Farmhouse 1431

Chapter 1431: For What?

Jin Zijin's brow furrowed after hearing this. He said to Gui Yunxi, "I'll have Ajing give you an explanation. You should go back first."

"I..."

"Forget it, driver, let's go back. Jin Zijin knows what to do!" You Jiang dragged Gui Yunxi away.

Jin Zijin entered the room where Yue Rujing was. He was lying on the bed, staring blankly at an empty cup on the table.

"Ajing!"

Jin Zijin called out to him, and only then did he react.

"What's wrong?"

Actually, it wasn't hard for him to guess what had happened, but the way Tian Jizi passed away in the end couldn't be blamed on anyone, because at that time, he handled it like everyone else. It was only at the last moment, when he called out to Zijin, that he suddenly realized...

Forget it, it's not even certain that person was Tian Jizi.

He sighed lightly and said, "Maybe I'm overthinking it. Master wouldn't become like that. We used to say Master was mentally off, but he was always pretending for others to see."

Yue Rujing was stunned for a moment and said slowly, "Was it Master or not?"

Jin Zijin gently shook his head and said, "Who knows? Whether he was or wasn’t, Master passed after Yu Jizi, so he had no regrets in this life."

"And you’ve been sulking in here for over ten days?"

Jin Zijin turned his head slightly and said calmly, "Not anymore, starting now. We have a long way ahead; life must go on."

"Heh, hehe..." Now, Yue Rujing was in tears and laughter.

He had a fit of anger with Gu Youyou. Was it really because of Tian Jizi’s issue, or was he standing up for Jin Zijin, or was it simply because he was jealous that Gu Youyou treated Jin Ziyuan better than him, so he wanted to vent?

Whatever the reason, at this moment, Gu Youyou hated him to death anyway.

Thinking of this, he couldn’t help but feel a bit regretful.

"Did you hit Searcy?" Jin Zijin raised an eyebrow at him, his gaze mixed with something difficult to decipher.

"She... Yes, because I had an argument with them, Searcy used a needle to stab me, and I didn’t mean it, I just threw it off..."

"You’re not the kind of person to be tactless, Ajing, you..." Jin Zijin intended to say that something seemed off since Nanzhao, but then he remembered the things Gu Youyou had said, so he swallowed back his words.

He said, "Whether intentional or not, you should apologize. Searcy isn’t just any servant you can hit and scold as you please!"

"Alright!" Yue Rujing nodded lightly.

...

Along with Yue Rujing came the Duan family's youngest daughter, Duan Xiaomei. She had grown up among the mountains and rivers and had never seen a place like Qiuci. Upon arrival, she spent the whole day wandering the streets of Qiuci.

When she returned to the lodging, she just happened to see Yue Rujing struggling to come out, leaning against the wall.

"Ajing, what's wrong with you?"

She hurried forward to support him and said, "You're not healthy; I'll take you to see the doctor Gu."

"I'm fine, let go of me."

Who would've thought this injection's potency was so strong? After lying for half a day, his entire body was still weak and limp.

"Then what's the matter with you?" Duan Xiaomei grabbed Yue Rujing's arm tightly. Anyway, he had no strength now, so he couldn't push her away.

Yue Rujing was helpless and could only let her assist him to find Gu Youyou.

Searcy lay on the bed while Gui Yunxi was feeding her a bowl, and Gu Youyou was busy pounding on some dark herbal medicine with a pestle on the side.

When Yue Rujing entered, the temperature of the entire room seemed to drop.

Gui Yunxi put down the bowl and chopsticks, then swiftly drew a watermelon knife, heading toward Yue Rujing with a fierce intent.

Chapter 1432: Apology

The bewildered Duan Xiaomei was startled, drew out her whip, and with a flick, she sent his watermelon knife flying far away.

"What are you doing? Who is this, daring to chop at Yue Shizi?"

"Yue Shizi, you're formidable. You vent your anger on whoever you want, hit whoever you want. I'm just a driver, a mere commoner. I have nothing, but I have a life. With this life, I can fight you!" Saying this, Gui Yunxi grabbed a stool and rushed forward.

"Driver, come back." Searcy called out loudly to him, but the loudness pulled on her wound, causing her to wince in pain.

Gui Yunxi hurriedly put down the stool in his hand and turned to look at her.

"What's wrong? Does it hurt again?"

Searcy shook her head and said, "Sit properly and see what he plans to do."

Yue Rujing was taken aback, felt guilty, pushed away from the supporting Duan Xiaomei and took a few steps forward, saying, "I was too impulsive earlier, I came to apologize to you."

"Ha..." Searcy turned to Gu Youyou and said, "When you pushed me, it was unintentional; an apology will do. But I think you might need to explain properly to Gu Youyou."

Gu Youyou turned her head aside but did not look at Yue Rujing.

She was exhausted, really too tired to be angry with anyone.

"Since Searcy doesn’t mind, let it be. However, you must compensate her medical expenses, lost wages, nutritional expenses, and emotional distress fees."

It seems that if the injurer is forgiven by the injured, these are the compensations, right?

Yue Rujing paused for a moment, and the anxiety in his heart finally calmed down.

With a relaxed mind, he felt his strength recover a bit more.

He repeatedly agreed, "Hey, if you say compensate, then compensate; whatever amount you say, I’ll compensate. I’ll write a letter back and have my father send the silver."

Yue Rujing swept away the previous gloom, happily went back to write the letter.

Gui Yunxi looked displeased; in his view, how could a few pieces of silver suffice after hitting his beloved? Though his family wasn’t wealthy, they weren’t so poor as to lack money for medicine.

Gu Youyou handed the divided medicine to the displeased Gui Yunxi and said, "Go brew the medicine, your beloved will need it tonight."

Seeing that it was already dusk, Gui Yunxi hurriedly took the medicine to brew.

Searcy looked at Gu Youyou strangely for a long while, then suddenly said, "What’s so good about you? Even as a mother, you still attract so many admirers! Oh gosh, your Prince must be really stressed, how big-hearted he must be to accommodate you!"

Gu Youyou stuffed a piece of cake into her mouth and said, "No matter what you all say, I will save Jin Ziyuan. In his condition, if I don’t save him, he would just be lying in bed waiting to die."

Searcy: "..." I wasn’t talking about Jin Ziyuan.

Forget it, sometimes she’s clever, sometimes she’s foolish to a fault.

But about Yue Rujing, it’s not good to say it openly, so it’s quite alright as they are all unaware.

After taking care of Searcy, it was very late at night. Gu Youyou hadn’t had a chance to eat, and she dragged her weary body back to her and Jin Zijin’s room.

Just like before, the room was empty, all dark; she speculated he was still keeping vigil for Tian Jizi.

She lit the lamp on the wall, and the room brightened up.

Gu Youyou washed up briefly and went to sleep; she had not eaten lunch or dinner, and her body’s fatigue had surpassed the pain of hunger.

The door was left unclosed, and Jin Zijin entered the room silently, carrying a food box in his hand.

She slept so deeply this time that she didn’t even know when someone came in.

Chapter 1433: Figured It Out

Jin Zijin placed the food box on the stone table beside the bed and gently patted her back, waking her up.

As she turned around, she saw the tall figure sitting by the bed.

"Zijin?" She was stunned for a moment and rubbed her eyes. Confirming it was him, she exclaimed, "You’re back?"

"Yeah." He responded softly, saying, "You’ve worked hard these days, I..."

"Shh, don’t say, I know it all."

The scene of Tian Jizi's death was too strange. They actually believed in Yu Jizi, who had exchanged souls, because Gu Youyou herself had experienced such an event. It's just that for some reason, Yu Jizi didn't manage to exchange with Jin Ziyuan but ended up in Tian Jizi's body instead.

Jin Zijin thought for a moment and said, "Maybe it was because Master consumed the Sun Zhuzhao."

"Hmm...?"

"Master had a Pure Yang Body. I guess a Pure Yin Body combined with the Youying Pearl and a Pure Yang Body combined with the Sun Zhuzhao might have the same effect."

After a brief silence, Gu Youyou said, "So you still believe that the latter person was Yu Jizi and not Tian Jizi's final moments of lucidity?"

"I think so!" he replied.

Nobody could be certain about it. Maybe, at the last moment, even the soul inside that body didn't know who it truly was.

In any case, everything was over. The deceased were gone, what is there for the living to hold onto?

Jin Zijin forced a smile, gently tucked the stray hair from Gu Youyou's forehead behind her ear, and softly said, "You can sleep later, let's eat something first."

Gu Youyou's stomach coincidentally grumbled, and they both laughed.

It seemed they hadn't sat together for a proper dinner in a long time.

No, this was more like a midnight snack.

They hadn’t sat together for a midnight snack in quite a while.

The people of Qiuci weren’t as indulgent in food and drink as those from Zhongyuan. Their food was simple, various not-so-tasty flatbreads accompanied by a pot of lamb soup, which was considered quite a good meal.

Gu Youyou barely managed to eat until half-full, finding the food rather unpalatable.

When life improves, people become picky about their food, and she was no exception to this common tendency.

Not having filled her stomach, she ate many grapes instead.

She actually knew that eating such high-sugar grapes in the middle of the night wasn’t good, but after the lamb soup, the greasy taste was uncomfortable, and she needed fruit to counter it.

And in her room, there was only this type of fruit available—grapes.

Yu Jizi was already dead. Sometimes thinking about it was still unbelievable. Lying in bed, Gu Youyou recounted how she was captured into that cave, met Jin Ziyuan, and how Yu Jizi had seized innocent people to coerce her in various ways.

This included why Jin Ziyuan ended up like this.

After listening, Jin Zijin asked after a long while, "How is Jin Ziyuan’s illness?"

Gu Youyou, worried and troubled, sighed softly, "His condition isn’t good. I don’t understand the Poisonous Insect toxin as well as Searcy. The medical facilities here are too lousy. If only we could do some tests. Sigh, look, your junior even wounded Searcy."

Jin Zijin was silent for a moment, then softly said, "I talked to him about it."

"Yeah, he apologized."

"He might..." Jin Zijin always felt something was off. Over the years, he considered himself quite knowledgeable about Yue Rujing, but now it seemed he might have been mistaken.

"Forget it, let’s sleep quickly."

"Mm, you sleep too!"

Still, this embrace allowed her to sleep peacefully.

...

Chapter 1434: Time to Go Back

That day, everyone entered the cave to find Yu Jizi, all prepared for a fierce battle, so as outsiders, Jin Xiaoran and Lin Qianqing were assigned to watch the car outside and provide support.

They were just two innocent people who didn’t need to be dragged into it.

Fortunately, everyone made it out alive, though Jin Ziyuan became a living dead.

Lately, Gu Youyou has been busy treating Jin Ziyuan, making Lin Qianqing feel reluctant to visit her.

Just as she is here, their dream of having a child...

"Cousin, let’s go see cousin tomorrow and let her check your health."

Not having children has always been a knot in their hearts.

Seeing Lin Qianqing’s expectant gaze, Jin Xiaoran couldn’t help but nod.

Lin Qianqing smiled, hooked his neck, and said, "We will definitely have one. Cousin’s medical skills are amazing; cousin, we will definitely have our own children. By then, we can take our children to many places, just like those merchants. Ah, later we can become traveling merchants, okay?"

"Okay, as long as you like it." Jin Xiaoran gently placed her on the bed, utmost tenderness in his actions.

When they are old and unable to travel, and the child has grown up, they could find a place with beautiful mountains and clear water to settle down, build a little courtyard, surround it with a fence, plant some vegetables, keep some egg-laying chickens, and spend the rest of their lives simply.

At dawn, Lin Qianqing hesitated outside Gu Youyou’s door, and just as she mustered the courage to knock, the door opened.

"Qianqing?" Seeing her like that, Gu Youyou knew she had something to say, yet found it hard to speak.

Gu Youyou closed the door behind her, saying, "Come with me to this side."

Jin Zijin might be extremely tired; it’s rare for him to rise late.

In another room, Lin Qianqing finally spoke of her intentions.

"Cousin, I want to ask you to check my cousin. We... it’s been so long, and we still don’t have children. Can his injury be cured?"

Gu Youyou already knew the situation. Even if surgery was performed, it might not lead to pregnancy, or rather, the chances of her becoming pregnant wouldn’t be very high.

After thinking it over, she sighed softly, "There’s no problem with the surgery, but the chance of you getting pregnant isn’t high, maybe even slim. I’ve told him all this. How about this, I’ll give him some prescriptions to strengthen his body, and after he’s well, try more often. Also, I’ll calculate a suitable

time for you to conceive, and you should keep track of it, and when fate comes, it will happen naturally. If it doesn’t, then just..."

Lin Qianqing’s complexion gradually turned pale, prompting Gu Youyou to stop and console her.

"He’s been injured for too long, and this kind of thing can’t be forced. Actually, whether or not to have children, you should take it lightly! If you really want one, you can adopt a child and raise them as your own. Except for not being biologically theirs, they’ll be no different from birth. Qianqing, the bond between parents and children is the love of raising them!"

After a long silence, Lin Qianqing finally said, "Hmm, let’s just let nature take its course."

Gu Youyou wrote her a prescription and instructions on how to calculate the ovulation period before seeing her out.

She brought breakfast back to her room, and Jin Zijin was already awake.

She smiled and said, "Wash up first, then come and eat. It’s rare to have rice porridge."

"Yes, you eat too!"

They had been away for a long time since Gu Youyou disappeared, staying out for a year and a half altogether.

After breakfast, Jin Zijin said, "We’ve been away for a long time. See when we can leave, pack up, and go back."

Chapter 1435: The Emperor Can’t Hold It Down

The ashes of Tian Jizi should also be brought back for consecration, and for the Dao Sect, it is time to fully retreat to Qi Mountain. From now on, there will be no more Tianzong or Xuanzong in the world, only the Dao Sect.

Gu Youyou was startled for a moment, put down her chopsticks, and lowered her head, saying: "Perhaps... I still need to stay for a while."

Jin Ziyuan has not woken up yet. How could she leave now and explain it to Madam Ru?

She couldn’t reconcile it in her own heart.

Jin Zijin said lightly: "It’s been a long time since you last saw Xuyao. Don’t you want to go back and see him?"

"I do!" Gu Youyou said softly, "He’s over two years old now, walking and talking. He might not need me anymore."

Jin Zijin knew all too well what she was thinking and what she was worried about, so he could only sigh helplessly, saying: "Earlier, a letter was sent to Qi Mountain, and the party to greet the master should be almost here now. So let’s wait a little longer."

Gu Youyou burst into laughter, saying: "I knew you wouldn’t be like Yue Rujing and indulge in wild thoughts. Let’s wait another month or so. Estimating that people from Qi Mountain will arrive in a little more than a month, by then Searcy’s injuries will be mostly healed. Regardless of whether Jin Ziyuan wakes up or not, I’ll go back with you."

"Alright, good!"

...

A little more than a month later, Searcy was able to walk, and coincidentally, the disciples of the Dao Family came to retrieve Tian Jizi’s ashes.

The people from Xuanzong and Tianzong were all present because they needed to retrieve not only Tian Jizi. The matters Yu Jizi did were considered internal conflicts, and discussing them would greatly impact the Dao Family.

But if not discussed, he remains a former sect leader of the Dao Family, and regardless of his mistakes, his memorial tablet should be honored.

Huo Li stayed at the Sanqing Temple to oversee the affairs, while those who came were the ones who had disappeared for a long time with Tian Jizi, including Yixi.

Back then, Tian Jizi went to Lingnan to find Jin Zijin and the others and had sent Yixi back to Qi Mountain first. Unexpectedly, that farewell turned into a goodbye to his master forever.

Yixi kept vigil for a night in front of Tian Jizi's memorial, weeping all night. The next day, with swollen eyes, he discussed the return date with Jin Zijin and the others.

Jin Zijin closed a simple, ancient notebook, saying: "The nearest good date is tomorrow. If not tomorrow, then we'll have to wait half a month for another auspicious day."

"Then let's go tomorrow," Yue Rujing said. "We've already been delayed here for a long time. Previously, news came from Beijing that the remnants of the Northern Peace Duke's House were stirring again."

Jin Zijin was momentarily stunned, saying: "The old man couldn't suppress it?"

Yue Rujing frowned, saying: "Indeed. Given the emperor's capabilities, it shouldn't be the case. There might be things we don't know about, so it's better to return as soon as possible. After working hard all these years, we don't want to serve as a foil for others."

"Alright, then tomorrow." Jin Zijin said, furrowing his brow.

Jin Zijin informed Gu Youyou that the party would set off at 7-9 AM tomorrow.

The time was tight, so she hurried to make preparations, focusing primarily on Jin Ziyuan.

The poison in Jin Ziyuan's body had been cleansed, but he still hadn't woken up.

Perhaps a catalyst was needed for him to wake up.

Madam Ru helped wipe Jin Ziyuan’s face, looked at her son with helplessness, and said to Gu Youyou: "You’ve done your best, go back. Whether he will wake up depends on fate."

When the hustle and bustle subsides, they can finally lead a simple life.

Although he now lies in bed like a living dead, for Madam Ru, it was an unexpected joy.

At least their greatest enemy was dead, and they were still alive. Next year, when they commemorate her husband, she could joyfully tell him that the one who brought them to a ruinous fate had already received retribution, and those he protected continue to live on.

Chapter 1436: Farewell

Gu Youyou nodded gently, leaving behind a set of notes on taking care of Jin Ziyuan, along with some medicine.

She said, "We’re going back, and I will have the medicine prepared and sent over. If... you are willing, you can also bring him to Beijing to find me!"

"Okay, thank you so much!"

"Also, when you have time, talk to him by his ear, and pay attention to his hands and eyelashes. Generally, if he is about to wake up, his eyelashes or hands will gently move."

"Okay, when are you leaving?" Madam asked.

Gu Youyou whispered, "Tomorrow at 7-9 AM, they come to receive the spirit, these things are a matter of tradition."

Madam nodded gently and said, "Then I won’t see you off, be careful on the road."

...

The next day, a procession of over a hundred people set off from Qiuci to receive the spirit.

Lin Qianqing and Jin Xiaoran were reluctant to leave as well. They, along with You Jiang, accompanied Gu Youyou and the others, seeing them off twenty miles outside Qiuci.

They traveled slowly, and when they reached twenty miles, it was just noon.

The procession stopped to rest and eat some simple food.

Lin Qianqing stood in front of Gu Youyou, her face full of reluctance.

"I thought I could stay with cousin for a long time, I didn’t expect a month to pass so quickly."

Gu Youyou gently smiled, stroking her hair, and said, "The one who will stay with you for a long time is behind you!"

She pouted her lips towards Jin Xiaoran, who had already mounted his horse not far away.

If it weren’t for Lin Qianqing, he probably wouldn’t have found a reason to come send her off.

Jin Zijin is his elder brother, but they get along like enemies. Even Gu Youyou and Lin Qianqing, who are cousins, have a better relationship than the brothers.

Though they can’t be considered enemies now, due to past events, it’s still awkward when they meet, let alone saying something sappy during farewells.

Lin Qianqing glanced back at the awkward Jin Xiaoran and lowered her voice to Gu Youyou, asking, "If we try a few more times, can I really get pregnant?"

Gu Youyou was stunned for a moment, then smiled and flicked her forehead, saying, "You shouldn't feel too pressured in your heart, nor should King Jin, everything should follow its natural course to have the best chance. If you're always thinking about trying more times just to get pregnant, then it becomes harder to conceive."

"Huh?" Lin Qianqing pouted, "There's so much to consider?"

"It's not about considering, according to their Dao Family's theory, everything in the world has a natural law, there is a measure for everything. Ah, these things are hard to explain to a little girl, you will understand slowly on your own."

"Huh? I'm not a little girl anymore."

"In my heart, you are." Gu Youyou said with feigned annoyance, "Alright, let's end it here. You should go back quickly, don't keep King Jin waiting too long." Gu Youyou gave her a gentle push.

Lin Qianqing shook her head and said, "I'm not done yet."

"Hmm? What else do you have?"

"Also..." Lin Qianqing's face darkened and she said, "Also... I can't fulfill my filial duty to my parents, and I make them worry. Cousin, when you get back, please tell my parents and grandmother to take good care of their health."

"Okay, I will." Gu Youyou said with a smile.

"And tell them I'm doing really well, never been happier." Lin Qianqing forced a big smile, yet tears welled up in her big eyes.

Gu Youyou knew that she was truly doing well now; those tears were merely for the farewell and her longing for her family.

The Lin Family is quite broad-minded, they can all understand her various helpless situations.

Chapter 1437: Nothing to Say

Gu Youyou took out a handkerchief and gently wiped the corner of her eyes, softly laughing, "I will. Uncle, Aunt, and Grandmother will all be fine."

"Hmm, that’s good!" Lin Qianqing sniffled, more tears flooding out.

"Also, tell Lin Shenxing that from now on, the Lin Family will rely on him. Let him uphold the family like a man."

Gu Youyou knew that Lin Qianqing, like most legitimate daughters from prominent families, was never fond of her half-siblings. Now that she could say such words shows she has come to terms with everything she couldn’t before.

The most important thing in life is one’s mindset, and she is currently in a good place, just a bit obsessed with matters concerning her child.

May heaven be kind enough to fulfill this one wish of hers.

Over there, Jin Xiaoran stood awkwardly from a distance. Jin Zijin thought for a moment and casually took a piece of watermelon to him.

"The weather is hot, have a piece to cool down," Jin Zijin handed the watermelon to Jin Xiaoran.

Doing this for the first time, he felt a bit strange inside.

Jin Xiaoran stared at the piece of watermelon, momentarily forgetting to react.

Jin Zijin pushed the watermelon forward again and said, "Take it."

It was only when pushed that Jin Xiaoran came to his senses and reached out to take the watermelon.

This seemed to be the closest interaction between them recently, with Jin Zijin handing him a piece of watermelon.

When he took the watermelon, it felt as if it were a dream.

Jin Zijin took another piece and started eating, leaning against the horse's back, gazing at the scorching desert ahead.

"Thanks!" Jin Xiaoran said stiffly, then took a bite of watermelon.

The cool, sweet juice went down his throat, and the awkward feeling seemed to go down along with it.

Under the blazing sun, Jin Xiaoran suddenly said, "In Beijing, the weather isn't this hot, but during summer, it still feels unbearably warm. Yet here, it's hot every day, and it doesn't seem as uncomfortable."

Jin Zijin bit into the watermelon and said, "That's because when things aren't going well, it always makes one restless inside. As they say, a calm heart feels cool naturally. Here, with fewer worries and a simpler life, it naturally doesn't feel hot."

Jin Xiaoran was momentarily taken aback, then sneered, "Seems to make sense. I thought it was because I got used to it. You Dao Family people always have plenty of reasoning."

Jin Zijin didn't continue the conversation and finished his watermelon in one breath.

He wiped his hands with a handkerchief and then said to Jin Xiaoran, "We're about to head back. Do you have any message for me to deliver?"

Deliver a message?

To whom?

In today's Beijing, I'm afraid everyone avoids him, eager to distance themselves. Who would care about him, and who would need a message from him?

Jin Xiaoran smiled bitterly, "None!" Seeing Lin Qianqing walking towards him suddenly reminded him of something, he said, "Or perhaps a message to the Lin Residence..."

But then he remembered Lin Qianqing had probably already informed Gu Youyou, and he changed his mind, "Forget it, there's no message to deliver."

Jin Zijin focused on him for a moment without saying anything else, just nodded lightly and left.

One must pay the price for the deeds one has done. No matter the reason for hurting others, one cannot pretend those things never happened. Thus, Jin Moning, having dedicated his life to the empire, lost one relative after another, and he couldn't blame anyone else.

...

Chapter 1438: Seeking Advice from the Empress Dowager

Beijing

Jin Moning had been ill for quite some time. Initially, everyone noticed only his gradual weight loss and aging appearance, but did not realize his health was deteriorating.

Yet on this day, he could no longer attend the morning court.

The Eunuch Wan was extremely anxious and said, "Your Majesty, we ought to summon the Imperial Physician to examine you. If you continue like this, I'm afraid unforeseen events might occur. If anything happens to you at this time, only Prince Qin will be by your side!"

"Cough cough, Wan Decheng, you don't understand, cough cough..." The Emperor took a sip of water and gestured for the Eunuch Wan to come closer, placing a cushion behind him.

He said, "Because there is only me right now, I cannot fall ill. If I were to become unwell, who would be able to keep them in check?"

"Ah, then why do you not send a message to the eldest Prince? As long as the eldest Prince returns, the realm will not fall into chaos."

"No, no message is absolutely secure. Not only can I not send one, but I must also ensure that no one sees my urgency in recalling Zijin to the palace. They see my dwindling energy and are just waiting for news that I'm unwell to spread. Once it spreads... cough cough cough..."

The Eunuch Wan hurriedly patted the Emperor's back to help him breathe more easily, and gave him some water, anxiously saying, "But Your Majesty, you are already so gravely ill. What if you cannot endure... Ah, no, that's not right, the old servant deserves death, deserves death..."

"Enough!" The Emperor halted him from speaking further, saying, "You make a valid point as well. I won't attend tomorrow's morning court. Find some reason to silence them!"

The Eunuch Wan was instantly rooted in place.

Since the Emperor ascended the throne, he had never missed a morning court session. What possible reason could allow him to miss without arousing suspicion?

Wasn't the Emperor asking too much of him?

"Your Majesty..." The Eunuch Wan thought long and hard but couldn't come up with a suitable excuse. He called out to the Emperor, only to find him already asleep, leaned against the bed.

"This... oh dear, what can be done now?" The Eunuch Wan was as anxious as an ant on a hot pan, but dared not disturb the Emperor's sleep. After pacing nervously, he helped the Emperor sleep well, tucked him in properly, and then left Qianqing Palace.

He quickly ran to the Renshou Palace to seek help from the Empress Dowager. If there was anyone in this world who could persuade the Emperor, it was the Empress Dowager.

"Eunuch Wan, it's so late. What urgent matter do you have to see the Empress Dowager?" asked Li Mama, who was beside the Empress Dowager.

The Eunuch Wan replied anxiously, "Li Mama, this matter is significant and I cannot speak of it. You see, I am close to the Emperor; without an urgent matter, would I dare disturb the Empress Dowager at night? Please convey my message to the Empress Dowager that Wan Decheng urgently needs to see her."

"Why can't you say what the urgent matter is? Ah, never mind. Hopefully, it really is an urgent matter, or else we'll be in trouble, and the Empress Dowager won't forgive you."

"I wouldn't dare, wouldn't dare. How could I deceive the Empress Dowager, burden Li Mama. I truly have an urgent matter..."

Li Mama went inside to inform the Empress Dowager, while the Eunuch Wan waited in the outer hall.

Before long, Li Mama helped the Empress Dowager out. The Empress Dowager was still wearing fine silk pajamas, with just a cape draped over her shoulders.

Seeing the Empress Dowager emerge, the Eunuch Wan knelt down with a thud and urgently said, "Empress Dowager, the old servant has a significant matter to report, risking execution to bring it to your attention..."

He glanced at the people around them, and the Empress Dowager understood instantly.

The Empress Dowager dismissed everyone, leaving only the close servant Li Mama.

Chapter 1439: The Empress Dowager's Idea

"Wan Decheng, you may speak now about what you have come here for."

"Ah!" Eunuch Wan nodded and hurriedly said, "His Majesty is ill, has been ill for quite some time, but he refuses to summon the Imperial Physician and doesn't want the news to spread. Empress Dowager, what should we do?"

"His Majesty is ill?" The Empress Dowager was so startled by these words that she stood up without the aid of her cane, and the attendant beside her hurriedly supported her, fearing she might fall.

"His Majesty is ill? When did he fall ill, how did this happen, why are you only telling me now, and why hasn't the Imperial Physician been called?"

The Empress Dowager anxiously fired off a string of questions.

Eunuch Wan was also feeling wronged, and said, "His Majesty forbids it, Empress Dowager. His Majesty says no one can know about his sickness. These past years, His Majesty's health has been declining day by day, yet he continues to bear it with gritted teeth. Before, he could endure and then be fine, but this time… this time, this old servant finds things amiss. His Majesty is older now, not like in his youth; this illness might not be so easily overcome."

The Empress Dowager paused, grasped her attendant Li's hand, and said, "Quickly, take me to Qianqing Palace to see His Majesty."

"No, you mustn't!" Eunuch Wan hurriedly blocked the Empress Dowager, saying, "His Majesty said that the news of his illness cannot be spread; otherwise, it could lead to significant trouble. At this hour, if the Empress Dowager visits His Majesty's palace, it might… might be problematic if seen by others!"

The Empress Dowager thought, and indeed, it made sense.

Visiting His Majesty's palace at this late hour would be like inadvertently drawing attention.

The Emperor's insulation from public knowledge was understood by the Empress Dowager, though surely, illness could be more urgent than secrecy? Can the fear of those with evil intentions prevent seeking care?

The Empress Dowager sank onto the couch and said to her attendant Li, "Quick, quickly go summon the Imperial Physician, say… say that I'm ill. Wan Decheng, go to Qianqing Palace to summon His Majesty, tell him I'm gravely ill and on the brink of death."

Eunuch Wan, having spent a lifetime by the Emperor's side, was perceptive and immediately grasped the Empress Dowager's meaning.

In haste, he bowed deeply to the Empress Dowager, rose, and ran towards Qianqing Palace.

The Emperor was sleeping soundly, his breathing steady, yet for the sake of his health, Wan Decheng had to muster the courage to wake him.

"Sire, Sire, wake up!"

"Hmm, what?" The Emperor was a light sleeper; as soon as Eunuch Wan called him, he awoke.

"Is it dawn? What time is it now, so quickly?"

Struggling to get up, he continued, "Didn't I say yesterday that there would be no morning court today? Wan Decheng, what's happening?"

Wan Decheng wiped sweat from his forehead, trembling, and said, "This humble servant reports to His Majesty, the Empress Dowager… sought the Imperial Physician last night, claiming she was ill, severely ill, hence this humble servant had no choice but to disturb Your Majesty's rest."

Having served the Emperor for a lifetime, this was Eunuch Wan's first act of deception against the monarch, his own life hanging by a thread.

"The Empress Dowager is ill?" The Emperor was fully awake now, sitting on the edge of the bed, looking at the sweating Wan Decheng kneeling beneath him.

Jin Moning's closest companion in life was neither his most cherished woman nor his most despised, but rather the eunuch Wan Decheng.

How could his actions be hidden from Wan Decheng's eyes?

He was indeed ill, but his mind was clear.

The Empress Dowager's illness was a pretense; Wan Decheng had enlisted the Empress Dowager's help, contriving a story of her illness, when in truth it was to persuade him to visit Renshou Palace for treatment.

"You may rise," the Emperor sighed.

What a difficult position for this eunuch.

"Proceed to Renshou Palace!"

Chapter 1440: Visiting the Sick

He had no choice but to put on his clothes and be carried to the Empress Dowager's Renshou Palace.

The two most senior Imperial Physicians were summoned inside, and the Empress Dowager sat comfortably on the chair, looking quite spirited, not at all like someone seriously ill.

Even if there was a minor ailment, it wouldn't warrant summoning them into the palace in the middle of the night, would it?

Even if summoned into the palace, at the very least, they should be allowed to check, take a pulse or something. In the dead of night, having them stand around doing nothing, unwilling to check, what does that mean?

"His Majesty arrives…" Wan Decheng's drawn-out voice sounded, and everyone in the room, except for the Empress Dowager, hurriedly kneeled to welcome him.

A moment later, His Majesty came in, supported by Eunuch Wan.

The Empress Dowager dismissed everyone irrelevant, leaving only Eunuch Wan and Aunt Li to guard the door, then quickly leaned on her cane to approach the Emperor.

"Your Majesty, quickly sit down. I heard you were ill, and my heart…"

"Mother, please sit!"

In the Emperor's heart, the Empress Dowager was like his biological mother.

The Empress Dowager had trouble with her legs, so the Emperor hurriedly helped her sit on the couch.

Only then did the two Imperial Physicians understand that the person who was ill was not the Empress Dowager, but the Emperor.

The actions of the Empress Dowager and the Emperor were merely to prevent anyone from knowing that the Emperor was ill.

Indeed, it was heard that the Emperor had been unwell lately, causing some people to start stirring.

“Your Majesty, where do you feel unwell?” The Imperial Physicians, being perceptive, quickly stepped forward to diagnose the Emperor!

This matter was temporarily suppressed this way, with the official statement being that the Empress Dowager had a sudden severe illness, the condition progressing rapidly, and life was constantly at risk.

The Emperor attentively attended to her, so the morning courts were skipped these few days.

However, the Empress Dowager’s illness was a significant matter. It was an excellent opportunity for the concubines of various palaces and the Madams of various families to show their devotion to the Emperor. How could they miss it?

They all sought to see the Empress Dowager and visit the sick.

However, the sickness was fake, and naturally, the Empress Dowager couldn’t allow anyone to visit.

This time, orders were given to Wan Decheng and Aunt Li not to let anyone into Renshou Palace to disturb the Empress Dowager.

“Oh dear, with the Empress Dowager so gravely ill, you still won’t let us in to care for her? What are you two dogs trying to do? Rebel against the throne?”

“Lady Xu, this is the wish of His Majesty and the Empress Dowager, please don’t make it difficult for us servants.”

“What do you mean by making it difficult for you? It’s clear you servants don’t know your place and are making it difficult for us.”

Another concubine said, “Indeed, if you won’t let us see the Empress Dowager, so be it. But we haven’t even seen His Majesty for days!”

Another impatient concubine said, “Oh, fine, if we can’t see her, so be it. Here, deliver this soup to the Empress Dowager. I personally stewed it. You two servants better not sneak any of it!”

They could deliver things, though.

Wan Decheng quickly took it and said, “Lady Chen, rest assured, even with ten lives, this servant wouldn’t dare to eat Your food. I will certainly inform His Majesty and the Empress Dowager of Your goodwill.”

Lady Chen laughed, raised her head proudly, and left the outside of Renshou Palace.

The other ladies were terribly envious, thinking: Why didn’t we think of making something and sending it over? If we can’t meet, we can’t show our feelings, but making something should be okay, right? Could it be that if the Empress Dowager drinks it and feels happy, then her illness gets better, and the credit goes to us?

As for the Madams outside the palace, it was easier to handle, telling them directly that the Emperor did not allow visits because the Imperial Physicians said the Empress Dowager’s illness required quiet recovery.

As for the invitations they sent, they should be received as necessary, but otherwise ignored.