Farmhouse 291

Chapter 291: You Scared Her

Jin Zijin's words were indeed a reminder for him. Yes, Tianzong and Xuanzong had developed deep-seated enmity many years earlier, and this feud had been passed down for generations, as deep as the sea. Yet, in the last two generations, with the disappearance of the Youying Pearl, and both sects' members searching for it for many years, their relationship had somewhat eased. They were almost forgetting the deep-seated enmity that once existed between their sects.

Gu Youyou only looked at Jin Zijin with a meaningful but unclear expression, attempting to discern from his face what was true and what was false.

Even though neither option was desirable, Gu Youyou would still choose Jin Zijin, for if she fell into Xuanzong's hands, she would suffer an even worse fate.

With this in mind, she leaned her head into Jin Zijin's chest on her own, shivering with fear. Her voice was as pleasant as the calling of a colorful bird, saying, "Husband, I don't like this strange person."

Jin Zijin was slightly surprised, knowing she was up to mischief again, but still felt an inexplicable softness in his heart.

To play along with her, he looked at the strange person with an even more profound gaze, and anger that he couldn't fully conceal displayed on his face.

"You've frightened her."

The warning was even more apparent. Zhuo Qing knew that if he continued to be insensitive, Jin Zijin might not be so amiable.

Staring intensely at their apparent marital closeness, he said angrily, "It seems that Zhuo Qing is too weak and insignificant to handle this task."

With those words, he flung his sleeves and strode out of the courtyard.

Jin Zijin furrowed his brows. Did this mean that someone capable of handling this task was going to come after all?

Hmph, he would stay right here and see who from Xuanzong would dare to brazenly use his wife as a medicine person.

While it was true that standing in the light, he had every right on his side, and they couldn't openly snatch her from him, but in the dark...

It seemed he would have to tell Yue Rujing to be more vigilant and to add more guards.

Gu Youyou felt the man walking away and pushed off his hand, straightening her posture.

Judging by the time, it was just about right; the medicine she prepared for her grandfather was ready.

She took the jar for the medicine, transferred the prepared decoction into it, and wrapped it up in a coarse cloth.

This time, she didn't ask anything. One reason was that she felt there was nothing to ask.

The second was that if Jin Zijin wanted to say something, he naturally would, and if he didn't, asking was useless.

In any case, she had come to understand a principle.

The people of Xuanzong were formidable, but neither Jin Zijin nor Yue Rujing were pushovers.

She was important to Xuanzong, just as she was important to Jin Zijin.

Of course, she was self-aware. This importance had nothing to do with any wife. She still remembered the saying: before the Youying Pearl was found, she was the Youying Pearl.

The Youying Pearl, ah, it’s the Dao Family’s ultimate treasure.

That thing should be in the hands of Jin Ziyuan.

No wonder he was hiding in the mountains, possessing the Dao Family’s treasure, he deserved to be pursued and killed.

No matter how precious these things are, they are but external objects. If it were her, she would have turned them in honestly a long time ago. Can any treasure be more valuable than life?

Wait, something’s not right!

Gu Youyou suddenly thought of something.

It wouldn’t make sense if the thing was with Jin Ziyuan. Didn’t they just say that the Youying Pearl had been missing for many years and that both sects of the Dao Family had been searching for it? Jin Ziyuan was a medicine person just like her, and it must have been Xuanzong’s doing. If the object was with him, and Jin Zijin knew about it, how could the people of Xuanzong be unaware?

His hiding in the mountains wasn’t his own intention, but because he was being raised in that special environment to cultivate Yin energy.

Just like the special dark room of the Gu Family.

"Zijin, are you certain that the Youying Pearl is in the hands of Jin... that person?"

Jin Zijin seemed to be pondering something and didn’t hear her clearly at first.

"What?" he asked.

Chapter 292 Whose Fault?

Gu Youyou could only ask again, "How are you so sure that the Youying Pearl is on the person in the ancient tomb?"

Jin Zijin slightly hooked up the corner of his mouth, understanding her meaning, and sighed, "The people from Xuanzong had already found the Youying Pearl, but everyone tacitly said nothing. We received information that the State Preceptor once went out for a year and came upon an insignificant little town, and it seemed he even found a pure yin male."

He looked towards Gu Youyou, his expression becoming solemn, "Although females with the Four Pillars Pure Yin are rare, they are not impossible to find. However, pure yin males are truly one in ten thousand, almost a once-in-a-century encounter.

Men are different from women; to cultivate a man's body into a medicinal vessel is not something that can be done with Youying Grass alone, but also requires the Youying Pearl. Thus, we speculate that he hid the Youying Pearl together with that man deep in the mountains!"

Was this the reason he came to Lotus Village in Qingshui Town?

Gu Youyou fell silent for a moment and did not speak again.

She took the medicine pot and went out, holding some silver in her hand.

She promised Sanya to buy some things when she passed by the street corner later.

Children are easy to please, but promises must not be broken.

As she was heading to the gate, Jin Zijin suddenly called out to her.

"Youyou, let Abao follow you, and come back early," he said.

It was probably because of Zhuo Qing's arrival that he was somewhat concerned.

With her own safety at stake, Gu Youyou did not object. She nodded, gestured for Abao to follow her.

Gu Youyou had intended to buy some sugary cake that children loved, but as soon as she reached the street, she saw a vendor selling candied haws.

In such a small town, candied haws were not commonly sold, and seeing them was rare. Without hesitation, Gu Youyou bought several skewers.

It had been a long time since she had tasted such treats, and Gu Youyou also ate a skewer herself.

Sour and sweet, it actually tasted quite good.

The Gu Family early on knew that Gu Youyou had raised a dog, but they had never seen it.

This was the first time she brought the fierce-looking Abao into the Gu Family's home.

The men had all gone out to work in the fields, leaving only those who could not work—Sanya, Meng Qiuju, and Erya at home.

It was heard that the frightened Lei Qianqian was still at the Lei Family's, only Dabao occasionally went to see her, and they had not brought her back.

Gu Youyou's expression darkened a bit, and she let out a cold laugh.

There was a saying that you reap what you sow, but who sowed and for whom was this retribution?

Meng Qiuju and Huang Xiangwen, the two women, stayed at home to do chores, and the to-be-married Erya was surely embroidering her dowry in the room.

When Gu Youyou arrived, Meng Qiuju was washing clothes in the courtyard, and Sanya was sitting at the side picking vegetables.

Children in farming families started working early. Sanya, not even six years old, was learning to do the chores she could handle. Picking vegetables was simple, especially since children learn quickly, and she picked it up at once.

"Sanya, Auntie!" Gu Youyou called out as she pushed open the courtyard gate.

Meng Qiuju actually did not dislike Gu Youyou that much, at least not to the extent of deliberately targeting her like Old Madam Huang and Huang Xiangwen did. Her attitude towards Gu Youyou was within normal bounds.

There is no filial child in front of a long-term sickbed—after all, who likes having a sickly person in the house? Naturally, they would wish for the sickly person to die early to avoid burdening the family, and this sick one was not even born to them.

So now that she had recovered from her illness, their repulsion towards her slowly dissipated.

"Youyou, you're here early today," she commented.

Gu Youyou replied, "Today I only have one prescription, so it's a bit early."

Sanya dropped the vegetables and stood up, dashing towards Gu Youyou with her little short legs spread out.

She knew her ghost sister would bring something tasty, and she had been yearning for it all day.

Seeing Gu Youyou holding strings of strange-looking things, she appeared a bit flustered and stopped halfway in her tracks.

Chapter 293 My Raised Dog

She had never seen ice-sugar gourd, but it looked both pretty and tasty.

Gu Youyou smiled and handed a string to Sanya, beckoning her with a wave, "Come here, Sanya."

Meng Qiuju saw this and felt a twinge of jealousy, yet still smiled and said, "Sanya, go get it, that’s the ice-sugar gourd your eldest sister bought for you."

Sanya had never seen an ice-sugar gourd, but she had heard about it. The last time her aunt came over, her cousin had asked her if she had ever eaten one.

She said she had and that it was the most delicious thing in the world, sweet enough to make your teeth fall out.

So this was ice-sugar gourd. Ghost Sister had bought her such a nice thing; Ghost Sister was so good.

Sanya grinned, revealing a row of small white teeth, with shallow dimples on her face, making her look very cute.

"Sanya likes Ghost Sister," she said.

Then she took the ice-sugar gourd that Gu Youyou had passed to her and immediately stuck out her tongue to lick it.

The world of a child is very simple, like is like, and dislike is dislike.

"Youyou, don’t spoil the child too much," Meng Qiuju said with a smile.

Gu Youyou knew she meant no harm and nodded with a smile.

"Auntie, I’m going to see Grandpa first in the house."

"Go ahead!"

She still had a few strings of ice-sugar gourd in her hand. She didn’t hide them deliberately but held them openly, bringing them all back to Gu Feng’s room.

Grandpa knew to share the sugar gourds with his brothers and sisters, but she couldn’t be the one to do it, because apart from the naive Sanya, she was seen by the other siblings as Ghost Sister, both feared and dreaded.

"Grandpa, are you feeling any better today?"

As Gu Youyou set down the things, she asked.

"Youyou is here again!" an old voice came from inside the tent.

"Of course, I should come; Grandpa is still sick!" Gu Youyou opened the window to let the sunshine in.

"Ah..." A scream shattered the peace.

Through the window, Gu Youyou saw Abao standing in the courtyard; the person who was frightened was Auntie Meng Qiuju. Suddenly seeing Abao come in, she was terrified, and the clothes she was carrying dropped to the ground.

She definitely thought Abao was a wolf; Abao did have a wolf-like appearance, and it was indeed scary for anyone who saw it for the first time.

It was an oversight on Gu Youyou’s part, she hadn’t thought about it at the moment.

"Grandpa, I’ll come back in a little while," she said as she turned around and went out to the yard.

Gu Feng naturally heard the scream from the backyard and propped himself up, ready to go out and see what was happening.

"Oh my, a wolf, there’s a wolf!" Meng Qiuju was truly frightened, her complexion pale, waving the stick she used for washing clothes, "Don’t come over here, don’t you come over here. Sanya, quickly come behind your Auntie."

Ignorance is bliss; Sanya didn’t know the terror of a wolf, only seeing how nervous and afraid her auntie was, she became afraid as well and ran frantically backwards, bumping straight into Gu Youyou who was coming out from inside the house.

"Don’t be afraid, Sanya!" Gu Youyou said quickly.

She was somewhat regretful now, she shouldn’t have brought Abao.

This wolf-like Abao would no doubt require an explanation if the villagers saw him.

"Youyou, you... you’re not afraid?"

Meng Qiuju had intended to warn Youyou to be careful, but seeing that Gu Youyou didn’t seem afraid, she changed her tune.

Gu Youyou felt somewhat relieved, called Abao over, and gently rubbed its head, "Auntie, don’t be afraid. This is the dog I’m raising, it just looks a bit like a wolf."

"This... this is the dog you’re raising?" Meng Qiuju was still unsettled, speaking in surprise.

"Yes, a dog!" Gu Youyou said with a smile.

A dog that looks like this? Meng Qiuju was truly shaken.

Chapter 294: People Have to Grow Up

Sanya, who had been hiding behind Gu Youyou, poked her head out. Seeing that Gu Youyou was not at all afraid of the creature and even reached out to touch it, her curiosity was piqued.

She lifted her head and tilted it as she asked, "Ghost Sister, can I touch it too?"

This address as "Ghost Sister" caught Meng Qiuju off guard, making her somewhat embarrassed.

Gu Youyou, not minding at all, smiled at Sanya and said, "Go on and touch it, of course you can. It’s very obedient, its name is Abao."

Abao had been raised by Gu Youyou to have a docile nature, and its favorite game was chasing butterflies. Gu Youyou often joked that it had been born into the wrong body and should have been a cat.

Jin Zijin immediately said that Abao was very alert and sensitive to danger; it only seemed as lazy as a cat because it didn’t sense any danger, but once it felt threatened, it could be more ferocious than a wolf in the mountains.

Gu Youyou was unconvinced because, in her eyes, Abao was just a big cat that loved to chase butterflies.

Sanya’s tender little hands caressed Abao’s head, and she laughed, while Abao also seemed to enjoy it very much.

"Sanya, be careful!" Meng Qiuju was still very nervous; even though it was a dog raised by Gu Youyou, it was quite frightening, and dogs could bite people, couldn’t they?

Gu Youyou just squatted down and said to Abao, "You play with my little sister in the yard and don’t bully her."

Meng Qiuju smiled and shook her head, still somewhat worried.

Gu Feng leaned on the door as he came out, and Gu Youyou quickly went forward to support him.

"Grandpa, why are you outside? It’s windy out here."

The autumn wind was somewhat cool, not suitable for Grandpa’s health which could be affected by the wind.

Gu Feng said, "I heard a scream and thought it was Youyou’s dog startling someone."

"Dad, it’s just that I’m too cowardly," Meng Qiuju said, looking at Sanya playing with Abao and bowing her head in shame.

"It is quite frightening; it looks like a wolf," Gu Feng said, "But that’s good, too. With Youyou, a girl, having to walk such a long mountain path every day, it’s safer with it around."

Gu Feng lay back on the bed, and Gu Youyou had already given him his medicine for the day.

His illness had significantly improved, but he still lacked energy.

Some ailments are not of the body but of the heart.

A doctor can heal physical illnesses, but one must rely on themselves for the matters of the heart.

Gu Youyou frowned and said, "Grandma has been gone for many days now; Grandpa needs to come out of his grief sooner rather than later."

A couple in their youth grows old together. It was normal for Grandpa to be unable to accept Grandma’s sudden departure; he needed time to come to terms with it. Therefore, Gu Youyou was not overly concerned.

Time can heal all wounds. In a few days, once he saw things clearly, he would be better.

This was something he had also said himself.

Gu Feng laughed and said, "Grandpa is old, don’t trouble yourself! A doctor can cure illness but can’t fight fate; everyone has their day."

Gu Youyou disagreed with this notion and said, "Being in good spirits can prolong life, showing that being healthy isn’t necessarily about being less able as one gets older."

Gu Feng laughed heartily and said, "Youyou always has a set of principles, and Grandpa can’t argue with you anymore. You were easier to comfort when you were little."

Gu Youyou laughed as well and said, "People have to grow up; we can’t always be as easy to comfort as when we were young."

Gu Youyou had spoken without intent, yet it made Gu Feng recall certain things.

His smile stiffened on his face, and his expression turned somber.

Seeing this, Gu Youyou’s demeanor also became solemn.

"Grandpa, what’s wrong?"

Gu Feng didn’t directly answer, but instead looked at her. After a moment, he sighed and said, "Youyou is right, people do grow up and can’t always be fooled."

Chapter 295: Please Have Some Meat

Gu Youyou felt there was a hidden meaning in his words.

Gu Feng continued, "When you were little, your illness was peculiar. Back then, the family couldn’t afford a good doctor, and given the rapid progression of your sickness, I had no choice but to trust that odd person. Later, someone told me they saw that person at the entrance of the village giving you something to eat. Zijin also told me that your disease came from that person."

His eyes, clouded with age, held a hint of melancholy as he said, "You were young and got deceived, and we... failed to discern right from wrong, which led to you suffering for ten years."

Gu Youyou was slightly surprised, not because someone had tricked little Gu Youyou into eating something that made her sick, but because Gu Feng also knew about these things.

It seemed that Jin Zijin took her out of the Gu Family home and must have revealed some truths to convince Gu Feng.

The elderly have their wisdom, for a doctor can treat illnesses, but can’t fight fate.

Even if grandfather’s health improved, he wouldn’t grieve over grandmother’s death anymore; his physical condition couldn’t return to what it once was.

He had aged, and each illness took its toll.

"Ah..."

Once again, a shout from outside shattered the calm.

This time, it wasn’t a woman’s voice, but a man’s.

"I’ll go have a look, it must be Abao scaring someone again," Gu Youyou said.

She really regretted bringing Abao here, such a nuisance.

The person who was frightened was her third uncle, Gu Wu, who was carrying a piece of pork.

And Abao was drooling, eyes glowing as he stared at the meat.

"Is this some kind of wolf?" he cried out in panic and anger.

Meng Qiuju was also quite scared of Abao, but she wiped her hands and hurried over to explain, "This isn't a wolf, it's a dog."

"What kind of dog?"

Sanya said, "Third uncle, this is Ghost Sister's dog, his name is Abao."

Abao? Gu Lao San's lips twitched, couldn't a better name than Abao be chosen, not knowing that several of the younger brothers in the family had the character 'bao' in their nicknames?

That damned girl was clearly doing it on purpose. If only mother was still alive, she would have taught her a harsh lesson.

"Abao!" Gu Youyou called out as she came out of the house, "Come here, want some meat? We'll cook it for you at home."

Abao was very obedient to Gu Youyou's command and intelligent; when Gu Youyou beckoned, he came over.

"Youyou!" Gu Lao San unusually smiled at Gu Youyou and lifted the piece of pork in his hand, "Knowing you would come today, I went and bought some meat. We'll have meat with our meal at noon; stay and have lunch with us!"

Gu Youyou never stayed to eat at the Gu Family's house, especially not lunch.

Because farmers rarely eat lunch.

Gu Youyou was taken aback in surprise.

Meng Qiuju was just as puzzled. Didn't she know what kind of man her husband was? Why would he suddenly go out of his way to buy meat and ask Gu Youyou to stay for a meal?

"Oh, what a coincidence!"

As several people were speaking, another person returned. It was Gu Lao Er, and he too was carrying a piece of meat.

Gu Youyou narrowed her eyes slightly, clueless as to what they were plotting.

Gu Lao Er smiled and came forward, "Lao San bought meat as well? Indeed a coincidence, I've bought some too. Youyou, we have meat for lunch; what would you like? Tell your aunt and she'll cook it for you."

How bizarre, thought Gu Youyou.

Gu Lao Er and Gu Lao San uncharacteristically went to buy meat and even invited her to eat, which was quite horrifying.

But in the end, one does not strike the smiling face with a hand, no matter what they were thinking, she had to respond with a smile too.

Gu Youyou nodded and said, "Okay, thank you, Second Uncle, Third Uncle."

Chapter 296: Out of Character

"Ah! I was just worried you might not be pleased, but this is great, it's been a long time since our family has gotten along so well." Gu Lao Er said as he snatched the meat from Gu Lao San's hand and brought it into the house together.

Gu Lao San didn't say much, only turned to Sanya and said, "Sanya, go to the fields and call your brother and sister, and your mother to come back for lunch."

Sanya was thrilled at the mention of meat for lunch, and two big pieces at that, and without a word ran off.

"Qiuju, start cooking, make plenty!" Gu Lao San then told Meng Qiuju.

Meng Qiuju also seemed a bit puzzled but still happily nodded her head and said, "I'll go get Erya to come help."

Having said that, she quickly walked away.

In the courtyard stood Gu Youyou and Gu Lao San. Gu Youyou had wanted to say that she was going to check on Grandpa in the house, but before she could speak, Gu Lao San beat her to it.

"Youyou, Dad spoke truthfully. As the only blood of your eldest brother, we, your uncles and aunts, have wronged you in the past and held some misunderstandings about you. Now that your mother has passed, your Third Uncle suddenly feels as if something is missing, and upon reflection, I recalled something Dad said when your elder brother and his wife passed away: we only have so many relatives, when one dies, there's one less.

Now I feel Dad's words were very true, when one dies, there's one less. You are also our relative, and now that you're in good health, you will naturally live a long time. Yet, because of some things, you have become estranged from us. Of course, it's not your fault; it was mother who was biased against you. Now that she has gone, once people die, it's like a light going out. I hope you won't always dwell on those things in your heart; we will always be your relatives!"

Gu Youyou, who had overheard from around a corner, knew well that Gu Lao San was a person prone to deep thoughts and actions, but seldom spoke. She didn't expect him to be able to speak so much at once.

His expression revealed the sorrow of losing Mother and some wistfulness. When he spoke these words to Gu Youyou, it was like an elder speaking earnestly to a younger; he did not notice anything amiss.

The only thing wrong was that he spoke too much - too normal, thus abnormal.

Gu Youyou recalled what her friend who studied psychology had told her: when taciturn people suddenly become talkative, it's a sign of guilt.

Was her Third Uncle feeling guilty? But what was he guilty about?

It appeared that she would need to stay and closely observe what exactly was off about her Second and Third Uncles.

Gu Youyou looked at him and nodded with a smile, "Third Uncle speaks truth; Youyou has always seen you all as family."

These days, who doesn't know how to pretend!

Gu Lao San suddenly smiled with relief and said, "That's good, that's very good. You go inside and check on Dad first; I'll go pick some vegetables and come back."

No sooner had Gu Lao San left than Gu Lao Er came out.

Upon seeing Gu Youyou, his smile stretched wide like that of a grinning monkey.

"Youyou, I was wrong before. Today, I especially went to buy meat to cook you a good meal as an apology. Please, don't take it to heart."

Heh... one by one they come to apologize, how very coincidental.

What is the Gu family up to now?

Gu Lao Er wears everything on his face, so unlike Gu Lao San who can rattle on with a bunch of reasons, he just comes right out with it when he's there to apologize.

But Gu Youyou understood Gu Lao Er just as well. Such a big change in him was certainly not simple.

Gu Lao Er wasn't adept at concealing his emotions. It was conceivable that Gu Lao San could put on a smiling face towards Gu Youyou for some reason, being flexible and accommodating, but for Gu Lao Er, it was difficult.

Especially since not long ago at Grandma’s funeral, he was still clamoring to fight with her.

Chapter 297: Visit Home

But his apologetic gaze was indeed very sincere and he did not seem unwilling at all.

Alright, she decided to stay, as she wanted to see what these weird characters were up to.

"Second Uncle is joking, Youyou has never taken it to heart."

Playing the part? Could anyone be better at it than Jin Zijin? Gu Youyou could do it too.

Gu Lao’er laughed and said, "Alright, you take a rest for a while, I’ll call you when it’s ready."

"Okay, thank you, Second Uncle!" Gu Youyou replied with a light smile, very politely.

Gu Lao’er seemed very happy as he hummed a tuneless melody and went back into the house.

Gu Youyou stood in the courtyard for a while, called out to Abao, and together they left the Gu Family’s yard.

She took Abao to the thatched cottage she shared with Jin Zijin. Because no one had been living there, many weeds had grown in the yard and the cottage was somewhat dilapidated.

The last time she was there had been at night, and she had left before it was light, so she hadn’t gotten a clear look at the yard.

There were quite a few weeds in the courtyard, but curiously, the vegetable and herb patches were well-tended, clearly showing someone had been looking after them.

She heard footsteps approaching, turned her head, and saw Wang Shun, carrying a hoe, coming her way.

Shunzi? It seems it was he who had been tending the vegetable and herb garden.

She wondered whether he had done it on his own initiative or if Jin Zijin had asked him to.

She guessed it must have been his own decision. Jin Zijin was not in real need of these things and with Jin Ziyuan no longer at the back hill, he probably did not plan to return to the thatched cottage. So why would he have Shunzi do these things?

"Eh, Sister Youyou, you're back?"

Shunzi, still carrying his hoe, obviously paused in surprise upon seeing Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou responded with a smile, "Yes, I came back today to see Grandfather and thought I'd stop by home to check on things."

Shunzi knew that Gu Youyou was now one of the owners of Jisheng Hall. The news had spread throughout the village even before the Huang Family's elder had passed away.

He had thought that since Gu Youyou had gained favor with Doctor Zhou and moved up in the world, she would spend her life working as a doctor in Jisheng Hall in town and would never return to the thatched cottage. Yet, here she was back again.

What about Jin Big Brother, then? Would he ever come back to hunt?

With this thought in mind, Shunzi asked with a smile, "I thought you two wouldn't come back. What about Jin Big Brother? Will he come back for hunting?"

Gu Youyou replied with a smile, "I'm not sure about that. He's doing some craftwork now, but he might still go hunting from time to time."

"Oh!" Shunzi nodded with an understanding grin, "I knew you would come back, so I kept the garden tidy for you, so you'd have vegetables when you return."

This truly honest child. Gu Youyou shook her head with a smile and said, "Come with me."

She walked ahead with Abao following behind her.

Abao had grown so big and looked like a wolf, which made Shunzi a bit uneasy, but he still followed along.

Gu Youyou led him to the vegetable plot and said, "When these vegetables are ready, you take them home and eat them. We don't know when we'll be able to come back again, and it's a waste if no one eats them. If too many grow, they won't grow well."

It seemed that was just the nature of vegetables. Shunzi grinned and nodded his head.

Gu Youyou continued, "There are also medicinal herbs here. Once they've matured, you take them to Jisheng Hall. Doctor Qin, who handles the medicines, will pay you for your labor."

Shunzi's face changed and he hastily shook his head, "No, no, how could I take payment for my labor? These herbs are originally Sister Youyou's. Once they are ready, I'll just harvest and deliver them to Jisheng Hall."

This sincere honesty. Gu Youyou said helplessly, "I heard you're going to marry our Erya?"

Chapter 298 Vigilance

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Shunzi was momentarily stunned, then chuckled and said, "Yes, big sister!"

He wasn't stupid; his words were quite sweet.

"If you want your wife to live a good life, you have to earn more money. You won't go wrong listening to your sister, the gratuity must be taken."

Shunzi felt a little embarrassed.

Gu Youyou stopped paying attention to him and pointed to a pile of red chili peppers that were almost dry, saying, "This is a precious medicinal herb. After we harvest and dry them, we'll take them to Jisheng Hall. Keep some seeds to plant next year, and I'll give you a gratuity for that as well."

Gu Youyou knew that she wouldn't have many chances to come back and grow them herself in the future, so she thought it would be good for Shunzi to plant them.

Shunzi was honest and one of the few friends Jin Zijin had in Lotus Village. He had helped her a lot in the past, so she was willing to help him as much as she could.

Chili peppers hadn't become widespread yet, which made them a lucrative business.

Although Shunzi didn't understand how these peppers had become a precious medicinal herb, if Sister Youyou said it was so, then it must be true. After all, she was a doctor at Jisheng Hall.

He gave a simple smile and expressed his thanks.

Shunzi hoisted his hoe and loosened the soil, while Gu Youyou watched from the side.

After he was done, he asked again, "Sister Youyou, when will you go back to town? I'm about to make a trip there; do you want to go together?"

Her two uncles had both invited her to lunch, so she wasn't in a hurry to go back. She replied, "You go ahead, I'm not in a rush. I'll go back after noon."

Shunzi didn't mind and nodded, "Then I'll head back first."

"Mm, go ahead!"

Just then, Gu Youyou suddenly thought of something and called out to Shunzi.

"Wait, Shunzi."

"Sister Youyou, is there anything else?" Shunzi stopped and turned around.

Gu Youyou said, "When you go to town, drop by Yangliu Lane in the western part and find Jin Zijin. Tell him I won’t come back for lunch and not to wait for me."

People from farming families didn’t eat lunch, but those in town did. He didn’t think much of it and nodded in agreement.

Ah, so Brother Jin and his family had moved there. He was only now finding out.

...

The lunch was sumptuous, with two large pieces of meat prepared in three different dishes: one bowl of half-fat, half-lean braised pork, one bowl of lean meat stir-fried with green onions, and one bowl turned into meatballs.

There were also dishes such as lotus root with greens, all very richly made, comparable to a New Year’s feast.

The younger brothers and sisters were overjoyed, impatiently waiting to eat.

Without their grandmother scolding them, they ate boldly and contentedly, until Huang Xiangwen couldn’t stand it anymore and scolded the children with a frown.

"Eat more, Youyou."

"Youyou, have some of this."

"Ghost sister, drink the meat soup!"

The Gu Family was unusually kind to Gu Youyou; her bowl was almost overflowing.

Gu Feng sat at the head of the table, his eyes slightly narrowed.

What trick were they pulling this time?

Gu Er, the second oldest, glared at Gu San, the third oldest, and whispered fiercely, "You're everywhere I am. What I do, you do. Are you purposely going against us, or what?"

He used "us," not "I." Gu Youyou saw that Huang Xiangwen had a similar expression to Gu Er.

So it appeared that this couple had discussed their plans and were in agreement—they both knew about it.

Looking at Gu San, he was busily ingratiating himself with Gu Youyou, while Meng Qiuju looked clueless, which indicated that this was Gu San's own idea, and Qiuju didn't know a thing.

"Second brother is just kidding. If Youyou is your niece, she's my niece too. What? Are you allowed to be good to her but I'm not?"

The other members of the Gu Family also found it strange, but it wasn't their place to speak, so they all kept quiet.

Gu Youyou ate her meal with trepidation, but she wasn't foolish. When her second uncle invited her to sit down, she moved to another seat to prevent anything wrong with her utensils. Eventually, it was Sanya who sat there.

Chapter 299 Related to You

Seeing no objections on his face, perhaps the problem wasn’t with this meal.

It was best to think it was simply an overthought.

At the table, she observed all food and drink meticulously, only eating after others did.

These two uncles were too strange; it was unclear if one of them was the problem or if both were, or if it was merely a coincidence.

During the meal, on the surface everyone was happy and the family was harmonious, but who knew what each was thinking in secret.

After lunch, Gu Youyou left with Abao.

Initially, she planned to head straight to the medical hall that afternoon, but on the way, she encountered Jin Zijin, who looked hurried and somewhat anxious.

It seemed the message sent by Shunzi had reached him.

His insights were so penetrating, staying for the meal at the Gu Family, it was inevitable he would think of other things.

"Are you alright?" Jin Zijin asked.

Gu Youyou felt there was something wrong with her two uncles, yet she hadn’t found anything amiss during the meal, as if she was just overthinking, but she trusted herself, it wasn’t possible that she was.

She frowned slightly, nodding and said, "Second Uncle and Third Uncle seem to want to reconcile with me, they even bought meat to treat me."

"Then why do you look so troubled?"

Gu Youyou replied indifferently, "You're asking what you already know."

The two of them really were...

"Alright, enough nonsense, what do you think their intentions are?" Gu Youyou asked.

Jin Zijin narrowed his eyes and took on a serious tone, saying, "It's hard to say, aren't you going back tomorrow? I'll accompany you."

...

Together with Gu Youyou and Abao, Jin Zijin returned home. Before even entering the door, they encountered Yue Rujing rushing out.

Seeing the scene, he immediately complained, "Neither of you were at home, I thought something had happened, it scared me to death. And here you two are, strolling with the dog, making me worry."

Jin Zijin asked, "Weren't you at Jisheng Hall? How come you're back?"

Yue Rujing naturally wouldn't have returned without reason, his urgent manner must mean there was some issue.

Gu Youyou knew that their matter was not something they wanted her to know, so she took Abao and headed into the courtyard, saying politely, "I'll go inside first, you two chat."

"Hey!" Jin Zijin stopped her, saying, "Let's listen together!"

Gu Youyou was slightly startled, looking at him with some astonishment.

Listen together? What if Yue Rujing was about to discuss something not meant for her ears?

Her gaze shifted to Yue Rujing.

With a helpless and bitter smile, Yue Rujing said, "Since the older brother has spoken, just stay."

It sounded like charity? If it was going to be difficult, it didn't matter—Gu Youyou snorted, a bit annoyed, "I don't have time."

She could hear them from inside anyway, why make such a fuss.

The elder brother had said, no matter whose side Gu Youyou was on, they should strive to win her over to their side. If they were still guarded against her in front of her, then there was no chance of winning her over. It wasn't something secretive; Yue Rujing felt there was no need to avoid her.

Yue Rujing blocked her path, giving a smile and said, "Gu Manager, this is about you, you should listen."

It concerned her?

Well, alright then.

Gu Youyou glared at him with annoyance, crossing her arms over her chest and tilting her chin up arrogantly.

She couldn't lose her presence, especially in front of Yue Rujing, lest he think she was easy to bully.

Lest they always be suspicious of her.

Yue Rujing’s expression turned solemn, he glanced at Gu Youyou, then at Jin Zijin and said, "That grandson indeed settled in the inn and even sent out a letter, but my people intercepted it."

Yue Rujing handed a letter to Jin Zijin, who took it, looked it over, and then passed it to Gu Youyou.

Chapter 300: Delivering the Letter

Gu Youyou briefly looked over it before returning it to Yue Rujing.

The "grandson" he mentioned was Zhuo Qing, who had come to visit Jin Zijin this morning. The content of the letter was generally about how he was under Jin Zijin’s control, powerless to fight back, and requesting reinforcements.

Jin Zijin said indifferently, "What do you think, if this letter reached Beijing, who would be the next person to come?"

Yue Rujing chuckled, "Who cares who it is, the letter wasn’t sent out anyway. If he tries to send it again, I’ll intercept it again. Since he’s decided to drag this out with us, I have ways to make him stick around Qingshui Town as a deaf mute. In any case, he won’t be able to send his message out, and no outside messages will get in either."

Gu Youyou smiled, this was the drawback of not having communication equipment. Suddenly thinking of something, she looked at Yue Rujing in surprise.

She had always thought Yue Rujing was just a pretty face without much use, like a decorative pillow, but unexpectedly, he did have some abilities.

Qingshui Town was not very large, but not very small either. To intercept someone’s messages, in those days, letters were personally escorted, and delivering a message did not necessarily depend on letters, so that meant... Qingshui Town was already under his control?

Yue Rujing was confident, even appearing to savor the misfortune of others. Jin Zijin, however, was not much relaxed and merely said flatly, "Ajing, do not be negligent or careless."

Yue Rujing laughed, "Brother, rest assured, that ’grandson’s’ every move is under my watch. He couldn’t turn the heavens upside down if he tried."

It was still early in the day, and Gu Youyou went with Yue Rujing to Jisheng Hall. Jin Zijin sat in a chair, rhythmically tapping the armrest with his hand.

"Zhuo Qing!" he called out softly.

He didn’t know much about Zhuo Qing but he knew he was Xuanzong’s headman and a disciple of the current State Preceptor.

It seemed he needed someone to look into this.

Ajing... Since they were in Beijing, sending Ajing’s people temporarily would not be suitable, so should he seek out him?

About traditional Chinese medicine, the notes left behind by Doctor Zhou were very good, and Gu Youyou wrote down some things that didn’t exist in this era in her spare time.

They had managed to set up an operating room, which should be put to some use. Although they couldn’t perform major surgery, minor ones were still feasible.

What she wrote about were common knowledge issues such as anesthesia, disinfection, hemostasis, and nursing. As for the rest, it would depend on the doctors’ skills with the scalpel.

Gu Youyou liked to wear a white cloth over her mouth and nose when diagnosing patients and had Qin Changlin wear one too.

He always regarded Sister Youyou’s words as a decree from the heavens and, although he didn’t quite understand, he always complied.

It was probably going to rain soon, for the weather today was unusually hot and muggy, making the white strip tied over the mouth and nose extremely uncomfortable. Qin Changlin couldn’t help but take it off.

But as soon as he did, Gu Youyou caught him red-handed.

"Qin Changlin, what are you doing? Keep your mask on. There are so many infectious diseases around right now, are you trying to get killed?"

Qin Changlin shivered with fright. He had just steadied his breathing when Sister Youyou, who was omnipresent, caught him.

Actually, occasionally not wearing a mask was not a big deal, but Gu Youyou hoped he would develop the habit. What if he was unlucky and the patient sitting opposite him had a highly contagious disease?

They say when you’re unlucky, even drinking cold water might cause a toothache - it was hard to say.

But the patient sitting opposite Qin Changlin was offended by her remarks, huffing, "Doctor Gu, what do you mean by that? You haven’t even taken my pulse yet, and you’re saying I have an infectious disease?"

"Of course I’m not talking about you. As you said, I haven’t even taken your pulse. Qin Changlin, wear your mask and take Uncle Wang’s pulse."