Farmhouse 1801

Chapter 1801: Unmasking the False Face

Jia Ren took the needle and gently lifted an edge on Fu Jian’s face, then used the needle to fix it in place to prevent the lifted skin from falling again.

Then he placed the remaining needles and a fingernail-sized small blade into the prepared potion, using the potion-soaked needle to carefully prick holes on Fu Jian’s face.

He said, "In order for the potion to penetrate the skin, we must do it this way."

Jin Xuyao still remembered when he was in Plum Blossom Valley, seeing Jin Luoyin marinate chicken wings in the same way, using silver needles to prick them for better flavor.

Jia Ren’s sighs didn’t affect his hand movements at all, he pricked the needle almost perfectly and then used the knife to lift the layer of skin bit by bit.

He said, "It’s fortunate that he is already dead, otherwise the pain would have been quite unbearable for him."

Jin Xuyao unconsciously touched his own face; every time he changed faces, it was in deep night. After taking the medicine, he’d fall asleep, and waking up the next day felt as if he were peeling off a layer of skin, with unbearable pain.

According to Jia Ren’s method, he only did the first three steps, which was just up to the ironing stage.

Whereas Fu Jian’s process of pricking and marinating surely would have been quite unbearable.

It’s a pity he’s dead; he got off lightly.

...

Outside, things were not idle either; Jin Luoyin and Searcy accompanied Gu Youyou inside the room. The window opened a small slit, allowing them to see the situation outside.

Outside, all of Tianhai Mountain Villa's servants were present, and the butler had solemnly erected a platform.

Everyone quietly listened to the butler's solemn narration, and by the end, their expressions changed one by one.

"Are you saying the owner was not actually our owner, our owner was actually killed long ago?"

"Exactly!" The butler said with a face full of grief, "What we saw was actually the former butler Qu at Tianhai Mountain Villa. He came to Tianhai Mountain Villa, approached the owner, and ultimately intended to replace the owner, seeking the owner's identity."

Everyone was dumbfounded; this was simply too crazy. It must be understood that Tianhai Mountain Villa had many servants; what was replaced were only those in the inner courtyard, especially those who frequently came in contact with the Young Master.

The people from the outer courtyard weren't replaced. Those who resided in the outer courtyard didn't usually have much interaction with the owner, knowing nothing more than the face.

Yet it happened to be that the face was fake.

No, it should be said that other than that face being the owner's own, the person was entirely fake.

How much of a slap in the face could this be?

Jin Zijin stood up, first lowering his noble status and deeply bowing to everyone, then said to everyone, "Due to our family's matters causing disturbance to everyone, I, Jin Zijin, apologize here."

Given Jin Zijin's status, even if he did something wrong, he wouldn't need to apologize to anyone.

This surprised and alarmed the crowd.

"Prince, please don’t say that. We were deceived by evildoers and didn’t realize our owner was long dead, that we were loyal to a fake person, an enemy."

Jin Zijin sighed softly, nodded, and said, "Indeed, as the butler just mentioned, that person is the enemy I’ve been searching for many years. Everyone knows that on the day of my family’s Commandery Princess’s full moon, the child was taken away. We’ve been searching all these years. The remnants of the Beiping Army, Fu Jian, lived in hiding within Tianhai Mountain Villa, which was unforeseen to me as well."

He paused, looked at Jian Shiqing, and said with some regret, "The person we owe the most is him, the true Young Master of Tianhai Mountain Villa."

These words, once spoken, truly shocked everyone present.

Chapter 1802: Young Master

The true Young Master?

"Young Master Jian?"

"How is Young Master Jian the true Young Master?"

At this moment, the teacher Chen they had painstakingly found came forward to speak.

He stepped forward, and everyone felt he looked somewhat familiar. It wasn’t until he removed his hat on the spot that they clearly saw his face.

"You are... you are Little Chen?" an elderly man asked.

Teacher Chen said softly, "Elder Zhao, it’s been many years, but your eyesight is still so good?"

Meeting again after more than ten years felt like a lifetime had passed.

Elder Zhao shook his head and said, "It's not the same anymore. I'm getting old. But Little Chen, why did you leave in such a hurry back then?"

Everyone at the villa knew that Teacher Chen and the owner had grown up together, sharing a deep bond. They all thought Teacher Chen would stay at the Tianhai Mountain Villa for a lifetime and never expected he would leave suddenly without an explanation.

Now returning...

Everyone's gaze was fixed on Teacher Chen, who said to Elder Zhao, and indeed to everyone, "My feelings for the owner would never let me leave Tianhai Mountain Villa. But the person who drove me away was not the owner, but Fu Jian, who harmed our owner and lived on by taking his identity. Not only was I driven away, but also all those who served closely by the owner's side, including Granny Liu.

Everyone knows that Granny Liu is the owner's nanny. With her status and age, she was supposed to stay in the villa to spend her old age there, but she was still driven out. All of this happened because the owner was no longer the owner. This impostor swapped identities in order to hide his own and went to such lengths to replace the Young Master.

That is not all. The owner's close aides who were replaced were all silenced. Those who survived, like me, were only lucky. All the others mysteriously died. Ladies and gentlemen, now that Heaven has eyes, and the villain is punished, it's time for the Young Master to reclaim his rightful position. And Young Master Jian is the true Young Master..."

The crowd looked at one another; they were all servants of the Tianhai Mountain Villa. During these days, everyone was anxious and uneasy. What they needed was merely a reason that could convince everyone.

The bloody incident at Tianhai Mountain Villa fifteen years ago and those unknown secrets were to them more like a story unrelated to themselves.

Jian Shiqing stood out, cupped his hands, and said to everyone, "Everything is over. Everyone's life should return to its rightful path. Please wait a moment, and soon you will see what the person impersonating my father actually looks like."

Inside the room, Jia Ren was almost finished removing Fu Jian's mask.

He called Jin Xuyao to help, and the two of them carefully removed the mask made of human skin.

What met their eyes was a ruined face.

This face showed typical burn scars!

Jia Ren sighed softly, "Fu Jian lost his mother in his childhood, and his stepmother caused the burns on his face. Later, he killed his stepmother, and his father bound him and sent him to the Governor's Office, but he escaped halfway. While he was being pursued by the Governor's Office for a few days, starving and exhausted, he encountered Jin Tianyuan.

After learning about his story, Jin Tianyuan even helped him counter-accuse his father and stepmother. With the Ducal Residence's power at the time, what he said was naturally taken as truth. Just like that, Fu Jian's stepmother died in vain, his father ended up in a large prison, and he was taken away and adopted as a godson by Jin Tianyuan."

Jia Ren shook his head and sighed, packed up, and said, "Let's go, let's go out too. Truly, the pitiful have their share of hatred, and the hateful are also pitiful. If not for his stepmother's abuse back then, there wouldn't have been a tragedy of a son killing his mother."

...

Chapter 1803: Tranquil Heart

The people who came to Tianhai Mountain Villa today were, of course, not just the servants from within the villa.

The ones witnessing this grand scheme unveiling were also people from the Yangguan City Governor’s Office, officials from the Ministry of Justice sent by the Imperial Court, as well as the bosses of various commercial firms closely linked to Tianhai Mountain Villa.

After all, not only should Fu Jian be brought to justice to clear the Ningwang Residence’s name, but the owner of Tianhai Mountain Villa also needed to be restored.

Everyone’s testimony was needed.

The human-shaped mask that was removed was placed on a head carved from a radish, and it was clear that it was the face everyone knew as Zhu Haisheng.

And lying before everyone was a corpse with a destroyed face.

An old member of the Beiping Army stepped forward and exclaimed after looking, "Yes, it’s him. Back then, Fu Jian came to the Beiping Army Camp exactly with this face. Although he has aged, I always remembered the scar on his face, and such a scar can’t be faked."

Several doctors stepped forward and said, "This scar is over a decade old, there’s no mistake!"

The servants of Tianhai Mountain Villa pointed at the fake face on the radish and said, "This really is our owner’s appearance, our owner..."

Now this owner only had a face left.

Everything had settled, and the truth was right there.

The official from the Ministry of Justice bowed to Jin Zijin and said, "Prince Ning, since it has been confirmed that this person is Fu Jian, please allow me to take Fu Jian back to Beijing to be brought to justice."

"Hmm, go ahead!"

Gu Youyou even sent some medicine with them, in case it decayed on the road!

Jin Xuyao never appeared before everyone, and the face with a fake mask would never show in the eyes of the world again.

He became an enigmatic figure unknown to the world. No one knew why Fu Jian took the original Zhu Yiping as an adopted son with him and found some unknown child to become Zhu Yiping.

People speculated that perhaps that child was really Fu Jian’s own son.

And Fu Jian’s sparing of Jian Shiqing was ascribed to a lifetime’s final bit of conscience.

Or it was a deal between him and the real Zhu Haisheng—Zhu Haisheng gave him a face and a life, and he let Tianhai Mountain Villa prosper, then raised his son.

The person had died, and the reason why remained unknown.

Jian Shiqing regained his identity and became the new owner of Tianhai Mountain Villa.

He used only his last name, changing his name to Zhu Shiqing.

But the character "Ping," which originally symbolized a wish for safety, seemed hardly related to his life.

At night, he carried two jugs of wine to find Jin Xuyao in the bamboo forest on the hillside.

After gazing at each other for over a decade, this was the only time they smiled upon meeting.

"I’ve known since I was little that you used my identity, so I hated you!"

"Then why didn’t you say something?" Jin Xuyao raised an eyebrow and asked.

Zhu Shiqing paused, then said helplessly, "You ask knowingly, does it interest you?"

"Interesting!" Jin Xuyao said, "Who told you to be the secret-keeper? You asked for it."

Zhu Shiqing lowered his head, and after a moment he chuckled, "Fortunately, I kept secrets, or else neither of us might have had a chance to grow up."

He tossed one of the jugs of wine in front of Jin Xuyao, saying, "Young Prince, have a sip."

Jin Xuyao looked indifferently and said, "I don’t drink."

He stood up and walked deeper into the bamboo forest.

"Where are you going?" Zhu Shiqing shouted out.

Jin Xuyao smiled bitterly, "Where else can I go? With a face like this!"

Chapter 1804: Relic

In the forest, there’s a bamboo house, and the people from the manor believe that the old strange man who took off Fu Jian’s mask lives inside it. No one dares to approach.

Gu Youyou and her husband have already returned; they were unable to take their son with them.

Jin Xuyao has his own ideas; he won’t go anywhere until he takes off this mask.

So outside, the Prince and Princess of Ningwang Residence are still looking for their son.

Jin Xuyao returned to the bamboo house, staring at the concocted medicine in the bowl, unmoving for a long time.

He hopes he can immediately take off this face, yet fears that once he removes it, his appearance would be disappointing.

Fifteen years of separation from family, and what stands between them might be more than just a face.

...

Jia Ren hasn't returned to Wutong Ridge for several decades. This place is where he lived with his master and junior apprentice sister before he set out, holding the best memories of his youth.

He was silent for a long time, looking at the two solitary graves overgrown with wild grass.

Lun Yu, along with Yi Yan, first offered incense at the graves, laid out fruit and offerings, then kowtowed, saying: "Master Grandpa, Mom, we've come to see you. Look who's here? This is Uncle Jia Ren. Do you remember him? He isn't wearing his mask today, looks much older."

Yi Yan burned paper, kowtowed, then stood up and said to Lun Yu: "I'll go find something to eat. Climbing this mountain is quite tiring."

"Mm, go ahead!"

It's rare that all three of them are standing in front of the tombs with their true faces.

After looking at the graves for a long while, Jia Ren said: "Did your mom truly leave nothing for me?"

"Nothing!" Lun Yu shook his head and said: "I've asked no less than ten times now. Is there something that might be with my mom?"

"Then who is your dad?" Jia Ren asked again.

"I don’t know. My mom said I was found." Lun Yu said.

Jia Ren just let out a cold laugh without saying anything.

After a while, he asked: "Do you know how she died? Did she say anything before she passed?"

Lun Yu thought for a moment and said: "The doctor said she fell ill due to overwork; simply put, she was exhausted."

"Exhausted?" Jia Ren became agitated and asked urgently: "What? You two didn’t live well?"

Now, Lun Yu looks to be in fine clothes, accompanied by Ningwang Residence, unlikely to be unable to afford food. It’s just unknown what kind of life they lived before.

Lun Yu sighed lightly and said: "It’s not that life was bad. My mom was just a strange person."

He looked at the scruffy old man and said disdainfully: "Not only her, but you are also strange, so am I, Yi Yan too. Those who do what we do aren’t normal people."

Jia Ren: "..."

"Hey, don’t look at me like that. My mom thought so too. The most frequently said thing was that people like us can’t live with normal people, and even if we have to be with normal people, we must wear masks all the time."

Jia Ren fell into silence, and after a moment asked: "Then what happened later?"

"Later?" Lun Yu smiled and said: "What later? In my memory, I was just fostered everywhere by her. She herself, well, I don’t know where she went—anyway, she had no fixed abode and wandered around. The place I was fostered the longest was Qi Mountain. Back then, Tian Jizi from Qi Mountain was a friend of Mom’s, and she left me at Qi Mountain. That’s where I met Prince Ning and Marquis Lingnan."

Jia Ren opened his mouth and said: "Why... why did she have to wander around? I remember her saying she didn’t like going places. For the years we were in Wutong Ridge, she went down the mountain only a handful of times."

Chapter 1805: Lun Tong’s Relics

"Really?" Lun Yu looked surprised and said, "Are you sure we’re talking about the same person?"

Jia Ren: "..."

Lun Yu’s mouth twitched as he said, "Besides being great at disguises, my mother has another identity. In the martial world, people call her Baixiaosheng. You know what Baixiaosheng means, right? If she didn’t love traveling around and gathering all sorts of random information, how else could she have earned the nickname Baixiaosheng?"

Jia Ren lowered his head, and after a moment suddenly exclaimed, "She travels around... is she looking for something?"

"Looking for something?" Lun Yu looked puzzled and shook his head, "That I don’t know, but I do know she has a hobby of collecting various stories, the more tragic, the better..."

At that moment, Yi Yan’s voice suddenly came from behind them.

"Hey, come over here quickly and see what I’ve found!"

The two of them were stunned for a moment, then promptly ran to the dilapidated stone house.

Previously, this place was occupied by a master and two disciples, who were known as rather mentally disturbed people according to their own statements.

Such people wouldn’t live in normal houses, nor would they spend time building such houses.

So they lived in houses made of piled stones and caves.

This house was used for cooking, while they actually lived in a cave.

Yi Yan, with a dirt-smudged face, had started a fire, holding a heavy stone box in her hands. On the other side, the fire she'd just started had already gone out due to lack of wood.

"What is this? Where did you find it?" Lun Yu quickly asked.

However, Jia Ren took it over, placed it on the ground, and opened the stone box.

Inside were old, yellowed scrolls.

Jia Ren quickly picked one up and read it. After a while, he closed it and looked at Lun Yu and Yi Yan, who were both looking at him expectantly. He smiled wryly and said, "You said your mom loves collecting all sorts of stories? Well, it's true. This box seems to be filled with the stories she collected."

Yi Yan nodded lightly, pointing to the stone cave at the end of the stone house, "There are more boxes like this in there, perhaps they're all stories collected by my mom."

The three of them walked over together, only to find newly disturbed soil and broken walls there.

It seemed to have been exposed by a landslide.

Lun Tong hadn't told her son and daughter-in-law about these things before she passed away. From the scene, it was clear she intended to bury these things and didn't want them to be seen.

Lun Yu knew his mother had collected many stories, and he had actually seen most of them. He just couldn't understand why his mother would do this.

If she wanted to take what she loved to the grave, she could have just instructed them, and they could have built her a tomb large enough to hold these things.

But she buried these boxes not very deep. A flood could have easily exposed them.

Lun Yu looked for a while and said, "These were mom’s favorite things while she was alive. Let’s dig them up first and re-bury them somewhere safer."

The three of them agreed and together pulled the stone boxes from the dirt.

They pulled out more than twenty, each one made exactly the same.

Lun Yu couldn’t help but complain, "Why not make a big one? It would be much better to store them in a large coffin."

Jia Ren gave him a light knock on the head, and at the same time, the box in his hand fell and shattered into pieces.

"Oh no!" he exclaimed, hurriedly picking up the contents and dusting them off.

He said, "As long as your mom liked it, but it seems a larger stone box to store these things would indeed have been better."

Chapter 1806: A Special Story

They opened all the boxes and took out the contents.

Only then did they realize that these stories were written on books made of different materials.

Some were Brocade Platinum, some were like ordinary paper comics, others had writing on animal skin, and even carved bamboo slips.

The three of them sat in the cave, organizing the books and laying them flat in the clean cave.

Lun Yu wiped his sweat and his stomach growled with hunger. He said, “Uncle Master, you stay here, Yi Yan and I will go down the mountain to buy some food and find a stonemason to make a big box.”

Jia Ren said, “Buy more food, but forget about the stonemason. Buy some tools for carving stones, and we’ll do it ourselves.”

He pointed at the books on the ground and said, “These Brocade Platinum are worth a fortune, it’s best not to let anyone know.”

It made sense to think about it.

Lun Yu nodded and said, “Alright, it looks like we’ll need to stay here for a while longer.”

“Yes, go ahead!”

Lun Yu and Yi Yan went down the mountain to buy things, while Jia Ren sat in the cave and slowly started reading through a book one by one.

The stories weren’t long, but as Lun Yu mentioned, they were all tragic love stories between men and women.

Some were about couples in love whose families disapproved and forcibly separated them.

Some were about one who relentlessly pursued another, but never succeeded in a lifetime.

Some were mutual love, yet due to various reasons, they never united even until death.

He read more than a dozen books and found none of them had a happy ending.

Gradually, he became more and more shocked and increasingly saddened as he read.

Until…he stumbled upon such a story.

——

Master took me, an orphan, back to the mountain, where I saw senior brother.

Master said, “From now on, we’ll live here, your family is Master and senior brother. Master needs to go down the mountain, senior brother will take care of you.”

I looked at senior brother’s face, finding it strange and a bit frightening.

But not to worry Master, I nodded vigorously.

Master often went down the mountain, and I spent a lot of time with senior brother, then I discovered a problem: senior brother’s face kept changing, every few months, I had to get to know him again.

Later on, I didn’t need to look at his face to recognize him; I could recognize him just by his silhouette.

So I asked him, “Senior brother, even though we study disguise, you don’t need to wear a mask every day, do you? I want to see your true face.”

Senior brother touched his face and smiled, “When you can create a makeup different from this face, I’ll show it to you.”

I learned quickly, and not long after, my disguise skills became very adept.

But when I asked senior brother to fulfill his promise, he said, “What I’ve learned, this skill cannot be shown to others before completing apprenticeship.”

I was quite disappointed, but the more he refused, the more curious I became.

Thus, a few more years passed, and we both grew up.

One time, Master went down the mountain and didn't return for a long time, I found senior brother was also missing, I searched all over the mountain for him but couldn't find him.

I'd never been alone on Wutong Mountain, and I rarely saw outsiders, living in fear every day.

Until one day, I saw senior brother returning with a clay jar.

His face had changed again; this time it looked particularly real, so I asked, "Senior brother, your face…?"

Senior brother said, "I've completed my apprenticeship, this is my real face."

Finally seeing his true face, I was ecstatic, too excited to speak, just staring at his face.

Chapter 1807: Continue

My senior brother's face couldn't be called very handsome, at best it wasn't unpleasant.

It's just that I've been longing for so long, his face seemed more and more pleasing to me, better than any face he had before.

I was secretly happy, only to find his complexion growing worse.

My gaze finally fell on the jar he was holding.

Feeling a vague sense of unease in my heart, I asked softly, "What is this?"

He glanced at me and only said in a low voice, “It’s the master’s ashes!”

The news was like a bolt from the blue, not knowing what kind of mood we were in when we buried the master that day.

The master is dead, it seems this home should also disperse.

At night, as usual, my senior brother made some small dishes. While eating, he said, “People will all have this day eventually. We all grow up. You and I are not young anymore, we can live well without the master. Junior sister, have you thought about how to live in the future?”

I never thought about this question. When he asked me, I didn’t know how to answer, so I asked him back, “What about you? What do you plan to do?”

After saying that, I added, “Are you going to leave here?”

He lowered his head, eating rice, nodding slightly: “Hmm, I want to leave here.”

“Where to?” I asked excitedly.

At the same time, a sense of loneliness arose in my heart, as if the world was about to collapse.

The master is dead, and now my senior brother is leaving too.

“I don’t know!” he said, “Having been here for so many years, don’t you get tired of it? I want to go out and see the world.”

Looking at the indifference on his face, I realized that he was never really my family.

Family would never talk about leaving, family stays together forever.

He stayed on Wutong Mountain to learn skills, which is why he was with the master and me.

Taking care of me was also because it was the master's will.

That night I drank a lot of wine, drinking up all the master's collection of wine.

He told me to drink less, saying that no banquet lasts forever; when fate ends, it's time to leave.

Half drunk and half awake, I told him, "Senior brother is right, no banquet lasts forever. We've stayed on this mountain for so many years, it's time to leave. Just right, I also plan to leave. But these are all good wines stored by the master, what a waste to leave them here? Don't stop me, let me drink, the more I drink, the less wasted."

I kept drinking, having a pretty good tolerance for alcohol, looking at these wines, I had the urge to drink them all in one go.

But no matter how good your alcohol tolerance is, there comes a time when you get drunk.

In a daze, I saw my senior brother also drinking. I opened a jar, and he took it over and drank it dry himself, later…

——

Later… there was no later. Jia Ren looked at the few pages that were torn out by someone.

He widened his eyes, flipping through the torn pages, unable to find what he wanted to see.

“Why is it missing? No, she must have written it!”

Jia Ren vaguely guessed something, but…

No, it’s not true, maybe it was just a dream.

But why did she write it down? Her story shouldn’t be like this.

Jia Ren flipped to the last few pages; this is an epilogue.

——

I have been searching for him, losing track of how many roads I’ve walked, perhaps through thousands of mountains and rivers.

I know he might wear different masks, but it doesn’t matter. I recognize him, never by his face, as long as I can see his silhouette, I can recognize him.

Chapter 1808: Jia Ren Is Dead

Later, I was exhausted and couldn’t walk any further.

Since waking up that day and finding he had already left, I’ve been searching for him for ten months straight.

That day, I stayed at a kind farmer’s home, and with his wife’s help, I gave birth to my child…

…I took the child to find him and left the child in the farmer’s care to search for him on my own.

I don’t understand what kind of story should occur between a man and a woman. I started listening to other people’s stories because I believe that one day, I might find a story similar to ours, and see how they dealt with it…

——

Jia Ren flipped through page after page, his aged face streaming with tears.

Having lived his entire life, he harbored a mystery within his heart.

He hid it all his life, not knowing the truth, yet chose the most absurd way to evade it, without even the courage to pursue the truth.

What happened that night when they were drunk?

It seemed like he had a romantic dream, or perhaps…

He clutched his head, painfully knocking it against the scattered pages of the book, and again against the stone wall of the cave opposite.

Why did he run away? Why couldn’t he be more courageous?

He heard that his junior sister had died and always wanted to know if she had left anything behind for him?

Perhaps something to solve his doubts?

When Lun Yu said there was nothing, in truth, besides a slight sense of loss, he was relieved.

But these things… must be what she left behind, intended for him.

He understood now; it wasn't a romantic dream at all!

"Ha ha… ha ha…"

Jia Ren felt he must have gone mad. He pushed away the surrounding clutter and ran frantically to the two solitary graves.

Kneeling on the ground, he clutched the tombstone with Lun Tong's name on it and wailed.

"I know, I know it all. Junior sister, I'm sorry…"

"But I didn't mean to, I was just scared…"

"No, I did mean it, I'm so cowardly…"

"Haha, I'm such a bastard, I deserve to be lonely until I die…"

Jia Ren alternated between crying and laughing, uttering strange words.

When Lun Yu and Yi Yan returned, they were startled to witness such a scene.

"Master, Master, what happened to you?"

Jia Ren turned his head, and they saw that his forehead was already a bloody mess, and their mother's tombstone had been stained red with fresh blood.

Lun Yu was so shocked his face turned pale, and he anxiously asked, "Master, what happened to you? If there's anything troubling you, please tell us!"

Jia Ren took a breath and asked Lun Yu softly, “How old are you this year?”

Not understanding why he asked this question, Lun Yu honestly replied.

Upon hearing Lun Yu’s answer, Jia Ren’s face went ashen and his eyes slowly closed.

He deserved to be lonely and not die well, being a good master. The junior sister didn’t tell him the truth, likely feeling the same way.

Lun Yu held Jia Ren’s body, already pale with shock.

Yi Yan reached out to check his breathing and gasped.

“Master has already passed away!”

Lun Yu felt a jolt in his heart, forcing a bitter smile: “This is too… How did he suddenly die, in such a crazy state? Do you think he had what the princess described as dementia?”

While saying this, tears fell from Lun Yu’s eyes involuntarily.

Apart from when his mother died, when had Lun Yu ever shed tears?

“Brother, let’s bury him!” Yi Yan lightly sighed.

“Alright, alright, this old man… How did he suddenly go mad and crash himself to death!”

Chapter 1809: Removing the False Face

Lun Yu awkwardly stood up, awkwardly wiping away the tears on his face.

But for some reason, those tears just kept flowing, no matter how he tried, he couldn't dry them.

"Senior brother, Master suddenly died, I know you're sad, but how can we make a coffin for him if you cry like this?"

"I… I just… I don't know what's going on, maybe it's the mustard you bought irritating me."

"I didn't buy mustard, come on, stop crying, dig the hole!"

…

Jin Xuyao locked himself in the bamboo house alone, and it's been three days.

Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin, after all, are not people of Tianhai Mountain Villa. After the villa returned governance to its people, they had long returned to Plum Blossom Valley.

But the son hasn't figured it out yet, and they can't just ignore it, so the daughter has to step up.

However, these three days, the daughter doesn't seem to be doing well either, Jin Luoyin hasn't seen her brother for three days.

"Don't worry too much, he's been wearing that mask for so long, taking it off won't be easy. I saw him studying how to remove it, once he's done, he'll come out," said Zhu Shiqing.

"But Jia Ren managed to take it off in one night without even replacing it with a new one. Why did you let Jia Ren leave? He didn't even remove the fake mask from brother's face."

Zhu Shiqing sighed, "It's the rule of their sect. If Jia Ren could help him take it off, would he need to struggle on his own?"

“So the reason I want him not to take it off is not that he can’t take it off, but because… he doesn’t want to.”

“Has he gone mad?” Zhu Shiqing sighed, “You’re overthinking it, I think you should give him more time.”

Inside the house, Jin Xuyao sat in front of a mirror with only the frame remaining.

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The pain on his face was already gone. He had been sitting here for three days, yet lacked the courage to see his own face.

In the house, there was also a basin and a pot of water.

Actually, he had taken the mirror apart, he could even choose to pour the water out, and see in the basin.

But each time he picked up the pot, his heart would falter.

“Am I really? What if… it’s a face that everyone doesn’t expect, and we all got tricked by Fu Jian?” Who am I then?

He pulled at the corner of his mouth, then laughed, “No, no, things have to be resolved. No matter what, I should step out!”

“Yes, I’ll look first. If it’s true, I’ll stay. If not, if my real identity is their enemy… I’ll go far away, never to let them find me again!”

The person in the room talked to himself, living in his own world like a madman, while the person outside was about to kick the door down.

“Move aside, I have to go in today. It’s been three days, he hasn’t eaten a drop, are you going to starve him to death?”

Zhu Shiqing was startled, thinking there was some sense in that.

But he and Jin Xuyao had muddled through these years, neither liked each other, and each meeting felt like it might end in a fight.

He had never asked him for help before.

And just three days ago, Jin Xuyao asked him for a favor, which was to guard this door and not let anyone disturb him, saying he needed to change faces.

He had struggled for so long, finally willing to change faces, he was happy for him.

But Jin Luoyin is right too, three days, what if something really happened…

He looked at the exasperated Jin Luoyin, suddenly recalling a past deal between them.

Chapter 1810: What Are You Afraid Of?

"Commandery Princess, do you remember what you promised me?"

"What?" Jin Luoyin, anxious about her brother, couldn’t recall what she had promised him.

Zhu Shiqing smiled and said, "You said... if I help you find your brother, you will..."

Jin Luoyin knew what he was going to say and hurriedly stepped forward to cover Zhu Shiqing’s mouth, saying, "Then didn’t you also say you would bring me the Youying Pearl or Zhuzhao Pearl?"

"Which is more important, these pearls, or your brother?"

Jin Luoyin: "..."

As she was unsure how to answer, Zhu Shiqing laughed and stepped aside.

"Alright, don’t be troubled, I was just joking. Come, let’s see what he’s doing inside."

They saw a figure stand up inside the window, moving towards an unknown direction.

Jin Luoyin’s face grew stern. She skipped knocking on the door and directly kicked the woven bamboo door with force.

The door, meant to keep out gentlemen rather than villains, was easily kicked open by her.

At this moment, Jin Xuyao was holding a water jug full of water.

The door fell with a crash, and as he turned and saw Jin Luoyin’s shocked face, the jug fell from his hand with a bang.

"I... how did you get in? You’re not allowed in here!"

Jin Xuyao hurriedly raised a hand to cover his face.

No, he couldn’t let them see.

Jin Luoyin sniffled and, taking a few steps forward to grab his arm, began to shout with a tearful and hysterical voice: "What are you afraid of? We’ve waited for you for fifteen years. How much longer do you want us to wait?"

Both Jin Xuyao and Zhu Shiqing were stunned, seeing for the first time the gentle Commandery Princess speaking so hysterically.

"What are you afraid of? Speak up!"

Jin Xuyao opened his mouth. Despite having countless explanations, her questioning left him speechless.

Jin Luoyin cried and shouted, "Every time Mother asks about you, I tell her to wait a few more days. After all, we've already waited fifteen years; a few more days won't matter. For you, accepting such a change in identity is difficult, and you need time to adjust.

But you are still young; you have plenty of time to adapt and accept. Waiting a few more days is no big deal. But what about Father and Mother? They have spent their best years searching for you. Every day they miss spending with you is a day lost. How long will you keep them waiting? Tell me, I'll let them continue to wait. But please, not indefinitely, alright?"

Jin Xuyao was shocked. It seemed he had never considered these questions before.

Jin Luoyin gently pulled his arm down, pleading, "Let me see!"

But that arm seemed to be fixed in place and wouldn't come down no matter what.

"Let it down!" Jin Luoyin said softly.

Putting down his arm, revealing his face to them, represented more than just his face.

It represented saying goodbye to the past and accepting a new self.

Jin Luoyin was in no hurry, gently pulling a little at a time, softly pleading with him.

"You have to face it eventually; you can't live like this forever. Father and Mother are always waiting for you."

Jin Xuyao opened his mouth, his voice slightly hoarse: "But what if... I’m not?"

Jin Luoyin paused, her expression changing.

What if he’s not?

It seemed they had never considered that because everyone had already assumed that he was.

"What if I’m not? He’s so good to me; what if I’m truly Jin Tianyuan’s descendant?" he continued.