Farmhouse 241

Chapter 241 Yue Rujing Sowing Discord

He spoke earnestly, almost with a sob in his voice, "Brother, I can assert with absolute certainty that this wife of yours could never be the Gu Family's daughter, a mere peasant girl would never dare commit such a shocking and unconventional act. It's quite possible that she is a major figure planted in the Gu Family by the palace, perhaps meant to act against the State Preceptor, but serendipitously picked up by us instead."

"She's a hot potato; in my opinion, the sooner we let her go, the better. Either kill her or hand her over to Xuanzong, curry favor with the palace, and then we can sit back and watch the tigers fight!"

Yue Rujing's words successfully diverted Jin Zijin's thoughts from the matter of castrating someone.

Jin Zijin looked at Yue Rujing with a strange expression, having never considered such a possibility himself, he found Yue Rujing's idea too far-fetched.

"Aren't you afraid I will be poisoned again?"

Afraid, of course, he was afraid, Yue Rujing's expression held a trace of melancholy, like that of a desperate beast trapped in adversity, clenching his fists tightly, he said angrily, "Don't we still have a few medicine men? If we lose this one, I'll move heaven and earth to find another for you."

Jin Zijin smiled bitterly and whispered, "But if we replace the person, how could she ever be Youyou?"

His voice was soft, as if he was talking to himself. But the intermittent sounds reached Yue Rujing's ears differently; he looked at Jin Zijin with shock on his face and a tint of incredulous fear.

"You... Brother, what did you say?" Similarly conflicted was Yue Rujing.

Previously when he joked that Jin Zijin might have fallen for that village girl, he was 80% joking, but now, seeing Jin Zijin's forlorn expression, he was afraid, truly afraid.

How could his brother... fall for a village girl?

Oh no, she might not be a village girl; she could be another medicine person.

"No, no, no, that can't be," Yue Rujing shook his head vigorously, his whole body shaking with emotion as he grabbed Jin Zijin's shoulders, his voice much louder.

"How could Tianzong's senior brother fall in love with a medicine person from Xuanzong? Her sole purpose is to suppress your poison until we find the Youying Pearl; once we cure the poison, we're supposed to hand her over to Xuanzong – that's what's right. Brother, you've always protected her, it's to cure the poison, right?" he asked frantically.

Jin Zijin wasn't thinking about whether the poison would be cured; just the thought of handing Gu Youyou over to Xuanzong made his heart ache.

He said, somewhat angrily, "Ajing, we cannot hand Youyou over to Xuanzong. Don't forget the difference between Tianzong and Xuanzong. It's one thing to say these words in front of me but be careful not to let the master hear them."

Yue Rujing, realizing he had spoken out of turn, shrank his neck guiltily.

"Xuanzong's actions are ruthless and have gone against the teachings of the Dao Family. If we go on to help the wicked, how are we any different from Xuanzong?"

Scolded by Jin Zijin twice in one day, and both times for Gu Youyou, Yue Rujing felt stifled and uncomfortable inside.

He couldn't care less about other people's life and death, and even less about Tianzong or Xuanzong's affairs. If it weren't for his brother being in the Tianzong branch of the Dao Family, he wouldn't even bother being a Taoist.

His only concern was to ensure his brother remained well; as long as his brother was okay, he couldn't care less even if the sky fell.

So despite feeling aggrieved, there was something he still had to say.

"But Gu Youyou is different, she’s not ordinary, too dangerous. Knowing she’s problematic, you shouldn’t keep her by your side."

"How can you prove she’s problematic? I want evidence!" Jin Zijin said calmly.

Chapter 242 The Ailments of Women Households

Yue Rujing felt that Jin Zijin was completely deluding himself, which infuriated and flustered him. He only regretted not draining all of Gu Youyou’s blood.

"Do you still need evidence? There’s not a single thing about her that matches the daughter of the Gu Family."

"With just these, we can’t prove she’s our enemy or a threat to us," Jin Zijin said.

Yue Rujing was rendered speechless by his words.

All he heard next was Jin Zijin saying, "If she really was planted here by someone else, then... we should win her over!"

...What? Win her over?

Had his senior brother gone mad, bewitched even?

There were thousands of ways to deal with her; why go through all this trouble?

Jin Zijin had lost interest in arguing. He just hoped that Gu Youyou would be okay. What could you do about it?

Yue Rujing felt helpless. Well, if that's what senior brother wished, and seeing that she did have some skills, then why not give it a try? He could only hope that he wouldn't regret it when she turned and bit them in the future.

...

After resting for several days, Gu Youyou finally returned to Jisheng Hall.

Having lost a lot of blood and experienced some shocks, life's great upheavals had taken a toll on her.

As a result, Gu Youyou looked pale and still quite ill.

"Sister Youyou!" Qin Changlin was clearly startled by her sickly appearance as he saw her for the first time in days.

"Sister Youyou, we heard you were ill and have been really worried about you, but you wouldn't let us visit. What happened to you? You still look so pale after all these days."

Gu Youyou didn't want them entangled in this mess, so naturally, she couldn't let him ask too much.

But seeing that Qin Changlin seemed intent on taking her pulse, Gu Youyou could only weakly wave her hand and say, "Lost too much blood, just women's issues!"

With that one line, Qin Changlin was stopped in his tracks, his face turning red. His raised hand hesitated, unsure whether to retract or extend.

"Hehe!" Qin Changlin gave an awkward laugh and pulled back his embarrassing hand, then secretly hit it twice as if to scold the impudent and insensitive limb.

"Then why don't you rest a few more days? Don't worry, with me here, Jisheng Hall will be just fine."

No wonder Yue Rujing said Sister Youyou had fallen ill and adamantly wouldn’t let them visit. So this was the issue.

Such an ailment was indeed a bit inconvenient for them men to attend to.

Looking at Sister Youyou’s deathly pale face, it definitely appeared to be a symptom of severe blood loss.

"Shall I prepare some medicine for you to recuperate?"

Gu Youyou shook her head and sat back down at her own place, saying, "No need, I’m already better. I just need a few more days to recover my complexion. I’ll prepare my own recuperative medicine; please bring me the patients’ records from these past few days."

What she wanted were the prescriptions.

After all, Qin Changlin was just an apprentice. For minor ailments, there was no issue with his prescriptions, but for more complex cases, he was inadequate.

And during these days Gu Youyou was absent, all the prescriptions were solely handled by Qin Changlin.

Qin Changlin brought the prescriptions, grinning as he said, "Sister Youyou, rest assured, all the patients these past few days had minor issues, and I saw no problems!"

Gu Youyou looked through the yellow papers and asked, "How about Yuancheng? Is he doing any better?"

Qin Changlin replied with a beaming smile, "He’s all better, no inflammation, and I’ve already removed his stitches." Bending over and lowering his voice, he added, "I haven’t said that you performed the surgery; only that you directed through the screen and I made the incisions. Make sure you don’t slip up."

Gu Youyou raised her eyebrows and, half-squinting, said, "Well, aren’t you clever, snagging the credit for my work with just a few words."

Chapter 243: I heard that Taoists have a future

"Ah...?" Qin Changlin was greatly startled, "I didn’t mean that at all!"

Gu Youyou chuckled, "All right, all right, I know what you mean; I was just joking. So now? Has Yuancheng come to his senses?"

Qin Changlin broke out in a cold sweat and said, "He has come to his senses, of course, but he still seems a bit odd."

"Hmm? What kind of odd?"

Qin Changlin shook his head, "I can’t quite put my finger on it; he’s just not quite the same as before."

Since she couldn’t get a clear answer out of him, Gu Youyou decided to check on the situation herself, "Where is he now?"

"He went to the private school early this morning; he’s very diligent with his studies now."

Gu Youyou nodded, her face revealing a look of relief.

The people at Jisheng Hall had all been thoroughly investigated by Yue Rujing, and they were indeed just ordinary folk. In this world full of danger and schemes, there was finally a place where she could fully relax and let down her guard.

During her free time, after chatting with Qin Changlin for a bit, Gu Youyou subtly and timely steered the conversation towards the topic of Zhuzhao Country’s esteem for the Dao over Buddhism.

"Do you know anything about our Zhuzhao Country’s Dao Family?"

Qin Changlin was surprised and said, "Sister Youyou, why are you suddenly asking about this?"

Gu Youyou said, "Just making casual conversation. I heard being a Taoist has better prospects than being a doctor. I wonder if they accept female Taoists."

Qin Changlin was so shocked that his heart skipped a beat. With Sister Youyou's abilities, why would she consider becoming a Taoist? And a female one at that. Since when was being a doctor less promising than being a Taoist?

He could only offer a weak response, "In every trade, a master emerges. There's no such thing as one having more prospects than another. If you are a good doctor, you can leave a legacy for ages. And if you can pass down your medical books, that's a truly great merit! Of course, if a Taoist excels, they can be just as remarkable. Our Zhuzhao Country's State Preceptor, who stands above ten thousand and second only to the Emperor, is a Taoist."

The State Preceptor, Gu Youyou sneered inwardly but showed nothing on her face before asking, "What kind of person is the State Preceptor?"

Beijing lay far to the north, and Qin Changlin didn't have a clear picture. He said, "Rumor has it that the State Preceptor is a person with great magical powers, his edicts resonating with the heavens. The Emperor trusts him deeply."

Gu Youyou scoffed internally. Could he have become the State Preceptor without fooling the old Emperor?

It seemed she wouldn't get the information she wanted from Qin Changlin.

...

These past few days, the Gu Family had been engulfed in joy as their newly-wed daughter-in-law appeared to be pregnant.

Huang Xiangwen couldn't stop smiling; she was about to become a grandmother.

"Qianqian, it’s getting cold, and the water from the river is chilly too. Don’t bother with these clothes; let Erya wash them later. It’s inconvenient for you with your condition; you should head back to your room and rest."

Qianqian was Gu Dabao’s previously married daughter-in-law, Lei Qianqian.

"Okay!" Lei Qianqian put down the clothes and responded, then she turned to Gu Xiaoqing, who was coming out of the house across the way, "Younger sister Xiaoqing, I’ll have to trouble you then."

Gu Xiaoqing inwardly cursed her luck; she should have made herself scarce a tad sooner.

This daughter-in-law of the second uncle’s was just like her—always bossing people around while lazy herself.

She said irritably, "Second aunt, if sister-in-law is pregnant and it’s inconvenient for her, that’s one thing, but you’re not; why don’t you do the washing?"

"Hey!" retorted her witty niece, who had become almost as much of a handful as that mischievous girl, "I’ve only heard of elders bossing around their juniors; I’ve never heard of juniors commanding their elders. You’re told to wash a few clothes, and you want to send me to do it instead? Is this how your mother raised you?"

Chapter 244 Gu Xiaoqing is Not to be Messed With

Gu Xiaoqing slapped down the broom in her hand and huffed, "My mom works to death in the fields every day, how could she have any time to educate me? Haven’t I learned everything from you, Auntie? Don’t you always like ordering people around?"

"You..." Huang Xiangwen was livid, clattering the stick used for laundry in the bucket with a loud rattle and shouted furiously, "You brat, are you trying to tear the roof down? I’m your auntie, and I can still reprimand you. Are you going to wash them today or not?"

There were only the three of them at home, and since Gu Xiaoqing had already had a falling-out with Huang Xiangwen, she wasn’t afraid anymore and retorted on the spot, "I won’t wash them, what are you gonna do about it?"

"How dare you, let’s see if I will show you a lesson!"

Huang Xiangwen felt she had lost face in front of her daughter-in-law, her face turning an ashy blue with anger as she picked up the laundry stick and charged toward Gu Xiaoqing.

Seeing trouble, Gu Xiaoqing immediately turned and, with a bang, closed the door and barred it.

No matter how fierce, she wasn’t getting in.

Huang Xiangwen, hopping mad, banged on Gu Xiaoqing’s door with the laundry stick, making a continuous thump.

"You lazy bones, open the door for your mother now! If I have to kick it down, you watch out for your hide."

Gu Xiaoqing was equally infuriated by her shameless aunt, acting as if doing her daughter-in-law’s laundry was something she was rightfully supposed to do.

"If you can, then kick it down; otherwise, let’s just wait it out. I’m waiting for Grandpa to come back and do justice."

"You shameless lazy bones, you still have the nerve to ask your grandfather for justice? Which family’s eldest daughter gets privately engaged to a man like that? How come they didn’t drag you to be drowned in a pig cage, huh? You bring shame to the family, and you’re too lazy even to wash some clothes..."

Huang Xiangwen’s cursing grew nastier and nastier; how could a sheltered girl match her vulgar language?

Gu Xiaoqing was so angry she twisted the handkerchief in her hand to shreds.

"Auntie, don’t push me too far. I’m not the kind to swallow grievances without complaint. You believe me or not, I will bring up today’s words to Grandpa and Grandma."

Huang Xiangwen paused for a moment, startled by the threat.

That brat Gu Xiaoqing really might do something like that.

Turning around, she saw her daughter-in-law Lei Qianqian’s face with an odd expression. When Lei Qianqian noticed her looking, she quickly turned away.

She felt she had gone too far, been too fierce. After all, Lei Qianqian was the Scholar’s daughter; she had probably never seen such aggression before—a scare to her daughter-in-law’s unborn grandson would be terrible. So, she tried to smile and said, "Qianqian, that brat is getting unbearable, probably because she’s about to get married. Usually, your mom isn’t like this, it’s just that she annoyed me. Don’t overthink it."

Her daughter-in-law was not like these crude village girls; she was a proper, literate lady who grew up in the city.

There weren’t many men in the village who could recognize a few big characters, let alone women. And Qianqian was certainly special.

Whenever someone mentioned that her daughter-in-law was a literate and well-mannered reader, loads of villagers were envious.

Lei Qianqian’s face was a bit pale. She touched her belly, gave a smile, and said in a low voice, "Mom, I’m fine. I’ll go wash the clothes myself."

With that, she bent down to pick up the basin.

Huang Xiangwen wouldn’t hear of it, and with a cry of alarm, she shouted, "Qianqian, don’t move!"

Shocked by her shout, Lei Qianqian jumped.

"What’s wrong, Mom?"

"How can I let you do that, I’ll wash them!"

Chapter 245: Huang Xiangwen’s Scheme

Huang Xiangwen spat toward Gu Xiaoqing’s room and cursed, "Lazybones."

"Mom, it’s just washing clothes, it’s no big deal," Lei Qianqian said.

"That won’t do," Huang Xiangwen insisted, taking the basin with clothes and said with a smile, "You can’t compare with us. We villagers are used to rough work, even when heavily pregnant we can still work in the fields. You’re different, you’ve lived in the city since you were young and never done this kind of work. You certainly can’t be like us. I’ve heard that city women are especially prone to accidents when they do work while pregnant. Be careful about the child."

The patriarch of the Gu Family had made it clear—if the first child that Lei Qianqian bore was a son, they would do whatever it took to support him, send him to school, and help him achieve scholarly honors. And Lei Qianqian wouldn’t need to do household or field work; her only duty would be to educate the child well.

Her eldest grandson could very well be a future Magistrate. How could they let him suffer?

Of course they couldn’t.

Lei Qianqian’s face was indescribably pale.

At dinner, the whole Gu Family gathered around the long table, and Huang Xiangwen kept serving delicious food into Lei Qianqian’s bowl, while the usually stingy Elder Huang didn’t say a word and even appeared happy.

"Qianqian really has prospects. She hasn't been with the Gu Family long and already has a child on the way, putting your mother and your third aunt to shame. Especially your third aunt, humph, it took her nearly two years just to have Erya."

Meng Qiuju, who had been quietly eating, suddenly lost half of her appetite upon hearing this.

It was an unsolvable source of distress for her life.

Huang Xiangwen's face was full of smiles, and she wasn't angry even though Elder Huang's words implied that the daughter-in-law had surpassed her. She continued with Elder Huang's line, "Exactly, Qianqian looks like someone with good fortune. Not to mention, what that matchmaker said about 'a woman who is three years older bringing home a gold brick' makes sense. Qianqian definitely has the fate of a high official's wife. Gu Dabao might not have a future as an official, but this younger one, my eldest grandson, is sure to be a Magistrate someday."

The simple-minded Gu Dabao grinned from ear to ear, while Gu Er and Gu Feng happily clinked glasses and drank. The second branch of the family beamed with pride, while the third branch had nothing to say, like eggplants beaten by frost.

Gu Feng looked darkly at the people from the second branch, his thoughts inscrutable.

As for Lei Qianqian, the person concerned, she kept her head down bashfully and fiddled with her handkerchief as if she were nervous.

Seeing that the stage was set, Huang Xiangwen turned to Elder Huang and said, "Mom, Qianqian isn't like our village girls, who have grown up doing farm work since they were young. I've heard that since she was a child in the city, she's done nothing but study and embroider flowers; her mother never had her do any work.

Qianqian was raised delicately, and now she's pregnant. I worry that making her do work will be too much for her, and if it harms the child, it would be terrible."

"Do work?" Before Elder Huang could say anything, Gu Feng, sitting at the long table, asked in surprise, "Haven't I said it already? Qianqian doesn't need to do any work; she just needs to focus on nurturing the child. Second brother's family, why would you still ask her to work?"

Elder Huang's smile faded and she asked sternly, "Second brother's family, what's going on?"

Gu Dabao, feeling protective of his wife and child, quietly asked, "Qianqian, what work did Mom ask you to do?"

Huang Xiangwen's gaze shifted to Gu Xiaoqing, who was quietly eating, and Gu Xiaoqing understood what was happening.

She snorted and threw her chopsticks down onto the table.

Everyone at the table frowned at Gu Xiaoqing, knowing without asking that she was involved in the matter.

Chapter 246 Big Sister Says Liars Get Struck by Lightning

Gu Feng felt a sudden surge of irritation and oppression. Was such strife not commonplace? A perfectly good day was ruined; everyone seemed determined to stir up trouble instead of living in peace.

He was well aware of the household affairs—there wasn't a single soul who could ease his mind.

He couldn't be bothered with the petty matters among the women. With a huff, he threw down his chopsticks and barked angrily, "This family will be the death of each other one day, with elders that don't act their age, and the younger ones without any respect for their betters."

Having said that, he stormed out in anger.

Matriarch Huang saw that his bowl still contained half a bowl of rice and frowned, "Old man, at least finish your meal before you leave!"

"I've had enough!" Gu Feng retorted irritably.

With Gu Feng gone, Huang Xiangwen spoke more confidently.

The person she feared most in the family was this old man.

Without Gu Feng, she gave Gu Xiaoqing a smug look before slowly starting, "Ah, how could I let Qianqian do any chores? This child is just too kind-hearted and feels bad if she doesn't contribute. Today, she went to the river to wash clothes by herself. Seeing Erya going to wash clothes as well and noticing Qianqian didn't have much to do, I asked Erya to help. Who would have expected Erya to become upset? She left the clothes unwashed, slammed the door, and cursed us all..."

Unable to tolerate the twisting of truth, Gu Xiaoqing's voice raised in anger, her neck flushing red, "Second Aunt, I remember my elder sister saying that people who lie will be struck by lightning. I don't think she was right though, otherwise some people who always lie and spout nonsense would not be living so well still, right?"

"Erya!" Perhaps it was the mention of Gu Youyou that provoked her, but Matriarch Huang suddenly lashed out, "How dare you speak to your elders like that? You haven't picked up anything good, just bad habits from that demon of a girl."

"Eh... Erya, keep it down!" Gu Feng's brother warned ominously.

Gu Xiaoqing knew exactly what her father meant; her grandmother had always favored the second branch of the family, and now that they were in a position of power, continuing the argument would do her no favors.

After thinking it through, she realized she wouldn't be staying in the family house for much longer anyway. There was really no need to get tangled in these conflicts, so she toned down her voice, "Grandma, Grandpa has said all I need to do is stay home and embroider my dowry, so I naturally wouldn't want to do laundry for my sister-in-law. Of course, if Grandma can find someone to help me with the embroidery, I wouldn't mind helping wash the clothes."

"Nonsense!" Matriarch Huang snapped irritably, "How could someone else embroider your own dowry?"

Matriarch Huang wasn’t foolish; with just one question, she understood what was happening.

Erya had a sharp tongue, and the second daughter-in-law was no pushover either. But even without considering the second daughter-in-law, she still had to maintain the dignity of the second branch, especially with Meng Qiuju, the newly arrived daughter-in-law from the city, sitting right there. She wasn’t like the rural girls.

"If Erya finds the time, she should also give your elder sister a hand! Every woman goes through pregnancy, and you’ll understand one day."

Gu Xiaoqing muttered under her breath, thinking to herself: Every woman goes through pregnancy, as if only Lei Qianqian was precious.

"Hey! Are you listening?" Matriarch Huang banged her chopsticks.

Huang Xiangwen looked triumphant as she watched Gu Xiaoqing.

"Alright, I’ll help out when I’m free," Gu Xiaoqing replied in a sardonic tone.

I’ll deal with it when I have time. As long as they want me to work, I’ll just work on my dowry embroidery, and they can wait until I’m free.

Matriarch Huang was so angry she cursed at the thoughtless girl.

Meng Qiuju, having no say in this family, could only watch as the women bickered over something as trivial as laundry. The men of the family didn’t bother to interject. With both members of the Huang family giving her cold looks, Gu Xiaoqing found her stay in this family growing ever more unbearable.

Chapter 247 Youyou Doesn’t Spend Silver

Out of concern for her daughter, Meng Qiuju still steeled herself to speak up and smooth things over.

"Mother, I see that Qianqian has been suffering from severe morning sickness these past few days, should we get a doctor to take a look at her?"

Huang Xiangwen was certainly willing; she had wanted to bring it up with Old Mrs. Huang for a while now, but knowing how stingy the old woman was, she hadn't dared to speak. She didn't expect the usually reticent Meng Qiuju to take the initiative, and only then did she soften her expression toward Erya.

You back-talking wretch, at least you have a mother who knows her place.

Old Mrs. Huang was in a dilemma.

Seeing a doctor would cost money, and it was normal for women to be pregnant. Which woman in the village ever called for a doctor when they were pregnant? They only called for a midwife when it was time to give birth. Some families, too poor to afford it, would just leave the pregnant woman on the bed to give birth by herself.

Seeing Old Mrs. Huang hesitant, Huang Xiangwen became anxious and said swiftly, "Mother, I heard that in the city, women call for a doctor when they're pregnant. This Qianqian..."

Old Mrs. Huang glared fiercely at Meng Qiuju and said impatiently to Huang Xiangwen, "Alright, alright, we'll call for a doctor, we'll do it tomorrow."

Not for any other reason, but for the sake of her great-grandson.

To everyone's surprise, the usually silent Lei Qianqian started waving her hands frantically, saying in a panicky manner, "No need, Grandma, Mother, I'm doing fine. A few days of vomiting and I'll be better, no need to call the doctor. Why waste the silver? Better to save it for the child's schooling in a private school later on."

Old Mrs. Huang thought this made sense and looked approvingly at Lei Qianqian, laughing, "After all, you are the daughter of a Scholar's Family, you know how to manage money. Silver should indeed be spent in such a sensible way."

Huang Xiangwen was so frustrated she felt itchy in her teeth and thought: Whether you spend that silver or not, it’s still in the old lady’s hands. Even if you spend it now, will the child’s schooling cost any less later on?

Suddenly, another thought struck her, and her eyes lit up as she said to Old Mrs. Huang, "Oh dear, I almost forgot about this."

Her melodramatic exclamation startled everyone; Old Mrs. Huang said irritably, "What now?"

Was she still scheming for her silver? Old Mrs. Huang’s expression soured.

Huang Xiangwen hurriedly said, "Mother, remember a few days ago we heard that Daya was wronged at the Chen Family’s? I went to see her yesterday."

Poor granddaughter, this too was a vexing issue.

Old Mrs. Huang shook her head and sighed, asking with concern, "How is Daya? If the Chen Family really doesn’t appreciate her, we simply bring her back here. I refuse to believe that the Gu Family can’t support her and her child."

Of course, this was said out of frustration. A daughter once married off was not to be taken back, no matter what.

Huang Xiangwen sighed, "It’s the same old problem, she’s gentle by nature and gets picked on. If she were as assertive as Youyou and Erya, let’s see who from the Chen Family could bully her."

The conversation turned to Gu Xiaoqing; indignant, she said, "Second Aunt, what about me? I haven’t provoked you."

Old Mrs. Huang only wanted to hear about Daya’s situation; curtly, she barked at Gu Xiaoqing, "Eat your food, and once you’re full, get on with your embroidery. We were speaking well of you."

With her sharp tongue and a fiery temperament, Gu Xiaoqing was worried her daughter might start another argument, and promptly pulled her back to the room.

Huang Xiangwen, focused on her agenda, continued, "Remember Lanxin was ill before? Daya said she was treated at Jisheng Hall, and it was Youyou who thought of the idea. Her mother-in-law thought they had hoarded silver to pay for the child's treatment, which is why she beat and scolded Daya.

Mother, others may not know, but how could we be unaware? With Daya's timid and honest nature, if she knew how to hide silver, would her life be such a mess? And as for Jisheng Hall—where Youyou is—how could she take Daya's silver?"

Chapter 248: The Beauty Trap

Huang Xiangwen had a sly smile on her face, with her words reaching this point, how could the old Huang Family not know what she was thinking? The two shared an unspoken understanding and already had a plan in mind.

A doctor who demands silver can't be used, but one who doesn't should not be wasted.

Tomorrow she would make a trip to Jisheng Hall and have them send a doctor over to the house to see Lei Qianqian.

...

Gu Youyou had never had much fondness for Yue Rujing, and ever since that day she let his blood, her dislike for Yue Rujing had only grown stronger, finding fault in everything with an overly critical eye.

He had just finished his work and was about to sit down for a drink of water to quench his thirst when she caught him again.

"Yue Rujing, have you sorted out the new herbs that came in?"

Oops, he had just finished unloading the goods; how could he have possibly sorted them that quickly?

It was obvious she was doing this on purpose, always waiting to catch him on something.

Yue Rujing endured and said with a forced smile, "Let me have a drink of water, and I'll sort them right away."

Gu Youyou, holding the ledger in her hand, slammed it onto the table with a smack and angrily said, "I hired you to work, not to drink water. Immediately, right now, go do your work, or else get out of here."

Yue Rujing's nose was so crooked with anger, but there was nothing he could do since his senior brother had said they had to win her over, regardless of whose person she was, they had to make her their own, or else he wouldn't stay here and put up with this humiliation.

Heh... Angry, are we? Gu Youyou smiled smugly, unable to directly fire you, but I have ways to make you leave on your own, let's see how long you can endure.

"I've been working like an ox or a horse; I should've gotten over my anger by now!" Yue Rujing muttered under his breath with a huff.

But the grudge over the bloodletting wasn't so easily forgotten, despite Jin Zijin's repeated assurances that there would be no next time, this didn't change the fact that he had done it.

Gu Youyou chuckled and said, "You can't handle it after just a few days, if I were you, I'd do whatever else I had to do, what are you sticking around here for?"

Yue Rujing thought to himself: Do you think I want to? Isn't this because my senior brother said that women's hearts are the softest, so I must show patience and sincerity?

Thinking of his senior brother made him angry. He talked a good game, but why didn't he do it himself? All those years of using the beauty ploys to no avail proved that senior brother was all show and no substance.

Hmm, I wonder if using a beauty ploy myself would work.

As Yue Rujing’s thoughts turned, so did the expression on his face; one moment his nose was crooked in anger, the next he shook his head in melancholy, and now... why was he smiling so cunningly?

Gu Youyou watched him warily.

Yue Rujing’s peach blossom eyes formed narrow crescents as he smiled, bowing to Gu Youyou and saying, "Youyou, you’re right, this is all self-inflicted. I should, who let me accidentally take too much blood, right? Ow, look at these hands of mine, they’re just not accurate, I deserve it, I should be punished with hard labor."

Gu Youyou looked at him, puzzled.

"As long as it calms your anger, as long as we can go back to the beginning, as long as you give me another chance, even if I have to work like an ox or a horse for you for the rest of my life, what’s the harm?"

Gu Youyou watched him in horror.

Yue Rujing’s smile, one capable of enchanting all the women in the city, his voice dripping with honey, "Youyou, anything given by you, I will relish it!"

Damn it, what’s going on? Gu Youyou shuddered, breaking out in goosebumps.

He had taken the bait, he had bitten, Yue Rujing was smugly triumphant, bursting with joy.

He thought to himself: This method is simply too good, it can not only subdue Gu Youyou but also solve senior brother’s trouble, why didn’t I think of it earlier?

Just watch, senior brother, this woman is all too willing to make you a cuckold, unreliable!

His senior brother, he surely deserved better.

Chapter 249: Harvesting the Autumn Wind

"Youyou..." Yue Rujing believed no woman could resist his tender, water-like gaze; he slowly leaned toward her from his superior position, his heart racing with joy.

But Gu Youyou had already been thoroughly infuriated by his perverse behavior.

"Yue Rujing, you're courting death!" Gu Youyou shouted, lifting her foot and stomping on Yue Rujing's instep, then angrily exclaimed, "Don't you ever call me Youyou again!"

Disgusting, she felt her skin crawl all over.

Caught off guard, Yue Rujing was stomped squarely by her, crying out in pain with an 'ow'.

That's not right, why the sudden change of face? It was far from the reaction he had anticipated. Could it be because he was wearing the clothes of an assistant, which diminished his charm?

Hopping on one foot while holding the other, he said, "If I can't call you Youyou, what should I call you? You don't like it when I call you Cousin-in-law, do you?"

Grinding her teeth, Gu Youyou said, "Call me Director Gu!"

Director Gu?

Certainly not Miss Gu, or Lady Gu? What did this "Director" title mean?

Hearing the screams, Qin Changlin hurried in and, seeing this scene, could only offer Yue Rujing a face full of sympathy.

He didn't know what the man had done to offend Sister Youyou again.

Gu Youyou smiled and added, "That gentleman is Director Qin; as a mere assistant, you'd better understand your place."

Alright then, I'm just an assistant.

...

Madam Huang had been wanting to come to Gu Youyou's place for a while to take advantage of the autumn winds, but being the busy harvest season, her own family matters had kept her from doing so.

Today, she came with an important mission, having a legitimate reason!

In Jisheng Hall, it was always Qin Changlin who received patients while Gu Youyou took care of indoor affairs. Qin Changlin had become quite adept at treating common colds and flus, leaving no need for Gu Youyou to step in; she only handled the difficult, baffling cases that Qin Changlin couldn't manage.

After Gu Youyou successfully treated a myriad of complicated cases, Qin Changlin's admiration for her grew stronger with each passing instance.

They had found a treasure! Gu Youyou's medical skills were, in some areas, definitely no less than that of their teacher, Doctor Zhou.

But could such a woman really be a village girl?

He couldn't comprehend it, it was just too baffling.

Of course, there were many strange things about Gu Youyou, things he couldn't figure out no matter how hard he thought, especially concerning her husband, who seemed to have become a different person after returning home. If not for Yue Rujing assuring him that was indeed his cousin Jin Zijin, he would never believe they were the same person.

He feared Gu Youyou might one day transform into the daughter of a wealthy family, and without her at Jisheng Hall, the place would almost certainly fall into decline.

It was a slow day today; early in the morning, only two patients had come in. After seeing them, Qin Changlin had been sitting idly for quite some time.

Out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a familiar old lady swiftly heading toward Jisheng Hall.

Although they had only met once, Qin Changlin remembered her clearly.

Wasn't she the Gu Family's old madam who hadn't paid for her consultation and had nearly asked him for money for tea, Gu Youyou's grandmother?

Gu Youyou's grandmother?

Qin Changlin was startled and became fully alert.

Madam Huang, focused on hurrying here despite her numerous chores at home, was already sweating profusely.

Finally arriving at Jisheng Hall, she stood in the shade and took out a kerchief to wipe off her sweat.

Qin Changlin signaled one of the assistants with his eyes, and the assistant stepped forward to inquire, "Old madam, are you feeling unwell? Please come inside with me; our doctor is inside."

Hearing this, Madam Huang's face fell, and she replied sharply, "How can you speak like that to someone so young? Where am I unwell? I'm in excellent health."

Chapter 250: Not Seeing Patients

The shop assistant, perplexed, twitched the corner of his mouth and turned his gaze to Qin Changlin inside the room.

Qin Changlin waved his hand at him, indicating that he should leave.

The shop assistant showed a gruff demeanor towards Old Madame Huang, saying, "Then please, proceed as you wish!"

"Hey! What's with that attitude? I am..."

"Madame Gu!" Before she could finish, she saw Qin Changlin approaching with a smile.

Old Madame Huang sized him up for a moment before recognizing him - wasn't this the inept apprentice who had treated Sanya's facial injury at her home? In the end, she had berated him so much that he didn't even dare to charge a consultation fee.

Luckily for Sanya, her facial wound had healed; otherwise, Old Madame Huang would have never spared this quack.

"Ahem!" Old Madame Huang put on airs and pointed at Qin Changlin: "I came here today to invite the doctor to my home for a consultation."

Qin Changlin's eyebrows twitched as he pointed to a signboard in front of Jisheng Hall and spoke in a gentle voice, "Madame, please look at this!"

Old Madame Huang couldn't read a single big character. She felt that Qin Changlin was humiliating her and suddenly became enraged, shouting, "What do you mean by this? Are you looking down on me? Let me tell you, my granddaughter is one of the proprietors of Jisheng Hall!"

His shouting reminded Qin Changlin that many old folks in the village were illiterate. He hurriedly offered an apologetic smile, "Oh, Madame, I surely wouldn't dare to look down on you. I wanted to inform you that our Jisheng Hall has a rule now: the doctor does not make house calls. If there is a patient at home who is too ill to come to us, a small amount of Silver Coin can be paid, and we will send our medical carriage to bring the patient here to stay in the infirmary of Jisheng Hall for treatment. They can leave any time they're cured. It's convenient for the patient; it's convenient for us, isn't it?"

Old Madame Huang was stunned for a moment, then cursed again after a while, "What sort of nonsensical rule is this? Who ever heard of moving a sick person so ill they can't walk to someone else's

place? If they happen to die by accident, wouldn't it mean dying away from home, unable to find the way back?"

"Oh!" Qin Changlin shivered in spirit and became serious, "Does your family have someone who is that severely ill? May I ask who it is?"

Qin Changlin remembered that Gu Youyou was very fond of her grandfather. If it was the elderly gentleman who had become this ill, the rules might not matter; Sister Youyou would surely be the first to go to the Gu Family to see the patient.

Old Madame Huang was startled and suddenly turned pale with anger. She grabbed the front of Qin Changlin's clothes and yelled, "You foul-mouthed thing, who are you cursing? Let me tell you, if anything happens to my daughter-in-law and my great-grandson, that will be your responsibility. Come on, let's go have a look!"

Your daughter-in-law and great-grandson should be your son's responsibility, shouldn't they? How did it become mine? Qin Changlin was taken aback.

Old Madame Huang had a strong voice and was loud. When she started to howl, people on the street gathered around.

Gu Youyou, with her sharp ears, heard her voice from inside the courtyard and muttered to herself that this was not good. She hastily straightened her dress and came out.

In the middle of the street, a fierce-looking old lady was aggressively holding onto a young man's clothes. The young man was Qin Changlin, the familiar doctor from Jisheng Hall?

The neighbors started whispering among themselves.

"Who is this old lady? How dare she treat Qin Changlin like that?"

"Shh, seeing how afraid Qin Changlin is of her, she might be his grandmother."

"My goodness, even if she’s the grandmother, she shouldn’t treat her grandson like this. It’s so embarrassing, scolding him in the middle of the street, and how is Qin Changlin supposed to face others?"

"Indeed, it’s outrageous."

"This is outright abducting!"