Farmhouse 191

Chapter 191: I Came to Visit Relatives

"Under the bright sky, no thief shall be audacious, Abao, attack! If he dies, it’s on me."

The man with a carelessly casual smile instantly stiffened; he had not anticipated that his first encounter with Gu Youyou would begin like this.

While he was still in a daze, Abao had already launched an attack on him, encouraged by his master’s command.

With a loud howl, it pounced and bit down on the man’s arm, immediately tearing off a piece of his fair clothing.

"Ouch, my clothes..." the man cried out in pain, hurriedly retreating into the yard, examining the sleeve now missing a piece with a pained expression.

Gu Youyou, holding a stick, chased after him and, by the bright moonlight, she finally saw the so-called thief clearly.

His attire was white and luminous like jade, reflecting the moonlight. His soft, delicate features made it hard to distinguish his gender. His black hair cascaded down his back, making him look like an immortal who had just stepped out of the Moon Palace.

Except that this immortal was somewhat disheveled, losing some of his dignity.

He pointed at Gu Youyou, who stepped out of the door, with a face full of anger, and accused her frantically, "You... you...ouch, this is the Crane Immortal White Moon Robe, unique in this world, a rare treasure, and you let that Little Beast tear it, I’m telling you, you have to compensate me; even if you sold yourself, you couldn’t afford it!"

Gu Youyou looked innocently at the so-called thief who was accusing her.

Clearly, this was not a normal person.

Would a normal person break into someone’s house in the middle of the night uninvited? Would a normal thief stroll around in white clothes?

She tugged the corner of her mouth and said, "You intruded into a residence in the dead of night. Forget one piece of clothing; even if you were bitten to death by the owner’s dog, you’d deserve it. Surely you must be aware of the laws of Zhuzhao Country, right?"

The man across from her paused, then with a serious face, said, "Who said I broke into a house in the middle of the night? I’m here to visit relatives!"

"Visit relatives?"

"Yes, visit relatives. Eh, where’s my cousin? He told me he lived here and to find him when I arrived."

"Your cousin?" Gu Youyou tugged at the corner of her mouth, disbelieving his nonsensical ramblings.

The man looked Gu Youyou up and down, then suddenly his eyes widened as if he had made an astonishing discovery, "Oh my, you wouldn’t happen to be the cousin’s wife, would you?"

Gu Youyou rolled her eyes; she really wanted to respond with, "Oh my, you wouldn’t happen to be Jin Zijin’s younger cousin, would you?"

Whether he was the cousin or not, she was certain that this guy had been sent by Zijin.

He actually had such unreliable relatives.

Even if he were a cousin, who behaves like this, barging into someone’s house uninvited in the middle of the night? Ever heard of knocking?

And what in the world was Zijin thinking? He indeed knew where she had gone, he had the sense not to come himself, but why send this man? Whatever the reason, it could not be good.

Gu Youyou pushed him out with the stick and said, "Your person isn't here, so get out quickly, or I'm calling the authorities."

"Hey hey...don't push, don't push. I've come all this way, you can't just leave me to sleep on the streets. I'm here to find Jin Zijin, I'm his cousin, his close cousin. He told me this was his house, no mistake...hey hey!"

Gu Youyou pushed him out the door, slamming it with a thud, and said, "Looking for Jin Zijin, right? Out the door, turn left, follow that road to Lotus Village, goodbye..."

The man continued knocking on the door from outside, threatening, "Your lousy door can't stop me, don't force me to climb over the wall to get in."

Chapter 192: Pity for You

Gu Youyou was taken aback, her teeth itching with anger, "Then just try and see if I dare to wake up all the neighbors."

The person outside displayed a glint of excitement in their eyes.

"Tsk tsk, truly not the ordinary village girl," he muttered to himself with an excited undertone.

"Alright, alright, then I'll formally visit my sister-in-law tomorrow morning!"

Suppressing the excitement in his heart, he looked towards Lotus Village with a cheerful demeanor and dashed off toward the village, as light as a swallow.

Gu Youyou pressed her ear to the courtyard door to listen to the movements outside, and only when she was certain the strange person had gone far away did she finally exhale deeply and walk into the house.

Inside, there was still a great Buddha waiting to be dealt with.

Abao had torn the piece of Crane Immortal White Moon Robe fabric he had pulled off the white-clothed man into shreds, and, still not feeling appeased, had sat on it with his buttocks. Seeing Gu Youyou headed inside, he finally let go of those pitiful shreds and followed her.

He couldn't wag his tail as nimbly as a dog could, but these days, he seemed to have figured out how to curry favor with Gu Youyou, rubbing against her feet and exhibiting the look of a lackey seeking praise.

Gu Youyou's previously heavy heart was instantly lightened by his antics, and she stopped, chuckling softly, "Abao, you did well today; do you understand to bite him again if you see that man tomorrow? I'll reward you with a meaty bone tomorrow."

Abao made a cute, whimpering sound.

The man hiding on the rooftop came down, looking at Gu Youyou with a complicated gaze. His emaciated, pale face seemed almost translucent, as if it would shatter like glass upon touch.

Gu Youyou, who had just come out from the Gu Family's dark chamber, was also very pale, and while she was much weaker than him, she didn't appear so utterly lifeless as he did.

She had saved him again, and Gu Youyou thought that if there was a next time, she would surely save him again.

Not for any other reason, but because they shared the same fate, and perhaps, even the same enemy.

Seeing him was like seeing the desperate, young Gu Youyou who had no one to turn to for help.

"You better leave now, he has gone far away."

This time the man didn't ask Gu Youyou why she saved him; from her pitiful and self-mocking eyes, he already knew the answer.

He felt fortunate that, when the whole world had abandoned him, he still managed to encounter a woman like Gu Youyou.

So what if it was out of pity?

It’s just that she... she had a secret that he knew of, and so did the person who buried that secret. She herself was unaware, and those who were desperately seeking that object even more so... Ha!

Quite the trick, deceiving the heavens and crossing the sea!

He hesitated whether to tell her or not.

Standing opposite Gu Youyou, he hesitated for a long time but ultimately chose not to speak.

Perhaps not knowing would allow her to live a little more comfortably, and a little longer, too.

Gu Youyou was feeling somewhat awkward; the man opposite her was lost in thought again, leaving her clueless about what was on his mind.

Jin Zijin was looking for him everywhere; his audacity was too great, daring to come here.

"You..."

"Come with me!" Just as Gu Youyou uttered a word, she was interrupted by his declaration.

Gu Youyou was taken aback, tugging at the corner of her mouth, "Why are we circling back to the same issue? Didn’t I make myself clear just now? It’s impossible for me to go with you."

"Then..." The man’s eyes filled with a tinge of melancholy, he sighed softly and said in a low voice, "Alright then, we people... Ha, forget it, you don’t understand now, but you will in the future."

He handed Gu Youyou a peculiar little bell, tiny, only the size of a pinky fingernail, and said, "There’s a Poisonous Insect inside this. If one day you change your mind, just heat it over a fire, and I will come!"

Chapter 193: They Are the Real Family

Gu Youyou looked at the small bell and tucked it away before gently biting her lip.

The decision to save him was the right one, although she didn’t fully understand his words, there was no doubt they were seen as the same kind of people in the eyes of those others.

"Okay, thank you!"

"Mmm! Then I’m leaving, be careful. Remember, in this world, you can’t trust anyone but yourself."

"Okay."

The man nodded and swiftly leapt out of the window, moving so quickly he was like a fleeting shadow.

"Hey, wait..."

Gu Youyou only thought of something important after the man had disappeared.

There were no sounds from outside anymore, and Gu Youyou, thinking he had gone far away, sagged in disappointment.

"You’ve decided to come with me, then."

Just when she thought the person had left, a barely audible voice resurfaced behind her.

Startled, Gu Youyou instinctively turned and stepped back, patting her chest, saying, "How are you so silent? My ears didn’t pick up any sound at all."

The man smirked, saying, "Our kind of people... heh, consider this ability a little compensation."

Twice in a short time he referred to "our kind of people," and Gu Youyou couldn’t help but be curious about what kind of people they were.

"Do you have other matters?"

He asked again, interrupting Gu Youyou’s curious thoughts.

She collected herself and said, "Let me take your pulse and see about that cold poison... Even if I can’t completely remove it, suppressing it a bit would be beneficial."

The man extended his hand in surprise, even shock, as he regarded Gu Youyou.

The cold poison was personally inflicted by that person, and even the people of Tianzong had no solution, yet this village girl boldly claimed she could do something about it.

Gu Youyou seriously took the man’s pulse, unaware of the unusual expression in his eyes.

"How long have you been taking that medicine?" Gu Youyou asked.

"About eleven years," the man replied.

Gu Youyou showed a hint of astonishment; eleven years was almost the same amount of time little Gu Youyou had been taking medicine.

She concentrated on taking his pulse and preliminarily deduced that the cold poison in the man’s body was not as severe as it had been in Gu Youyou’s back then.

Of course, this could be related to physical constitution. A little girl's body is originally weaker, and since little Gu Youyou had been taking that medicine from such a young age, her body was naturally ruined, and now at almost nineteen, she still hadn't had her menstrual cycle.

Letting go of the man's wrist, Gu Youyou turned and entered another room, a study.

She lit an oil lamp, spread out thick yellow paper, ground some ink, and began to write with a newly bought brush.

Her handwriting was forceful and accomplished in one fell swoop; soon, a prescription was drawn up.

After airing the ink, she told the man, "Take this prescription, one dose divided into three parts, one every seven days, for four successive treatments. I've taken this prescription myself, and the effects are quite good."

The man took the prescription, and, like his expression when he saw the handwriting on it, was extremely shocked.

He looked deeply at Gu Youyou before tucking the prescription away and said, "Thank you, my name is Jin Yi, styled Ziyuan; you can call me Jin Ziyuan."

After that, the man turned and left, this time without returning.

Gu Youyou stood there dumbfounded, the astonishment in her eyes no less intense than that of the man who had just departed.

Jin Ziyuan, Jin Zijin?

If Ziyuan was his style name, could Zijin also be a style name?

In ancient times, those who were a bit particular all had given names and style names. Jin Ziyuan, Jin Zijin, could it really be a coincidence?

Heh...

After all that fuss, it turns out they are family, and here she is, spinning around like a fool as if being twirled by a spinning top.

...

Chapter 194: Find Doctor Zhou

Dawn had just broken when Gu Youyou left the house, for she feared the strange visitor from last night would block her path early this morning.

According to Qin Changlin, Doctor Zhou should have returned last night. Although she had never met Doctor Zhou, Qin Changlin had already arranged for Gu Youyou to be placed under Doctor Zhou as a female disciple, which would provide her with an official status when she would eventually consult at Jisheng Hall.

Gu Youyou's medical skills may not have been inferior to Doctor Zhou's, yet she was very willing to become his disciple because Doctor Zhou was a true man of medical ethics.

With his medical skills, he could have opened his own clinic in a much larger city by now, but he chose to stay in the small Qingshui Town to ensure that the local people had access to medical care.

With time to spare, Gu Youyou first went to a breakfast shop selling wontons and had a bowl before heading over.

Qin Changlin had mentioned the day before that Doctor Zhou might return very late after several exhausting days and might not get up early, so she could come a bit later.

But Gu Youyou still arrived too early.

The attendant in the clinic had just opened the doors, and was wiping the clinic's signboard at the entrance. The boy was merely in his early teens - employing child labor was indeed something only people from the ancient times would undertake.

Seeing Gu Youyou, the boy hurried over, "Sister Youyou is here early. Qin Shixiong is currently washing up in the back hall, and will come out in a moment."

As she followed him in through the main door, Gu Youyou laughed, "Early to bed and early to rise makes for a healthy life. Besides, I'm not that early. If I were in a farming household, I'd have to start working on the fields much earlier."

The attendant repeatedly agreed, then added, "Indeed, indeed, it's the busiest time of the year for farmers with the autumn harvest. With the scorching sun during the day, they can only work from dawn to dusk. Otherwise, they might suffer from heatstroke, fall ill, and have to spend money on medical treatment."

Gu Youyou took a seat on a chair, raised her eyebrows, and asked, "You seem to understand quite a bit about the life of a farmer; are you from a village?"

Upon hearing this, the attendant froze, then started to fidget uncomfortably, prompting Gu Youyou to frown in wonder.

There's nothing shameful about being from a village, yet his mannerisms suggested that he felt his background was something to be hidden.

Just then, Qin Changlin emerged from the backyard. Upon hearing the conversation, he shook his head with a smile, "Yuancheng, go back outside to wipe the signboard."

Relieved as if a huge burden were lifted, Yuancheng hurriedly scuttled away in a flurry.

Gu Youyou was puzzled, and Qin Changlin offered an explanation with a smile, "This Yuancheng, originally a farmer from Shishu Village. His family was poor and, unfortunately, they had many children. Just his parents alone had ten. Together with the other four houses, it's said they had over thirty

children. Even a well-off household would struggle to support such a large number of children, let alone one as poor as his.

Later on, the daughters who were too young to work in the fields, those around three to five years old, were sold by the family. They sold several, but there were still too many children. Eventually, his parents began contacting human traffickers to sell their sons. That year Yuancheng was only five. He couldn't do much work in the fields, and when a human trafficker came by, his parents sold him. Do you know what for?"

Lowering his voice on his last words, Qin Changlin teased with a suspenseful tone.

Gu Youyou rolled her eyes, "What else can a five-year-old boy be sold for? To the palace to become a eunuch."

Qin Changlin gasped with pretended surprise, staring at Gu Youyou, "How did you know?"

Gu Youyou: "..." How did I know? Isn't that how it's always portrayed in TV dramas? Such an old cliché.

Chapter 195: Yuan Cheng's Thoughts

"What happened afterward? How did he end up in Jisheng Hall as an attendant?"

Qin Changlin said, "It just so happened that my master was collecting herbs in that village on that day, saw him and felt pity, so he bought him and brought him back."

"Oh, his luck isn't too bad then," Gu Youyou said.

"Alas!" Qin Changlin sighed and shook his head, "Even though he was saved, he's not much different from a eunuch."

"What?" Gu Youyou was shocked and asked, "Could it be that his family, wishing to send him to be a eunuch, had already... already castrated him?"

"Ah...? This this this..." Upon hearing Gu Youyou's words, Qin Changlin's neck turned red, and he was unable to utter a complete sentence.

Gu Youyou was again startled and said, "Did I guess right? My goodness, his family is really... bizarre, aren't they? To really go through with it, so ruthless. No wonder Yuancheng had that expression when I asked about his family just now, having such parents, I would feel ashamed myself."

"No no, it's not... it's not that!" Qin Changlin stammered, not able to get the words out.

"Then what is the matter?" Gu Youyou's face turned serious.

If she had a subordinate who stammered like this, she would fire him, never to be employed again.

"He... his...," Qin Changlin thought for a long time about how to explain to Gu Youyou.

What shocked and embarrassed him even more was Gu Youyou's attitude when mentioning such a manly issue, so calm and collected, as if there could be a woman in the world with such thick skin.

"You better hurry up and tell me." She hated it when people talked in half-statements.

Qin Changlin was extremely conflicted; he felt it wasn't right to discuss such matters with Gu Youyou, but couldn't suppress his gossipy heart and thus whispered the matter in a low voice.

"That's how it is, Yuancheng was born with a defect down there; even as he grows up, he won't be able to carry on his family line. What's the use of keeping a son who can't carry on the family line? He was born with the fate of a eunuch, so his parents wanted to send him to the palace to be a eunuch."

So that was it.

Gu Youyou nodded calmly and collectedly.

Her composure helped Qin Changlin relax a bit as well.

Setting aside that sensitive issue, it was just like normal small talk.

Gu Youyou’s curiosity and competitive spirit were piqued, and she wanted to see what kind of innate defect could prevent someone from carrying on the family line.

"Call Yuancheng in for me, I’ll take a look at him, maybe there’s a cure?"

"What?" Qin Changlin staggered back in fright, steadying himself with the chair behind him to stand properly.

"My sister, do you realize what you’re saying? Do I understand what I’m saying? Do you know where he’s defective?"

Gu Youyou looked at Qin Changlin as if he were insane and said, "I’m beginning to think it’s you who’s off your rocker today. I get your point, but let me tell you, this is not the right attitude. Being born a healer, the most important thing is to save lives and heal the sick. One should cast aside those cumbersome rituals because they will confine your thoughts and impede your talents.

The reason so many women die in childbirth is precisely because you guys are too scrupulous. If there were a proper obstetrician on hand when a woman is giving birth, the chances of survival would be far greater."

Gu Youyou turned away in disinterest, facing a Qin Changlin who stood there dumbfounded.

Feudal thoughts weren’t something that could be changed with just a few words. If they could, feudal society wouldn’t have survived for thousands of years.

She felt pity for Yuancheng and wanted to persuade Qin Changlin to convince him, to allow Yuancheng to agree to let her take a look, as perhaps there might be a cure.

Chapter 196: Administering Medicine

Qin Changlin had clearly been frightened by Gu Youyou's words.

She sighed and said, "Forget it, can I even reason with you? I just want to check on Yuancheng's condition. If you are a doctor without medical ethics, then pretend I didn't say anything."

Qin Changlin snapped out of his shock, swallowed his saliva, his face full of distress.

"Sister, you've put such a huge hat on me by saying I have no medical ethics, how could I not help? Just tell me, what do you want me to do?"

Gu Youyou felt delighted inside, glanced outside the door, and lowered her voice, "Just persuade him, say I want to treat him."

Ancient people felt ashamed quite easily, especially with this kind of condition. If Gu Youyou were to say it, it might drive someone to jump off a building.

Qin Changlin's face showed his dilemma; he understood men all too well, uh... well, Yuancheng wasn't quite a man yet.

But everyone understood the principle that boys and girls shouldn't sit together after the age of seven, and although peasants weren't so picky, Yuancheng was after all a ten-year-old boy with quite a strong sense of pride. To let her treat him would be a surprise.

After pondering for a moment, Qin Changlin said to Gu Youyou with difficulty, "To say... I think it's better to forget it. You might not see it, but Yuancheng has a very strong sense of pride. Only Master and I in Jisheng Hall know about his condition. If he knew you were aware, he would be so anxious he might jump off a building to commit suicide!"

Gu Youyou nodded her head, thinking, That's exactly what I thought!

"Then what's your plan?"

Qin Changlin paced back and forth, at one point he went to the front hall, then came back, holding a packet of something in his hand, looking confident.

He said slyly, "Use this, I'll apply a Knockout Drug on him. I guarantee everything will go smoothly and unnoticed."

Gu Youyou gave him a thumbs up, thinking to herself: Qin Changlin really isn't cut out to be a doctor, such wasted talent.

"When do you plan to use it?"

"There's no time like the present, let's do it today."

"Today? I still need to take Doctor Zhou as my master. Let's wait until I've done that."

"My master... sigh!" Qin Changlin sighed and said, "My master didn't come back last night. It seems the journey was far and it got late, so he probably rested at an inn on the way. He's getting old, too; he can't endure traveling all night."

Gu Youyou felt quite disappointed since she hadn't managed to meet Doctor Zhou several times.

She thought to herself that good things take time and didn't mind too much.

"Alright, then shall we... administer the drug to Yuancheng first?"

Considering this crafty plan, Qin Changlin's eyes gleamed, "Done, you go wait in the backyard, and I'll call you once I've laid him down."

Gu Youyou thought: He's really cut out to be a villain!

Jisheng Hall’s backyard was quite spacious, it was Doctor Zhou’s residence. For some reason, she never saw any of Doctor Zhou’s family members in the back house; instead, Qin Changlin, his apprentice, managed Jisheng Hall and lived there as if he were his son.

Of course, it did not exclude the possibility that Doctor Zhou was an elderly bachelor, but she wondered what made him stay unmarried for life.

Qin Changlin moved quickly and tricked Yuancheng into taking the Knockout Drug. As soon as the drug took effect, the boy fainted.

Qin Changlin carried Yuancheng to the backyard, while Gu Youyou stood in the yard looking at a twisted pine tree.

He called out to Gu Youyou, "Sister Youyou, it’s done, come quick!"

There were many empty rooms in the backyard. Yuancheng, the poor boy that Doctor Zhou had picked up, naturally lived with him, and his room was right next to Qin Changlin’s.

Chapter 197: Finding the Cause of the Disease

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Qin Changlin laid Yuancheng on the bed, and Gu Youyou excitedly started to remove his pants. It had been a long time since she had treated someone, and now faced with a somewhat challenging case, she couldn’t contain her eagerness.

But to Qin Changlin, that look of hers was something else, like that of a creature from a monster movie.

You tell me, a female doctor treating that kind of disease for a man, shouldn’t you, even with the best medical ethics, have some restraint?

Why did he get the impression that Gu Youyou’s expression was like that of a rascal who had just laid eyes on a young girl?

Without a second thought, Qin Changlin grabbed hold of Yuancheng’s pants, warily eyeing Gu Youyou, and said, "Sister Youyou, Sister, are you really capable of treating this disease?"

He couldn’t help but doubt whether Gu Youyou’s mind was all there.

He felt that subjecting Yuancheng to the Knockout Drug had been a mistake, and if Gu Youyou did anything to Yuancheng, then he’d be an accomplice. His master was fond of Yuancheng, and would surely skin him alive.

Qin Changlin’s protective stance, like guarding a cub from a sexual predator, left Gu Youyou utterly frustrated. She knew what he meant and gave him a disgruntled look, saying, "He’s just a ten-year-old child, what do you think I’m going to do to him? And didn’t you say he has a problem down there? Even if I were desperately thirsty, I’d turn to you, not him; what are you so anxious about?"

Gu Youyou had only been speaking offhandedly, but it frightened Qin Changlin considerably.

Rushing, he drew back his hand and retreated to the corner of the wall, his face pale as he guarded against Gu Youyou.

"Sister... I... my family has arranged a marriage for me, don’t come after me!"

"You..." Gu Youyou felt an overwhelming sense of speechlessness.

She waved her hand dismissively at Qin Changlin and holding her forehead said, "Alright, I misspoke. Rest assured, I won’t come after you, so hurry over and help."

Let Qin Changlin be the one to pull down the little boy’s pants. She was a woman of integrity.

Qin Changlin lifted Yuancheng’s clothes, then hesitated.

He looked toward Gu Youyou and asked cautiously, "Aren’t you worried you won’t be able to get married as a young lady?"

Gu Youyou was taken aback for a moment.

Ever since the last time he visited Lotus Village and upset Gu Youyou, Qin Changlin hadn’t inquired about her again, and seeing that Gu Youyou hadn’t put up her hair like most married women, he was unaware that she was married.

Thinking of Jin Zijin, Gu Youyou’s expression darkened, and she said indifferently, "Divorced, and I don’t plan to remarry in this lifetime. There, satisfied? Now get to work, before he wakes up."

"What?" Nowadays, women daring to divorce were rare, and he thought well of Gu Youyou, assuming she was still waiting to be married. But how could she be divorced? That man must have been blind.

It was not a pleasant topic, especially for a woman, so he didn’t pursue further questions and changed the subject, saying, "Don’t worry, I gave him a strong dose; he won’t wake up for at least half a day."

"Alright, alright, even if he’ll sleep for a while, we need to get to work fast."

With Yuancheng’s lower body exposed, Gu Youyou felt no embarrassment; when she was in work mode, she was a qualified doctor.

Under the watchful eyes of Qin Changlin’s pale face, she examined Yuancheng, finding that it wasn’t a big problem—just a minor surgery was needed and he’d be okay.

After examining, Gu Youyou pulled the blanket over Yuancheng and told Qin Changlin, "It’s treatable, not a big issue, but we need to prepare some things. It’s fortunate that Yuancheng is still young, or if this had happened during puberty, it could have affected the development of his reproductive organs."

Chapter 198: Jin is the Surname of the Royal Family

"Can this... can this be cured?"

It was apparent that the doctors here had no concept of performing such surgery.

Without pursuing the strange terminologies Gu Youyou had mentioned, Qin Changlin was overjoyed to hear that Yuancheng’s condition could be treated.

This had been the boy’s personal affliction; in their village, everyone knew that the Yuan family had a son who resembled an eunuch, and they had not spared their ridicule. If he could truly be healed, to then take a wife and father a healthy baby boy would be a grand way to make a point; he would show those who had jeered what for.

Qin Changlin dressed Yuancheng, covered him with a blanket, and stepped out of the room along with Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou, holding a delicate pen, drew a diagram and listed the dimensions before handing it over to Qin Changlin, saying, "Find someone to make me a small knife like this one. There’s no need to rush, but it must be made with precision."

A precisely made small knife?

Qin Changlin felt a sudden jolt of unease, a bad premonition tightening below, as he instinctively clenched his legs together.

Considering that this knife could very well be used on Yuancheng, his face turned ashen and he said, "Sister Youyou, you... you aren’t going to..."

"Yes!" Gu Youyou knew what he was about to say and admitted it straightforwardly.

"I told you, he needs a minor surgery to remove those bits that shouldn’t be there. This little trick is my secret technique, a technique I’m imparting to you for free. You had better learn it well. Hmm, perhaps have the blacksmith make an extra one for you to keep."

Sure enough, Gu Youyou’s shocking pronouncements had truly frightened Qin Changlin.

That place, once touched by a knife... could it still function? He deeply worried about Yuancheng’s future sexual blessedness.

Then again, without the surgery, Yuancheng's sexual blessedness was non-existent anyway. Perhaps Gu Youyou's method could indeed be useful.

He considered that at this point, they were but treating a dead horse as if it were alive.

Qin Changlin gazed at the drawing for a long time, puzzled. The blade was just that small? Considering the many oddities about Gu Youyou, attempting to make sense of everything would surely burst one's brain.

"Alright, but it might take some time. Our small Xiaoqingshui Town likely lacks a blacksmith skilled enough; I'll need to ask someone to find one in Yangguan City."

"That's fine. His condition isn't a matter of immediate urgency."

Gu Youyou suddenly recalled the strange event from the night before and asked Qin Changlin, "Are there any families with the surname Jin nearby?"

"The Jin family?" Qin Changlin looked at Gu Youyou in bewilderment, thought for a moment, and said, "There are no families by that name around here, but the Jin surname is prominent in our Zhuzhao Country, especially around Beijing in the north. That name is quite significant—the imperial surname..."

The imperial surname? Gu Youyou was slightly startled. "The Imperial Family has the Jin surname?"

Qin Changlin nodded and replied, "Yes, I should say most of the Ministers in control of Zhuzhao Country bear the Jin surname."

Vaguely remembering, Gu Youyou thought back to the time behind the ancient tomb's mountain, when Jin Zijin had inquired about the tongueless wild man, asking which Prince he might be.

...

When the afternoon arrived and Doctor Zhou had not yet returned, Gu Youyou decided to head back home.

She had assumed that the bizarre man, having waited for half the day without seeing anyone, would have left on his own, yet there he was, sitting atop her garden wall, leisurely watching the sunset, idly fanning himself.

Such a bewitching figure, he almost looked like a ’sunset god.’

If it weren’t for the fact that Gu Youyou had encountered too many handsome men throwing themselves at her in her past life, she might have actually fallen for his charms.

The courtyard gate had been locked by Gu Youyou before she left; Abao was locked inside the house. Hearing the sounds of teeth grinding and scratching at the walls, she could imagine Abao’s current state and now understood why the man was sitting atop the wall.

Chapter 199: Persistent Harassment

Gu Youyou wanted to avoid him, but it was too late, and he caught her in the act.

"Ah, cousin-in-law, you’re finally back, I’ve been waiting all day for you."

Gu Youyou could scarcely contain her irritation as she regarded him coldly and said, "Didn’t I tell you to go find Jin Zijin? What, couldn’t find him?"

The disdain and impatience in the depths of Gu Youyou’s eyes were unmistakable to him, and a touch of surprise added to his feelings.

With his charming looks, he’d always been a surefire hit with women. He was accustomed to seeing admiration, shyness, and greedy affection in their eyes, but never had he seen someone like Gu Youyou, who seemed to treat him as nothing but a huge nuisance, avoiding him at all costs.

She truly was no ordinary person, definitely not a village woman!

His face bore a suitably pleasant smile as he leapt down from the wall with a graceful, almost celestial posture.

He came to a stop in front of Gu Youyou, and mustered all his charm to make his voice sound more appealing as he said, "Cousin has only a straw hut to offer, no place for me to sleep. Your big tiled house is much better, with three rooms even. Me staying in one shouldn’t be a problem, right?"

The extent of his devilish charm was extraordinary. Gu Youyou steadied herself and replied with a cold snort, "Didn’t he tell you that he and I have no relationship anymore? So save that cousin-in-law title for someone else—I can’t accept it."

That letter of divorce? Of course, he knew about it, but he would never admit it.

Jin Zijin had assigned him the task of investigating this woman, and though he’d found nothing amiss after a long investigation, there was just something about her... everything about her seemed incorrect. After much deliberation, the only plan he thought of was to shamelessly stay by her side to get a close look at what sort of demoness she really was.

Thus, he decisively shook his head and said earnestly, "Cousin mentioned you went into town to earn money to cover expenses. I understand, your family doesn’t have fields to work, and relying solely on my cousin’s hunting, life is indeed hard. For a woman like you to be self-sufficient, that’s truly admirable.

You alone out here, it’s not easy, and now I’ve come to help out. If there’s anything you can’t handle, just let me know, I can do anything!"

Gu Youyou rolled her eyes and said flatly, "Let’s not beat around the bush—why exert so much effort? With your status, you could probably buy up this whole town with a flick of your wrist. Why bother troubling a village woman who has become useless to you?"

"Ah! You speak wrongly, cousin-in-law. How can you belittle yourself? Your worth is immense; you are my cousin’s life. Don’t speak of yourself as useless anymore; my cousin would be heartbroken."

Gu Youyou’s expression grew colder as she said, "If you’re not clear, then go back and ask properly. If you keep calling me cousin-in-law, I’ll have you brought before the officials. Oh right, you’re probably

not afraid of that either. Heh, just say it, what exactly is it that you want? I don’t have the time to play games with you."

It seemed no one associated with Jin Zijin was simple, and Gu Youyou felt truly exhausted.

All she wanted was to live a peaceful life.

The person opposite her fell silent for a moment, and his gaze towards Gu Youyou turned mysterious.

Gu Youyou wasn’t lacking in time, so she waited quietly, waiting for his next move. Would he continue to play the fool, or would he be straightforward?

Truthfully, Gu Youyou both anticipated and feared a straightforward answer.

Chapter 200: Yue Rujing

How should I put it, my mind is a mess, and I’ve felt confused since I came to this world. This feeling leaves me with a great sense of insecurity.

So everything I do is done in a bewildered manner.

I like to have a backup plan for myself, and speaking too straightforwardly takes away the opportunity to have one.

They don’t plan to let me off the hook, but isn’t it perfect since I also want to start with them to find the person behind all this?

It’s better if we all remain bewildered, acting, after all, is a skill they have, and I have it too.

So, for Gu Youyou, this answer is not so important anymore.

Let him think it over. Gu Youyou took out her keys, deciding to open the door and enter the house first.

Abao in the yard was energetically scratching the wall; I hope he doesn’t scratch a hole through this adobe wall.

The locks in ancient times were the old-fashioned kind that opened with a turn of a key.

After unlocking, Gu Youyou stepped inside, and the man, seemingly having his answer, followed suit.

But Abao caught him. Almost the instant he entered the door, Abao fearlessly pounced on him.

The tiny body could actually jump more than a meter high.

The man had just figured out Abao’s trick last night, but today it wouldn’t be so easy for him to be touched again. He deftly sidestepped and avoided Abao’s charge.

"You little thing, I’m a guest, not a burglar. If you dare bite me again, I’ll stew you for meat," he warned.

Abao was really too small to bite anyone seriously. Gu Youyou beckoned to Abao, and he scurried over, of course, not forgetting to bare his teeth at the man from beside Gu Youyou.

The man chuckled and said, "The dog is taking advantage of its owner’s power."

Gu Youyou gave him a slight glance, wondering if he was intending to feign confusion.

Heh... that’s great!

It was getting late, so Gu Youyou went inside to cook, with Abao obediently following by her side.

While kindling the firewood, Gu Youyou patted Abao’s back and chuckled, "Abao, I guess in this world, you’re the only one who’s truly real."

The man who followed her inside stood at the kitchen doorway. He was dressed in white, and at a glance, it seemed much like what he wore last night, but on closer inspection, there were differences.

It seems this person has a thing for white clothes.

He probably thought the kitchen was dirty and had no intention of coming in; he just stood at the doorway watching Gu Youyou with amusement.

Gu Youyou cast him a cold glance, thinking: Damn it, keep looking, you're not getting a share anyway.

Perhaps feeling that such a standoffish attitude was not too pleasant, the man took the initiative to start a conversation with Gu Youyou.

"Cousin-in-law..."

"Stop right there!" Gu Youyou immediately interrupted, "I thought I made myself clear."

"Oh...? Ah, haha, right, right, not 'cousin-in-law,' then what should I call you? Youyou?"

Gritting her teeth, Gu Youyou set down the fire tongs and snapped, "Youyou is for you to call? Get out!"

"... Then what to call you? Should I just keep with 'cousin-in-law'?"

Gu Youyou: "..."

"Heh heh, how about I introduce myself first," the man said as he snapped open his folding fan, striking an extremely flamboyant pose, his face handsome, a smile playing at his lips, "I am Yue Rujing, the third disciple seated under Master Yunmeng of Tianzong, known in the martial arts world as 'Taoist Yue.'

Gu Youyou looked up in surprise at the man claiming to be a Taoist.

She had been thinking that Jin Zijin and the Imperial Family were related, and his relatives would most likely be from the Imperial Family too, but unexpectedly, he had a cousin who was a Taoist.

Speaking of which, this man who called himself ’Taoist Yue,’ he looked more like a frivolous scion of a wealthy family, how could he be a Taoist?

"You are a Taoist?" Gu Youyou asked.