Farmhouse 1531

Chapter 1531: The Real Father Arrives

Prime Minister Zhang thought it made sense; Gu Youyou's reputation was big, who in Zhuzhao Country didn't know about her now? Gu Wu's son and daughter were merely restaurant owners. If he was wandering outside, it would be normal not to know their situation.

Prime Minister Zhang's face fell, and he said lightly, "Brother Gu, I've sheltered you, treating you as a friend. If you still have some matters hidden from me, it wouldn't be fair. Your children have received Gu Youyou's care and opened a Fish Manor in Beijing, indicating that Gu Youyou still treats her poor relatives well. But you are her uncle, yet you've been wandering the streets for years; do you think anyone would believe that?"

"This…" Gu Wu had already come up with a plan to see Gu Youyou, knowing well that she couldn't tolerate him. So he thought it over and decided to tell him those words.

He was planning to shout about it everywhere anyway.

Gu Wu said, "To be honest, sir, I am a sinner to Gu's family, afraid to return home and not daring to bring my family—Erya, Sanbao, and Youyou!"

Seeing something interesting, Prime Minister Zhang sent the attendants away, leaving only Gu Wu and Gu Shuisheng.

Gu Wu's acting skills were always impeccable. He immediately portrayed a remorseful, helpless expression and vividly performed a grand drama.

"Back then, my brother and I both fancied Youyou's mother. However, my father, insisting on prioritizing the eldest for marriage, forcibly separated us. Youyou's mother became my sister-in-law. What none of them knew was, Youyou's mother and I still had feelings for each other. We secretly committed a betrayal against my brother. Feeling guilty, I hurriedly married a wife.

Later, my sister-in-law told me Youyou was actually not my brother's daughter but my own. At that time, I went mad, furiously seeking revenge against my brother. My brother noticed something was off

with us, and somehow learned about that matter. Then, during a heavy rain, my brother called me out, intending to kill me. Unexpectedly, during the fight, my brother fell into the water and drowned. My sister-in-law, who tried to mediate, also ended up drowning. Because of this matter, my father learned about it and died from anger. Youyou has always seen me as a murderer…"

"You are Gu Youyou's biological father?" The other details no longer mattered to Prime Minister Zhang, who stood up, beginning to reevaluate Gu Wu.

What, Gu Wu? This kind of fellow, surprisingly, is Gu Youyou's biological father.

Oh no, Gu Youyou was born from her mother's affair, an illegitimate child unfit to be seen. If this status were true…

Prime Minister Zhang couldn't hold back his laughter.

"Hahaha… Brother Gu, men, who wouldn't make a mistake in their youth? Besides, this isn't entirely your fault, your brother had a grudge for stealing your wife! But speaking of, Princess Ning mistakenly regarded a thief as a father. Her hatred toward you is wrong. This matter must be clarified. Father and daughter, shouldn't be misunderstanding forever, right?"

Gu Wu nodded excitedly and then frowned, saying, "But the misunderstanding Youyou has towards me is too deep; she now still sees me as a father-killer!"

"It's not a problem, it's not a problem at all, if she can't figure it out temporarily, it's understandable. Brother Gu, if you don't mind my interference, I am willing to speak out for you and explain well, until Princess Ning understands."

"The Prime Minister is willing to speak out for me?" Gu Wu was overwhelmed with excitement, as if he could see Gu Youyou recognizing him as her father the next second, and then becoming relatives with the current emperor. Maybe, he could even become a state father in the future?

Just thinking about it makes one excited!

Chapter 1532: Chancellor Zhang's Schemes

"Of course!" Prime Minister Zhang said with a smile, "Brother Gu, Young Master Gu, please stay in the residence for now. Such matters cannot be rushed. I'll help you reunite with your daughter when the right opportunity arises."

Gu Wu, thinking about staying in such a luxurious place, couldn't care less about the urgency of the reunion.

After all, he had made it all up, and he was naturally hoping that Prime Minister Zhang wouldn't rush.

Looking at this splendid mansion, Gu Wu couldn't suppress the smile on his face and repeatedly responded, "Alright, no rush, no rush. Thank you, Prime Minister Zhang, for hosting the two of us. You truly are a good person!"

He quickly smiled and said to Gu Shuisheng, "Shuisheng, quickly, Prime Minister Zhang is willing to take us in, quickly thank Prime Minister Zhang!"

Gu Shuisheng seemed indifferent to Prime Minister Zhang's offer of shelter, but since Gu Wu had saved his life and he had recognized Gu Wu as his father, he naturally wouldn't defy his orders over such trivial matters. He could only stiffly raise his hand to express his gratitude!

...

Zhang Shiyu, upon hearing these words, was so excited that she lost her appetite.

If the merchant's daughter Gu Youyou were a match for Jin Zijin, then what about the bastard? Does the Imperial Family still want to save face? How could a bastard match Jin Zijin?

She would soon be disowned by the Zong Family and find a reason to be executed.

Then her opportunity would come.

But hearing that her father wasn't planning to act immediately, she grew anxious.

"Father, why must we wait? This matter should be publicized immediately!"

Prime Minister Zhang hummed a tune from the opera troupe, smiling, and said, "Shiyu, you are too impatient. Can this matter be rushed? Just because Gu Wu claims he's Gu Youyou's father, does it make it true? If Gu Youyou refuses to acknowledge it and believes Gu Wu is deliberately slandering her, do you think the Emperor will choose to save the Imperial Family's face or recognize Gu Wu? What's more, Gu Youyou has saved both the Emperor and the Empress Dowager's lives, which you do not understand!"

"Then what's going on, Father? What are your plans? I'm no longer young and cannot wait any longer!"

"Ah, I know, Ningwang is also no longer young. Why are you so anxious?"

"I am anxious! Can't you see how others are mocking me?"

"Alright, I know everything!" Prime Minister Zhang said confidently, "Father knows what he's doing. Don't worry, this time, not only will I cause Gu Youyou's reputation to be destroyed, but I'll also have Ningwang, whom you long for, come to our residence to earnestly propose marriage to you."

"I hope so!" Although Zhang Shiyu was dissatisfied, she had no choice but to respond.

Prime Minister Zhang put on his court attire and walked out with a stern expression.

"Hmph, everything must be done one step at a time, from shallow to deep..."

In his view, now Jin Zijin and Gu Youyou both enjoyed a good reputation in the public eye. To topple Gu Youyou now, even if everything Gu Wu said was true, would be as challenging as reaching for the moon.

So... what if their public image were first severely damaged?

Like the selection process for the consort that took place years ago, that magnificent selection was a national event, open to all eligible women, regardless of rank or status.

If Gu Youyou won in talent and everyone was convinced, they could accept it.

But what if the final result was rigged, and Jin Zijin and Gu Youyou had conspired long before? Why should everyone be deceived by Jin Zijin and Gu Youyou?

Yes, let’s do it this way!

...

Only when they found some spare time did Erya and Shunzi arrive at Ningwang Residence.

Upon hearing that Gu Youyou had an urgent matter to discuss with them, how could they still focus on their business? Everyone knew that Gu Youyou was a considerate person, who wouldn’t casually interrupt others at work. If it wasn’t for something extremely urgent, she wouldn’t look for them during work hours; she’d wait for them during their off time.

Chapter 1533: Letting Everyone Know

"Miss Xiang Chun, do you know why the eldest sister is looking for us?"

"Second Miss, I don’t know either, but the princess seemed quite anxious. You’ll find out once you get there."

"Don’t worry, let’s see the eldest sister first. We’re already here!"

Gu Youyou had keen ears. They were still in the courtyard when she heard them.

She closed the book, dismissed everyone from the study, and then Xiang Chun brought Erya and Shunzi inside.

"You've arrived. Please sit down. Xiang Chun, go outside now!" Gu Youyou said with a smile.

"Yes, princess."

Erya sat down with Shunzi, feeling anxious, and asked, "Eldest sister, what's the matter?"

Only the relevant people remained in the room now, and Gu Youyou's face turned serious as she said, "Gu Wu is here!"

"Ah...?" Erya and Shunzi were both a bit stunned.

Gu Youyou repeated once more, "Erya, your father is here, just last night."

"What?" Erya's face suddenly turned pale.

Upon hearing Gu Wu's name, hearing 'father,' there was an indescribable feeling in her heart.

It was like a calm lake being disrupted by a pebble, or like looking happily in a mirror and suddenly having it shattered by someone with a hammer!

Like a wolf suddenly appearing in a pasture full of sheep.

Without seeing anyone, her entire body had already tensed up, feeling that the good life she had finally attained would soon be shattered.

"Is he not dead?" Erya trembled as she asked.

"No!" Gu Youyou shook her head, speaking softly.

The fact that her own biological father wasn't dead brought her no joy at all, only fear and helplessness.

Gu Youyou saw everything clearly, and Shunzi comforted Erya in a soft voice.

"Don’t be afraid, don’t worry, the eldest sister definitely has a plan to deal with him." Shunzi turned to Gu Youyou and asked, "Eldest sister, what has he come for?"

Gu Youyou shook her head and said, "I don’t know. The guard said he came to find me, but the guard didn’t let him in."

"Find you?" Erya and Shunzi were extremely surprised.

"Since he’s not dead, what’s he looking for our eldest sister for?" Erya sneered, "He still has the face to come looking for our eldest sister? If it weren’t for him, our uncle and aunt wouldn’t have died, and grandpa wouldn’t have died. How does he still have the nerve to come looking for our eldest sister?"

Erya still thought that Gu Wu had come to find her and Shunzi for retirement but didn’t expect him to be looking for Gu Youyou.

"I don’t know!" Gu Youyou said indifferently, "I’m just letting you know, Gu Wu is here, he’s in Beijing, and he may come looking to cause you trouble, so be prepared!"

Erya said fiercely, "Cause us trouble? Does he still have the cheek to cause us trouble? If it weren’t for him, mom wouldn’t have died either." The more she spoke, the more agitated she became, until she started crying: "A perfectly good family was ruined by him, and since he isn’t dead, why doesn’t he stay far away? We’re just getting to live a good life, and he still wants to disrupt it? Can his conscience be at peace?"

Shunzi comforted the crying Erya, whispering, "Erya, don’t worry, our eldest sister hasn’t said what he’s here for. What if he didn’t come to cause us trouble? Let’s wait and see what he wants first, and then decide."

Crying, Erya pushed Shunzi away and said, "You’re always the nice guy, thinking everything will turn out well. If he were a good person, it would be another matter. He’s Gu Wu, that bastard who kills and is

unfilial, capable of any evil deeds. Even then, you think of him in a good light, you must have hit your head against the wall, right?"

Chapter 1534: Marriage Proposal

Facing his wife’s anger, Shunzi was at a loss and could only seek help with his eyes from Gu Youyou, the big sister.

Gu Youyou pondered for a moment, then said softly, "Erya, stop crying. Shunzi does have a point. Even if we know he has ill intentions, there’s nothing we can do. We can only wait and see what he plans to do. You should go back for now, just remember what I said."

"Alright, big sister, you be careful too. If there’s really no way, then..." Then we should just treat him as a murderer and turn him in—Erya couldn’t bring herself to say such words.

She only said, "Big sister, don’t stand on ceremony. Just do what needs to be done. Someone like him isn’t worth our sympathy!"

"Hmm, I will!" Gu Youyou said.

...

That evening, Jin Zijin didn’t come back, only sent someone to say he had some urgent matters to attend to. Gu Youyou felt awkward, clueless about what he was up to, with no one to consult.

The status of women in ancient times meant that without relying on men, some things were indeed difficult to handle. For instance, trying to find a way to probe into the Chancellor Residence.

Xiao Jinyan was good at sneaking around, but unfortunately, since the Grand Tutor was assigned to manage Xining, he followed there too.

The last time, I heard Jin Zijin say that the Grand Tutor planned to hand over Xining to Xiao Jinyan after his death, and to keep him there, even found him a local wife in Xining.

Yue Rujing also returned to Lingnan, so the only reliable person left who could sneak around was Jin Zijin.

Gu Youyou had a constant feeling that big trouble was coming, making her sleep poorly the whole night, yet she still had to get up early the next day.

Sunrise!

Today, Miss Du had arranged to meet the Madam and eldest daughter of the Vice Minister of Punishments at a teahouse opposite the Fish Manor, and Gu Youyou had to go and see. It was for arranging a lifelong marriage for Lin Shenxing and Lin Zixin, to do justice by her uncle’s family.

"Oh my, Princess, such dark circles, didn’t sleep well?" Xiang Chun exclaimed in shock while assisting her with her washing up.

Gu Youyou quickly lowered her head to look at her reflection in the basin of water.

A fair-skinned woman with dark circles looked particularly conspicuous, which annoyed her. With such a face, how could she meet the Madam and daughter from the Ministry of Justice family? It would appear so undignified.

Thus, Gu Youyou, who rarely wore makeup, had to apply rouge and powder, crafting a thick makeup look typical of ancient women.

Looking at her face now, it matched the ancient aesthetic standards, importantly, it concealed the dark circles.

Xiang Chun laughed and said, "The Princess is truly amazing, capable of covering such severe dark circles."

I wonder how the Princess got dark circles. Was it because she didn’t sleep well last night since the Prince didn’t return?

Hmm, thinking this way, the Princess must have felt a sense of crisis, as she should!

Gu Youyou did not know the little calculations in Xiang Chun's mind, just changed her clothes and went out.

To show politeness, she arrived earlier than Miss Du and their guests.

Miss Du chose a quiet private room on the second floor, with a window facing the entrance of the Fish Manor. Opening the glass window, the strong aroma of braised fish could be smelled.

Soon, Miss Du arrived with a charming woman and a young girl.

These were presumably the Madam and eldest daughter of the Vice Minister of Punishments.

Upon seeing Gu Youyou in the room, both were surprised and hurriedly said, "Princess Ning? Greetings, Princess Ning!"

The woman tugged at the girl's sleeve, prompting her to fearfully and respectfully say, "Greetings, Princess Ning!"

Chapter 1535: Hidden Troubles

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "Madam Tao, Miss Tao, please sit down first!"

"Thank you, Princess Ning!"

Being so restrained is naturally not conducive to conversation, so Gu Youyou smiled and said, "Everyone, let's be casual here. There is no Princess Ning here. I am just entrusted by my grandmother and uncle to help my cousins from the Lin Family with a marriage arrangement!"

Gu Youyou spoke swiftly and directly, and intentionally or unintentionally glanced at Miss Tao, making the young girl feel quite embarrassed.

Madam Tao, leading Miss Tao, sat somewhat awkwardly opposite Gu Youyou. Madam Tao asked, "Is the Princess looking for a match for the Lin Family's son?"

"Yes, Madam Tao. I heard that you have also been looking at many talented young men for your daughter, so you probably know my cousin. In terms of age, he is just right for Miss Tao, and their family backgrounds are quite similar. I just fear that Madam Tao might mind my cousin's status as a child born out of wedlock."

Madam Tao quickly replied, "No, no, how could we mind the Lin Family son's birth status? The Lin Family doesn't have a legitimate son; only one son, whether born out of wedlock or legitimate, is equally noble."

Miss Du remarked, "Isn't it the case! There's a difference even between children born out of wedlock. Madam Tao, you have been my valued customer for a long time, and Miss Tao is someone I often see. Therefore, I introduced this marriage to you. Although Lin Family's son is born out of wedlock, he is destined to inherit Master Lin's estate, and his wife will be the future head of the Lin Family."

Miss Du and Princess Ning's words made her quite tempted, but when she thought of Jin Yuan, still the butler of the former Ducal Residence, it always made her feel uneasy.

She feared whether Madam Lin still harbored resentment towards the Imperial Family, and if, one day, she committed some rebellious act, dragging down the Lin Family, the Tao Family would be implicated due to their marriage alliance, and her sin would be significant.

Madam Tao looked troubled, while Miss Tao, being a young girl, didn't think much of it; she just kept her head down, fiddling with her handkerchief and occasionally glancing out the window.

Of course, the grand drama arranged by Gu Youyou was yet to come, and soon Miss Tao wouldn't be bored anymore.

Gu Youyou smiled gently and said, "In reality, whether life is good or not, others can't see it; only they know. Of course, as a senior, Madam Tao does everything for the wellbeing of her children, which I understand. But don't all parents in the world hope for their children to lead good lives? Life is but a few decades, and if you can't get along with your spouse and argue every day, you'll waste those decades without a chance to live anew."

Madam Tao awkwardly tugged at her mouth, affirming with a yes.

Indeed, she had been thinking not so much about her eldest daughter’s happiness but rather weighing the pros and cons, worrying whether Madam Lin might cause some mishap that would involve them.

Hearing Gu Youyou’s words, she felt somewhat ashamed.

Miss Tao gratefully looked at Gu Youyou. She was already seventeen, and her parents had started considering her marriage prospects since she was fifteen, genuinely wanting to find a good match for her while also contemplating whether it could benefit the family.

Miss Du continued, "Lin Family’s son is outstanding in talent; I believe Madam Tao knows this. During the last imperial examination, the emperor personally praised him for having the esteem of his father. Both father and son from the Lin Family were Top Scholars by birth, which is unparalleled among ordinary households."

Madam Tao nodded repeatedly, saying, "Lin Family’s son is indeed good; my husband often praises him, but..."

Chapter 1536: Blind Date

Gu Youyou knew what she wanted to say, wasn’t it just looking at her aunt with colored glasses?

If her aunt really had ulterior motives, she wouldn’t have sided with the Emperor that time in the palace.

Of course, she could understand Madam Tao’s concerns as well. There were plenty of people who, despite living well, insist on seeking revenge against all odds.

But it was unfair that the sins had to be borne by the young master and miss of the Lin Family, so at this point Gu Youyou didn’t let her say the rest, only said: "Madam Tao, why don’t we do it like this? Since it is all for the sake of Miss Tao, why not let her choose herself?"

"Choose herself?" Madam Tao looked surprised, as did Miss Du, who was also unaware of this suggestion, and looked at Gu Youyou with surprise. Miss Tao's eyes were filled with curiosity.

Madam Tao said: "Since ancient times, the marriage affairs of children have been decided by the parents. How can I let my daughter choose for herself when she is just a young girl?"

Gu Youyou smiled softly and said: "All along, marriage has been based on the words of matchmakers. Parents roughly judge from the matchmaker's words whether such a family suits their own, but rarely do they consider whether the two main parties of the marriage are suitable for each other, which is unfair to them. What I mean is, why not let Miss Tao and Young Master Lin meet privately..."

"How can that be?" Madam Tao immediately rejected the idea.

"If it doesn't work out, how can my daughter marry if word gets out?"

Miss Du already understood Gu Youyou's intention, having interacted with her for years, and had been influenced by her thinking to some extent, seeing things openly.

She immediately assisted in speaking: "Madam Tao, please rest assured, the matter of coming to this teahouse today, whether it's you and Miss Tao or me, Princess Ning, and Young Master Lin, is a secret. Regardless of its outcome, it will not be spread."

"This..." Madam Tao looked towards Miss Tao.

A glint of light appeared in Miss Tao's eyes, naturally willing.

Her family had been arranging marriages for her for so long; regarding her own future, she naturally hoped to see and understand more herself.

That Young Master Lin was so renowned in Beijing, she had seen him from afar once or twice, yet had no opportunity to speak with him.

First, there was the difference between men and women, and secondly, the Lin Family's status was indeed higher than her own family's.

These young masters and misses had their own circles, often playing with those of similar family backgrounds—the direct descendants together and the illegitimate ones separately.

Young Master Lin was somewhat awkward, having mingled in both the circles of direct and illegitimate descendants, a fact she'd heard from her close friends.

Never before had she thought of marrying up to the Lin Family. Now, with Princess Ning herself matchmaking, thinking about Young Master Lin again, she felt a bit eager.

Madam Tao sighed lightly; how could she not understand her own daughter?

Seeing her daughter's expression, she had no choice but to agree.

Hopefully, Madam Lin behaves and stays home like her own queen, causing no trouble outside, and does not challenge the Imperial Family's authority risking implicating the Tao Family.

Madam Tao cupped her hands towards Gu Youyou and Miss Du and said, "Since Princess Ning and Second Mistress Jie guarantee it, then... then let my daughter meet Young Master Lin."

Gu Youyou beamed, pulling out a finely crafted small wooden token from her sleeve, wrapped it with a handkerchief, and handed it to Miss Tao.

Miss Tao took it with suspicion, glanced at the token, and a trace of surprise flashed in her eyes. She bowed slightly to her mother, Gu Youyou, and Miss Du, wrapped the small wooden token tightly in the handkerchief, and left.

...

Chapter 1537:: Gossip in the Zhang Residence

Gu Wu, now dressed like a person of dignity, already feels like he has become a wealthy man with high status in Beijing after just two days.

Moreover, with Prime Minister Zhang intentionally treating him with respect and calling him brother, he even feels that the next moment he'll be recognized as the father of Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin, becoming the emperor's in-law and sitting at the same table with the emperor for a casual meal.

Of course, when it comes to bossing around the maids, there's no holding back.

"How did you make this water? Trying to scald me to death, huh?"

Gu Wu overturned the basin of water, splashing the maid all over.

The maid attending to his wash, with her wet hair, knelt down and apologized repeatedly.

"Master Gu, it's my fault! I'll quickly go change the water for you!"

The maid hurried out with an empty basin, while the maids outside looked at her sympathetically, whispering, "Xixi, why is that beggar inside so temperamental?"

"Sigh!" Xixi sighed helplessly, "I really don't know what our master is thinking, how he managed to pick up this beggar and provide him with good food and drink."

A particularly imaginative woman said, "Oh, haven't you heard?"

"Madam Liu, heard what?"

Madam Liu looked around to ensure no one was watching, then pulled the two young maids aside and whispered, "This isn't a beggar that the master picked up. It's clearly the second young lady who picked up these two beggars."

"But wasn’t it the master who decided to keep them, and serve them with good food and drinks?"

"Do you know why?" Madam Liu teased.

Xixi pressed urgently, "Oh Madam Liu, stop teasing. Tell us why!"

"Yes, tell us!"

"Hehe!" Madam Liu chuckled, "In the Zhang Residence, our young lady can’t find anyone to marry, and the young masters can’t find suitable brides either. It’s no secret in Beijing. The second young lady is already getting on in age and really can’t find a husband. The master thought of bringing in a son-in-law for her. The second young lady is the legitimate young lady, they can’t let her remain unmarried, right?"

The two maids suddenly understood and said, "So Madam Liu means the young lady brought back these two beggars to be her in-home son-in-law?"

"What do you mean two? That younger beggar, once tidied up, looks just like the noble sons of Beijing, right? The older one is his father. I guess the master and the young lady took a fancy to this younger beggar, so they took in both beggars, treating them well."

Everyone thought this made some sense but also felt quite pitiful.

"Before the eldest young lady and Madam had their accident, the second young lady was the most sought-after talent in Beijing. Pretty and talented, people couldn’t even dream of having her as their bride. Now, she has fallen to the point of picking a beggar to be her in-home son-in-law. Truly a tragedy."

"Exactly. Picking one and getting another for free—the younger beggar is still alright, but the older beggar puts on airs bigger than our master, as if his son is marrying a princess!"

The maids and women chatted away, meanwhile, Gu Wu, waiting impatiently for the maid to bring water to the door, shouted furiously, "You lazy wench, where’s my water? Hurry up or you’ll get your legs broken!"

Xixi shivered, not that she could look down on the old beggar anymore—her master assigned her to serve him, and what could she, a servant, do but accept her fate?

The others could only look at Xixi with sympathy.

Chapter 1538: Scheming

Xixi quickly drew another basin of water and delivered it to Gu Wu, who cursed her thoroughly, leaving the pretentious beggar shivering with anger.

Gu Wu washed himself clean and chose what he thought was a very luxurious outfit to wear, only then did he step out the door.

After hearing the news about Erya and Sanbao, he decided to visit Erya's Fish Manor today. On one hand, he genuinely missed his own children, and on the other, after hearing Chancellor Zhang bragging about the delicious fish and booming business there, saying that they earned heaps of silver every year.

Gu Wu listened with eyes gleaming.

Even if Gu Youyou here doesn't acknowledge him, could his own son and daughter, running such a large Fish Manor, possibly not afford to support him?

Anyway, his trip to Beijing was worth it, not only finding his son and daughter, but securing his own luxurious future.

He had even boasted to Chancellor Zhang at the time, saying that the fish-cooking skills of his daughter and son-in-law were taught by him. But when Miss Zhang expressed her desire to try the master's fish, he chickened out, only admitting that years of being a beggar left him with aching arms and legs, and lost his skills, making Miss Zhang sick to her stomach.

This beggar, forever spinning tales, made it hard to believe which of his words were true.

Seeing Gu Wu, dressed like a wealthy bumpkin, stepping out the door, Zhang Shiyu stomped her feet angrily: "Father, look at these kinds of people, I regret bringing them back so much. Father, what exactly

are you plotting, keeping such nauseating things at home, the servants say he acts more high-handed than you."

Chancellor Zhang chuckled sourly, "Well, his daughter has become in-laws with the Emperor, let him act as he does!"

"Ugh, with a father like Gu Youyou, once they acknowledge each other, Gu Youyou's time as Princess Ning will be over."

"Ha! That's exactly right!" Chancellor Zhang laughed, stroking his beard.

However, Zhang Shiyu couldn't find it funny and said, "But Father, you must expose this matter first, Father, he's now living with us, making our lives miserable."

"Oh!" Chancellor Zhang shook his head, "Shiyu, I've told you so much, how come you're not progressing? What good would it do to reveal it now? You think Gu Youyou is foolish? Hmph, if she were foolish, she wouldn't have her current fame, would Ning Wang even be interested in her? Let me tell you, don't get upset, Gu Youyou is much smarter than you."

"Father!" Zhang Shiyu looked upset.

"Hmph, Gu Youyou isn't foolish, she won't recognize this father, she might even retaliate and drag our Chancellor Residence into the mess. To deal with her, we must be foolproof."

"What does Father plan to do?" Although Zhang Shiyu was reluctant to admit Gu Youyou's prowess over her, she trusted her father, Chancellor Zhang.

Chancellor Zhang said, "Gu Wu has gone to Erya's Fish Manor!"

Zhang Shiyu seemed confused and asked, "So what? Didn't Father say the owners of Erya's Fish Manor are Gu Wu's own daughter and son-in-law? His own son is working there as a chef too."

"Exactly!" Chancellor Zhang said, mysteriously.

"What connection does that have with Gu Youyou acknowledging them? They are his own son and daughter naturally."

"Ah, of course, there's a connection." Chancellor Zhang chuckled, "See if Gu Youyou isn't taking better care of Gu Xiaoqing and her brother than the family in Jinxiu City!"

Chapter 1539: All Dead

The Prime Minister Zhang has a lot of information about Gu Youyou and the Gu Family here.

Zhang Shiyu nodded and said, "Perhaps Gu Youyou and Gu Xiaoqing were close before."

"Close? What closeness?" The Prime Minister Zhang looked as if he hated iron for not becoming steel and said, "Gu Youyou was locked in a dark room when she was young, with no contact with any siblings. Where would the closeness come from? Instead, it was Gu Wu who killed the eldest of the Gu Family, Gu Youyou's parents, and Gu Youyou knows about this matter.

Think about it, Gu Youyou being so nice to the children of her father's killer, isn't that abnormal?"

"It's abnormal!" Zhang Shiyu shook her head and said.

"Yes, it's abnormal!" The Prime Minister Zhang drew out his tone with a mysterious smile, "It's precisely because it's abnormal!"

Zhang Shiyu understood what her father meant, but…

"Is this really the case?"

The Prime Minister Zhang laughed heartily and said, "Regardless of whether the truth is like this or not, it must appear to be so. The people will believe it's like this! Haha… First, let Gu Wu reunite with the siblings at the Fish Manor so that everyone knows the boss of Fish Manor has found their father and

who their father is. Haha, let everyone recognize this face so that when Gu Youyou suddenly introduces a father, people won't be clueless who this person is.

Once Gu Wu's name spreads across Beijing, then reveal that Gu Youyou is not cousins with the siblings of the Fish Manor, but actually half-sisters. This way, everyone won't have difficulty accepting it!"

Zhang Shiyu also started chuckling, continuing from the Prime Minister Zhang's words, "Then Gu Youyou's excessive care for the siblings of Fish Manor can be explained, as they are not the children of her father's killer, but her biological brother and sister?"

"Ah, indeed, my daughter has really grown!"

"Father!" Zhang Shiyu called out bashfully.

"Father is indeed amazing!"

"Haha…" The Prime Minister Zhang laughed heartily, "Daughter, don't forget how the Ducal Residence was once so powerful, powerful enough to rival the Emperor, but in terms of strategy, they were no match for me. Their failure was in underestimating your eldest sister, not taking the Zhang Family seriously. Hmph, now look, they're all dead, aren't they!"

"How can those bunglers from the Ducal Residence compare to Father? Father thinks deeply, I believe in Father!"

The Zhang Family was once closely allied with the Ducal Residence, yet after the Ducal Residence's fall, all those ministers closely associated with it were implicated, with severe cases being annihilated and lesser ones being dismissed and expelled from the capital, yet he alone survived unscathed.

…

The Tao Family lady followed the small wooden sign's instructions and found a secluded elegant room.

With trepidation, she knocked on the door, which was soon opened from the inside, revealing a young, handsome gentleman. Though not as tall and strong as northern men, he exuded the unique elegance of a scholar.

Just like Master Lin.

Miss Tao softly asked, “May I ask if you are Young Master Lin?”

She had seen Lin Shenxing from afar before, so she recognized him at once.

But Miss Tao was clever enough to not reveal she recognized Lin Shenxing, so she pretended not to know him.

Lin Shenxing glanced at the small sign in Miss Tao’s hand, speaking softly, “It is I, Miss Tao, please come in!”

Miss Tao lowered her gaze, her face unknowingly turning a shade of crimson, yet she didn’t linger at the door and quickly entered the room.

Chapter 1540: They Have Arrived

Lin Shenxing closed the door, feeling terribly awkward being alone in a room with a young lady who had not yet been married off.

However, this was a suggestion from his cousin Gu Youyou, who called it a blind date.

Gu Youyou had told him, “You two sit down together and see for yourselves whether you like each other. It’s up to you to decide; I won’t make the choice for you. I’ll just help you find suitable young ladies your age!”

At first, he found it intriguing and agreed, but when the day truly came, looking at the shy girl across from him, he felt somewhat at a loss.

How should a blind date be conducted? What should be said first, and what should follow?

If he said something wrong, would it make a bad impression or even scare her off?

A series of questions overwhelmed him, and for the first time, the eloquent Lin Shenxing was at a loss for words.

He and Miss Tao sat facing each other, and neither of them spoke a word for quite some time.

On this side, Lin Shenxing and Miss Tao have already met face to face, but they were simply meeting, staying silent and shy in each other's presence, which Gu Youyou was unaware of.

She believed that young people should be given some space, with elders in one room and young men and women in another; this was her vision of a blind date.

But Madam Tao still looked worried.

"Madam, Madam Xie, is this really alright?"

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "Don't worry, they're just in the room across; Madam Tao, just wait here."

All she could do was wait, and Madam Tao could only sit anxiously, occasionally glancing at the door opposite.

To ease the awkwardness, Gu Youyou began to ask some family-related questions.

"Where is Madam Tao from? Your accent doesn't sound Northern."

Madam Tao replied softly, "I'm from Xuyang. My family and my husband's family are old acquaintances. The marriage was arranged in our grandfathers' generation."

Miss Du realized, “I heard that the Tao family isn’t originally from Beijing; they came from the generation of Old Master Tao, right?”

Madam Tao laughed, “Yes, my husband’s family was formerly neighbors with my mother’s family. Our Old Master used to be the County Magistrate of Xuyang before being transferred to Beijing. That’s how our family established roots in Beijing, with later generations finding positions here as well.”

“So it seems Madam Tao has left her hometown?”

“I suppose so! But after all these years, I’ve gotten used to life in Beijing. When my mother passed away a few years ago, I returned to Xuyang once, and felt quite unaccustomed to it!”

The group chatted and laughed, but then they heard some discordant voices from the downstairs opposite side.

Gu Youyou had keen ears and immediately recognized the voice the moment they spoke downstairs.

Her expression changed, and she stood up at once.

This sudden action startled Madam Tao, who thought to herself, everything was going well, why did Madam’s expression change all of a sudden?

Miss Du, who understood Gu Youyou’s temperament, asked worriedly, “What’s wrong?”

“There’s an acquaintance downstairs!” Gu Youyou replied calmly, her eyes fixed on Gu Wu, who was standing in front of the Erya Fish Manor.

They hadn’t seen each other for years; the difference between Gu Wu now and when he was in Lotus Village was like night and day. Life in jail wasn’t easy, and neither was living as a beggar.

He had lost a lot of weight and looked much older, his hair completely gray, though meticulously tidied by him.

Even his voice had changed from that of a middle-aged man to an old man, but Gu Youyou could still recognize it without seeing him.

“Erya, Erya, have you come out? Do you still recognize me? I am your father!”

The ever-dramatic Gu Wu truly seemed like he had found his long-lost daughter at that moment. Every action, every expression evoked sympathy from others.