no disturbances before that."

After giving the instructions, she then went to the third floor, took the tools pre-prepared in her office, put them in a drafting box, and took it downstairs.

Others could only comment that King Jin was fortunate to have persuaded boss Gu herself to personally come down to design the drawings.

"What is this...?" King Jin was somewhat surprised to see Gu Youyou carrying a large box into the room.

Chapter 1237: Accident

Gu Youyou said, “This is my drawing kit, but it’s not filled with drawing materials, it’s my medical box.”

King Jin understood and nodded at her.

Gu Youyou put on specially made gloves and then said to King Jin, “Take them off, I will have a look at you now.”

This forthrightness made King Jin embarrassed. But having come this far, he certainly wouldn’t back out halfway.

Considering that Gu Youyou seemed to handle confidentiality well, even if she was somewhat annoying, everything else she did was beyond reproach, which made him feel slightly more at ease.

However, taking off his trousers was still awkward. He fumbled for a long while before removing them.

He found it difficult to speak of it and didn’t even dare to look.

On the contrary, Gu Youyou, a woman, appeared very calm.

Gu Youyou gave him a serious examination and noticed a tiny scar.

She asked in surprise, “Have you been injured before?”

King Jin’s face flushed as he nodded and said, “It’s probably because of this injury that I am infertile. Imperial Physician Cui has examined me and said that… my essence has been cut off…”

Gu Youyou was utterly astonished. How could the injury be so coincidental as to sever the vas deferens? Such a wound was similar to a vasectomy in modern medical practice. No wonder he couldn't have children.

King Jin continued, "I had previously investigated you. I heard that when you were in Qingshui Town, you had cured a patient born with this problem – a child adopted by Doctor Zhou, right?"

As Gu Youyou examined the scar, she nodded and said, "Yuancheng's congenital phimosis was indeed cured by me."

King Jin didn't understand the medical jargon Gu Youyou used, but hearing her affirmative answer reignited his hopes.

He said, "It is because I heard about this case that I dared to let you try. Imperial Physician Cui said my condition is incurable, but perhaps you can help."

Gu Youyou replied, "In theory, it is treatable. However, your wound is quite old, and everyone's condition is different – it's hard to say for sure."

Having said that, she flipped to the other side and was even more astonished to find a similar scar there. It was too much of a coincidence. If one side was injured by accident, and the other side similarly… it couldn't possibly be an accident. Could someone have done it deliberately?

"How did you get injured?" Gu Youyou asked in astonishment.

Who would dare give King Jin a vasectomy? Judging by the scars, they seemed to be many years old.

King Jin sighed and said, "It was an accident some years ago."

"An accident? What kind of accident?" Gu Youyou didn't believe it to be an accident.

Thinking that Gu Youyou was to treat his condition, King Jin didn't think much about it and simply said, "When I was twelve, I was playing at the Ducal Residence and fencing with some cousins. Since the weapons were not wary and we were all young, the incident happened."

"Someone stabbed you twice? And both times they stabbed you there?" Gu Youyou said with a sarcastic smile.

Thinking that Gu Youyou was mocking him, King Jin's fragile pride was hurt, and he quickly darkened his face, covered his exposed body with his clothes, and huffed, "If you can cure it, then cure it. There's no need to mock me."

Gu Youyou was taken aback and realized that her earlier smile might indeed have hurt the patient's fragile ego, so she quickly apologized to King Jin, saying, "I didn't mean to mock you just now. It's just that your… accident seems too coincidental. Please tell me in detail about the accident that happened when you were twelve. Otherwise, I can't properly treat you."

Chapter 1238: A Conspiracy

"It's really troublesome." King Jin muttered, but it was because of Gu Youyou's calmness that much awkwardness was dissolved.

He said, "The one who stabbed me was not the cousins from the Ducal Residence, but a talented young officer under my uncle's command. He is an orphan, picked up by my uncle and raised by his side, also highly skilled in martial arts.

The cousins were all defeated by him within three moves, and at that time, I was young and arrogant, so I didn't believe in such rumors and went to compete a few moves with him. Unexpectedly, I was injured, and in such an embarrassing place."

Gu Youyou's heart skipped a beat, sensing a conspiracy brewing.

She quickly asked, "Then how many moves did you withstand?"

"After so many years, I can't remember clearly, probably about a dozen moves!" King Jin said with a touch of pride. But seeing Gu Youyou's odd expression, he suddenly froze and then looked shocked, asking, "You couldn't be suspecting..."

Gu Youyou candidly told him, "Yes, I suspect it was done on purpose."

"You..."

Gu Youyou swiftly lifted the clothes covering his body and grabbed a place that can't be described, seriously saying, "Look here, and here, do you know what these two wounds mean?"

"What?" King Jin seemed to have thought of something, but that outcome was too cruel; he dared not admit it, just foolishly pretended to be dumb.

Gu Youyou said, "The severing of these two tendons means that you have lost the ability to procreate. Have you thought it through, were these two places indeed injured?"

"No... not..." King Jin's body trembled slightly. At this moment, all his embarrassment and unease vanished; he just saw the person opposite him as a doctor, and himself as the doctor's patient desperately awaiting treatment.

At such a time, who cares about the differences between men and women?

He flipped over a spot below his abdomen, where there was still a pale scar, which had been covered by thick hair and not seen by Gu Youyou.

He said, "I was injured here, it's not those two places..."

"Then what's the matter with these?" Gu Youyou asked in shock.

"Here, these two places..." King Jin's shivering slowly intensified, his voice becoming somewhat hoarse as he said, "I fainted from fright at that moment, and when I woke up, it turned out like this. My maternal grandfather told me that he had called a doctor who already treated me with medicine, saying it wouldn't cause any issue."

"Ah? Did you not notice the two extra cuts?"

"The doctor said I was frightened, and if bleeding wasn’t done at these two spots, later I would become... impotent..."

Gu Youyou: "..." This naive child.

"Being injured in such a place is hard to speak about. Afraid of my father and mother learning about it, I conspired with my maternal grandfather to recover from my injuries in the Ducal Residence before returning to the palace. We declared publicly that I was merely playing with the cousins for a few days..."

Thinking of those days, King Jin was so shocked that he was drenched in cold sweat.

Back then, he was young with not a hint of cunning, plus it was such an embarrassing event, after recovering, he gradually forgot about it.

Over the years, he didn’t have any problems in that regard, so he didn’t think too much of it.

But now, hearing Gu Youyou’s words... he vaguely felt a huge conspiracy had been brewing for many years.

Initially, Imperial Physician Cui had examined it. He also spotted these two wounds and mentioned infertility. The empress behind the screen, panicked, rushed in and interrupted his words.

Imperial Physician Cui died too early.

Chapter 1239: The Heart of Stealing the Nation

Had it not been for Gu Youyou today, this secret would have likely remained unknown forever, effectively allowing them to succeed.

"First, put on your trousers," Gu Youyou spoke indifferently, "To properly reattach these two tendons, surgery is needed. I have to go back and prepare a few things."

Her sympathy for King Jin grew; in this era, there was only one standard to judge a man's capability to father children, and that was whether he could perform.

It was merely a vasectomy—naturally it wouldn't affect his sexual function. Moreover, considering the fragile male ego of the time, without anyone informing him, King Jin would never have suspected this.

Thus, it was his own naivety that led to his demise.

"This is indeed a tragedy beyond measure," Gu Youyou sighed, "you probably understand their motive. We will not get involved in this matter for the time being; how to deal with it is entirely up to you." After a pause, she added, "If there's no issue, come find me in three days, and I'll perform the surgery for you."

King Jin was at a loss as to how he left the place, how he returned home, his entire visage uglier than that of someone mourning their mother.

Considering King Jin had been bearing such a gloomy expression not for one or two days, but much longer, passersby didn't think too much of it.

People only whispered about the consecutive series of misfortunate events in King Jin's household as the cause of his solemn mood.

First was the Consort poisoning the other wives, rendering him childless although he had been married for years.

Later, he favored the only concubine who was not poisoned, leading to her pregnancy, which in turn enraged the principal wife.

The principal wife, in a fit of anger, ran away. For any man, let alone King Jin, such humiliation was unbearable.

Because the principal wife left, the once-favored concubine lost her status, leaving King Jin perpetually with a countenance as if he had lost his own mother.

The consensus was ’King Jin really has it tough.’

...

The atrocious act carried out by the Ducal Residence was cruel enough to King Jin, but to Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin, it was an advantageous occurrence. Dog eats dog, and they had been looking for a way to provoke this very issue.

Now it seemed that they need not lift a finger; infighting was about to erupt within their ranks.

Since the moment King Jin sent Lin Qianqing away, it was clear that he was a man of dignity; it was just that his enemies were too deeply concealed and too cunning.

Given the relationship between the Ducal Residence and the Empress, King Jin indeed had no way to guard against them.

He always thought the Ducal Residence was wholeheartedly aiding him to ascend the throne, yet little did he know, they were doing it for themselves.

Using him, they intended to place a descendant with the Ducal Residence’s bloodline on the throne.

No wonder the Empress was so dissatisfied with Lin Qianqing, her position as the principal wife was still securely hers.

Lin Qianqing should, in fact, address the Protector Duke as her great-grandfather, and the child she bore with Jin Wei would naturally be closer to his heart than those born by other women.

If Gu Youyou’s guess was correct, once King Jin truly ascended the throne, his end would not be far off.

Upon returning, Gu Youyou informed Jin Zijin of the matter, to which Jin Zijin simply smiled faintly and said, "Neither King Jin nor the Empress will let this go, and not to mention the Ducal Residence's ambition to usurp the throne... I initially thought they just wanted to become powerful officials, but I didn't expect they harbored ambitions to seize the throne itself!"

"Such a crime," Gu Youyou spoke lightly, "is enough to implicate the entire clan, isn't it?"

Jin Zijin turned to look at her, nodding, "Indeed, it is a grave crime that warrants the punishment of the entire clan." His brow furrowed deeply, he continued, "Generations of their family have been officials, with ties through marriage spanning the whole of Zhuzhao Country's bureaucracy. To implicate the entire clan, we'd have to purge seven to eight tenths of the officials—your uncle's house would be among them..."

Chapter 1240: Angry

Gu Youyou was suddenly alarmed and said, "Then isn't it difficult to settle the charges based on these statements?"

The Emperor would not really execute all the officials of the Imperial Court, no wonder Jin Zijin, with his current power, still hesitates to take action against the Ducal Residence.

Such a deeply rooted and complex family cannot be eliminated recklessly; it must be done slowly, removing each branch one by one.

The Emperor, able to hold his throne under such circumstances, truly is a capable person.

But they do not have that much time, and old Yu Jizi is hiding somewhere with no news at all.

It would be best if they could remove the malignant tumor of the Ducal Residence before Yu Jizi appears.

"What do you plan to do now?"

Jin Zijin frowned and said, “The plan needs to be slightly altered; let’s first see what King Jin’s move will be.”

Gu Youyou nodded and said, “I’ll check on his condition again in a few days. He probably still hopes to be cured. He will come to me in three days; let’s just find a way to have him come to our house quietly for the treatment, we have everything ready at home.”

“Can it be treated?” Jin Zijin asked with a raised eyebrow.

Gu Youyou, with a smug look on her face, said, “Of course, I am the Divine Doctor.”

“How will you treat it?” Jin Zijin suddenly looked stern.

He had just heard her, focused solely on the century-long plans of the Ducal Residence generations, but had ignored the problem with King Jin himself.

The Ducal Residence had someone plot an attack, piercing King Jin’s ‘indescribable’ place?

Wow, she’s becoming bolder by the minute.

“Did you see his wound?”

Gu Youyou felt a dangerous aura emanating, shrank her neck, and hurriedly backed away.

“Well, I am a doctor, in order to make a diagnosis… ah!”

Jin Zijin was incredibly furious, feeling as though he was surrounded by jars of vinegar, sour enough to make his teeth hurt.

He grabbed her forcefully and asked in a deep voice, “So, you have seen it?”

Gu Youyou, tearfully, felt she had a surgery to perform, didn't want to lie to him, and couldn't even if she wanted to. She hoped he would support her work, although it might be hard for him to accept.

Even modern men might not all be able to accept it.

She understood that too.

Plucking up her courage, she said, "Yes, I have… seen it. If not, how could I suspect the Ducal Residence's conspiracy?"

"Did you touch it too?" Jin Zijin's face was growing darker.

Having decided to be honest, Gu Youyou had no need to make excuses anymore.

She sincerely answered, nodding, "Touched, I did touch it. But I wore gloves!"

She admitted her mistake actively, hoping for a lenient treatment.

Jin Zijin held her hand tightly, squeezing it until her bones ached.

He sneered with gritted teeth, asking, "Was it big?"

"Huh? Ah?" Gu Youyou suddenly felt her brain couldn't keep up; his change of topic was too abrupt, making her feel completely unprepared, lowering her IQ by several percentage points.

"Didn't catch that? Want me to repeat?"

Jin Zijin looked increasingly dangerous, she unconsciously broke out in a cold sweat.

It felt like being caught cheating, though in her opinion, it really wasn't anything serious. However, according to the ancient mindset, her actions were definitely counted as cuckolding him.

It was her oversight. If she could turn back time, she would still help King Jin with his medical issue, but she should have informed Jin Zijin beforehand, and it would be best if he could be present during the treatment.

She had underestimated the psychological resilience of ancient people.

But now that it had come to this, she had no choice but to betray her own principles once again.