Farmhouse 1671

Chapter 1671: Xuyao Is Missing

He called out, but no one responded from inside the room.

He looked around, but still found no one.

However, Xiang Chun mentioned that she had seen him in the room not long ago.

The servant was also frightened, as there were many people today, with a mixed crowd, and the young master was still so small. What if something happened to the young master?

Yue Rujing searched around and discovered some scattered paint on the study table, along with white silk paper depicting some children's doodles.

Yue Rujing chuckled softly and said, "Wanted to paint a picture, but alas, my skills are lacking."

A maid entered to clean, and upon seeing Yue Rujing, she paused slightly before hurriedly greeting, "Yue Princely Heir!"

"Hmm, where is your young master?" Yue Rujing asked.

The maid replied, "I saw the young master going to the back mountain, saying he wanted to pick plums!"

The previous guiding servant quickly added, "Yue Princely Heir, perhaps the young master intends to pick plum blossoms as gifts!"

Yue Rujing nodded and said, "It's possible. I'll go take a look; you stay here!"

Yue Rujing wandered to the back mountain, where the blossoming plum flowers attracted the visiting guests. In Ningwang Residence, Jin Xuyao was the only child who could run around, so inquiring about his whereabouts wasn't difficult.

He asked and searched all the way, and Yue Rujing's expression turned grim.

"Little one, daring to run off to such a desolate place?"

The guests were nowhere in sight here, only occasionally could one hear the distant chatter and laughter of the guests.

Yue Rujing's face grew increasingly grim, until he saw a half piece of cloth hanging on a plum tree branch.

Yue Rujing's face turned pale as he tightly gripped the cloth, channeling all his energy and rushing towards the Prince Residence in the valley.

The guests admiring the plum blossoms were shocked, seeing Yue Rujing in such a state, how could they continue admiring the plum blossoms? They hurried down the mountain to the valley to see what had happened.

The cloth was unfurled, and written on it was a line of blood-written words.

Jin Zijin held this cloth for a long time without speaking.

"Senior brother, who could this be?"

After Yu Jizi's death, who in this world would dare provoke Jin Zijin?

To take your son's life, exchange it with Jin Tingyu's head.

That’s what the bloody words on the cloth said.

Jin Zijin tried his best to remain calm and said, “This is the handkerchief Gu Youyou prepared for Xuyao.”

Yue Rujing understood well, looking toward Gu Youyou, through the transparent window, he could vaguely see her smiling leisurely with several women, one of whom was Miss Du.

She was still unaware of the situation!

“Don’t tell Youyou, keep an eye on her for me; I’ll be back shortly.” Jin Zijin’s hand on Yue Rujing’s shoulder was heavy.

Yue Rujing nodded solemnly and said, “Senior brother, rest assured, I will take good care of them.”

“Alright!”

Jin Zijin proceeded in the direction Yue Rujing mentioned, and along the way, those who saw him sensed something was amiss.

Everyone started asking Yue Rujing.

“Yue Princely Heir, did something happen?”

“Yes, the Prince seems a bit off!”

Yue Rujing forced a smile and said, “It’s nothing, just that a child is being playful and we don’t know where he’s wandered off to. My senior brother has gone to look for him. Everyone, please don’t worry, continue with your activities. Shortly, it’s time for the banquet. Please be sure to join in!”

“Oh, so the Young Prince has disappeared? I’ve seen the Young Prince heading to the back mountain to climb plum trees!”

“Yes, I’ve seen it too. Kids play around, perhaps he’ll find his way back shortly. Yue Princely Heir, don’t be too anxious!”

Chapter 1672: Blood Letter

Yue Rujing responded, "Yes, yes, yes, the child is just playing around, he’ll be back soon!"

Yue Rujing smiled in response, arranging for the guests to be seated, but the smile didn’t reach his eyes.

If it were truly just because he was playing around, how great it would be if he came back soon.

The Princess wasn’t seen coming out to greet, nor was the Prince seen, but because Yue Rujing was deftly managing the scene, everyone remained in high spirits, and the banquet proceeded happily.

After lunch, the guests were gradually sent off, leaving only those who were from further away or had close relations with the host of the Ningwang Residence.

As night fell, Gu Youyou, who hadn’t seen her husband and son all day, became increasingly uneasy.

"Ajing, why isn’t Zijin back yet?"

Yue Rujing was chatting and joking with the Xiao brothers and Jie Zhonglin when he saw Gu Youyou coming out wrapped in a cloak and couldn’t help but be startled, quickly saying, "Why did you come out? Didn’t Senior Brother say you shouldn’t come out?"

"Where is he?" Gu Youyou’s expression didn’t look good.

Yue Rujing didn’t dare to tell anyone about the matter, so the Xiao brothers and Jie Zhonglin were also unaware of the truth. Yue Rujing only told them that Jin Zijin had some urgent matters and would be back soon.

Then he kept stringing them along until now; they had arrived late, and till now, they hadn’t seen Jin Zijin.

Yue Rujing smiled and said to Gu Youyou, "Senior Brother is sending off the guests; once he’s finished, he’ll be back."

He was sweating coldly inside, thinking to himself: Why hasn’t he returned yet? If he didn’t know that no one in this world could be Jin Zijin’s match, he might have suspected that Jin Zijin had also been abducted.

Just as he uttered this lie, it was immediately exposed by the clueless Xiao Jinyan.

"How come I didn’t see Brother sending off the guests? Haven’t the ones who were supposed to leave already gone?"

Everyone: "..."

Xiao Jinfei had already sensed something amiss and fiercely pinched Xiao Jinyan on the thigh.

Xiao Jinyan cried out, "Brother, why are you pinching me?"

Xiao Jinfei wished he could knock some sense into his foolish brother.

Gu Youyou’s expression gradually turned cold and she said, "What’s really going on? Where’s Xuyao? You said Zijin went to see off the guests, then where’s Xuyao?"

Yue Rujing, awkwardly, said, "Xuyao... is with Senior Brother!"

Gu Youyou gripped her cloak tightly, helplessly saying, "Don’t lie to me, do you think I’m stupid?"

The others also looked at Yue Rujing, considering it inappropriate for him to still be hiding the matter at this point.

"Princely Heir Yue, what's really going on? Please don't hide it from us."

Xiao Jinyan finally stopped being foolish and nervously said, "Yes, tell us so we can think of a solution together. We have not seen Brother or Xuyao ever since we've arrived."

Seeing that Senior Brother hadn't returned yet, Yue Rujing was also extremely worried and could only tell the truth to everyone.

"Xuyao is missing, and Senior Brother went to find him!" He looked at Gu Youyou but still didn't mention that Jin Xuyao had been taken away and a Blood Letter was left behind.

"Many guests said they saw him go to the back mountain, and that he was climbing a tree to pick plum blossoms; we guess he probably wanted to pick them as a gift for the Commandery Princess!"

Everyone was silent for a moment, no one spoke.

Seeing Gu Youyou, whose face was pale and standing in the cold wind, Jie Zhonglin quickly said, "Princess, why don't you go back first? Perhaps the child got lost while playing at the back mountain; we'll go together to look for him, and we'll find him soon."

Gu Youyou's mind went blank when she heard Yue Rujing saying it wasn't a big deal.

Chapter 1673: Recalling Eunuch Wan's Murder

But why did she feel that things weren't that simple, as if something big had happened?

She clutched her chest, feeling like there was an empty space there.

"Xuyao?"

Miss Du came back from the inner room and hurriedly supported Gu Youyou, saying, "Why did you come out? Go back quickly!"

In their eyes, confinement is a big deal.

Without forty days, one must absolutely not go out and catch a breeze, or there will be a series of aftereffects.

So Miss Du was quite shocked to see Gu Youyou standing in the courtyard, blowing in the cold wind, and dragged her back inside.

Yue Rujing took a deep breath, and only when Gu Youyou walked away did she say, “Let’s talk while we walk!”

They started walking towards the back mountain, and only then did Yue Rujing tell everyone the truth.

“Xuyao didn’t get lost on his own; he was taken away by someone.”

The blood letter was in Jin Zijin’s hand, and Yue Rujing had no choice but to tell them, “The person left a line, saying that to save Xuyao, we have to exchange the Emperor’s life. Senior Brother probably went to pursue.”

Everyone was shocked and couldn’t say a word for a moment.

Yue Rujing asked, “Since I left Beijing, I haven’t inquired about what happened here. Has something happened? Do you know who could have done this?”

Yue Rujing really couldn’t figure out who in the world would do such a thing.

Everyone was silent for a moment, and then Jie Zhonglin suddenly spoke, “After the Emperor passed away, Eunuch Wan also died. You all know this, right?”

Everyone nodded.

That matter was suppressed at the time, and not many people knew about it. Only the Emperor secretly sent people to investigate it.

The Jie Family had always been valued by the emperors, and the current Emperor, Jin Tingyu, was no exception. The previous Emperor told Jin Tingyu everything about whom he could use, whom he couldn't, and whom he could trust completely before deciding to take his own life, so Jie Zhonglin knew about that matter.

He said, "The Emperor actually committed suicide by poisoning, but Eunuch Wan was murdered!"

What?

They were hearing the truth about the Emperor's death for the first time and were extremely surprised.

"Why would the Emperor commit suicide?" Yue Rujing was quite shocked.

Jie Zhonglin gently shook his head and said, "Maybe the Prince knows. The Emperor died at Empress Xiaochen's mausoleum."

Everyone was stunned and fell silent.

The Emperor was already dead, the new Emperor ascended, and the world was now peaceful. Investigating why the Emperor committed suicide was no longer important; what was important was who would be so idle as to kill the old eunuch by the Emperor's side the day the Emperor died.

Jie Zhonglin continued, "We speculate that the person's target was the Emperor, but unexpectedly found him dead. However, when leaving, he was discovered by Eunuch Wan, who happened to deliver a cloak to the Emperor late at night. He killed him to silence him."

This explanation seems plausible, but who was the one who intended to kill the Emperor and ended up killing Eunuch Wan?

“Nowadays the world is at peace, the people live in prosperity; who would still want to kill the Emperor?”

“Yes, the person who kidnapped Xuyao left a note demanding the new Emperor’s life. Their goal is clear; whoever becomes Emperor, they want to kill them.”

Xiao Jinyan pondered for a moment and said, “The only people I can think of who would bear such a deep grudge against the Imperial Family are the remnants of the Ducal Residence…”

He looked at the others.

Yue Rujing said, “If we’re talking about the remnants of the Ducal Residence, there’s Madam Lin and the first wife of Young Master Lu… but these two weak women had no involvement in the rebellion of the Ducal Residence, nor do they have the capability to enter the Imperial Mausoleum and kill Eunuch Wan!”

Chapter 1674: Who Was It?

Jie Zhonglin nodded and said, "Yes, but the Beiping Army has already been reorganized, and all close associates and family members of Jin Tianyuan and Jin Tianzhong have been executed without exception. They have no one left."

The group had already arrived at the place where Yue Rujing discovered the Blood Letter when Xiao Jinyan suddenly said, "Could it be remnants of the Third and Fifth Princes? The Ducal Residence’s remnants have been dealt with, but there were still many remaining from the Third and Fifth Princes back then. The previous Emperor was merciful and even pardoned their crimes, wasn’t he?"

"Them? How is it possible? Madam has already resolved her inner conflict; Jin Ziyuan has amnesia, and she now only wishes for Jin Ziyuan to have a good life in the latter half of his life."

These words are indeed irrefutable, but besides Jin Ziyuan and them, others truly can’t imagine who else would do such a thing.

As the night fell, Jin Zijin hadn’t returned. After their investigation, they could only go back and wait anxiously outside, not daring to enter Gu Youyou’s inner courtyard, lest they cause her to worry.

Searcy was called out by Gu Youyou to inquire about the situation, and with a few questions, realized they were talking.

She played with a plum blossom in her hand, its petals plucked clean, her eyes lightly sweeping over them, saying, "Since someone is missing, why are you all worrying but not going out to search?"

The crowd was slightly stunned, knowing that the woman beside Gu Youyou with decent medical skills and a somewhat fiery personality was not easy to deal with.

Jie Zhonglin raised an arm and said, "As someone missing an arm, I can’t navigate the mountain paths, so I returned."

Hmm, the disabled, Searcy nodded lightly.

Yue Rujing laughed dryly and said, "My senior instructed me to watch over the house!"

Xiao Jinyan said, "I rushed over from Xining, rode tirelessly all the way just to make it, and my waist, oh, I need to find a place to rest first. Hey, little girl there, quickly lead me to rest in the guest room!"

Xiao Jinfei: "..."

Searcy’s smile gradually faded and she said, "Stop pretending, has something gone wrong?"

Everyone’s demeanor turned solemn, unsure of what to say.

It was Jie Zhonglin who explained the entire matter, analyzing the possibility of Jin Xuyao’s men being involved with Jin Ziyuan when Searcy immediately denied it.

"It couldn’t be him!"

"Oh? How do you know?" Everyone was puzzled by Searcy's certainty that Jin Ziyuan wasn't involved.

But, after all, Jin Ziyuan's father died because of Jin Zijin. His followers and many families were massacred under the orders of the former Emperor. Although the former Emperor eventually understood the reasons behind the rebellion and reconciled with the survivors, what about their subordinates?

The survivors reconciled, but the dead were still gone, inevitably leading some to cling to their grievances.

Yue Rujing chuckled and said, "Don't tell me it's because Jin Ziyuan lost his memory. It's because of amnesia that he could be easily fooled; the subordinates seeking revenge could conveniently fabricate deep grievances to encourage him to take revenge."

Ha, but Jin Ziyuan hasn't lost his memory. Of course, this secret is known only by Jin Ziyuan himself and Searcy.

Jin Ziyuan hasn't lost his memory; even if he wanted revenge, he wouldn't have Jin Zijin kill the Emperor, nor threaten Gu Youyou's son. His deep affection is genuine; otherwise, he wouldn't orchestrate a play of amnesia.

But Searcy couldn't explain this matter, for she had promised Jin Ziyuan not to reveal that he hadn't lost his memory.

Chapter 1675: Him?

Expressing it would be detrimental to everyone; she hoped Gu Youyou wouldn't have any more psychological burdens.

Each person genuinely wishing well for Gu Youyou would work so hard to keep the memories sealed away, allowing everyone to live without burdens.

"In any case, it couldn't be him. Think again, could it be someone else?"

Searcy pondered for a moment and then said, “The target is very clear, first it was the former Emperor, and now the current Emperor. In other words, whoever in the Jin Family becomes Emperor, he wants to kill. Such behavior is like that of a madman, acting solely out of spite.”

Everyone felt that Searcy’s analysis had some merit, but as for who was suspicious, they still couldn’t figure out anyone else.

“Unless…” Xiao Jinfei suddenly said with a serious face, “unless there are still remnants, the Beiping Rebel Army wasn’t completely wiped out.”

Those with such deep-seated hatred against the Jin Imperial Family, unable to rise again to rebel, could only kill the Emperor to vent their anger, could only be the remnants of the rebels wiped out back then.

“Why not the remnants of the Ducal Residence?” Xiao Jinyan asked curiously.

Xiao Jinfei glanced at him indifferently and said, “If there were still any remnants within the Ducal Residence, they would have defected during the Beiping Rebel Army’s time, instead of staying hidden until now.”

While everyone was at an impasse in their discussion, a figure slowly approached the villa in the valley from afar.

It was Jin Zijin, whom everyone had been waiting for.

The snow had fallen heavily in the mountains, leaving snowflakes on his hair and shoulders. Yue Rujing hurriedly went forward to brush off the snow on his body and asked, “Didn’t find Xuyao?”

Jin Zijin shook his head lightly, his expression terrifyingly somber.

“Cousin, did you find any clues?” Xiao Jinyan also hurried to meet him.

Jin Zijin threw the bloodstained handkerchief to him and said, “It should be the same group, or even the same person, who killed Eunuch Wan back then.”

Yue Rujing sighed, “We thought the same, but who is that person after all?”

Jin Zijin stood firm in front of Xiao Jinfei and said, “You were the one supervising the execution back then. Think carefully about any omissions, or anything unusual?”

Xiao Jinfei thought for a moment and then suddenly exclaimed, “I compared each person strictly, they were indeed the right ones. But there was one person, he wasn’t of the Jin surname, had no blood relation to them, he…”

“Who?”

Xiao Jinfei’s face turned pale, “Jin Tianyuan’s adopted son, his abilities far surpassed those of Jin Tianyuan and Jin Tianzhong’s direct sons. But he was disfigured from a young age, often wearing a mask in public. Those who had seen his true face were probably only Jin Tianyuan. Back then, I didn’t think much of it, since everyone said it was him, I included him in the execution. If I recall, he was the only one whose face couldn’t be matched.”

“Him?” Jin Zijin had indeed heard of this person.

Searcy was surprised, “The one who nearly wiped out King Jin’s lineage? His swordsmanship was quite precise.”

The details Searcy spoke of were unknown to others. Regarding how King Jin became infertile, it was a shame to the Imperial Family and a private matter, inconvenient to discuss with outsiders, so they didn’t know the inside story.

Searcy heard about it from Gu Youyou.

Everyone was looking at her, and she, being different from other women, didn’t feel embarrassed. She recounted what Gu Youyou had told her, word for word.

After hearing her story, everyone's expressions were intriguing, and they looked at Jin Zijin with changed eyes.

Chapter 1676: Fu Jian

Although they didn't quite understand some professional terms like 'vas deferens,' they could more or less guess the meaning, and after listening to what Searcy said, they already painted an indescribable picture in their minds.

In their eyes… does this count as a betrayal?

Searcy's face turned dark, and he snorted coldly, "Please respect a doctor's professional integrity. In our eyes, there is no division of gender, only the relationship between patient and doctor."

Seeing his senior brother's embarrassment, Yue Rujing quickly helped to mediate, "Yes, we are doctors! I'm currently managing Jisheng Hall in Lingnan. When necessary, I also treat women's illnesses. It's no big deal, you men shouldn't be so narrow-minded."

Jin Zijin kept a cold face, so naturally, everyone didn't dare to say anything.

But the most important thing now is to find that person, and Jin Xuyao.

"If it's really him, it will be troubling!" Xiao Jinfei said gravely, "No one has seen his face. Due to an injury he suffered as a child, his mask-making skills are on par with the Bai Family. If someone like him goes into the martial world, catching him would be even harder than catching Bai Xiaosheng."

Everyone fell silent. This time, since Jin Zijin didn't catch him, to catch him again, they'll have to wait for him to show up himself.

…

It was late, and everyone had returned to their guest rooms. Jin Zijin wandered outside the room door, unsure of how to enter or explain to Gu Youyou.

It snowed again at night, and the cold wind howled outside, making a buzzing sound. Jin Zijin wandered alone in the courtyard for a long time until Gu Youyou's voice came from inside the house.

"Come in!"

The voice was cold and clear, seemingly tinged with despair.

Jin Zijin felt a pang in his heart, and regardless of what to explain, he hurriedly strode inside.

"Youyou!" The woman in thin clothing sat by the windowsill, with the room heated by a brazier, but it was still a bit cold wearing only thin clothes.

Knowing he had come in, she turned her head to look at him, her face full of tears.

"You found out?" Jin Zijin was startled.

Gu Youyou said slowly, "You know, I have good ears!"

As early as when they were discussing who did it, she was listening to their conversation from behind the roof beam not far away.

"What's the name of Jin Tianyuan's godson?" she asked.

"Fu Jian!" Jin Zijin replied.

What he feared most now was that Gu Youyou wouldn't be able to bear this blow.

However, Gu Youyou was stronger than he imagined. Though sad and crying, she still faced the reality.

“Fu Jian!” Gu Youyou bit on these two words lightly, but analyzed seriously, “At twelve, he sparred with King Jin, and those around the same age in the Ducal Residence were defeated by him within two or three moves, while King Jin withstood more than ten moves, but was injured by him in a specific spot. Zijin, at that time, Fu Jian was only twelve or thirteen, this person…”

Jin Zijin nodded gently, saying, “He is very formidable, and finding him will be very difficult. We can only wait for him to come to us!”

“He wants you to kill the emperor!” Gu Youyou said somewhat agitatedly, “Otherwise, he’ll kill him anyway!”

“I can’t possibly kill the emperor!” Now, Jin Zijin didn’t intend to deceive her, only saying, “He wants the emperor’s life, kill one, and there will be a second and third emperor ascending the throne. The nation cannot be without an emperor for a day, there are too many to kill unless the Jin Imperial Family’s line is cut off!”

Gu Youyou naturally understood this reasoning, and said, “Then what should we do now? Xuyao is in his hands, and he’s so young…”

Chapter 1677: Her Plan

"Everyone must go through hardships, if he..." He wanted to say that if he couldn’t come back, he would also be powerless.

"We will do our utmost to save him, we will never give up on him. Youyou, I might go out tomorrow and if Xuyao doesn’t come back for a while, I might frequently go out. Before leaving Beijing, I said once we have our new home, we will never be separated again. I’m sorry, I broke my promise!"

Gu Youyou’s eyes welled up again, nodding, she said: "We will never give up on him, we will look together!"

They were people striving to survive in the cracks, perhaps too greedy, having one child and wanting two, three, even dreaming of a house full of children and grandchildren.

Is it really that easy to form a perfect family?

When the moon is full, it will wane; days were too perfect, so heaven became jealous...

...

Fifteen years later

"Dad, are you going out to find brother again?"

Zijin, now middle-aged, still looked very young, although white hairs sprouted at his temples, adding an air of melancholy. Just like Yu Jizi and Tian Jizi years ago, no matter how young they looked, their hair would turn white.

Fifteen-year-old Jin Luoyin had grown into a graceful young lady, it was early spring again, just after the New Year, and the plum blossoms in the valley were blooming splendidly. Zijin packed his bags, ready to leave again.

Each year, he went out several times, ranging from a few days to several months.

Jin Luoyin had gotten used to her father frequently going out for work.

"There's news of your brother from the north, whether it's true or not, I have to go see!" Zijin explained to him patiently.

Gu Youyou stood under a plum tree not far away, waved her hand to him.

Zijin, holding his horse in the snow, also waved his hand.

"Go back, I'll be back soon!"

Every time before leaving, he said the same thing.

He’s no longer young, yet still works tirelessly, because Jin Xuyao hasn’t been found yet, he always needs to run around.

Over the years, he visited nearly everyone who might know the Disguise Technique, yet none was Fu Jian.

"Dad, will Uncle Lun Yu also go with you?"

"Of course, they’re waiting for me in Qingshui Town!"

In order to discern the Disguise Technique, one needs experts in this skill, so often it wasn’t only Jin Zijin running around, but also Lun Yu and Yi Yan.

After Lun Tong died, he married his favorite female disciple to his son, and now this couple, used to swapping identities, also became regulars at the Ningwang Residence.

Jin Luoyin stopped talking, chased her father’s horse for a while, then stopped, watching the road leading to the outside world until the sound of hooves disappeared, and the figure vanished in the snowstorm.

Gu Youyou turned around and went back into the house, into the study, picked up the ledger as usual.

To have enough people work for her, she must have enough money to buy their loyalty.

Whether now or in the future, to find the lost children, a huge amount of money must be spent.

Jin Luoyin watched her already not so young parents with growing worry, standing silently in the snowstorm.

Searcy looked at her and said slowly, "Haven’t you gotten used to it after all these years? As long as there’s no news that your brother has died, they have to keep searching."

Jin Luoyin looked back at Searcy and said, "Aunt, Erniu’s father in the village is the same age as my dad, and he no longer does much farm work, just some light tasks like herding cattle, but my dad still has to toil outside year after year. When will he be able to stop and rest?"

Chapter 1678: She Should Share Her Parents’ Burden Now

Searcy was taken aback, as she, who was usually sharp-tongued, didn’t know how to respond to this question.

Jin Luoyin continued, "Mother reads the ledger every day, her eyes are getting worse!"

Listening to these words, Searcy felt an indescribable bitterness in her heart.

She thought for a moment and said, "Your brother hasn’t returned yet. Maybe they won’t stop until they can no longer run or see."

Jin Luoyin suddenly exclaimed excitedly, "Why wait until they can no longer run or see? I am grown up; I can go find my brother."

"You?" Searcy looked at her in surprise and said, "If your mother had given birth to a boy, by now, at fifteen, he could take over your father’s work. But you, a girl, could indeed take over your mother’s work, but you dislike looking at ledgers!"

Jin Luoyin replied, "What’s the problem with being a girl? I can dress as a man."

She acted immediately, dragging Searcy to her courtyard, speaking excitedly as they walked, "I’ll dress up for you to see, if you think it’s not convincing, I’ll ask Yi Yan for help next time. Her disguise as a man is as good as any real man’s."

Returning to Jin Luoyin’s courtyard, they found her rummaging through the bottom of a cabinet and pulling out an inconspicuous cloth bundle. Upon opening it, there were indeed a few decent sets of men’s clothes.

Searcy asked in surprise, "You had all this prepared already?"

It was apparent that her words about going to find her brother for her father weren’t just spoken in jest; it must have been part of her plan all along.

Last month she came of age, and perhaps she’d been waiting for this day all the while.

"Yes, I have thought about it for a long time. I mentioned it to Mother before, and she didn’t object, just said I was too young and to wait until I came of age. Now that I am, I should go find my brother."

"Your mother didn’t object?" Searcy was stunned but quickly realized that Gu Youyou was indeed such a person. If she didn’t need to stay to handle the work on the home front, she might have already gone out herself.

"Alright, change your clothes first and let me see, then we’ll go talk to your mother. If she agrees, I have no objections either!"

Jin Luoyin was not raised like a typical delicate young lady. She had trained in martial arts since childhood and learned a lot of medical skills from Searcy and Gu Youyou, so she was quite capable of going out on her own without much worry.

Moreover, Gu Youyou’s numerous businesses were spread across the land, and she could contact people from the Prince Residence at any time.

However, Fu Jian was truly cunning; aside from being active in threatening Jin Zijin with a few letters after capturing Jin Xuyao, there had been little news since.

As two more years passed with no further news, occasional reports about them from the outside world were mostly false as well.

Fu Jian probably feared being hunted by Jin Zijin and Gu Youyou’s people and didn’t dare mention killing the Emperor again, only seeking to preserve his life.

If he resolved to hide away, incognito, finding him would not be so easy.

Jin Luoyin put on the men’s headgear and clothing, and with the disguise technique she had learned from Yi Yan and Lun Yu, upon closer inspection she looked like a dashing young dandy with an air of elegance mixed with boyish charm.

Searcy sized her up and down and said, "You do have a few hints of the part, and since the weather’s cold, dressing thickly hides your chest; it’s not bad!"

Jin Luoyin beamed happily, "Really?"

"Really!" Searcy nodded.

"That’s great, then I’ll set out tomorrow, oh no, today, and follow in my father’s footsteps!"

Chapter 1679: Youyou’s Imagination Runs Wild Again

"Come on now." Searcy rolled her eyes and said, "Your mother’s mind is a bit different from normal folks. She might support you, but your father, forget it. He nearly went mad after losing a son; if he loses a daughter too, he’ll truly go insane. He definitely won’t agree."

Jin Luoyin pouted.

Searcy continued, "Do you know how your father refused Prime Minister Zhang and his daughter back then?"

"What?"

Searcy laughed, "He said, he’s getting old, and it’s not easy to have a son, he doesn’t want to cut off his bloodline!"

Jin Luoyin: "..."

"All right, pack your things tonight and leave tomorrow. The coachman is going to Yangguan City tomorrow, you can ask him to give you a ride. I also need to prepare some things for your self-defense tonight!"

"Ah, thank you, Aunt!"

"Also, remember to tell your mother!"

Jin Luoyin hesitated but said, "Better not, tell her after I've left!"

"Hmm? What, you said your mother agreed, were you lying to me?"

"Lying to you, of course, I wouldn't dare, it's just that when my mother sees me off, she might get sad like she does with my father!"

Searcy sighed gently and said, "Alright then, prepare yourself!"

...

Jin Luoyin, carrying the items Searcy prepared for her, changed into men's clothing and, taking advantage of Gui Yunxi's caravan departure, secretly hid in a cart transporting goods.

Only Searcy and Jin Luoyin knew about this, even Gui Yunxi who was transporting the goods didn't know.

Gui Yunxi, as usual, led the caravan to the town, loaded up with goods from the town, and continued to advance towards Yangguan City.

Ten years ago, the most prosperous place in Zhuzhao Country was Jinxiu City. Now, because Gu Youyou shifted the commercial focus to Yangguan City, Yangguan City has become the most prosperous place in Zhuzhao Country.

Merchants came and went in an endless stream, and Gui Yunxi's caravan was not particularly noticeable.

"Whoa... everyone stop the carts here for now. As usual, wait here for a bit while I go to the warehouse to meet with Butler Chen!"

The carts stopped, and the cart drivers sat down in the tea shed to drink tea and eat some snacks to fill their stomachs. At this time, no one noticed a handsome young man jump down from one of their carts, carrying a bundle, quickly disappearing into the bustling street.

Gu Youyou only learned the next day that Jin Luoyin was missing, and Searcy didn't intend to hide it from her, saying, "She went out, saying she didn't want you guys to work so hard. Concerning the search for Xuyao, she also wants to contribute and said she told you about it in the past and you agreed."

"She went to find Xuyao?" Gu Youyou slowly said, "Yes, I did promise her, agreed to let her search for Xuyao. She's fifteen now, can't believe how fast time flies, Xuyao has been missing for fifteen years, he's almost at the age of adulthood now, who knows what he looks like."

Searcy looked at her, somewhat sadly, and said, "The older you get, the more you nag, especially when it comes to your son. No useful information has come up all these years. I'm worried Fu Jian might have raised him in a different way. He was four when he left, perhaps he doesn't even remember."

"Yes!" Gu Youyou sighed and said slowly, "Do you remember the stories I told you about recognizing a thief as a father? When they couldn't accomplish something, they'd kidnap the enemy's child to raise as an assassin. Then the assassin would recognize the thief as a father and end up killing their own parents. The thing I fear most is Xuyao turning out like that. What should I do?"

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Chapter 1680: First Foray into the Jianghu

Searcy rolled her eyes at her and said, "I really don't understand what's going on in your head. I just hope Fu Jian doesn't have these things in his mind, or else I really wouldn't know what you should do."
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Heaven knows how many images of sons have filled her mind over the years.

When Jin Zijin was sad, it felt like his own retribution. He said that he didn't grow up next to his father when he was young and always felt that everything was caused by his father. No matter what he did, no matter what he said, he could never fully accept him from the bottom of his heart. Otherwise, he wouldn't have left in such a manner.

He might have happily become a retired emperor, watching his descendants flourish, and passed away peacefully.

But he selfishly only wanted to live his preferred life, disregarding his feelings, and privately built a residence here in Plum Valley.

The late emperor must have known but couldn't bear the separation from his descendants once again, punishing him through a final farewell in death.

Initially, Gu Youyou disagreed with his view because she had read Lun Tong's books and later knew that the late emperor had deep feelings for Empress Xiaochen. When peace reigned, he simply wanted to reunite with his wife.

As her hopes of finding their son grew fainter, she gradually came to believe.

It seemed that fate was beginning to repeat. The late emperor couldn't watch his own son grow up and secretly sketched an image of him in his mind. Now Jin Zijin was experiencing the same thing.

It was only through enduring such helplessness himself that he could understand the late emperor's suffering.

Searcy let out a long sigh and said, "You're spacing out again. Never mind, I've said everything I needed to. She's already gone. Even if you're unwilling to let her go, you can't bring her back."

"Hmm, I know," Gu Youyou replied flatly.

Searcy looked surprised and said, "You're really not worried?"

Gu Youyou replied, "What is there to worry about? Will worrying bring her back?"

Searcy: "...No, it can't!"

"Well, there it is then!"

Searcy was speechless for a moment, wanting to scold her, but in the end, it turned into comfort.

"Honestly, I think it's a good idea to let Luoyin search. All these years, whenever there's a hint of news, the Prince goes out. They are in the dark, while we are in the open. They deliberately mislead, deliberately avoid us, so finding is naturally very difficult. But who would have thought Luoyin would be searching? Luoyin is searching in the dark, so we at least have a secret path."

Gu Youyou just gave her a faint look, unmoved.

It must be said that after hearing Searcy's last words, she felt a lot better inside.

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Jin Luoyin would often accompany Gu Youyou to Yangguan City, but this was her first time coming alone and disguised as a man.

To avoid being recognized, she decided to leave early. After all, she had many acquaintances in Yangguan City. Even though she was in disguise, what if someone sharp-eyed recognized her?

"Commandery Princess?"

Just when she thought of sharp-eyed people, she indeed ran into one.

Jin Luoyin’s heart skipped a beat, the familiar voice calling out "Commandery Princess" startled her greatly. Mr. Zhang, just how sharp are your eyes?

Jin Luoyin turned her face away, and when Mr. Zhang saw her, he showed a look of disappointment and said, "Sorry, brother, from your background I thought you looked like someone I knew well. Turns out I was mistaken."

Jin Luoyin breathed a sigh of relief and laughed, "No harm done, many people have similar features, let alone just a similar silhouette."

Mr. Zhang laughed heartily, "Right, right, it’s just that your back looks a bit frail, you should exercise more!"