**Farmhouse 141**

Chapter 141: Escaped

"Ow! You silly woman!" Gu Laosan stomped his feet in anger, saying, "Her filial gesture? Have you never wondered where she gets the fish from?"

"Caught from the river, right? Oh, how did she catch them?" Meng Qiuju finally remembered and exclaimed in shock, "Are you saying... this was given to her by someone else?"

Gu Laosan, breathing heavily with anger, said, "How can you be so careless as a mother? Don't you care about Erya's affairs at all? Do you know how often she mingles with those people in the village?"

Looking at Meng Qiuju's expression, it was clear she knew nothing. He suddenly shouted, "How did I end up marrying such a foolish woman? You can't even please your mother-in-law! You can't learn anything from your sister-in-law, and you can't even keep an eye on your own daughter. She's losing her way because of you. You don't know what she does all day long. Tell me, what do you know at all?"

Meng Qiuju was rendered speechless and couldn't utter a word.

Gu Laosan continued furiously, "All you do is eat and idle away. What are you boiling water for when you have nothing else to do? Didn't I tell you to keep a close eye on her these days? Sigh! Such an incorrigible woman."

After the scolding, he stormed out in a rage.

Meng Qiuju felt wronged after the scolding but quickly asked, "Where are you going?"

"I'm going out to find her!"

It had been many years since she'd been scolded like this since their son was born. The second year after she married into the Gu Family, she had a daughter, but no matter what, she couldn't get pregnant again. Huang Xiangwen, who had married into the family not many years before her, had several children, while she only had one daughter. She had not suffered lightly during those years.

Indeed, it was during those years, without a son, that she couldn't hold her head high and developed a character of endurance, always being suppressed by the Gu Family members.

It was only after Gu Sanbao was born eight years later that her life got somewhat better.

After enjoying better days for a while, she had almost forgotten how ruthless her husband could be; back then, he had often threatened to divorce her.

As her thoughts deepened, tears welled up in Meng Qiuju's eyes. Gu Sanbao, who saw this, quickly asked, "Mom, what's wrong? Are you crying?"

Meng Qiuju pulled at the corner of her mouth, smiling and saying, "No, I just got smoke in my eyes while boiling water."

Gu Sanbao, seven years old and not understanding the situation, uttered an "Oh" and then said, "Grandma told me to come and ask if the water is ready."

Meng Qiuju hurriedly wiped her tears and replied, "It's ready, it's ready. Tell Grandma I'll bring the water over right away."

Why do I have to boil water in the kitchen? You think I want to do it?

...

Gu Youyou was picking herbs in the mountains. She didn't dare to venture deep and was picking in the areas where the villagers also frequented. Today, by accident, she walked a bit too far and could see the village below getting farther away. She quickly retraced her steps.

Her hearing was much more sensitive than the average person's and she kept hearing strange noises every few steps.

Gu Youyou was shocked, and her heart sank.

Had she run into a wild man again?

Could she be so unlucky? Jin Zijin searched the mountains every day without success and she, having entered the mountains only a few times, had encountered one again?

If it really was a wild man, with his speed, it was no use for Gu Youyou to run. The best thing to do would be to hide quietly.

She may have found him, but that didn't necessarily mean he would notice her.

Gu Youyou crouched down and stealthily hid behind a bush, listening to the noises coming from that direction.

Listening carefully, it was a man's and a woman's voices—weren't they Wang Shun and Gu Xiaoqing? Just the other day, Auntie Wang had doubted their affair, and now here she was, overhearing their secret rendezvous?

Chapter 142: There's a Way

"Brother Shunzi, I have it all figured out. Tomorrow, my Brother Dabao will go with Second Uncle to the Lei Family to propose marriage, and the day after tomorrow, you must call the matchmaker to our house, do you understand? You can't let the person my father finds get ahead, otherwise there'll really be no chance left."

Wang Shun's face was a picture of difficulty, as he had already discussed the matter with his family, even found a good matchmaker, and prepared the items needed for the proposal. But, none of his family members were optimistic about it.

Although his parents were still supportive, they couldn't stand up to the sharp tongues of the aunts and uncles, or the grandparents in the family, who all said that the Gu Family would surely not agree, and that going there would only bring shame.

"Brother Shunzi!"

Seeing him lost in thought, Gu Xiaoqing tugged at the corner of his clothes.

"I..." Wang Shun turned his head back, and then hurriedly gave a simplehearted smile, saying, "Alright, you just relax. Everything needed for the proposal is ready. The day after tomorrow, early in the morning, I'll come to your door. Our houses are close, I can guarantee no one will be faster than me."

"That's good! You absolutely can't be late!" Gu Xiaoqing said with a smile.

"But, what if your parents don't agree?" Wang Shun said with a worried face, "I've heard that your father is considering the son of the Bun Shop in town for you."

Gu Xiaoqing's face darkened as she said, "He must fancy their buns! Humph, I won't marry into the Bun Shop. I don't love buns, I love fish!"

"But..." Wang Shun said hesitantly, "But you can't make decisions about your own marriage, can you?"

Gu Xiaoqing suddenly smiled with a sly look on her face, "You don't have to worry about that. Just make sure that no matter what, you will marry me, and I'll have my own way of dealing with it!"

"What way?"

Wang Shun was a little more simple than Gu Xiaoqing, and these past few days, he'd lost hair worrying without coming up with a solution. Apart from being more skilled than others at catching fish in the river, he seemed to have no other strengths.

But not everyone in the Gu Family liked the fishy taste of fish like Gu Xiaoqing did!

Now, hearing Gu Xiaoqing say she had a way, hope immediately flared up in him.

Gu Xiaoqing lowered her voice and said, "If I can't marry anyone but you, do you think they would be willing or not?"

"Can’t marry, how could you not be able to marry?" Wang Shun scratched his head, pondered for a long time without figuring it out, and then asked, "What do you mean?"

Gu Xiaoqing’s face sank in annoyance, she pushed him slightly, pouted, and snorted angrily, "Why are you so dumb? How did you catch those clever fish?"

"Xiaoqing, I really caught them!" Thinking that Gu Xiaoqing doubted where the fish came from, Wang Shun said grievously.

Gu Xiaoqing said irritably, "Don’t worry about it, just do as I say. The day after tomorrow, come early in the morning to propose at my house, and don’t be late!"

Gu Youyou, having listened for a while from a distance, couldn’t help but laugh out loud.

She could probably guess what method Gu Xiaoqing intended to use; it seems that people from ancient times also used this trick. She really is a bold girl!

At this moment, Gu Youyou heard someone approaching. From her position, she could see Gu Wu, the Third Uncle from the Gu Family, hurrying up from the base of the mountain. She was struggling with whether to warn them, but in no time at all, he had already come up and found the two hidden in the bushes.

Seeing his own daughter cozied up with that poor boy Wang Shun, Gu Wu exploded as if he had been stung by a hive of bees, completely losing the calm and composure he usually had when competing for favor in front of Grandfather!

"You wretched girl, what are you doing? During broad daylight, messing around with this poor kid in the mountains, do you have no shame? Do you realize, this is grounds for drowning in a pig cage!"

Gu Wu pulled Gu Xiaoqing behind him, then turned and started berating her furiously.

Chapter 143: Soak in the Pig Cage

Gu Xiaoqing, a girl yet to be married, blushed and turned pale as she was scolded by those words. She shook off Gu Wu's arm and retorted, "Dad, what nonsense are you spouting? Why would I need to be dunked in a pig cage? What have you seen me do? Is it not okay for me to pick mushrooms on the mountain?"

She was still holding a mushroom in her hand!

Of course, Gu Wu was not buying any of it. After chewing out Gu Xiaoqing, he turned to point his finger at Wang Shun's nose and said, "Shunzi, let me make it clear to you today, you can forget about Erya. Even considering her is pointless. Considering your family's situation, it's debatable whether you can even get a wife. Yet you dare to fancy my Erya? You're a toad lusting after swan meat. Hmph, I've already found a suitable match for her, and in a few days, it will be settled. Just give up on it!"

Wang Shun's face turned ashen. Even a person without much cunning couldn't help but feel his self-esteem bruised by such scorn!

His face flushed with embarrassment, he stammered for a while without being able to say a word.

Gu Wu sneered disdainfully, "What virtuous behavior!"

Gu Xiaoqing, with a stern face, said, "Dad, his family may be poor, but I like him. The son of the Bun Shop in town, I don't want to marry him!"

Gu Wu scoffed coldly, "Marriage is the decree of the parents and the matchmaker's word. It's not up to you!"

In desperation, Gu Xiaoqing's face turned red, and then she lowered her head in shame and said, "Then you might as well take me to be dunked in a pig cage! If I must die, I'd rather die in the river outside the village; the water is clear, and it's closer to home. That way, if I die too far away in town, my soul won't be able to find its way back!"

Hearing these words, Wang Shun became panicked, and his courage grew. He sidestepped Gu Wu and took hold of Gu Xiaoqing's arm, asking, "Xiaoqing, what's with this talk of dying? What are you saying?"

"What do you mean?" Gu Wu was also alarmed.

Gu Xiaoqing pinched Wang Shun’s arm from behind, signaling him not to speak, and then she sighed with regret, "Dad, it’s just like what you’re thinking. Actually, I regret it too. I mean, look at his foolish appearance; how could he be a match for me, right? But it’s already done. Now, what should we do? If you really want your daughter to die, I guess I have no choice!"

As she spoke, tears began to swirl in her eyes.

Wang Shun still didn’t understand the meaning of her words, but Gu Wu, shrewd as he was, felt a storm inside his heart!

How could this be?

He was speechless for a moment.

"How could this... Oh!!"

Wang Shun wanted to say something else but was pinched again by Gu Xiaoqing, this time with more force, making him cry out in pain.

"Xiaoqing..." He looked at her with a mix of pain and confusion.

Gu Wu, his mind reeling as if he had been struck on the head, buzzed for a while before he could recover.

He looked back and forth between Gu Xiaoqing and the stupefied Wang Shun and asked, "Did you really...?"

"Of course, it’s true!" Gu Xiaoqing interjected before Wang Shun could speak.

Although Wang Shun didn’t quite understand what "true" meant, when Gu Xiaoqing nodded, he naturally nodded along.

Gu Wu felt his heart go cold. Stumbling, he had to steady himself on a nearby villager before he could remain upright.

Had it been anyone else facing this situation, they would have exploded with curses by now.

But Gu Wu was different. His mind was spinning rapidly. Once he had sorted out his thoughts, he took Gu Xiaoqing’s hand and hurried down the mountain without another word.

Gu Xiaoqing did not resist, letting him lead her.

Wang Shun was anxious, following behind them. Gu Wu’s barbaric demeanor was frighteningly intimidating, and Wang Shun feared for Gu Xiaoqing’s well-being, so he hurriedly called out and chased after them.

Gu Wu stopped, turned around, and glared furiously at Wang Shun, causing Wang Shun to instinctively shrink back.

"Don’t follow us. Go down the mountain separately!"

Chapter 144: Captured by Savages to a Strange Place

Wang Shun didn’t move, looking towards Gu Xiaoqing.

Gu Xiaoqing whispered, "If I told you not to follow, then don’t. He’s my dad, he won’t kill me, right?"

Wang Shun remained standing in place, and it was only after Gu Wu and Gu Xiaoqing had walked far away that Gu Youyou stood up.

It was so awkward, she definitely didn’t want them to discover her.

Crouching for too long had made her legs soft, and as Gu Youyou bent down to pat them, she suddenly felt someone approaching her at high speed from behind. She turned around sharply, seeing a blurry figure. Before she could react, she closed her eyes.

In that moment of fuzzy consciousness, she still heard Wang Shun's voice in the distance from within the woods.

"Who's there?"

"Sis...?"

...

Her mind was groggy, and she felt a nauseating tumult within her, as if she might vomit yet couldn't! In her daze, Gu Youyou couldn't distinguish between reality and dream.

She felt as though she had returned to the Gu Family's villa. Her grandfather was practicing Tai Chi with a wooden sword, and Dahuang was squatting not far away, watching. As Gu Youyou walked over slowly, Dahuang dashed towards her on all fours, and she was caught off guard and knocked to the ground by it.

It licked her incessantly with its tongue, frolicking around her and causing Gu Youyou to laugh out loud.

But that was a little girl, only about seven or eight years old, apparently even younger than Dahuang.

When did I become so small?

Gu Youyou was suddenly alarmed inside, which jolted her awake.

Her bright eyes snapped open, and in the darkness, she saw another pair of bright eyes staring back at her.

Looking into each other’s eyes, Gu Youyou screamed in fright.

"Ah..."

She kicked the person lying on top of her with all her might.

The person was kicked off her and rolled to one side, with a wall nearby, yet still uncomfortably close to her.

"Who are you?" Gu Youyou asked warily, staring at the person.

It was a man, appearing to be in his twenties, with very white skin, unnaturally pale, ghostly white and frightening.

The sickly paleness of Gu Youyou was abnormal; she was two shades paler than the average person, yet the man was even paler than her.

Almost transparently white!

If not for the translucent whiteness, he could have been mistaken for a zombie from the movies.

The man did not answer her, only staring blankly at Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou looked around and realized they were in a narrow space, like a stone box encased on all sides.

The space above was vast, evidently crafted with care. It seemed that this stone box was within a very large area.

Seeing that the strange man did not respond and made no move to approach her, she boldly stood up.

She then carefully observed him, and seeing no reaction, she dared to clamber out of the stone box.

The edge of the stone box was as high as her chest, and it took her an immense effort to climb out.

Gu Youyou sat on the ground, resting against the stone, and took deep breaths. She wiped her face haphazardly, feeling some sticky substance, and the thought of what had just happened disgusted her utterly.

Hadn't she just been dreaming, thinking she was licked by a dog? It turned out that it wasn't a dog that had licked her but this strange man.

My God! I am a married woman!

After catching her breath, she started to look around this strange place.

A circular structure with several lamps on the walls emitted a green light; it couldn't be more eerie.

The walls and ceiling bore many intricately carved decorations, just like the top.

Chapter 145: The Man in the Coffin

And the stone box she had just struggled to climb out of... Gu Youyou's eyes widened, this was no stone box at all, it was clearly a giant stone coffin!

So, was this place actually a tomb chamber?

The coffin lid was leaning against the stone coffin, and the front of the lid was engraved with eight large traditional characters.

"Attain the Way, Immortality in Heaven and Earth!"

Gu Youyou's face turned pale with fright. She stepped back a few paces, looked around at the strange tomb chamber, and then at the even stranger man standing in the coffin, who kept staring at her without blinking.

Is this... really a person?

So young to reside in a tomb chamber, to sleep in a coffin, and with such a vacant stare, could he be a legendary zombie of some sort?

But no, just now Gu Youyou had felt his breath on her face, and his body was soft; he was not a zombie.

But what kind of world had she traveled to? She was a bit confused.

This man wasn't a zombie, nor could he be a normal person.

The murals in the tomb chamber depicted a fairyland shrouded in misty clouds, indicating that the owner of this place was a delusional individual obsessed with becoming an immortal. This place seemed quite old, certainly centuries old; therefore, the original owner couldn't possibly be this man before her.

He appeared to be only in his twenties.

Gu Youyou rolled her eyes. From her analysis, this man was definitely an even more twisted individual than the original owner of the tomb; most likely, he had disposed of the owner's body and taken over this place for himself.

A place like this was hidden in the hills behind Lotus Village; she guessed that this place, this man, was probably the one Jin Zijin was looking for.

Gu Youyou steadied herself, took a look around, and spotted the tomb's door. She tried to move towards the door.

The man opposite her was still watching and stood in the coffin without any sign of stopping her.

Gu Youyou approached the tomb door, about to find out how to open it, when it suddenly opened on its own.

An automatic sensor door?

Gu Youyou was startled, but her heart jumped to her throat when the person who walked in from outside the tomb doorway.

"A wild man?"

This was the wild man.

That's right, this place was the very place Jin Zijin had been searching for; the man in the coffin was probably the one Jin Zijin wanted to find.

The wild man held a deliciously roasted wild rabbit in one hand, and a medicine jar in the other. The moment he opened the door and saw Gu Youyou, he too was taken aback.

He opened his mouth but made no sound, yet his eyes were ominously dark.

Without any observable action on his part, the stone tomb door automatically closed from above and sealed the tomb chamber once again.

The wild man's gaze carried a warning. He pursed his lips, signaling Gu Youyou to go back.

Gu Youyou snapped out of her shock and panic, quickly retreating several paces.

In the hands of such a person, she had to be more careful than ever.

She had barely escaped a haunted house, and she definitely didn't want to die inexplicably here.

Gu Youyou tried to make herself as unobtrusive as possible, squatting obediently in a corner of the tomb chamber.

Seeing that she was being sensible, the wild man turned his attention away and split the roasted rabbit, giving half to the man in the coffin, who began to tear at the meat and eat.

Watching the man devour the food gleefully, the wild man even cracked a smile.

Similarly silent, but Gu Youyou could clearly see a loving glint in the wild man's eyes, like a father contentedly watching his obedient child eat.

Chapter 146: Warning

Gu Youyou hid in a corner, watching the strange interaction between two people, but no sound of speaking came from her mouth, only the sound of the man tearing and chewing the roasted rabbit meat.

Judging by their ages, Gu Youyou thought there was a good chance these two were father and son.

The man ate quickly and soon finished half of the rabbit. The wild man then handed him the medicine pot again, and he took it without hesitation and started drinking from it.

A pungent medicinal smell filled the air in the tomb chamber, which wasn't ventilated. Gu Youyou sniffed, recognizing a familiar scent.

As she carefully discerned it, she realized the medicine... it smelled so much like the one she had been forced to drink all year in the little black room.

Oh no, that was a poisonous medicine that couldn't be consumed!

Having previously guessed that they were father and son, Gu Youyou now began to doubt it.

If they were father and son, why would the wild man feed his own son a poisonous medicine?

Could it be... this wild man was deceived just like Gu Feng had been?

Considering this possibility, she looked at the two men across from her with a sense of sympathy.

They were both victims, why make it hard for another victim?

Gu Youyou was quickly weighing her options. Jin Zijin had searched for several years without finding this place; relying on him to arrive soon was obviously unrealistic, and waiting for his rescue was clearly unreliable.

So, she had to find a way to save herself.

She wasn't sure why the wild man had captured her, but no matter the purpose, it was certainly right to establish a good relationship first and gain his trust.

Having clarified all this, she mustered up the courage to speak to the two men, "Don't drink that medicine anymore, it's too cold."

She didn't directly state that the medicine contained a strange cold poison; that would have to wait until she understood these two men better.

The man in the coffin continued to drink from the medicine pot as if he hadn't heard her, but the wild man suddenly turned his head around, looking menacingly at Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou continued bravely, forcing out a smile uglier than crying, and said, "I'm the doctor from the village down the mountain; I mentioned it the first time we met, do you remember?"

The wild man's gaze was sharp like a knife, causing her to be so frightened that she dared not breathe too loudly.

The other side remained silent, glaring at Gu Youyou with a look full of severe warning. After a while, he tore off a leg from the remaining half of the rabbit and threw it to Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou was both startled and astonished; she looked down at the rabbit leg, then back up at the wild man who was devouring large chunks of rabbit meat.

Her heart was filled with complex emotions!

What did that glare just now mean? Was he really the father of the man in the coffin? Did he know what that medicine was?

She couldn’t make sense of the various mysteries, and as she wondered, her stomach growled with hunger.

Gu Youyou picked up the rabbit leg, about to take a bite, but then recalled that the rabbit was roasted by the wild man, who was filthy beyond measure, probably not having washed himself in at least a decade; could eating this... cause diarrhea?

What a dilemma, as she looked at the rabbit leg with increasing worry.

The wild man across from her had finished the rabbit. Seeing Gu Youyou staring blankly at the rabbit meat, he suddenly threw a gnawed bone at her.

The bone hit Gu Youyou’s arm, causing a sharp pain.

She cried out, drawing the attention of the man in the coffin who was quietly drinking his medicine.

"You... elder... what are you doing?" she asked.

The wild man eyed the rabbit leg in Gu Youyou’s hand and snorted through his nose, seeming to warn her to hurry up and eat.

Chapter 147: A Fool

Gu Youyou swallowed hard, her stomach growling loudly from hunger at that moment. Eventually, her ravenous stomach won over her reason, and she ate the piece of rabbit meat.

A while later, the wild man went out, and Gu Youyou squatted on one side without daring to move. Once he had left, she finally dared to slowly come out.

The man in the coffin still stood there, not coming out. But in those dull eyes, there seemed to be a hint of curiosity as he continued to stare at Gu Youyou.

Feeling uncomfortable under his gaze, Youyou mustered the courage to approach him a bit and said, "Hey, can you understand what I'm saying or not?"

The man's expression grew more curious, his head tilted, his dull gaze occasionally showing a simplicity and clarity only found in children.

Feeling a bit bolder, Gu Youyou thought this guy must have something wrong with his brain; she wondered if it was related to the medicine he had drunk.

After all, when she had first arrived, she had only drunk the medicine once, and had secretly poured the rest away, not knowing what condition the previous Gu Youyou had been in.

But one thing she was sure of was that the previous Gu Youyou could talk.

Standing outside the coffin, Gu Youyou smiled at the man and said, "If you can understand me, nod your head, if not, shake your head, alright?"

Err... if he couldn't understand, there was no need for him to shake his head either.

"Do you understand?"

The man didn't react, still staring at Gu Youyou as if she were a novel object.

"Why don’t you speak? And... that person outside doesn’t speak either. Are you two mute by any chance?"

"You’re a mute, and an idiot too?"

After trying to speak more with him, Gu Youyou gave up, disappointed!

This guy was simply a fool!

Soon, the stone door of the tomb chamber opened again, and the wild man came in carrying a wooden basin covered with coarse cloth.

He glared at Gu Youyou, who hastily retreated to a corner, trying to minimize her presence.

Then, Gu Youyou saw the wild man bring the wooden basin, filled halfway with water, to the side of the coffin, and after wringing out the cloth, he began to wash the man’s face.

The loving look in his eyes was unmistakable. Even if they weren’t father and son, they were certainly close.

After washing his face, he wiped the man’s body. Gu Youyou, unlike typical ancient women, turned her head away, feeling a bit embarrassed.

She couldn’t understand why the wild man, who was dirty himself, possibly covered in lice, insisted on keeping the man who stayed in the coffin all day clean. Who was it for?

The entire process was silent, yet they cooperated well. Gu Youyou had no idea how these two mutes communicated with each other.

There was no way to tell the time outside in the tomb chamber. After the wild man had completed his tasks, he patted the man’s shoulder, and the man obediently lay down to sleep.

In the coffin!

He got up, walked over to Gu Youyou, and stared down at her from his greater height.

Gu Youyou, who had been quietly squatting in the corner like a mural, had no choice but to respond.

She said with a smile, "Elder, what brings you to me?"

Heaven knows how awkward Gu Youyou’s smile was.

The wild man glared at Gu Youyou with fury and pointed at the coffin in the center of the tomb chamber!

Gu Youyou’s face stiffened, thinking to herself: He couldn’t possibly want me to sleep in the coffin, could he?

With a wry smile, Gu Youyou said, "This... Elder, that’s not quite appropriate, is it? The coffin is narrow; I’m afraid it would make the young master uncomfortable!"

Hearing Gu Youyou say this, the wild man’s gaze became even more ferocious, and with a grunt of anger, he still pointed at the coffin!

Chapter 148: Thrown into the Coffin

I’d rather die than sleep in a coffin. Pretending to be clueless, Gu Youyou earnestly promised, "Ah, elder, you want me to guard this for you, right? Go ahead and take care of your business, I’ll make sure to keep an eye on it, no way he’s getting out!"

Having said this, it seemed she had thoroughly enraged the wild man. His eyes, big as if ready to devour someone, suddenly reached out to grab Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou was like a helpless little chick, picked up by the wild man, who strode towards the coffin with her in hand.

Gu Youyou yelled and cursed loudly, "You pervert, let me down! I'm a living person, not someone who sleeps in coffins. Hey, why don't you go sleep in it? Let go of me, my husband is the hunter on this mountain, and he's bound to catch you and sell you off..."

Ultimately, Gu Youyou was still thrown into the coffin by the wild man.

She hit her head so hard that she saw stars; scrambling up, she tried to climb out of the coffin.

But her small stature was little use, as the wild man quickly pushed her back in.

This time the fall was hard, and her bottom ached terribly!

She could hear the sound of heavy stones being moved from outside. Before long, Gu Youyou saw a lid being added to the massive stone coffin.

It was that very lid leaning against the coffin!

Now she truly felt like crying but had no tears—how on earth the wild man managed to lift that massive coffin lid, she had no idea.

One thing was for sure, once it was covered, there was no way she could push it off.

As the coffin lid moved, a heavy sound echoed, and Gu Youyou's heart sank deeper, heavy as if stuck in a mire.

When the lid was entirely in place, darkness engulfed the space to the point where she couldn't see her hand before her face. Even after her eyes had completely adjusted, with Gu Youyou's vision, she could only make out a vague silhouette of the man beside her!

It looked as if he was crawling towards her.

Gu Youyou huddled in the corner, unsure if the man could see her.

He had been in this coffin all this time and surely knew it inside and out—it was his domain!

In this pitch-black environment, Gu Youyou felt as if she had returned to the haunted House of the Gu Family, suffocating in the sealed darkness. She was frightened, very frightened.

Gu Youyou had no clue what these two were up to, nor did she understand why the wild man had thrown her in here!

Suddenly, she considered a possibility that made her heart leap to her throat.

Could it be that they were using her as food to feed the creature in the coffin?

No, that couldn’t be right—if they wanted to kill her, why would they have wasted a rabbit leg earlier?

With nowhere to retreat, Gu Youyou had no choice but to shout at the man, "Hey, hey, don’t come over here, don’t move!"

As soon as she spoke, the man seemed to understand and, indeed, didn’t come any closer. He just sat across from her, perfectly still.

Gu Youyou couldn’t see him clearly and thought about reaching out to touch him, but decided against it after some thought.

It was pitch black in the coffin, and pushing it open was impossible. Gu Youyou heard footsteps growing fainter and then, after a while, the sound of the tomb door moving. She was shocked; the wild man was about to leave.

If he left, she would have to remain cramped up like this. In desperation, Gu Youyou shouted, "Uncle, elder, can we talk this out nicely? I'll sleep, okay? I'm ready to sleep, just don't put the lid on. Once the lid's on, it's pitch dark in here, and I don't sleep well. If by accident I hurt your honored son, it wouldn't be good."

The person outside paused for a moment, and Gu Youyou heard the door falling back into place, followed by the heavy footsteps of the wild man approaching. Not long after, several muffled thuds sounded on the coffin lid, like thunder, making Gu Youyou's ears painfully ring!

## Chapter 149: Notify the Gu Family Members

The wild man Uncle vented his frustration by hitting the coffin lid several times before he headed towards the grave entrance again.

After a while, when no more sounds could be heard from outside, Gu Youyou's heart, which seemed to be in her throat, finally settled down.

He must have gone out.

My goodness, had I known this would be the outcome, I might as well have said less.

Talking to a mute really is— the more you say, the more it irritates!

In the pitch-dark coffin, it was just Gu Youyou and the man sitting opposite her.

Although she couldn't see, Gu Youyou knew he must be staring right at her.

She struggled to pull up the corners of her mouth, trying to communicate with him!

"The coffin's actually not that small, let's make a deal, eh? One half for each of us, look! If anyone crosses the line, they're responsible for opening the coffin lid."

She didn’t know whether the man opposite could understand or would agree, but Gu Youyou was trying her last resort, chattering away regardless.

"Can’t see anything in this pitch black anyway, so here’s the deal; if you bump into me, you lose; if I actively bump into you, I lose. Agreed?!"

Perhaps it was somewhat effective, as the man opposite really didn’t come closer again; instead, he stayed in a corner of the coffin, like Gu Youyou.

Not knowing what time it was, Gu Youyou’s eyelids grew heavier and heavier. Although she pinched herself several times to stay awake, she still fell asleep inadvertently.

...

Wang Shun saw a strange thing carrying Gu Youyou on the run, darting swiftly through the forest, all black and as agile as a monkey, he too thought it was a wild man!

He chased for a while, but as an ordinary man, how could he catch up when it was carrying a person and still shook him off by a long shot; in the end, he had to give up.

Upon returning to the village, Wang Shun hurried to the Gu Family, because Jin Zijin was in the mountains at this hour, and with the mountains being so vast, he might not find him right away; going to the Gu Family to report was the best option!

A series of urgent knocking sounds startled everyone in the house.

Today, matchmaker Zhang paid the Gu Family a visit to discuss the proposal to the Lei Family for tomorrow, so no one from the Gu Family went to the fields, making it a rare occasion where everyone was home!

Matchmaker Zhang clutched her chest as if scared, saying, "Oh my, who’s that, knocking like this in broad daylight!"

Gu Feng, with a look of surprise on his face, turned to Gu Feng's second brother and urged, "Second brother, go see who it is!"

"Is Grandfather Gu home? Please open the door quickly!"

"Coming, coming, who's summoning spirits in broad daylight!" Gu's second brother responded while walking to the door.

Wang Shun, anxious, called out loudly, and everyone in the courtyard heard his voice.

Gu's third brother, who had just brought his daughter back home and was in his room lecturing her behind closed doors, heard the voice, his face turning suddenly dark, and muttered to the world outside, "That persistent nuisance, we had just taken care of one thing, and he's on our doorstep a moment later, hmph, watch me not kick him out!"

Gu's third brother emerged from the room, grabbing a stick used for washing clothes by the door!

This stick wasn't meant for play when it struck a person's body; Gu Xiaoqing, startled, hurriedly stood up and chased after him.

"Dad, you can't, ah! One hit with that stick and it's all over! Why would you beat someone for no reason? What will the neighbors think?"

Meng Qiuju, on the other hand, pulled her daughter back, shut the door, and blocked it, not allowing her to open it, saying, "Let him be beaten, he deserves it. Isn't it all because of you, bringing trouble upon us? I must have owed you in a past life; if it weren't for having you, my life wouldn't be like this. Look, is there any place for me in this house? It's all because of you, you troublesome girl!"

Chapter 150: Strike Out

Meng Qiuju had never spared words calling Gu Xiaoqing a loss for the family, and Gu Xiaoqing had long understood what made Meng Qiuju harbor a thorn in her heart. At first, she might have been a bit hurt, but later, she came to understand that no matter how Meng Qiuju cursed, she still cared for her in her heart, and hearing such words became easier to dismiss.

In the village, wasn’t it common for people to call their daughters a financial loss? The more one heard it, the more accustomed one became.

But this time was different. Her dad had stormed out with a stick, and even though he wouldn’t kill Wang Shun, if by chance he injured him and delayed the marriage proposal, that would be terrible.

So no matter what, she had to go out and see for herself!

"Mom, step aside, I can’t listen to you this time!"

Gu Xiaoqing forcefully pulled away Meng Qiuju’s arm, which was blocking the door!

Meng Qiuju cursed angrily, "When have you ever listened to me? Didn’t I tell you just this morning? I told you not to go out, but look at you, running off while I was boiling water, and even... even making your dad drag you back. You won’t be staying in this house much longer, can’t you just give it a rest?"

"I... sigh! I can’t explain it to you, just let me through. You all may have no shame, but I still have dignity!"

"You have dignity? If you had dignity, would you have done such a thing with that poor boy?"

Outside, Gu Lao’er had opened the door, and before Wang Shun could even speak, Gu Lao’san, who came up behind with a stick, swung at him without a word. Thankfully, Wang Shun dodged quickly, turning his head to avoid the blow. The stick still hit his shoulder hard, causing intense pain.

"Gu... Uncle Gu, why are you hitting me?"

Wang Shun rubbed his shoulder as he stepped back outside.

Seeing Gu Lao’san raise his stick for another strike, Gu Lao’er quickly stepped forward to stop him.

He said, "Lao’san, what are you doing? Why are you hitting Shunzi?"

The last time Gu Lao’er’s daughter had a face injury, it was Shunzi who had gone to the town to fetch the doctor, and they hadn’t even thanked him yet.

"Brother, step aside. I must beat him to death to see if he dares to come to our house again!"

"Hey! Lao’san," Gu Lao’er yanked the stick from Gu Lao’san’s hand and looked around cautiously.

Fortunately, it was the busy farming season, and everyone was out picking corn in the fields. Otherwise, the commotion would have drawn the neighbors.

"If you have something to say, just say it. Why hit someone for no reason? If you injured him badly, wouldn’t the medical expenses have to come out of the public fund?"

Hearing the noise outside, Gu Feng also came out and, seeing Gu Lao’er and Gu Lao’san fighting over a stick, thought they were brawling and scolded, "What are you two doing? I’m still alive. Are you trying to kill one another to fight over the inheritance?"

Both were startled and immediately let go of the stick, which fell to the ground.

Gu Lao’er hurriedly explained, "No, Dad, it’s not that I’m fighting with Lao’san. He just started beating Shunzi without any explanation. Shunzi came to us in such a hurry, he must have something important, and before he could even open his mouth, Lao’san went at him with the stick. I was afraid Shunzi might really get hurt, so I snatched the stick away."

Gu Feng frowned and asked, "Lao’san, why did you hit Shunzi?"

"I..." Gu Lao’san didn’t know what to say.

Elsewhere, seeing the head of the Gu Family come out, Shunzi hurriedly said, "Grandfather Gu, I have urgent business with your family."

Everyone looked at Wang Shun, who seized the moment to speak. Gu Lao’san’s face darkened, and he quickly took a few steps forward to stop him but was intercepted by Gu Lao’er.

Sensing something, since he had heard some rumors about Xiaoqing but couldn’t be certain until now, seeing Gu Lao’san’s demeanor, he figured it was probably true.

Seeing a commotion involving Gu Lao’san was rare, and Gu Lao’er couldn’t help feeling very smug about it.