Farmhouse 1631

Chapter 1631: How Was He Killed?

Madam Lin was originally from Qingshui Town and was familiar with the people from Lotus Village. Given that the Lin Family was well-known back then, Madam Lin's reputation was also widely known.

After taking a few glances, Madam Lin recognized the village chief and said, "Aren't you the son of the village chief from Lotus Village?"

The village chief looked up and didn't recognize Madam Lin; he only noticed that this old woman was dressed luxuriously, clearly someone important from Beijing.

"You are...?"

"Oh dear, you don't recognize me? Ning Prince, quickly tell him who I am."

It was Jin Zijin who informed him.

"That's Youyou's grandmother, the mother of Lin Xingyi. Do you remember?"

The village chief suddenly realized and said, "So you're the wife from the neighboring village's Lin Family. Oh dear, everyone knows your son Xingyi is ambitious; he's become a high official in Beijing. After you all moved to Beijing, we seldom heard news from you. How unexpected, meeting you in this lifetime. By the way, where is your son Xingyi, Madam Lin?"

"Look, there he is!" Madam Lin pointed to Lin Xingyi.

Prime Minister Zhang couldn't watch anymore and snorted coldly, saying, "If you want to reminisce, don't you see where you are? Are you planning to have the emperor and the entire court wait while you chat?"

Only then did everyone realize the conversation had veered off course, and they hurriedly fell silent.

However, this reminiscing served to calm the village chief's nerves, and he didn't tremble as much as when he first entered.

Jin Zijin said to the village chief, "I need you to recount the events of the day Grandpa Gu Feng passed away."

The village chief glanced at the sly-looking Gu Wu, snorted, and nodded.

But Gu Wu said, "Why bring up irrelevant things? I only have one question for the village chief—what was my relationship with Sister Lin back then?"

The village chief was about to say something when Eunuch Wan, standing beside the emperor, shouted in his shrill voice, "Don't speak until you're asked to! Do you understand the rules? Dare you babble in front of the emperor—we'll see if you stay silent if we give you a beating."

With that shout from Eunuch Wan, Gu Wu quieted down.

But the village chief didn't dare speak either. Only when everyone was looking at him did he turn back to Jin Zijin and ask, "Can I... can I speak now?"

"You may!" Jin Zijin said.

Only then did the village chief dare to slowly recount the affairs of the Gu Family during the time of Gu Feng's death.

This included the childhood experiences of Gu Youyou and how the Gu Family's second and third sons successively sold Gu Youyou for money.

And what drove Gu Feng to death was being told that Old Third Gu killed Old First Gu and his wife. Brother killed brother and sister-in-law, which was a blow too much for Gu Feng.

But Gu Wu shook his head loudly, saying, "No, I didn't kill my brother and sister-in-law for money. It's because my sister-in-law was the woman I loved, yet my brother took her. I was overwhelmed with anger which is why... why I killed my brother. I didn't kill my sister-in-law; she drowned herself."

The village chief snorted and said, "You truly fancied your sister-in-law, but how can you say your brother took her? Everyone knows that they were engaged since childhood, arranged early by your grandfather."

"My sister-in-law loved me too. We even had a daughter together; Gu Youyou is Lin Lian's daughter with me!" Gu Wu had decided to spill everything. Even if he had to admit to murder and face death, he wanted to drag Gu Youyou down with him.

He wouldn't survive, and neither should Gu Youyou have an easy life.

Chapter 1632: Why Did He Harm Her?

The local leader had never heard Jin Zijin talk about these things. This was the first time he heard it, and he was amazed. Shaking his head, he said, "How is that possible? We all know that the Gu Family's eldest son and his wife have a great relationship. We believe you think about the Gu Family's sister-in-law, but saying she fancies you? Hmph, you should look at yourself in the mirror first!"

"No matter what I'm like, Gu Youyou is my daughter," Gu Wu insisted.

"You..." The local leader had rarely encountered such shamelessness, and for a moment, he was too shocked to speak. After a while, he slowly said, "Gu Wu, what good does it do you to be so stubborn and unreasonable? You say Youyou is your daughter? Is this how one treats their daughter? You're pushing her into the fire.

Do you hate her so much? Are you so eager for her to die? We've been neighbors for decades. Everyone has seen your father's character, and while your mother was feisty, she wasn't so vicious.

Your eldest brother's character was impeccable and very much like your father's. Your second brother was at most greedy, but he was very filial to your parents. As for your wife, she bore you two children and toiled tirelessly for your Gu Family. In the end, when she heard you wouldn't return, she committed suicide. She did right by you.

But you... look at yourself. When you say these things, have you thought about them? They cannot rest in peace even in death! Gu Wu, think carefully: what was your family once like, and what is it like now? Your parents are dead, your elder and second brothers are dead, your sister-in-law and your wife are also dead. What has become of such a good family?

Since childhood, Youyou has suffered so much. What did she do to you to make you disregard the family's reputation and harm her?"

The local leader's words were quite plain, like an elder earnestly advising a disobedient youth. This made those accustomed to the verbal battles of the court somewhat uneasy, yet the leader's words were all the more penetrating.

People whispered among themselves, saying, "This old Madam speaks with reason. This Gu Wu claims repeatedly that he had a daughter with the woman he loved and treated the daughter well. But if he truly cared for her, he should have kept it a secret for life instead of proclaiming it everywhere. This is more like how one would treat an enemy's daughter."

Over there, the County Magistrate bowed to everyone and slowly said, "Isn't it just that? I recall clearly that year when Prince Ning and his princess visited Qingshui Town to see the prisoners, Gu Wu looked at Princess Ning with eyes filled with animosity. He hated that she had landed him in prison, and he hoped to have an opportunity for revenge in this lifetime. Heaven really wasn't stingy with Gu Wu, for Qingshui Town flooded that year, and indeed Gu Wu escaped from prison."

Everyone found the County Magistrate's explanation quite reasonable.

If Gu Youyou were truly Gu Wu's daughter, how could he treat her like this? When he is on the brink of death, does he not realize what revealing this secret means for Gu Youyou?

After the County Magistrate finished speaking, he raised his hand to the Emperor, saying, "Everything I said is true. Your Majesty, please see clearly!"

"Hmm, does Gu Wu have anything else to say?" The Emperor glanced lightly at the sweating Gu Wu.

What else could Gu Wu say? At this point, he could only insist that he killed his elder brother and sister-in-law due to a love-turned-hate situation, and anyway, Gu Youyou was his daughter.

No one had ever seen such an unreasonable person. Everyone was shocked by Gu Wu's tantrum and antics in the courtroom.

Chapter 1633: The New Witness

Prime Minister Zhang glanced lightly at Jin Zijin, with a hint of schadenfreude, and said, "Gu Wu insists that the Princess Ning is his daughter. Does anyone have any thoughts on this? Is there any way to prove otherwise?"

How could this be proven? In their view, even blood tests would be useless, as they were, after all, a family with blood ties.

At this moment, the old Madam Lin trembled as she stood up. After listening for a long time, she finally understood that her daughter and son-in-law were not killed by accident, but murdered by the person in front of her?

Those were her elder brother and sister-in-law; how could this beast have the heart to kill them?

It was the first time Madam Lin heard the true cause of her daughter and son-in-law's death. She no longer cared whose child Youyou was, only that her daughter was dead, not by accident but murdered.

If so, she must avenge her daughter! Her heart was pounding violently, wanting to rise and tear Gu Wu apart, but she simply couldn't stand up.

Everyone feared she couldn't bear the truth, so they hadn't dared to tell her. Now, hearing it, she was heartbroken, wishing she could immediately bite Gu Wu to death, drink his blood, and pull out his sinews.

Lin Xingyi feared his mother couldn't take it and disregarded even the emperor above. He hurried to help old Madam Lin, aiding her to breathe.

"Mom, don't rush, you mustn't rush. At your age, you should..."

"Shut up!" Madam Lin loudly rebuked him, "Did you already know how your sister died? Why is this person, who ought to be executed a thousand times, still alive?"

Lin Xingyi was speechless, unable to say anything, only softly comforting his mother and apologizing.

Jin Zijin glanced at Prime Minister Zhang and then at Gu Wu, slowly saying, "Don’t worry, you all probably want to know the true circumstances under which Gu Wu murdered my father-in-law and mother. Rest assured, the witness will arrive shortly."

A witness? Could it be that there was an eyewitness when Gu Wu committed the crime back then?

Impossible. If there was an eyewitness, they should have come forward when Gu Wu was sentenced back then, right?

Everyone speculated about who this witness Jin Zijin mentioned could be.

...

Meanwhile, Gu Youyou went out early with Jin Zijin and Searcy. After entering the palace, they parted ways. They went to check the Empress Dowager’s pulse for peace, a morning routine. Jin Zijin headed straight to Taihe Hall.

Now that Gu Youyou had finished her tasks, she also planned to go to Taihe Hall to take a look.

"Searcy, you go back with the things first. I need to go to Taihe Hall!"

Searcy raised an eyebrow and said, "What? Don’t you trust your Prince?"

Gu Youyou replied helplessly, "It’s not that I don’t trust him; I just want to watch the spectacle."

When she arrived at Taihe Hall, she saw a somewhat familiar figure entering the hall, but it passed quickly, and she didn’t see clearly who it was.

Gu Youyou cautiously approached the outside of Taihe Hall, listening to the intermittent voices coming from inside.

The acoustics of Taihe Hall were quite effective; other people wouldn’t be able to hear a thing.

Gu Youyou quietly asked a eunuch, "Who just went in there?"

The eunuch was new and did not recognize them. He could only shake his head at Gu Youyou.

Inside Taihe Hall, everyone finally awaited the arrival of this mysterious witness.

"Huo Li?" Everyone knew Huo Li, but after the Dao Family’s departure, it was said that Huo Li became a proper Taoist, no longer drinking wine, eating a simple diet, and never leaving the mountain to marry, spending his life serving the Sanqing deity statues.

Chapter 1634: Huo Li Has Arrived

Everyone thought that Xuanzong’s former chief disciple, who was most likely to become the State Preceptor, would never descend the mountain again. But unexpectedly, he became the key witness mentioned by Jin Zijin.

The emperor was extremely surprised and slowly said, "Huo Li, can you prove why Gu Wu killed his elder brother and sister-in-law?"

Huo Li was from the Dao Family, once the chief disciple of Yu Jizi. He was not required to kneel before the emperor, an inherent sense of superiority made him stand out among the ministers like a crane among chickens.

He nodded gently and slowly said, "This matter should begin with the secrets of the Dao Family!"

The secrets of the Dao Family? Everyone knew something about these secrets, so when Huo Li said this, they all perked up their ears.

"My master Yu Jizi always believed that the supreme methods of the Dao Family could achieve immortality. Over the years, countless sect leaders from the two sects Tian and Xuan died untimely deaths in pursuit of immortality.

However, when the time passed to my master's generation, he realized some special methods, which led to the rebellion of the three princes, the mysterious disappearance of the children of the three princes, and my master's journey to Tianmen Mountain..."

Under Jin Zijin's instruction, Huo Li revealed these secrets of the Dao Family without reservation.

From the time Yu Jizi took the chosen body, which was Jin Ziyuan, to the Tianmen Mountain behind Lotus Village, to when Yu Jizi descended from Tianmen Mountain, passing by Lotus Village and accidentally meeting the young Gu Youyou, recognizing her Pure Yin Body, and then orchestrating a Yin-nurturing conspiracy.

When he revealed everything, the person everyone wanted to condemn was no longer Gu Wu, but Yu Jizi, who manipulated everyone.

Huo Li looked at everyone, finally letting his gaze rest on Gu Wu, and said calmly, "A thousand taels of silver, you killed Gu Youyou's parents, leaving her an orphan. Gu Feng, desperately protecting Gu Youyou, was willing to do anything to keep her safe. This is the reason Gu Wu murdered his brother and sister-in-law."

What else could everyone say?

The Yin-nurturing method alone was terrifying enough, but they did such a thing to a little girl.

Gu Wu's face was ashen, while on the other side, Madam Lin was close to tears.

"So that's the reason Youyou was sick from childhood. When we sent people to bring her to Beijing, we discovered she could not leave that dark house because someone was sabotaging it?

She was so young then, Gu Wu, you vile beast, how could you be so heartless? How could you lay a hand on her? Lin Lian and Dalang took good care of you, even giving you money to marry, yet you raised a white-eyed wolf."

Gu Wu's face was ashen, unable to utter another word.

Prime Minister Zhang furrowed his brows, feeling it was too difficult to bring down Gu Youyou. Even after all this, they couldn't finish her off?

Last time, he said that if he couldn't bring down Gu Youyou, he would let his daughter marry into her family and give her half of the family fortune.

Will he really have to do that?

Everyone sighed deeply. Now that the truth was revealed, Huo Li cupped his hands towards Jin Zijin and then bid farewell.

"Brother Jin, if there is anything you need from Huo Li, feel free to ask, but for now, I must take my leave."

"Yes, thank you!" Jin Zijin returned the gesture.

When Huo Li left Taihe Hall, Gu Youyou realized the person who went in was Huo Li.

Huo Li appeared in the Imperial Palace? But why did Huo Li enter at this time?

Apparently, entering there is the only way to know.

Chapter 1635: Letting It Go

Gu Youyou requested to enter the hall from the eunuch beside her, and the eunuch naturally dared not stop her, who knew what business she had?

Besides, the matter being discussed in the court now is related to Gu Youyou, and just being the Empress Dowager's exclusive doctor, no one dared stop her.

What if she were seeking an audience with the Emperor on behalf of the Empress Dowager? Stopping her would be courting death, wouldn't it?

"Princess Ning, please wait here for a moment, this servant will be back shortly."

The young eunuch conveyed these words to the old eunuch Wan, who whispered them into the Emperor's ear. Only when the Emperor nodded could he pass the Emperor's intent back to the young eunuch, who then ran back to announce Gu Youyou's entrance into the hall.

Fortunately, the eunuchs were efficient, and Gu Youyou did not wait long.

The trial was nearing its end as Gu Youyou entered, and everyone present wore expressions of great interest, one could say quite peculiar.

"Have you finished speaking?" Gu Youyou asked with a hint of amusement.

In her view, this was nothing but a farce.

She wasn't afraid of Gu Wu's wild accusations; she had a trump card, the blood relation test.

She could manipulate whose blood would merge with whom, and conversely, she could ensure that her blood would not merge with Gu Wu's.

But if things could be resolved without blood, all the better!

At this time, the County Magistrate of Qingshui Town was recounting the trial of Gu Wu from back then, while Gu Wu was held down by two guards, his face pale, his eyes staring resentfully at Gu Youyou.

With just one glance, Gu Youyou could tell he was someone who wouldn’t give up easily.

Jin Zijin gestured for Gu Youyou to stand by his side.

After the County Magistrate finished speaking, the Emperor inquired with surprise, "From what you say, after Gu Wu was convicted of murdering his elder brother and sister-in-law, he should have been sentenced to be executed in the autumn, so why was he imprisoned for so many years?"

The County Magistrate perspired profusely and replied, "Your Majesty, I... I received secret orders from above to spare Gu Wu’s life. I was just a minor official, insignificantly feeble in influence, and, given that those above found him useful, I dared not make the decision to kill him. We waited many years, yet no further instructions came until the flood that year, when the prisoners in the dungeon escaped."

"Oh? Which official wanted to spare Gu Wu?"

Everyone was curious as well, who would protect someone like Gu Wu, who had no power or influence?

Jin Zijin stepped forward and said, "Father, I speculate that Yu Jizi had some use for him; the specific official who gave the secret orders to the County Magistrate of Qingshui Town is no longer important."

The infiltration of the court by Yu Jizi back then was something the Emperor was aware of.

After Yu Jizi’s defeat, those influences were gradually removed, and now tracing it further indeed has no meaning.

Since bygones are bygones, how should Gu Wu be dealt with now?

A fugitive, a death row convict with malignant intentions, attempting to falsely accuse his sister-in-law and spread the lie that the current Princess Ning is his illegitimate child, has severely damaged Gu Youyou’s reputation, as well as the dignity of the Imperial Family.

Moreover, Zhang Chancellor stepped on him at the last moment, firmly claiming he was deceived by Gu Wu.

But to Gu Wu, Zhang Chancellor was his sole lifeline.

He cried out loudly, "Chancellor, Chancellor, you can’t abandon me after serving your purpose! Why did you shelter me, we both know, if you don’t save me now, who else can?"

Chapter 1636: I’m a Victim Too

Chancellor Zhang snorted disdainfully and said, "That’s because you deceived me. You claimed to be Gu Youyou’s father and traveled a long way to find her, only to be turned away at the door. I pitied you and took you in, and now you want to drag me into the mess?"

Gu Wu forcefully pushed aside two guards and lunged at Chancellor Zhang, saying, "It’s your daughter who wants to marry into the Ningwang Residence and Gu Youyou won’t agree. You planned to use me to ruin her, hoping your daughter could enter the household. Everything I did was by your arrangement, wasn’t it?"

Chancellor Zhang kicked Gu Wu away and shouted angrily at the guards, "What are you doing? Can’t even hold a single person down?"

Gu Wu was quickly subdued again by the guards, pinned tightly to the ground.

Jin Zijin said calmly, "So, it was Chancellor Zhang orchestrating this whole play behind the scenes. Chancellor Zhang, you really went to extremes to get your daughter into my residence as a concubine. I thought I made myself clear before, didn’t I? No matter what, I won’t dare take your daughter. I have no desire to end up childless."

Chancellor Zhang’s old face was utterly disgraced, so he just let it go.

He cursed loudly, "Ningwang, you're going too far! If it weren't for that consort selection ceremony you held, which made my daughter develop inappropriate feelings for you, she'd be married by now in her twenties. It's all because of you!"

Gu Youyou hurriedly said, "Hold on, Chancellor Zhang, we're not taking the blame for this. You know well enough why your daughter isn't married yet. Do you need me to count how many times you've had matchmakers look for prospects for her? Blaming us because no one wants your daughter is hardly fair."

The others seized the opportunity to add fuel to the fire.

"Chancellor Zhang, who in Beijing doesn't know why your second daughter can't marry? Stop deceiving yourself! Using this excuse to trap Ningwang is really uncalled for."

"Exactly! Who would dare become in-laws with your family now?"

Everyone was talking at once, leaving Chancellor Zhang flushed with embarrassment.

It wasn't over yet; Gu Wu was still causing trouble on the other side.

He knew he was doomed, and Chancellor Zhang was his only lifeline.

Even though he was pinned to the ground by the guards, he shouted loudly, "Chancellor Zhang, you can't abandon me. If you don't save me, I'm as good as dead. Chancellor Zhang, all of this was your plan. I acted according to your instructions..."

"Shut up!" Chancellor Zhang shouted furiously, "You keep saying I told you to do it? Did I tell you to spread those rumors? Don't forget, it was you who misspoke after drinking, and it has nothing to do with me."

Gu Wu was rendered speechless.

Chancellor Zhang smiled smugly, then turned to the Emperor and said, "Your Majesty, I was also deceived by Gu Wu. If I am at fault, it is in trusting false words and misjudging Gu Wu."

Gu Youyou rolled her eyes, thinking that Chancellor Zhang's skill in evading responsibility was just like Jin Shien back in the day.

She sneered and said, "Is Chancellor Zhang taking us for fools? You and your daughter have been at odds with me. You wouldn't deny that, would you?"

Chancellor Zhang snorted, acknowledging tacitly.

Gu Youyou laughed, "Since that's the case, what do you mean by keeping Gu Wu around? Do you really need me to spell it out?"

Everyone found this reasonable. No matter how he tried to argue, his intentions were clear to everyone. There was no dispute; it was just up to the Emperor to decide.

Chapter 1637: How Should He Be Dealt With?

However, Prime Minister Zhang was not willing to give up, and said, "Your Majesty, I did harbor Gu Wu, but indeed with other thoughts in mind."

"Oh?"

Everyone looked at him strangely, Gu Youyou sneered, wondering what lie he would come up with now.

Truly like a centipede that refuses to die.

"Your Majesty, I kept him for another reason as well: I had my eyes on Gu Wu's adopted son. Gu Shuisheng, one of the top three in this autumn's imperial examination, Your Majesty, you know my character, when I see a young person with talent, I cherish them greatly. So I took Gu Shuisheng as my pupil, and in doing so, I also kept Gu Wu."

Everyone: "..."

Gu Youyou stomped her foot in anger, this old dog, he really knows how to make excuses.

Jin Zijin’s expression darkened, not looking at Prime Minister Zhang, but instead at the Emperor.

In fact, no matter how many reasons Prime Minister Zhang had, whether to punish him was all up to the Emperor’s will.

Conversely, if the Emperor does not want you to live, even if the charges against you are flimsy, you still cannot survive.

But does the Emperor truly intend to eliminate Prime Minister Zhang?

Everyone waited tensely for the Emperor’s answer.

After a while, the Emperor finally spoke calmly, "Indeed, Gu Shuisheng is someone of great potential, so he was originally the adopted son of Gu Wu."

Prime Minister Zhang breathed a sigh of relief and chuckled awkwardly, "Isn’t it so? He has a good eye, saving such a promising young man. Your Majesty, I held a heart of cherishing talent, thinking that Your Majesty is currently in need of people, the candidates from this examination hold great significance to Your Majesty, thus I took it upon myself to keep them father and son."

This way, he shifted the responsibilities off himself entirely, thanks to Gu Shuisheng.

Gu Wu was dumbfounded; it was only now he saw how formidable these people were.

He, a powerless beggar, should not have come to Beijing at all, even if he lived his whole life as a beggar, he should not have come.

From the beginning, he was being manipulated by others.

What a pity that he was foolish enough to naively think that in dealing with Gu Youyou, he was an ally with Prime Minister Zhang, like grasshoppers tied to the same rope, even if something happened, Prime Minister Zhang couldn't escape.

Thinking so left him with no worries.

Since Prime Minister Zhang dared act, why should he, who walks barefoot, fear those who wear shoes?

It turns out once something happens, they might completely shirk responsibility, even having planned an escape route long ago, while he himself was simply pulled out to take the fall.

He originally wanted to plead for leniency for the sake of his adopted son.

But upon closely observing the current situation, saying such a thing would only implicate Shuisheng instead.

The Emperor squinted slightly at the increasingly despairing Gu Wu, lightly tapping his fingers on the table.

He had delayed announcing the final results of this autumn's imperial examination precisely to consider whether the young man named Gu Shuisheng was worthy of the title Top Scholar.

"Fine, I confess my guilt, everything I did, had nothing to do with others!" Gu Wu finally raised his head like a man, his face weathered, yet he stared firmly at Prime Minister Zhang.

Prime Minister Zhang understood his implication, he took on all the guilt to hope that he wouldn't implicate Gu Shuisheng.

This could only make Prime Minister Zhang find it amusing, that he didn't treat his own son and niece as well as he did that adopted son, did he?

Yet at the very end, he considered that adopted son.

The scene was silent, even Gu Youyou was somewhat surprised.

Moments later, the Emperor looked up at Gu Youyou, saying, "What do you think should be done with him?"

Chapter 1638: Let’s Ask Erya and Sanbao’s Opinion

If it’s the emperor’s will, then Gu Wu would be executed by slow slicing.

However, as a modern person, Gu Youyou just couldn’t stand the bloody scene.

If he were to be decapitated directly, it felt too easy for him.

Thinking it over again, she said, "I kindly ask Father Emperor to leave his corpse intact, so my parents can recognize him when he reaches the other side."

"Leave an intact corpse?" The Emperor looked towards Wan Decheng.

Wan Decheng said, "If he were to leave an intact corpse, either grant him a cup of poisoned wine or let him hang himself. But it would be too easy for an evil person like Gu Wu to die that way."

Madam Lin also disagreed, "Youyou, people like him should be executed by slow slicing, you must not soften your heart at this moment."

But Gu Youyou said, "Yu Jizi fed me poison for ten years, I just want him to experience it once. Searcy has also studied that cold poison, why not use him to test the poison?"

Upon hearing this, everyone had no objections.

Gu Wu was taken away, temporarily locked up in the Ministry of Punishment’s Prison.

The village head and County Magistrate traveled a long way from Qingshui Town to Beijing, they were quite worn out and would rest for a few days before leaving.

Gu Youyou was also generous, directly sending two servants along, taking them to tour around Beijing. If in the mood, they could even go to Jinxiu City.

Whatever they wanted to eat or buy, Gu Youyou covered it all.

After all, what she lacked the least was silver.

Thus, the farce ended, leaving everyone a bit dazed.

Gu Wu clearly wasn't a good person, so why did so many people believe him back then?

The storyteller explained, "People have this mentality, it's better to believe it exists than not."

...

In the morning, Searcy brought a packet of poison to Gu Youyou. Holding it, Gu Youyou gazed at it, lost in thought.

Just poison Gu Wu then?

After some thought, she sighed deeply, still having someone call Erya and Sanbao over.

These days, Erya hadn't opened the Fish Manor at all. No matter how much their father erred, this fact couldn't be erased.

When Gu Youyou asked for them to be called, they arrived quickly, just in time for Gu Youyou to not yet put away the black powder poison.

"You've come?" Gu Youyou turned around.

"Big sister!"

"Big sister!"

Both looked somewhat haggard.

Gu Youyou's face slightly darkened, and she said blandly, "You are aware of everything, aren't you?"

Erya and Sanbao nodded lightly.

Gu Youyou pursed her lips, her chest heaving several times, gathering the courage to speak.

"He's still your father. If you want to give him a chance, I..."

"No!" Erya interrupted her.

Gu Youyou saw her slightly trembling hands and the trembling in her voice.

"He's our father; he's our kin, but so are our uncle and aunt, and you, big sister. Grandpa, and mother died unfairly because of him. Big sister, he's our father, we don't want to see our father die like this, but we can't fail to avenge our other family who died unjustly."

Sanbao helped Erya sit down, too, with a crying voice said, "Mother didn't close her eyes when she died, her eyes couldn't close. The village elders said she didn't die content. Even at her burial, her eyes remained open."

Saying so, the siblings began to cry.

"The night before she died, mother sat at my bedside saying she wasted her life. I didn't understand then, I still don't now, but I grasp one thing, when a woman says she wasted her life, it's because of that man. Big sister, if he doesn't die, mother won't close her eyes."

Chapter 1639: Who Are You Really?

Gu Youyou was profoundly shocked. She didn't know her third aunt well, only knowing that she was treated worse than her second aunt at home. Unexpectedly, her nature was so unyielding.

Everyone said she feared hardship and exhaustion, afraid that raising her two children was too arduous, which drove her to jump into the river.

But in a farming family, isn't hardship and exhaustion inevitable? She never complained before; why would she abandon her two children because of fear of hardship and exhaustion?

She must have been heartbroken by Gu Wu, feeling that she worked so hard to sustain a family and raise her children, only for that man to never consider her, never see her as a person, making her feel she'd lived in vain.

Gu Youyou led Erya and Dabao, carrying that packet of poison, towards the Ministry of Punishment's Prison.

But outside the mansion, they encountered many people.

The village chief, the County Magistrate, Shunzi holding a child in each hand, with Shunzi's parents standing behind him.

Second Aunt Huang Xiangwen and Dabao's family had already returned, Erbao and Sanya had also come.

Gu Youyou opened her mouth but couldn't say anything.

The village chief sighed softly, saying, "We're all acquaintances, let's go take a look!"

Acquaintances, let's take a look.

Indeed, in the distant Beijing, in these ancient times with underdeveloped transportation, having so many acquaintances was truly remarkable.

Gu Youyou's group gradually entered the Ministry of Punishment's Prison, where Gu Wu was shackled, confined in a separate dungeon.

Outside the cage was a young man dressed in Top Scholar's attire. He turned upon hearing the commotion, and Gu Youyou realized it was Gu Wu's adopted son, Gu Shuisheng.

Today, the imperial decree arrived before him, making him the newly appointed Top Scholar of this session.

After accepting the decree and donning the robe, his first action was to come to this Ministry of Punishment's Prison to see Gu Wu.

Seeing Gu Youyou bring people inside, he stepped aside, murmuring, "He saved my life."

Gu Youyou nodded gently, saying nothing more.

No one can be completely worthless; Gu Wu may be heinous to them, unforgivable even with a death sentence. Yet, to Gu Shuisheng, whom he unintentionally saved, he was indeed a benefactor.

Gu Shuisheng didn't turn his back when Gu Wu was about to be executed but visited him right after receiving the imperial decree, proving his extraordinary character, no wonder Prime Minister Zhang valued him, and the emperor favored him.

Even a selfish and despicable person like Gu Wu, in the end, would consider him.

Gu Wu sat amidst grass, looking at the once familiar faces sentimentally, finally letting out a sigh.

"If you're going to do it, do it. I've long lost any chance of turning back."

Gu Youyou signaled the jailer to unlock, saying indifferently, "Life has many paths. Even if there's no turning back, there are other paths to choose. Yet you insisted on choosing a dead end."

Gu Wu looked up at Gu Youyou, suddenly asking, "Who exactly are you?"

Gu Youyou paused, snorted coldly, and turned aside, saying, "Give me the time of one incense stick!"

Upon her words, someone lit a stick of green incense for her.

Gu Wu's gaze kept following Gu Youyou. Just now, he suddenly realized this woman wasn't Gu Youyou, couldn't possibly be the Gu Youyou subjected to confinement and manipulation since childhood. Who was she?

How did she deceive everyone and become Gu Youyou?

Chapter 1640: No One on His Side

"Dad, why don't you have some food before you go, at least die full!"

Seeing that everyone had come to see Gu Wu, but no one spoke, Shunzi had to let go of the two children, take the food box from Shunzi's mother's hand, and said to Gu Wu.

Only then did Gu Wu move his gaze away from Gu Youyou and look at the others.

Seeing those two little ones, he felt a brief joy in his heart, but thinking that he was about to die, a wave of sadness washed over him.

Forget it, he wouldn't ask, nor let them call him grandpa, just let it be.

He looked at Erya and Sanbao and said in a low voice, "I have wronged you both, and now I can’t live on. I only ask you one thing."

Erya turned her head away, refusing to look at Gu Wu at all.

Erya was the most fiery-tempered of the Gu Family children, so Gu Wu could only helplessly turn his gaze to Sanbao, looking at him expectantly.

"Say it!" Sanbao gritted his teeth.

Gu Wu sighed and said, "After I die, bury me back in Lotus Village."

Before they could speak, the village head on the side shouted his disagreement.

"Gu Wu, you should know the rules of our Lotus Village. Anyone who commits a capital crime is not allowed to be buried back in the village. Our village does not take in executed criminals; no one can break this rule!"

The older people get, the more stubborn they become. Especially those who serve as village heads.

The crowd clicked their tongues inwardly, looking at Gu Wu with sympathy.

"Then where do you want to bury me?" Gu Wu angrily stared at the village head.

Gu Youyou, seeing the incense that had burned quite a bit, kindly reminded him, "Sooner or later, the dead become a pile of ashes; wouldn’t it be a burial wherever it is? I advise you not to bother about things after death and think more about what you haven’t said yet!"

Gu Youyou’s fierceness was a form of coldness.

It was a chill that made people shiver, only that she usually faced the world as a doctor who saved lives, rarely showing this side of her.

The atmosphere turned colder, Gu Wu looked at each person present.

Finally, he closed his eyes and said coldly, "I have nothing to say to them. Gu Youyou, I do have something I want to ask you alone, would that be possible?"

Gu Youyou replied indifferently, "Sure, about to die, why wouldn't it be possible?"

Actually, the others also didn't know what good to say to him.

Erya turned and left.

Shunzi, leading the two kids, followed behind Erya, awkwardly smiled at Gu Wu, and quickly followed Erya's steps.

Shunzi's parents sighed helplessly, "In-law, our two families became relatives, and we haven't even had a meal together yet, look at this, really..."

The straightforward Shunzi's father nearly made Gu Wu angry enough to vomit blood.

At such a moment, he was still regretting not having a meal together.

Shunzi's mother quickly nudged Shunzi's father out.

Sanbao kowtowed to Gu Wu and said, "Dad, I'm leaving, have a safe journey."

Gu Wu was filled with sorrow, wiped his tears.

Then it was Erbao’s turn, he sighed helplessly, "Third Uncle, you won’t be lonely over there, my father and grandfather are all there."

Gu Wu: "..."

Back then, Sanya was still young, and her feelings for Gu Wu were the shallowest.

Gu Wu proactively greeted her, "Sanya’s grown so big, huh?"

Sanya said, "My mom said you died long ago, Third Uncle, so it was a lie. Third Uncle, I’m leaving!"

Gu Wu: "..." Not a single one hopes for him to live.

These little brats, even if one of them spoke up for him, pleaded with Gu Youyou, he might have a chance to live.

Though up till now, he still didn’t want to die.