Farmhouse 1611

Chapter 1611: He Doesn't Recognize Anyone Anymore

Gu Youyou and Searcy both sensed something amiss.

Madam continued, "Ziyuan, they are the doctors who cured your illness. Once they arrive, we'll find out why you don't recognize even your own mother."

As she spoke, Madam choked up again, and outside, Gu Youyou and Searcy were shocked.

Jin Ziyuan doesn't even recognize his own mother?

Does that mean he won't recognize them either? So… is he truly suffering from amnesia, or did Yu Jizi intentionally pull this trick to avoid being discovered?

Gu Youyou pondered further. When she first traveled to this place, she too had no idea where she was. She originally planned to pretend to have amnesia, but later realized that in her situation, no one cared even if she died, so she decided to just go with the flow. When in difficulty, she played sick, feigned sleep, or acted confused, and nobody paid her any mind.

Could it be that Jin Ziyuan has been taken over by someone else?

She broke into a cold sweat, terrified by the notion of time travel.

"Let's go in first," Gu Youyou said to the deeply concerned Searcy.

Seeing them arrive, Madam dabbed at her tears with a handkerchief and managed a difficult smile, "Doctor Gu, you're here?"

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "Yes, Madam. Jin Ziyuan has woken up. How is the situation?"

They glanced at Jin Ziyuan, noticing he only gave them a brief look before averting his gaze, expressionlessly staring at his own thin fingers.

Madam glanced at Jin Ziyuan and said, “He’s like this now. He… he doesn’t remember who I am and it appears he doesn’t remember any of you either. What should we do?”

Gu Youyou was about to say something when Searcy held her back, smiling as she walked over to Jin Ziyuan, saying, “How are you? May I check your pulse?”

Jin Ziyuan turned his head to look at her but showed no particular expression.

Searcy lowered her head, raised his long and slender arm, and began checking his pulse earnestly.

Moments later, she pulled out a needle for drawing blood, and with a smile, softly said to Jin Zijin, “I’ll draw a bit of blood to see if you’re truly recovered.”

Jin Ziyuan still showed no reaction, allowing her to handle him as she wished.

Meanwhile, Madam was growing apprehensively concerned.

Knowing Searcy’s disposition, she didn’t dare ask her directly, but instead turned to Gu Youyou and asked, “Why is blood being drawn? Isn’t it enough that he’s awake?”

Gu Youyou explained, “We need to confirm if he’s really recovered.”

Madam could only accept reluctantly.

After taking the blood, Searcy left with the syringe. Gu Youyou then earnestly began examining Jin Ziyuan.

She observed his reactions while examining him.

After half an hour of various tests, she could confirm he hadn’t been taken over nor was possessed by Yu Jizi.

Perhaps he truly suffered from amnesia?

Whatever the case, his body seemed free of major concerns.

“Madam, amnesia isn’t a big deal. Sometimes being able to start over can be a blessing. The important thing is his body is fine now; as long as he takes care of himself, he’ll recover well.”

Madam understood deeply. Instead of living with those unpleasant memories, maybe it was better to forget what should be forgotten. That certainly seemed preferable.

Her main fear was whether Jin Ziyuan’s body had some other hidden ailment that resulted in his memory loss.

Searcy returned, her expression unreadable, and she said to Gu Youyou indifferently, “No issues. He seems to have completely recovered. As for the amnesia…”

Chapter 1612: Jin Ziyuan’s Difficulties

Searcy gave a meaningful smile and, facing Gu Youyou, said, "Do you mind if I talk to him alone for a bit?"

Gu Youyou: "..."

Shouldn’t you be asking his mother?

Madam, a bit embarrassed, said, "I don’t mind, Doctor Gu, let’s step outside first."

Gu Youyou shot several warning glances at Searcy before leaving with Madam.

Madam might not know, but Gu Youyou was well aware that Searcy was indeed capable of some things.

If she discovers that the awakened person could be Yu Jizi, she might not be able to hold back from taking action.

With the door closed, only Searcy and Jin Ziyuan were left in the room.

Jin Ziyuan looked at her, somewhat puzzled, and said nothing.

Searcy half-closed her eyes and stared at him. After a while, she looked down at him and said coolly, "Stop pretending, you may fool them but not me. Do you really think I'll believe you?"

Jin Ziyuan was momentarily stunned and said in a low voice, "What are you talking about? What pretense?"

Searcy also lowered her voice, leaned down, and said, "Let's not beat around the bush, I know why you're pretending to have amnesia."

Jin Ziyuan's pupils shrank as a trace of murderous intent rose in him.

Searcy shrugged indifferently and said, "To guard against someone new taking over this body, I specifically poisoned you."

Jin Ziyuan: "..."

Searcy smiled and said, "As long as I'm sure you pose no threat to us, I'll give you the antidote. Don't worry, your body can withstand it, and the poison won't act up for now."

"What do you want?" Jin Ziyuan's voice was a bit cold.

"Ha, can’t keep the act up anymore?" Searcy laughed triumphantly, "Not much, I think what you’re doing is quite right." She gave Jin Ziyuan a thumbs up.

Jin Ziyuan said nothing, only lowered his head to look at his fingers.

Long, slender, and white to the point of transparency. Even more transparent than when he emerged from that ancient tomb.

Searcy straightened up, walked over, sat on the stool by the bed, and said softly with a laugh, "This is good, really good. It’s not in vain that she sincerely wants to save you. The two of you actually match quite well, only you’re unfortunate that Gu Youyou met Jin Zijin first.

Clearly, you care deeply for her, not less than Jin Zijin. But fate between two people doesn’t always come from being a good match. Seeing you now, I believe you’ve come to terms with everything, ready to forget and start anew. I just worry that you might not act well enough and be found out. How about this? Want me to help you by giving you something to really forget?"

Jin Ziyuan’s eyes widened, and he spat out two cold words.

"No need!"

Searcy didn’t persuade further, just said, "Then you’re choosing a path of hardship on your own, you’ll live a very tough life."

"None of your business!" Jin Ziyuan said coldly.

"Ha, what’s it got to do with me? I don’t care," Searcy said.

Jin Ziyuan raised his head and said, "I hope you can keep this secret."

Searcy said, "Don’t worry about that, I won’t gossip."

"That’s good, thank you for everything these days."

In the courtyard, Gu Youyou was keeping Madam company talking.

Madam sighed softly, "After a few more days, when he’s regained some strength, I’ll take him away from here. Now that he remembers nothing, that’s actually okay. As long as he is healthy, nothing else matters! I’ll bring him to live a different life. It’s really good that he’s forgotten everything."

Madam’s tears were easily triggered, and she was soon crying again as she spoke.

Gu Youyou, afraid she might cry her eyes out, mixed up some eye drops for her.

Chapter 1613: This Is Pretty Good

Gu Youyou said, “Madam, do remember to use the eyedrops. Jin Ziyuan has lost everything, even his memory. He has only you to rely on. If something happens to you, what will he do?”

The Madam wiped her tears and nodded repeatedly, saying, “You are right, I must not fall, nor can I cry until I go blind. I have been using your medicine, thank you!”

Actually, what she feared most was her son suffering through the rest of his life, loving a daughter he could never have.

This really turned out well; Jin Ziyuan’s amnesia was an unexpected surprise in the eyes of the Madam.

It wasn’t long before Searcy came out, and they left some medication prescriptions and together bid farewell to the Madam.

On the carriage, Gu Youyou couldn’t help but ask, “How did your probing go?”

Searcy smiled and said, “No problem, he is indeed Jin Ziyuan.”

Gu Youyou, trusting Searcy's incredible observational skills, believed her, recalling how she once immediately recognized Lun Yu disguised as Lun Tong.

Moreover, knowing Searcy's personality, if she found that Jin Ziyuan was not Jin Ziyuan, she certainly wouldn't be this calm.

"Alright, since you've confirmed it, I'm relieved." Gu Youyou asked again, "By the way, did you give the antidote? They should be leaving in a few days."

Searcy nodded and said, "Rest assured, I gave it. The antidote is included in the prescription, and I specifically instructed the Madam to make sure he takes it properly."

As the Madam carefully takes care of Jin Ziyuan, there shouldn't be any issues.

…

Rumors were already swirling in Beijing, but Gu Youyou remained unaffected, which made Prime Minister Zhang's family somewhat anxious.

"Dad, what do you think Gu Youyou wants? Could it be that she's still unaware?"

A sharp knock from Prime Minister Zhang landed on Zhang Shiyu's forehead, and he said, "Is there anyone left in Beijing who doesn't know? Hmph, looks like we need to press her harder. Dreading the old lady coming out to try to suppress the rumors, no chance."

Gu Youyou didn't care, but Elder Lady Lin could not tolerate it.

Her daughter had been dead for so many years, yet people were saying such scandalous things, nearly infuriating her.

Now she was relentlessly fighting against the rumors harmful to Gu Youyou, which certainly brought considerable resistance to Prime Minister Zhang's plans.

Zhang Shiyu's eyes brightened, saying, "Dad, what do you plan to do about her?"

Prime Minister Zhang smiled mysteriously and said, "It's late, go to sleep, and you'll know tomorrow."

After Zhang Shiyu left, Prime Minister Zhang had someone bring over Gu Wu.

Gu Wu hadn't left home in days, and being called by Prime Minister Zhang so late made him feel a bit uneasy.

No matter how confident he felt, he was actually somewhat afraid, especially this time, when Prime Minister Zhang said nothing, yet all the tasks he wanted were naturally accomplished. It can be said that his every move was within Prime Minister Zhang's calculations. How could he not feel fear?

"Brother Gu, how about I send you home tomorrow?"

"Home?" Gu Wu looked puzzled.

Prime Minister Zhang laughed and said, "Yes, home, to your daughter's home, the Ningwang Residence."

"The Ningwang Residence?" Gu Wu was quite shocked. Gu Youyou had shown no reaction, and he had been feeling uneasy all this while.

Prime Minister Zhang laughed heartily and said, "The Princess Consort of Ningwang is vacillating, and we need to make a decision for her. It's only natural for a homeless father to seek refuge with his daughter; no one can fault you, wouldn't you say?"

Chapter 1614: A Challenge at the Door

"But…"

“There’s no but, Brother Gu. You can’t always stay here with me, can you?”

Gu Wu originally wanted to say that Gu Youyou hadn’t acknowledged him yet, but Chancellor Zhang blocked him.

Moreover, Chancellor Zhang’s expression darkened this time, and his smile carried a hint of eeriness.

Gu Wu suddenly realized his good days at the Zhang Residence were over. But it didn’t matter; he had dismissed his pride since he became a beggar.

If Gu Youyou couldn’t take him in, he would go find Erya and Sanbao, and if they didn’t want him either, he would sit outside their Fish Manor and beg.

Gu Wu knew his children too well; they would feel too embarrassed to let him beg at their doorstep.

He had long prepared a way out for himself, so he was truly fearless.

“Fine, I’ll leave everything to you, Chancellor,” Gu Wu said.

Then he thought: “My Shuisheng…”

It didn’t matter if he went begging himself, but he didn’t want Gu Shuisheng following him stubbornly to beg as well.

Gu Shuisheng wasn’t an ordinary person; he had seen that early on.

He was a man of passion and integrity, and educated. Gu Wu hoped he could achieve academic success, as he was Gu Wu’s last hope.

Chancellor Zhang chuckled, “Rest assured, Shuisheng is now considered my protégé. He will continue to stay at my residence, waiting for the exam results. If he doesn’t do well this time, I won’t drive him away

either. I see this child as promising material. If he doesn't do well this time, let him stay here, study hard, and take the exam again next time."

Thus, Gu Wu was relieved. He bowed to Chancellor Zhang, saying, "Thank you for your hospitality these days. I shall take my leave first thing in the morning."

"Hmm, Brother Gu has become more learned than when he arrived," Chancellor Zhang said with a half-smile.

…

The next day, Chancellor Zhang, seated in a carriage, took Gu Wu to the Ningwang Residence.

He handed a card to the gatekeeper, requesting to see the Princess of Ning.

The gatekeepers looked at each other uneasily and said, "Chancellor, isn't this inappropriate? Our Prince is not at home, only the Princess is…"

Chancellor Zhang smiled, "I know your Princess can make decisions. Please send it in."

No matter what, Chancellor Zhang was an official of the highest rank. Even if they didn't allow him in, the Princess would have to refuse him personally. These people of lower status couldn't make that decision; they could only deliver his card, and whether to meet or not was for the Princess to decide.

"Please wait a moment, Chancellor, I'll be right back."

"Much appreciated!"

The guard handed Chancellor Zhang's visiting card to Gu Youyou. After reading it, Gu Youyou sneered and whispered to herself, "Couldn't hold back, still came."

The guard awkwardly asked, “So, is the Princess going to meet them or not?” Then he gathered the courage to say, “I think the Princess would be better off not meeting them. That Gu Wu is not easy to deal with, and Chancellor Zhang is even more troublesome, and our Prince is not at home now…”

“No!” Gu Youyou interrupted, “Meet them, why not? Bring them in!”

The guard couldn’t defy Gu Youyou’s order, so he went out and invited Chancellor Zhang and Gu Wu in.

Xiang Chun, hearing this, felt like she was facing a formidable enemy and paced back and forth anxiously.

She knew the recent rumors all too well. She had even hired people to find out and used her own spare money to bribe some to speak for Gu Youyou.

But within the Prince Residence, she had no one to discuss this with, so she had no choice but to go to Searcy.

Searcy was the last person in this residence she wanted to talk to, but there was no other way. Now the only one she could discuss this matter with was Searcy.

Chapter 1615: Grab a Kitchen Knife

"Hey, hey, those with the surname Zhang and Gu Wu are coming with ill intentions, aren’t you supposed to be smart? Hurry up and think of something! They’ve already come to kill us!"

Searcy just calmly went about her business, saying, "If they’ve come to kill, the guards are here, what are you worried about? Are you good with a sword, or are you handy with a gun?"

"I... I mean, they’ve come looking for trouble, they must mean harm to the Princess."

Searcy let out a mocking laugh and said, "Afraid of what? In this Beijing city, except for the Emperor, who would dare to mess with Gu Youyou? Even the most tumultuous of commoners outside wouldn’t dare to cause trouble in front of Gu Youyou."

"But the people coming are Prime Minister Zhang and Gu Wu. They must be trying to... to..."

She didn’t even know what they wanted, stammering for a long time without coming up with anything.

Searcy had to remind her, saying, "To force Gu Youyou to acknowledge Gu Wu as her father?"

Xiang Chun nodded eagerly, saying, "Yes, yes, they want the Princess to acknowledge the father!"

Searcy sneered and said, "Do you think Gu Youyou would let people manipulate her? Would she acknowledge whoever they say is her father?"

"Of course not!" Xiang Chun widened her eyes, somewhat angry.

She felt Searcy was too disrespectful to the Princess, and there was a tone of mockery in her words.

Among those freeloading at the Prince Residence, no one was more annoying than her.

"Are you going to handle this or not?" Xiang Chun was done with wasting words on her.

"Not handling it!" Searcy directly refused, saying, "This is none of our business and certainly not mine. If you’re worried, why not make a scene, or go to the kitchen, grab a vegetable knife and stand at the door."

Xiang Chun: "..."

"Go on then!" Searcy even urged her.

Xiang Chun was so angry she felt like spitting blood, but no matter how many times she clashed with Searcy in this residence, she never managed to win.

In the end, she left angrily, but upon thinking it over, she realized that among Searcy's nonsense, the last two sentences actually had some use.

Right, grab a vegetable knife and stand at the door, if they dare to bully the Princess, she'd fight to the death if she had to, even if it meant chopping them up.

In the main hall,

Gu Youyou watched the two of them calmly, lounging lazily on a deck chair with an air of a domineering CEO.

But her demeanor didn't match the elegant image that women of this era were supposed to have, instead making her appear disrespectful to the guests, standing and sitting without decorum, quite unbecoming of her status.

A trace of disdain slipped across Prime Minister Zhang's lips, thinking to himself that a country bumpkin is just a country bumpkin. If it were his daughter, she certainly wouldn't act like this.

Gu Youyou was indifferent, lightly shaking her small hand and said insipidly, "If there's something you need, just say it. We're all old acquaintances, and I know your ways, so let's not waste time with empty pleasantries. After all, we don't have much in common."

The words were hardly polite, making both Gu Wu and Prime Minister Zhang's faces look unpleasant.

But both were used to her bluntness; Gu Wu had learned this the hard way years ago, and as for Prime Minister Zhang, after losing face a few times, he knew perfectly well what kind of person Gu Youyou was.

"In that case, I'll just speak plainly." Prime Minister Zhang said with a sullen face, "I suppose you recognize him!"

Gu Youyou glanced at Gu Wu, nodded lightly, and then gestured with her hand for Prime Minister Zhang to continue.

"You might not know, he’s not actually your third uncle, but your real father."

"Oh?" Gu Youyou gave a dry laugh and said, "I really didn’t know that, but it seems Prime Minister Zhang knows quite well, doesn’t he."

Prime Minister Zhang was choked by the remark and his face darkened.

Chapter 1616: Shutting the Door to Deal with Him Slowly

Thinking: this thing was already spreading like crazy in Beijing, who doesn’t know about it? And yet you dare say it’s unclear?

Over there, Gu Wu was somewhat nervous. He hadn’t seen Gu Youyou for many years, and didn’t expect her to have become much sharper since her days in Lotus Village.

Her expression was elusive and enigmatic, both intelligent and unknowable, her demeanor and appearance were somehow reminiscent of the Lin Family daughter from back then.

Before coming, he told himself he must drag Gu Youyou down insistently believing she was his illegitimate daughter, but now encountering her in person, he felt a sense of fear.

Always felt that getting involved with Gu Youyou wouldn’t end well, fearing it’d be worse than being a beggar.

Prime Minister Zhang nudged the stunned Gu Wu, signaling it was time for him to speak.

Gu Wu snapped out of it, hurriedly saying: "Oh, it’s like this, Youyou was too young at that time and didn’t understand things."

"Hmm, perhaps she has already forgotten." Prime Minister Zhang echoed in agreement with Gu Wu.

Gu Wu forced a laugh: "Yes, at that time Youyou was only six or seven years old, the night I had a fierce argument with my brother and sister-in-law, she was asleep and didn’t hear."

Well, one moment saying he didn’t hear, the next saying she was asleep, keep making up stories, continue the fabrication.

Gu Youyou watched them with a knowing yet ambiguous smile.

Prime Minister Zhang said: "Well, now you know. Princess Ning, this is your biological father, he now seeks your protection, and I have helped arrange for him to be brought to your estate, you..."

Before he could finish, Gu Youyou chuckled softly: "Then let him stay!"

Ah...?

Prime Minister Zhang and Gu Wu were both dumbstruck.

"What? Say that again?" Prime Minister Zhang could hardly believe his ears, thinking he misheard.

Gu Wu was even more flustered, bewildered on the spot.

Who is Gu Youyou? She’s the one who wouldn’t even tolerate a tiny loss when holding a dustpan.

He was well aware of how difficult it was to converse with her. He knew clearly Gu Youyou wouldn’t acknowledge him easily; he planned to leverage public pressure to force her compliance.

But yet, none of those tactics had been employed, not even one, and she... agreed?

Gu Youyou smiled politely: "Then let him stay!"

Even if they couldn’t trust their ears, they had no choice but to believe it; Gu Youyou was so accommodating, agreeing to keep Gu Wu.

Although the goal was achieved, somehow, for Prime Minister Zhang, it brought no sense of accomplishment; it felt like punching into cotton.

Gu Youyou smiled and said: "Prime Minister Zhang, now you have no business here, right? See the guest out!"

So finally, Xiang Chun, who had been standing at the gate holding a kitchen knife had a purpose.

She couldn’t decide whether to hold the knife or not, realizing there wasn’t enough time to put it back as the princess herself had come out; she could only take that kitchen knife and see the guest out.

Just one fierce-looking maid carrying a kitchen knife to escort guests out frightened Prime Minister Zhang considerably.

Regardless, Gu Wu had already been left behind, and Prime Minister Zhang ought to leave.

Gu Wu remained bewildered in the living room, shortly after Prime Minister Zhang left, two guards came in, before he could react, they pulled him up and dragged him away.

This rough action finally awakened him, seeing the stern-faced guards, he finally realized something was amiss.

One would wonder, given Gu Youyou’s nature, how could she possibly accept him? No, this was all a trap; she must be planning to use private punishment against him.

Gu Wu was gripped with fear only now, nearly losing half his life, he shouted: "No, I won’t go, help, I’m not leaving, Prime Minister Zhang, I want to find Prime Minister Zhang..."

Prime Minister Zhang had already left the estate, his hope to find Prime Minister Zhang was destined to fail.

Chapter 1617: Private Prison

A guard coldly smiled at him and said, “Be honest, maybe you’ll get a chance to see Chancellor Zhang once more in your life.”

“You, what do you want to do with me? What do you want to do? I want to see Gu Youyou, bring Gu Youyou to me.”

“Hmph, you? Look at what kind of thing you are, wanting to see our princess. Just give up on that thought!”

Finally, Gu Wu was locked away in the same place where Searcy had previously imprisoned the Empress’s informants, with a small window above and the heavy stone door dropping down, nearly turning it into a completely sealed stone chamber.

But for Gu Wu, who had spent years in the dungeon, the conditions here were much better than in the dungeon.

He knew that Gu Youyou was not someone to be trifled with. Sitting in the dark room, he increasingly regretted provoking Gu Youyou.

Just relying on Erya and Sanbao, they could have had good lives, his adopted son was also a man of letters. If he had just kept a low profile, even if he couldn’t be rich and powerful, he would still be well-fed and clothed.

But there’s no turning back after the bow is drawn, just like many years ago, once he took advantage of that person, he could only continue to make mistake after mistake.

…

Gu Youyou had Gu Wu locked up and didn’t visit him for two days, nor did she let anyone bring him water or food.

Luckily, the weather wasn't too cold right now. If it were the middle of winter, that freezing stone room could have killed him directly.

Two days later, Gu Wu was both starving and thirsty. Over the past month, he had been living at Chancellor Zhang's house, accustomed to good food and drink, suddenly reverting to the life of a beggar with no certainty of the next meal, driving him nearly insane.

However, Gu Youyou didn't intend to actually starve him to death, so after two days, she brought several guards and maids carrying water and lavish food into the stone room.

The heavy stone door opened, sunlight suddenly streamed in, causing Gu Wu's eyes to quickly shut in discomfort.

When he opened his eyes again, he saw Gu Youyou standing in front of him like a queen overlooking the world, surrounded by attendants.

Thinking back to that little girl who was on the verge of death from illness, who could have imagined she would have such a glamorous day?

Gu Youyou smiled faintly, saying, "Hungry?"

The aroma of the food was fatally tempting to Gu Wu. Once his eyes fully adjusted to the sunlight, he looked at the exquisite dishes in the maid's hands, drooling uncontrollably.

The image of an old beggar drooling was unbearably repulsive to Xiang Chun and others, who expressed that they wouldn't need lunch.

"You… what do you want to do?"

Gu Wu knew that acting wouldn't work in front of Gu Youyou, so even though he was starving, he watched her vigilantly.

Gu Youyou laughed and said, “Wrong question, isn’t it? It’s not about what I want to do, but what you want to do.”

“I…?” Gu Wu tried not to look at those exquisite dishes, turning his head away and said, “I did wrong back then, I wronged your mother and wronged you, but the fact remains that you are my daughter. Killing me is against justice!”

Gu Youyou’s smile froze, then she turned cold, saying heavily, “So, you don’t want to eat, huh?”

Gu Wu raised his head.

Gu Youyou sneered, “Fine, I’ll fulfill your wish. But don’t worry, I won’t let you die so easily. You’ll stay alive and see how I deal with you.”

Gu Youyou had a couple of hard buns and a bowl of cold water left for him.

Then let someone bring in a guard dog, placing those exquisite dishes in front of the dog, letting it devour them all before Gu Wu’s eyes.

Chapter 1618: Unable to Touch Gu Youyou

After everyone had left, Xiang Chun came back and scolded.

"Refusing a toast only to drink a forfeit, no matter what, you’re still our princess’s third uncle. Now it’s good, you’ve completely destroyed that last bit of family affection. Hmph, see the outcome? Even if there were good things, I’d feed them to the dogs rather than give them to you!"

Gu Wu was infuriated, being scolded by Gu Youyou was one thing, but this was merely a servant by Gu Youyou’s side, who was she to scold him?

But he was too hungry to fight back with any retort.

In the end, he could only pick up two dry steamed buns from a rough bowl by the wall and gnaw on them. When he was thirsty, he drank from a bowl of water that didn’t look very clean.

...

As for Prime Minister Zhang, he already felt something was off on the way back.

He felt that sending Gu Wu to Gu Youyou might have been a mistake. When Gu Wu was in his hand, he could potentially use Gu Wu to create public opinion, but now Gu Wu was in Gu Youyou's hand.

Prime Minister Zhang was a bit anxious.

No news about Gu Wu had emerged these past two days, nor any word on Gu Youyou's opinion on the matter.

Yet the commoners were still intrigued, but just as the event reached its climax, it was halted.

This left Prime Minister Zhang feeling uneasy and very strange.

Zhang Shiyu said anxiously, "Father, even though Gu Wu has been sent to her, why is there still no progress? What is the Emperor thinking? Gu Youyou is nothing but a bastard child, how can such a daughter-in-law be accepted? Why hasn't the Emperor removed Gu Youyou yet?"

Counting on the Emperor for now was no use, Prime Minister Zhang sighed helplessly, "That Gu Youyou has truly been fortunate. The Emperor won't act against her for now; we're being too impatient."

"Why? What happened?" Zhang Shiyu was very anxious.

She intended to settle the matter before Jin Zijin returned, so Jin Zijin could learn what kind of person Gu Youyou was and despise her from then on.

It was best if the Emperor stepped in to rid Gu Youyou, the bastard, so she'd never get to meet Jin Zijin again.

Prime Minister Zhang sighed, "The Empress Dowager is ill, and the Imperial Physicians are all at a loss. Only Gu Youyou can treat her. The Emperor is the most filial to the Empress Dowager, so even if Gu Youyou committed a grave crime, he wouldn't act against her at this time."

Zhang Shiyu was so exasperated she couldn't speak, saying, "How could it be such a coincidence? Last time, it was said that the Empress Dowager was ill because the Emperor was sick. That time, the Empress Dowager's illness was fake, could it not also be fake this time?"

Prime Minister Zhang said in dismay, "Who under heaven but the Emperor could dare to have the Empress Dowager feign illness for protection?"

Zhang Shiyu: "..."

"So what do we do now? We can't just let it go like this, it's come this far."

Prime Minister Zhang squinted his eyes and said, "Naturally we can't just let it go. If we can't topple Gu Youyou this time, I will..." Remembering Gu Youyou's inscrutable face, Prime Minister Zhang couldn't speak the cruel words, only saying, "If we can't topple her this time, you'll just have to accept it."

"What?" If they couldn't topple Gu Youyou, Zhang Shiyu felt she would go mad.

Prime Minister Zhang sighed helplessly and said, "Father promises you and your brother will each receive half the family assets. You shouldn't marry out, anyway, you can't find a husband, Father will get you a son-in-law who marries in."

Zhang Shiyu breathed unevenly with anger and finally burst into loud tears.

"Waa, Father, why can't I get married? It's one thing for others to laugh at me, but why do you also laugh at me? What did I do wrong? Why must I bear the black pot for mother's and sister's wrongdoings? I've never poisoned anyone, yet they all say marrying me will end their family line, Father, I can't swallow this insult!"

Chapter 1619: Gu Shuisheng Arrives

Chancellor Zhang was quite helpless and only sighed, "My son, I know you're suffering! Let's not think about it now; I will do everything in my power to ensure you become Ning Wangfei."

...

Gu Wu hadn't shown up for several days, and Chancellor Zhang couldn't get any news from inside the Ningwang Residence, so he turned his attention to Gu Shuisheng.

"Shuisheng, still reading?"

From afar, Chancellor Zhang saw Gu Shuisheng holding a book, sitting by the windowsill.

Gu Shuisheng put down the book, stood up, and bowed to Chancellor Zhang.

Chancellor Zhang quickly supported him, saying, "Oh, we're at home, no need for such formalities."

"Yes, Chancellor."

Chancellor Zhang laughed, "The autumn exam is over, Shuisheng. Just rest well and wait for the results!"

Gu Shuisheng pursed his lips and nodded gently.

Chancellor Zhang added with a smile, "Your father has gone to see your elder sister and has been away for a few days. He told me last time to have you visit him at Ningwang Residence when you had time. Since the weather is nice now, why not take a walk to Ningwang Residence?"

Gu Shuisheng looked up at Chancellor Zhang; seeing the smile that didn't reach his eyes, he understood that as someone living off Chancellor Zhang's household, he had no right to refuse.

He nodded lightly, saying, "Alright, I'll get ready and go."

"Very well, then I won't disturb you. Tell your father that if he's not comfortable there, the Chancellor Residence always welcomes him back. I've kept his room empty for him."

Chancellor Zhang appeared like a kindly middle-aged man, ever gentle, with a faint smile often on his face.

But looking deeper, one would realize that the smile was just a paper flower; fake is fake.

However, Gu Shuisheng couldn't understand why, after letting Gu Wu leave, they still kept him around.

...

Early the next morning, Gu Shuisheng arrived at the gates of Ningwang Residence. It was his second time there; he vividly remembered how last time, when they got to Beijing, it was almost dark, they were hungry and tired, and wanted to see the legendary Ning Wangfei, but were stopped by her guards and couldn't get in.

Now standing again before the towering gate, it felt as if he had stepped into another world.

After much hesitation, he took heavy steps to the two guards.

Making a bow with his hands, he said, "Gentlemen, may I trouble you to inform the Madam that I request a meeting with Ning Wangfei."

The two scrutinized him, unable to recognize him as the destitute beggar they saw over a month ago.

Now he appeared dignified, courteous, dressed as a noble's son.

After all, Chancellor Zhang hadn't treated him poorly.

Such a person, perhaps from some well-known family in Beijing?

But a young man requesting a meeting with the Wangfei seemed... cough, cough, wasn't there already enough happening with Wangfei recently?

They smiled as they asked, "May I ask which family's young master you are? It might be more convenient if the Madam of your house requested to see our Wangfei."

Gu Shuisheng made a deep bow, saying, "Gentlemen, I'm not a young master of any prominent Beijing family. I am currently staying with Chancellor Zhang because..."

"Go, go..." Before Gu Shuisheng could finish, the two guards interrupted, pushing him away.

As soon as they heard the name Chancellor Zhang, their faces turned dark.

If it was Chancellor Zhang himself, they couldn't stop him, but as someone merely staying in his house and not a noble, they could easily send him away.

After all, anything associated with Chancellor Zhang lately wasn't good news.

Chapter 1620: Request to See Princess Ning

Gu Shuisheng staggered back a few steps before standing straight, hastily saying, "Dear sirs, I'm just…"

"Scram, there's no 'just', if you don't scram, we'll hit you until you can't even roll away." One guard said harshly.

Having been a beggar for years, Gu Shuisheng was accustomed to threats of being chased away several times a day, so even being shouted at had little effect on him.

He quickly stood up, using his usual beggar's bravado, loudly shouted towards the residence, "Princess, Ningwang Residence, I request an audience with Princess Ning, please grant me a favor, sirs."

Xiang Chun happened to pass by and heard the commotion, curiously ran to the gate to take a look.

She saw an unfamiliar man standing outside the gate, while two guards wielded long spears to chase him away.

“Shut up, disturbing our Princess will cost you dearly.”

“I request an audience with Princess Ning, please show leniency, sirs.”

“Do you think meeting Princess Ning is as simple as that? Scram!”

Xiang Chun observed the young man, who didn’t seem like a bad person, and he looked quite anxious. Could it be there was something urgent?

Moved by curiosity, she stepped forward and asked, “Who are you? What business do you have with our Princess?”

Xiang Chun was brought from the Lin Family by Gu Youyou, the only maid allowed to serve closely, ranking highest in the courtyard after the masters, she was rather respected by others.

The two guards hurriedly told Xiang Chun, “Aunt Xiang Chun, this man is from Zhang Chengxiang’s family, surely he’s here up to no good, we can’t let him in to trouble the Princess.”

Another guard added hastily, “The Prince isn’t home, letting him in might be inappropriate.”

The first guard feared he was from Zhang Chengxiang to trouble Gu Youyou, but she didn’t care much. Knowing how Gu Youyou handled Zhang Chengxiang and Gu Wu, Xiang Chun was well aware of her Princess’s strength, no ordinary person could easily trouble her.

But what the second guard said was true; he was a young man with good looks and bearing, affiliated with Zhang Chengxiang. If he's setting a trap for the Princess, letting him in might stir up some unfavorable rumors.

Exactly, they couldn't allow any chances to harm the Princess.

"Drive him away, and if he won't leave, send him to the Governor's Office." Xiang Chun lifted her head, speaking arrogantly.

Gu Shuisheng was disappointed, having hoped the friendly-looking sister would be easier to deal with, but she turned out even more difficult than the others.

However, with no news from Gu Wu for days, not only was Zhang Chengxiang worried, but Gu Shuisheng was anxious too.

Meeting Gu Youyou wasn't crucial; what mattered was seeing Gu Wu.

Blocked by the two guards, he still loudly called to Xiang Chun, "Sister, dear sister, I'm not here to see the Princess, I need to meet my father, I came to find my father."

"Hm…?" Xiang Chun glanced at the two guards.

The two guards quickly said, "He just said he wanted to see the Princess!"

Xiang Chun raised her eyebrow, coldly smiled as she approached Gu Shuisheng, blocked by the guards, saying, "Looking for your father? Who's your father?"

"My father is Gu Wu, who came to the residence a few days ago and hasn't been heard from since. I'm a bit worried, so I came to check."

"Gu Wu?" Xiang Chun was utterly surprised.

She only knew Gu Youyou treated Gu Wu's children well, the current relatives were living a good life in Beijing or Jinxiu City, and Xiang Chun recognized them all. But this person she had never seen before.