**Farmhouse 1501**

Chapter 1501: The Final Arrangement

That day, in the street battle, countless were killed or wounded. Only when Jin Zijin captured Jin Tianyuan did the battle come to a halt.

Jin Tianzhong died on the spot, while Jin Tianyuan became a prisoner.

All of this was merely a scheme set up by the Emperor!

At the time, Jin Tianyuan did not understand, but during these days in the deadly prison cell, he figured it all out.

To the victor goes the spoils; he had nothing more to say.

“Jin Tianyuan, do you admit your guilt?”

Jin Tianyuan gave a bitter smile and said indifferently, “I, Jin Tianyuan, take responsibility for what I did. I only ask for a swift end!”

The Emperor sneered, “Your crimes are not so simple that a swift end is enough. At this point, is there nothing you want to ask?”

Jin Tianyuan lifted his head and asked, “Indeed, I have many doubts. First, is the Emperor truly ill?”

The courtiers all looked at the Emperor, as this was something everyone wanted to know.

The Emperor responded indifferently, “The illness is real, but not as severe as you all thought. I was ill, so I turned the situation to my advantage.”

Jin Tianyuan's face was ashen as he murmured, "So you set numerous traps, just to lure us into Beijing?"

A glimmer of appreciation flashed in the Emperor's dark eyes, and he said, "Indeed, how could I destroy you without luring you into Beijing? To subdue the fifteen thousand troops in Beiping completely would certainly be more challenging than dealing with Xining earlier. By drawing you into Beijing, although there was heavy casualties, the battle wouldn't last too long and wouldn't cause as much prolonged suffering to the people."

"So that's it!" Jin Tianyuan said with a bitter smile, "The Emperor can also use this opportunity to rid himself of those disloyal to him?"

"Yes, exactly that!"

It turned out their lives were always within the Emperor's calculations.

If they wanted to survive, the best way was to stay put in Beiping, waiting for the emergence of a vanquished Monarch.

Jin Tianyuan still remembered his father's words to them before he died, saying that this generation's Emperor was extraordinarily talented and cunning, far more formidable than they had imagined.

The fact that he could ascend to the throne without bloodshed was the best proof.

Your grandfather did not believe this, underestimated the Emperor, and you must remember not to act rashly before the Emperor's demise.

If the next Monarch is Jin Zijin, warn your descendants not to act rashly either.

But they didn't listen!

Jin Tianyuan took a deep breath, looking at the Emperor and asked again, "Second, I want to know where King Jin has gone?"

The Emperor was momentarily stunned, then sighed lightly, “Where have they gone? I truly don’t know. Of course, they managed to escape the Zongrenfu because I let them. I prepared many things for them, but they probably didn’t trust me and left on their own. The world is vast, who would know where they’ve gone?”

Lin Xingyi felt a bit heartbroken upon hearing this, having only received the secret message from Eunuch Wan, saying that the Emperor arranged for King Jin and his consort to leave, yet no one knew their whereabouts. Now even the Emperor claims ignorance, so who could know?

But on second thought, not knowing is perhaps for the best; not knowing might be the greatest protection for them.

After hearing this, Jin Tianyuan nodded slightly and said no more.

He knew everything he needed to know; he resigned himself to whatever fate awaited him.

…

After returning from the Imperial Palace, Gu Youyou fell ill. Since being captured by Yu Jizi, traversing through Nanzhao, then to Qiuci, and then racing back to Beijing as if on a mission, she had been under extreme mental stress the entire time. For a body that was never particularly strong, it had been severely overtaxed.

Chapter 1502: Yue Rujing is Leaving

Of course, what she needed was rest. After resting for over a month, her body gradually recovered.

Today’s weather was nice, so she got up, sat by the window basking in the sun, and watched Xiang Chun and Xuyao playing games.

When Xuyao was initially brought into the palace, Xiang Chun stayed in the palace for a few days and then returned to the Crown Prince Residence, after all, she was Gu Youyou’s main maid, and with her masters not around, she had to watch over that big house!

Searcy came in with a pot of medicine, saw Gu Youyou sitting by the window, and hurriedly said, "Why did you get up? Didn’t you say you needed rest?"

Gu Youyou glanced at the medicine pot, waved her hand dismissively, and said, "Take it away, take it away, I’m already fine, no need to drink these meds!"

"This isn’t medicine; it’s a tonic to replenish your body!" Searcy corrected.

Now that she was well, Gu Youyou had fallen sick, so she took care of Gu Youyou.

"I won’t take the tonic either!" Gu Youyou said.

Searcy wasn’t one to argue. She placed the medicine pot on the table and said, "Suit yourself. Since you’re feeling better, I’ll let Yue Rujing know."

"Let Yue Rujing know?" Gu Youyou raised an eyebrow.

Searcy said, "Yes, I’ll let Yue Rujing know; that’s what he said."

"Hmm?"

"Well, the Dao Sect has completely withdrawn now. What’s he still doing in Beijing? If he’s staying, he should go to Qi Mountain."

Gu Youyou knew about this and just acknowledged it with an "oh."

Searcy said, "There’s only one Sect Leader in Qi Mountain now, appointed by the Heavenly Master, they say."

"Yixi?"

"Yes, it’s him. His top disciples have gone home to get married and have kids, so it’s up to Yixi now."

"Oh, that’s good!" Gu Youyou said lightly.

"Yue Rujing and the others are going back to Lingnan, saying that the Marquess Yue’s health isn’t great, and he’s eager to have grandchildren!" Searcy explained, seeing that she seemed a bit absent-minded.

Gu Youyou blinked and asked, "They? You mean Yue Rujing and Duan Xiaomei?"

"Yes, they’re getting married for diplomacy. Anyway, it’s all about continuing the family line. As long as the woman can have children, it doesn’t matter. If Yue Rujing doesn’t want to bring back a Nanzhao woman, he has to find someone else in Zhuzhao Country to marry a Nanzhao woman, which is such a hassle. He said he’d rather not bother!"

Hearing this from Searcy’s mouth was somewhat amusing, but thinking about it deeper, Gu Youyou suddenly felt that Yue Rujing was quite pitiful.

But then she thought, in ancient times, men and women were like this; parental orders and the matchmaker’s words. Happening to meet someone you like was very rare; Yue Rujing, tossing around until thirty before marrying, already counted as peculiar.

After a moment, Gu Youyou said, "Alright, go ask them when they’re leaving, I’ll go send them off!"

"Alright, you get some rest first!"

...

The date for Yue Rujing’s departure was set, and Gu Youyou accompanied them all the way to the city outskirts.

Jin Zijin didn’t come; Yue Rujing said he didn’t want him informed, didn’t want him to come send him off.

With his bag on his back, Yue Rujing turned to Duan Xiaomei and said, "Go ahead to the Shili Pavilion and wait for me, I have something to say to Gu Youyou."

"Ah?" Duan Xiaomei looked at Yue Rujing, then at Gu Youyou, and finally nodded, riding off.

Gu Youyou smiled at Yue Rujing and said, "What do you want to say?"

Yue Rujing thought for a moment and said, "I’m not getting involved in the business in Beijing anymore. I’ll be focusing on business in Lingnan, and you’ll have to give me a higher share there!"

Gu Youyou: "..."

Chapter 1503: Farewell

“Are we missing a shareholder meeting?”

Gu Youyou always thought Yue Rujing was just playing around with business. Yet, unexpectedly, he called her out alone to say goodbye, just for money.

“Shouldn’t we?” Yue Rujing said with some displeasure, “I invested the most in the Lingnan business. If it weren’t for my backing, your first Jisheng Hall branch wouldn’t have opened.”

Gu Youyou rubbed her forehead, nodded, and said, “Alright, you take seventy and I take thirty, okay!” Gu Youyou was now wealthy and didn’t care about the small amount of money. She said, “But the supply of herbs needs to be increased, make sure to supervise it well after you go back!”

Collecting herbs in Lingnan was the easiest, with many varieties, and the biggest income was from exporting herbs.

“Sure, no problem!” Yue Rujing agreed readily.

“Hmm, is there anything else you want to say?” Gu Youyou asked again.

“There’s also…” Yue Rujing seemed a bit awkward and said, “I have to leave. My father is not well, and in the future… I might not be able to come and see you again.”

These were things Gu Youyou already knew. She nodded and said, “Hmm, go ahead, take good care of Marquess Yue. If you need anything, just send someone to inform me. My greatest skill is in medical skills.”

Yue Rujing seriously said, “Okay, when I need your help, I won’t hold back. Over the years, we’ve suffered a lot to save you. To help you catch the Ice Snake, I almost got bitten to death by one.”

Recalling that embarrassing event, Yue Rujing blushed a little.

“Hmm!” Gu Youyou smiled lightly as she looked at him.

Feeling that there was nothing much to say, Yue Rujing mounted his horse, rode a few steps, but then came back and said, “I’m really leaving. In the future, if someone bullies you, I won’t be able to help you. You should… tell your senior brother.”

“I know!” Gu Youyou said.

“But if your senior brother bullies you, you tell me!”

Gu Youyou laughed and said, “Why tell you? So you can help your senior brother bully me?”

Yue Rujing suddenly said nervously, “How could that be? I would definitely help you.”

“Hmm?” Gu Youyou looked at him strangely, with a hint of a teasing smile, but she didn’t believe him.

He hurriedly explained in a fluster, “What I mean is… if he bullies you, you definitely can’t beat him, and of course, I can’t beat him either, but I can help you run away far enough so he can’t bully you.”

Gu Youyou chuckled and said, “What nonsense are you thinking? How could he bully me? Alright, alright, go quickly before your senior brother knows.”

“Oh, oh, right.” Yue Rujing seemed to suddenly realize and said, “I have to leave quickly, so senior brother doesn’t know and come to see me off. I hate being apart from senior brother, and he does too. If he comes to see me off, he’ll definitely cry. It’s ugly when senior brother cries. Alright, I’m really leaving this time.”

Yue Rujing turned his horse around once more, but still kept looking back.

But even so, the road is limited, and after lingering, there’s a time when you reach the end.

Gu Youyou held her horse and waited in place until she couldn’t see Yue Rujing anymore. Then she mounted her horse and rode back to the city.

…

Once everything had settled, Xiang Chun chattered to Gu Youyou about the current situation outside.

“The Emperor has been ruthless this time, executing more than a dozen officials and confiscating their properties. Over twenty officials are serving in disgrace. It’s said the Emperor just hasn’t found replacements for them yet. After this year’s exams, exceptions will be made to promote new people to replace them.”

Chapter 1504: Refusing the Decree

“Ah, such a pity I’m not a manservant. This year’s imperial exam is such a rare opportunity. The time hasn’t even arrived, and those examinees are already in a frenzy.”

Out with the old, in with the new. After the Imperial Court’s major reshuffling, it will be another scene entirely.

Gu Youyou looked at Xiang Chun, who had a face filled with regret, and smiled lightly, “Xiang Chun, can you write your own name?”

Xiang Chun: “…”

Gu Youyou mercilessly stabbed a knife into her heart, “Even if you were made a man, you’d still only be envious.”

Xiang Chun pouted and smiled, “You just make fun of me. In my next life, I’ll be reincarnated as a man!”

“Hmm? Well, you’ve got to live this life well first. That’s something for the next life. Speaking of duties, your monthly salary now isn’t small, and walking outside, your status isn’t any worse than those scholars!”

“Oh, that’s true!” Xiang Chun, being straightforward, quickly stopped being tangled up about becoming an official.

“By the way, last time Madam praised the pastry shop’s newly launched peach crisp. It was very delicious!”

Gu Youyou hadn’t managed those shops for a long time, so she asked, “Who made it?”

Xiang Chun said, “I heard Miss Du has recently employed a very talented pastry chef. That peach crisp is made by him.”

“Oh!” Gu Youyou thought to herself that she couldn’t be lazy anymore and should go out for a walk.

She said, “Pack your things; we’re visiting the Lin Residence today!”

“Today?” Xiang Chun said, troubled, “I’m afraid we won’t see Madam at the Lin Residence today!”

“Hmm?”

“You may not know, today is the day for the execution of the rebel Jin Tianyuan. Everyone has gone to the execution ground to watch. I heard Madam also plans to go!”

This was something no one had informed her about, likely at Jin Zijin’s behest.

Over there, Xiang Chun let it slip and feared Gu Youyou might want to go see it too. She cautiously said, “I hear the sentence is execution by dismemberment, along with a dozen rebellious ministers. Great Prince’s consort, you probably wouldn’t like such a bloody scene, right?”

Indeed, most people fear seeing such bloody scenes, yet more people are both afraid and curious, so no matter how bloody the scene, whenever there is an execution at the execution ground, many people still crowd in to watch.

“Wasteful!” Gu Youyou merely muttered softly.

To her, not using the bodies for academic research was indeed wasteful.

She had been ready to go out, but then she thought, at this time, the people she wanted to find were probably at the execution ground as well, and she wasn’t planning to go there, so she decided against it.

“Oh well! Why don’t you go… get me a peach crisp instead!”

Not going to the execution ground was good; Xiang Chun quickly agreed with a smile.

…

Jin Zijin hadn’t been to the Imperial Palace since he returned last time.

The Emperor had summoned him several times, but he declined them all. This day, the royal decree came again.

The Eunuch Wan, with earnest sincerity, said, “Great Prince, you should accept the decree. The Emperor just wants to see you!”

Jin Zijin, with Jin Xuyao, was making a wooden horse. He heard this but didn’t lift his head and merely said blandly, “If he gives up that idea, I will naturally go to the palace to see him.”

“This…” Everyone understood without saying, they all knew what that idea was.

The Eunuch Wan sighed, “The Emperor is old and not as healthy as before. If you don’t take the throne, he can only continue to hold on himself.”

Jin Zijin stopped and turned his head to say, “Prince Qin’s leg should be almost healed, right? Let him hold on for a few more months!”

“Prince Qin…” The Eunuch Wan raised his voice, feeling it was inappropriate, and quickly softened his tone, saying, “Great Prince, you jest. How could Prince Qin do it? From ancient times, the throne is inherited by the eldest legitimate son and grandson. Prince Qin is just a concubine’s son…”

Chapter 1505: Planning to Leave

"Eunuch Wan..." Jin Zijin interrupted, "Even a concubine’s son is still a prince, Eunuch Wan, you must be careful with your words and actions!"

"Ah, yes, yes, this old servant spoke wrongly, I deserve a beating!" Eunuch Wan even slapped his own mouth a few times, feeling bitterly troubled in his heart.

He had seen and heard many a time brothers fighting to the death over the throne, but someone like the eldest prince, who had every right to inherit yet refused to be the emperor, was truly unique.

In his view, if it weren’t for the eldest prince consort, the prince might just be planning to serve before the Sanqing statues on Qi Mountain for life.

Compared to being a Taoist, at least now the eldest prince has a family, thinking this way, Eunuch Wan felt somewhat relieved.

It seemed today would be yet another fruitless endeavor. Eunuch Wan had no choice but to sigh, "Then I shall return to the palace and report truthfully to His Majesty. Your Highness, the Emperor warned me before I left, that if you do not enter the palace this time, he will have to visit your residence himself!"

Jin Zijin: "..."

Seeing Jin Zijin's changed expression, Eunuch Wan left with satisfaction.

Gu Youyou emerged from the house, smiling, "I guess both Eunuch Wan and the Emperor are frustrated, not knowing what you're planning. So, what are you planning?"

"Alas..." Jin Zijin put down the tools in his hand and sighed deeply, "Don't you already know what I'm planning? Once the situation stabilizes and the regime is secure, our family will leave this place!"

"Where?" Gu Youyou asked in surprise.

Jin Zijin laughed, saying, "You'll like it. Your current task is to shift the business focus southward. Otherwise, when the time comes for us to leave suddenly, you won't have time to react."

"Huh?" Move the company.

"Yes, unless you want me to be Emperor? Didn't you say your hometown cannot tolerate a partner with divided loyalties? But as Emperor, for the sake of the world, one must have multiple wives."

Gu Youyou, thinking about his mysterious demeanor, concluded that according to the usual pattern, he was planning to find a picturesque place to live a secluded life.

Indeed, that seemed wonderful!

She nodded eagerly, "Yes, yes, you make the decision. Today, you stay home and take care of the children, I need to visit the Lin Family!"

"..." On which day wasn't he the one taking care of the children?

...

Gu Youyou went to the Lin Family to firstly visit the Madam and secondly to inform them about Lin Qianqing.

The couple did not want to be disturbed, so this matter could not be spread outside.

"Youyou, is that you?" The old Madam of the Lin Family seemed much older than before, partly due to her advancing age, and partly due to the many troubles at home over the years.

"Grandmother, how have you been lately?"

Gu Youyou presented some customary gifts according to the local custom, and the old Madam smiled broadly as she had her maid take them.

"Good, good, I'm quite well, it's just you all, one misfortune after another, how is it that you're all plagued? You, having barely returned, fell ill again. And there's that child Qianqing, who knows where she is now. Shenxing has also grown up, and your aunt is tired and has no energy to arrange a marriage for him. Then there's your cousin Zixin, she's grown up too, but with your aunt's condition, no one dares to marry their children to our family, how can this be resolved?"

Gu Youyou couldn't help but smile wryly, it seemed the old lady had been waiting for her just to share her grievances.

Gu Youyou followed the old lady inside the house, while the old lady continued to talk incessantly.

"Relying on your aunt for their marriages won't work. I'm old, and your uncle is just a rough man, if worse comes to worst, could you help take a look?"

Chapter 1506: Madam Lu Looks for Her

Gu Youyou nodded gently, graciously taking on the matter.

Just as Grandmother said, the current status of Aunt is too awkward. It is unlikely that anyone would want to marry into a family from the Ducal Residence, and those who refrain from public insults do so for Uncle's sake.

Moreover, Grandmother is advanced in years, and being from a farming background, finds it hard to communicate with established families in Beijing.

Many still regard them as nouveau riche.

Upon reaching the inner room, Gu Youyou dismissed everyone, leaving Xiang Chun by the door, before daring to discuss Lin Qianqing's matters with the old lady.

"Grandmother, my main purpose for visiting this time is to inform you about Cousin."

"Cousin? Which cousin?"

"Lin Qianqing, I've met her!"

"You've met her?" The old lady was immediately filled with excitement.

But upon realizing that Gu Youyou had dismissed everyone to tell her this privately, she quickly lowered her voice and asked quietly, "Where did you meet her? Where has she gone? How is she doing now?"

The old lady was so emotional that tears filled her eyes as she trembled and kept questioning Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou whispered, "Grandmother, don’t worry. She’s doing well now. Although her conditions aren’t as good as at home, she is content."

"Is she with King Jin?"

"Yes, they are together. Grandmother, Cousin is most worried about you. She says she can’t fulfill her filial duties and fears for your well-being."

The old lady wiped her tears with a handkerchief, saying, "Silly child, how could we not be well? We only worry about her. In a foreign land, who knows what hardships she may face!"

With that, her sobbing grew louder.

Gu Youyou continued softly comforting her until her emotions slowly calmed.

"Grandmother, I’m telling you this privately because I’m afraid word of their whereabouts might spread. With their status, obtaining a peaceful life isn’t easy, and you all..."

"Don’t worry, don’t worry, I understand. I won’t ask where they are, as long as they’re well. Youyou, if you can contact her, just send her a message saying everything is fine at home and she need not worry!"

"Alright, then I won’t trouble Uncle and Aunt. Please, Grandmother, relay Cousin’s situation to them, so they won’t worry!"

The old lady quickly said, "Ah! Although I’m old, I understand these things!"

Gu Youyou avoided seeing Madam Lin, assuming that Madam Lin also wished to avoid an awkward meeting. After all, matters related to the Ducal Residence were tied to her and Jin Zijin.

Though they brought it upon themselves, they remain her relatives. Understanding is one thing, but letting it go entirely is perhaps not that simple.

...

Upon returning, Gu Youyou saw Searcy by the doorway talking to someone who appeared to be a servant.

Gu Youyou curiously paused to watch. When Searcy noticed her, he averted his gaze, hurriedly dismissing the servant, and left without so much as a greeting.

This was unlike Searcy's usual behavior.

Gu Youyou returned home puzzled and asked Xiang Chun.

"What's going on with Searcy? Which family is that servant from?"

Xiang Chun, having spent many years in the circles of the city's elite, had the skill to recognize the distinctive signs of each household, ready to answer her master's questions at any moment.

She glanced once and knew which family the servant belonged to.

She said, "That's from the Lu Family, perhaps Madam Lu sent for her!"

Chapter 1507: Dealing with Relatives

"Madam Lu is looking for her?" Gu Youyou was shocked.

The Lu Family saw Searcy like a plague god, wishing they never knew her in their lifetime; why would they send someone to look for her?

Xiang Chun whispered to Gu Youyou: "You fell ill after coming back, so you wouldn't know. The Lu Family's attitude towards Searcy has changed?"

"Oh? How has it changed?" She had been in a daze these past few days and really didn't know what was happening outside.

Xiang Chun said, "Isn’t it because the Beiping Army revolted, causing countless deaths and injuries? Young Master Lu was severely injured in that battle, remained unconscious, and almost lost his life. The Imperial Physicians were helpless and suggested Madam Lu ask for your help. But you fell ill as soon as you returned, and the First Prince didn’t allow anyone to disturb you, so they were naturally left with no options. Later, Searcy returned, and they lowered their pride to ask Searcy for help to save him."

"Did Searcy save him?" Gu Youyou’s heart skipped a beat.

"Yes, she did!" Xiang Chun said, "A few days ago, Young Master Lu already woke up, and Madam Lu wants to invite Searcy back to the house, probably to bury the hatchet."

"Oh, Searcy is unwilling?" Gu Youyou raised an eyebrow.

Xiang Chun, who was never on good terms with Searcy, snorted and said, "Isn’t it obvious? Now that they need her, she acts all high and mighty. Hmph, to put it bluntly, she just wants to stay here with you. The First Prince’s consort, look at her, she’s neither a servant nor the master, yet she enjoys a master’s lifestyle; who would want to leave? Going back to the Lu Family, she’d still be an illegitimate daughter despised by everyone. Even a cat or a dog in the Lu Family must see her as a plague god after what she and her mother did, right?"

Xiang Chun was usually quite friendly, but that was as long as she didn’t encounter Searcy.

Whenever Searcy came up, she could become downright mean.

Searcy was just that kind of love-hate person, even Gu Youyou had countless arguments with her.

"Hmm, just let her be then!" Gu Youyou sighed softly.

...

After hearing that Gu Youyou had recovered well, relatives and friends came to visit.

Today, after having a spicy fish meal, they had just seen Er Yao and the Shunzi family off when the second aunt's family came by.

"Youyou, we heard you were ill a while back, and we wanted to visit, but the First Prince had people blocking us, saying not to disturb your rest. Now that we heard you're all better, we finally came to visit!"

"Thank you for your concern, Second Aunt!" Gu Youyou invited them to be seated and had someone serve tea.

Entering such a grand residence, Huang Xiangwen was no longer as uneasy as before.

Gu Youyou had also heard by now that they were doing quite well.

The members of the Gu Family were diligent, and diligent people could get by anywhere without much trouble.

Gu Dabao and Erbao were already married, and Sanya had grown into a fine girl. In a couple of years, she'd be ready for marriage. Regarding the children, she no longer had any regrets. She said to Gu Youyou, "They say fallen leaves return to their roots. My only regret now is not being in my hometown!"

Gu Youyou raised an eyebrow and asked, "Second Aunt still wants to return to Lotus Village?"

Huang Xiangwen said, "Yes, we were born farmers, and farming should be our job. We have so much land that shouldn't remain abandoned."

Gu Youyou was full of surprise and asked, "Wasn't Lotus Village destroyed?"

Huang Xiangwen quickly said, "Back then, it was destroyed by heavy rain. But later, many villagers returned and rebuilt the village. The land is still ours; only the houses were ruined, so we need to rebuild the houses!"

Chapter 1508: They Are Going Back

If that’s the case... then Gu Youyou didn’t know what to say.

But speaking of it, Lotus Village is indeed a great place, with sprawling fertile fields under the vast mountains, abundant wildlife in the hills, and rich soil that grows anything you plant.

From a modern perspective, people would certainly think that Huang Xiangwen’s idea is foolish. The whole family has high-paying jobs, lives in the wealthiest city in Zhuzhao Country, and has powerful relatives to rely on, yet they want to go back to those mountains to farm. It’s as if their brain got stuck in a door.

But the truth is different; this is an agricultural society. Farmers have a higher status than merchants, and besides, they aren’t the bosses but just workers for the bosses.

Having vast fertile lands at home yet running to be a laborer for businessmen is what’s truly foolish.

Gu Youyou had lived here for many years and could already understand their thoughts.

She lightly nodded and said, "So, when does Second Aunt plan to go back?"

Huang Xiangwen quickly replied, "No rush, no rush. Let Dabao and his wife go back first and find some people to fix up the house. I’ll stay here with Sanya and Erbao, and we’ll go back after they fix the house!"

Dabao didn’t come today, but Erbao and Sanya were here.

Erbao quickly said, "Big Sister, I’m not going back; it’s Big Brother, Sister-in-law, and Mom who want to go back."

The story of Dabao being cheated on by Lei Qianqian had spread widely through Lotus Village. Now Dabao had surely figured things out and decided to let his wife go back to live in Lotus Village, which was a good thing.

Huang Xiangwen explained for Erbao, "Erbao's wife is the only daughter of our next-door cloth shop owner. They can't bear to part with her, so..."

Hmm? Erbao is a son-in-law who married into his wife's family?

In the end, being a son-in-law who marries into the wife's family isn't something to be proud of, and Erbao felt embarrassed being talked about.

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "As long as life goes well, anything is fine!"

She then looked at Sanya, who had already become a young lady, and asked, "So, is Sanya going back?"

"Sanya will see. In two years or so, she'll be talking about marriage. Her sister-in-law said she would find a family for her in Jinxiu City. If she can find a suitable one here, she'll stay. If not, I'll take her back."

Sanya is a girl, and since life has been better these years, she's been raised a bit more delicately. Huang Xiangwen is worried if she goes back to the countryside, she won't be able to handle the hard work of farming.

Thirteen-year-old Sanya already knew how to feel shy. Listening to her mother talk about marriage, she blushed and said to Gu Youyou, "Big Sister, I'm going to see Little Xuyao!"

"Hmm, go ahead. He's outside in the courtyard with Xiang Chun."

Huang Xiangwen laughed and said, "Look at her, she's shy now, knows how to feel embarrassed!"

Erbao quickly added, "Sanya is a big girl now, Mom, don't tease her so much!"

After chatting with Huang Xiangwen for a while, they left the mansion.

Today, Gu Youyou had set time aside for guests. Not long after Huang Xiangwen’s family left, Miss Du came.

She was now staying at the residence of Commander Jie, making it convenient to visit Gu Youyou.

The business over in Jinxiu City wasn’t as convenient as before.

"I came today just to see you. I’ll head back soon!"

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "Why are you saying you’ll leave just as you arrive? I haven’t seen you in so long. Before, when I was in Nanzhao, I thought I wouldn’t make it back, and I was really worried about all those businesses, fearing you might ruin them!"

"Hmm? And then?" Miss Du asked with a smile.

Chapter 1509: The Emperor’s Sudden Arrival

"And then!" Gu Youyou laughed and said, "I didn’t expect you to be naturally talented for big business. Not only did you not mess it up, but you’ve grown it bigger and bigger. Now you’re probably a well-known rich lady among the noblewomen of Beijing, right?"

"No matter how wealthy I am, I’m not as wealthy as you. I only have the business of Manxiu Building and the major clothing shops, but you have pharmacies, pastry shops, and even glass production."

The two laughed as they spoke. It was indeed inappropriate for people like them to be so nonchalant about silver. They joked for a bit and then changed the topic.

Miss Du stroked her belly, a happy smile appearing on her face, and said, "Before, I thought that in this lifetime I might really only be able to adopt some orphans to support me in my old age. I never thought I could actually have my own children."

"Hmm, you’re pregnant again?" Gu Youyou said as she watched her belly-stroking gesture.

Miss Du nodded, "Yes, pregnant again. This time, I really hope it’s a daughter so that I have both a son and a daughter!"

"Do you want me to take your pulse?" Gu Youyou asked with a smile.

Miss Du refused, saying, "Better not. Whether it’s a son or a daughter, it’s still my child. If it’s a boy again, then... then I’ll just have another one!"

Gu Youyou: "..."

"Hey, are you guys planning to have more?" Miss Du suddenly asked.

Gu Youyou sighed lightly and said, "You know the condition of my body. It’s not easy for me to conceive. There’s no family planning here, and I personally want to have more. But these things should be left to fate. If I’m destined to have only one child, I’ll accept it."

Miss Du looked a bit surprised, asking, "You’re a doctor yourself, and you can’t manage to fix your body?"

"Sigh! A doctor isn’t almighty! They can’t cure every illness!"

Otherwise, despite the support of advanced modern technology, there are still so many infertile couples trying all means to have children, through IVF, surrogacy, womb borrowing, you name it.

...

The relatives and friends were all sent away, and it was already evening.

Thinking about Miss Du being pregnant again, Gu Youyou felt somewhat displeased and jealous!

They gave birth to their firstborn on the same day, so why was there no stir from herself?

At night, she entangled with her husband all night long, leaving Jin Zijin quite bewildered!

Last time, what Wan Eunuch said wasn’t false. The Emperor said he would come, and he really did.

The Emperor was a disciplined man; no matter how late he stayed up at night, he always got up with the crow of the rooster in the morning.

It wasn’t a good time, as the two who rarely slept in were having a lie-in that morning.

This was awkward. Xiang Chun kneeled on the ground trembling and replied, "The Crown Princess was entertaining guests all day yesterday, perhaps too tired, and hasn’t... hasn’t gotten up yet."

Wan Eunuch croaked, "Then what are you standing there for? Go wake them up!"

"This this..." Xiang Chun was quite troubled.

Wan Eunuch shouted angrily, "Bold! What kind of maid are you? Letting the Emperor wait?"

"Hey, Wan Decheng, step back!"

Wan Eunuch heard the Emperor’s words and stepped aside.

Only then did Xiang Chun quietly say, "The Crown Prince has a rule not to let us serve them too closely. We can only enter the courtyard when they come out in the morning. If they haven’t come out, we dare not go in!"

"..."

"But we can’t keep the Emperor waiting!"

Xiang Chun felt the same way; having the Emperor there was a grand matter. When it’s a grand matter, rules and protocols no longer apply.

She immediately kowtowed to the Emperor and went out to call someone.

"Wait!"

But was once again stopped by the Emperor.

Chapter 1510: Didn’t Get Up

Xiang Chun retreated from the doorway again and quickly asked, "What instructions does Your Majesty have?"

The Emperor said, "Forget it, I don’t mind waiting here for a bit, you just go and call them."

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

As a maid, she could only listen and obey.

At the same time, she thought that the Emperor was indeed good-natured, no, it should be said that the Emperor was really good-natured towards the Grand Prince and Princess Consort.

Afraid the Emperor might be bored waiting, Xiang Chun quickly added, "Your Majesty, the little imperial grandson should be awake by now, shall I bring him over?"

"Oh, Xuyao is awake?"

"Yes, the little imperial grandson always wakes up early."

"Haha, then bring him over!"

Not long after, Jin Xuyao was brought into the flower hall by Xiang Chun. The Emperor hadn't seen him for days, and upon seeing him now, he was quite pleased, as the unpleasant matters of Jin Zijin were temporarily forgotten.

"Xuyao, it's been a while since you saw your imperial grandfather, have you missed him?"

"I have!" Jin Xuyao said happily, "I also miss imperial grandma; when will imperial grandpa and imperial grandma come see me?"

He meant Imperial Concubine Sheng. After Gu Youyou's incident, he'd been cared for by her, and at such a young age, in his memory, she was probably the closest person to him.

Though his parents were with him now, he still often asked when Imperial Concubine Sheng would come to see him.

At his age, he didn't have a concept of death, and his memory was short, so they could only come up with some random excuse whenever he asked.

It seemed Jin Xuyao's memory of Imperial Concubine Sheng lasted longer than Gu Youyou had anticipated.

This time when he asked about her, both the Emperor and Eunuch Wan were at a loss for words.

Recalling the events of the day Imperial Concubine Sheng died, Eunuch Wan felt both aggrieved and infuriated.

He had never borne such indignity since serving beside the Emperor, being insulted by Jin Tianzhong and knocked unconscious twice. He thought to himself, thankfully, his constitution was strong enough to survive until now.

Imperial Concubine Sheng was so pitiful, everyone else survived, but she alone died.

The Emperor also felt a bit guilty about Imperial Concubine Sheng’s death.

He wasn’t really suffering a stroke at the time; he only feigned it to avoid questioning.

While his act spared him for a moment, it cost Sheng Qiaoyue her life.

He had orchestrated such a grand scheme with so many deaths, but it was still worth it in the end.

The ten thousand strong Beiping Army was now under his control, relieving the people of prolonged war.

But, when faced with Jin Xuyao’s persistent little face, he felt immense guilt.

"She has gone to a very far place and cannot come see Xuyao!" the Emperor said softly.

Of course, Jin Xuyao didn’t understand what the Emperor meant, so he merely asked, "Can Xuyao go see Imperial Grandma?"

The Emperor gently smiled at him and said, "Not now, when you grow up, you can!"

"Then I want to grow up quickly!"

"If you want to grow up quickly, you must eat more," the Emperor pinched his nose and said, "Xuyao just woke up, have you had breakfast yet?"

"No!" Jin Xuyao shook his head and touched his stomach, saying, "Hungry!"

Xiang Chun, observing their expressions, quickly said, "Then I’ll have them bring breakfast at once!"

"Yes, quickly go!" the Emperor instructed.

The Emperor accompanied Jin Xuyao for breakfast and played with him in the courtyard all morning, until the sun was high in the sky and the main residence’s masters finally got up slowly.

Gu Youyou yawned as she rubbed her belly and said, "Yesterday, Miss Du came to see me, and she’s pregnant again."