Farmhouse 351

Chapter 351: Jin Ziyuan

The nearby mountains were abundant with herbs, even more so than Gu Youyou had imagined. It was fortunate she had the artisans who were repairing the house create a cart as well; otherwise, the scrawny girls, she and Banxia, wouldn't have been able to bring back so many medicinal herbs.

Banxia's family had been dealing with herbs for generations, and she knew the prices of various herbs like the back of her hand. When it came to bargaining, she lacked her usual shyness and was decisively clear-cut.

Gu Youyou felt like she had stumbled upon a treasure; a monthly wage of five taels of silver was completely reasonable.

"Since there's so much to collect, let's split up. You head to the south end of the village, and I'll go to the north end. We'll meet up under this big mulberry tree later."

"Alright, Sister Youyou, don't pick too much. We won't be able to fit everything in the cart."

"Yeah, I know!"

Indeed, buying directly from the local herb gatherers was much cheaper than in the city's herb shops, although it was a bit more troublesome.

"Miss, I have quite a bit of schisandra berries here, are you interested in buying?"

Upon suddenly hearing the voice behind her, Gu Youyou instantly tensed up.

Only one person could stand so silently behind her without her detection.

She whirled around abruptly and saw a plainly dressed man with porcelain-white skin.

He stood there quietly, like glazed porcelain shining with a faint glow in the dark night.

Gu Youyou quickly looked around; no one was in sight. She pulled him behind a clay house and asked in a low voice, "Why are you here? When did you arrive?"

Jin Ziyuan pursed his lips and said, "I arrived the day before yesterday, looking for some things."

Gu Youyou couldn’t help but roll her eyes; it was just too much of a coincidence. Of all times to come, he just had to come now.

Why look for things here of all places, in Lingnan?

Didn’t he know Jin Zijin was here? Didn’t he know Lingnan was Yue Rujing’s territory? They were searching for him everywhere.

"You’d better leave quickly, and come back for your things later."

"Why?" Jin Ziyuan asked.

Gu Youyou said hastily, "We’ve also only arrived here not long ago. Jin Zijin and Yue Rujing are looking for you everywhere, don’t you know?"

"I do know," Jin Ziyuan said.

His eyelashes quivered, and beneath the long, pitch-black lashes, his complexion appeared even more translucently pale.

It was just great; she had gotten quite tanned since leaving the dark room while he remained so pale.

Gu Youyou collected her thoughts and said in displeasure, "Knowing that, you still came?"

"It’s something very important I’m looking for," he said with a stubborn tone.

Well, after all, it was his life to gamble with.

Gu Youyou felt annoyed, but she was always reluctant to see accidents befall someone who, like herself, was a fellow herbalist.

In the future, when all the herbalists gathered, wouldn’t they have to confront the State Preceptor together?

It would be a pity if, before seeing the State Preceptor, he met his end at the hands of Jin Zijin.

Her expression darkened, and she asked, "How important is it, is it even more important than the Youying Pearl?"

Jin Ziyuan was startled, his gentle expression turning cold.

"How do you know about the Youying Pearl?" he then seemed to remember something and said with self-mockery, "Did he tell you?"

Gu Youyou said, "That’s right, he told me. The Youying Pearl is with you, isn’t it?"

"With me?" Jin Ziyuan seemed surprised, then observed Gu Youyou who was completely unaware, and suddenly laughed, saying, "Yes, it’s with me."

Gu Youyou consoled him, "I know it’s important, and if I asked you to hand it over, you’d definitely refuse. How about this, you keep looking for the important items, and if you’re unlucky enough to get caught by them, then you can just give them the Youying Pearl. Even the finest items are merely possessions; it’s staying alive that gives you hope, right?"

Chapter 352: We Have No Relationship

"No!" Jin Ziyuan didn’t even think before blurting out two words.

"You..." Gu Youyou suddenly felt at a loss for words, "Geez, you're the classic case of preferring wealth over life. I tried to comfort you precisely because we're in the same boat, and yet here you are, stubborn as a mule that won't turn a corner."

She laughed in spite of her annoyance, nodding before she added, "No wonder, really. You'd rather hide in a grave for over a decade. I used to think you had it rough, but now I see you brought it on yourself."

Faced with Gu Youyou's mockery, Jin Ziyuan found it both amusing and pitiable.

After a long silence, he finally said, "Do you think the Youying Pearl is something you can just hand over if you feel like it? You'd better learn more about it before you speak."

"What do you mean?" Gu Youyou felt that there was something off about his words.

Jin Ziyuan merely scoffed, offering no explanation.

That scoff, and his deep eyes, reminded Gu Youyou uncomfortably of Jin Zijin, which inevitably brought their identities to mind.

She thought for a moment, then asked again, "Your names are almost the same, and you look... somewhat alike. You wouldn't happen to be brothers, right?"

"How could that be?" exclaimed Jin Ziyuan in surprise. "How could I look anything like that rough country bumpkin? Are you seeing things? There are plenty of people with the surname Jin in Zhuzhao Country, and besides, Ziyuan is my courtesy name; my actual name is Jin Yi."

He looked somewhat enraged, and even his normally gentle features seemed fierce and intimidating.

Gu Youyou had originally thought they were family, but she hadn't expected such a strong reaction from him.

Could she really have been mistaken?

No, that wasn’t right—Gu Youyou suddenly thought of something.

"You’re wrong. He is not some rough and coarse man. That unkempt beard you saw on him last time on the mountain was fake..."

Realizing she might have said too much, Gu Youyou abruptly covered her mouth.

Jin Ziyuan’s gaze darkened even further.

Internally, Gu Youyou couldn’t help but wonder, what’s all this about? Why make things so complicated?

She covertly observed Jin Ziyuan’s reaction, deciding she would have to probe Jin Zijin once she got back.

She wondered if both of them were being kept in the dark, or if it was just Jin Ziyuan who hadn’t recognized Jin Zijin.

Several melodramatic plots sprouted in Gu Youyou’s mind, but the most sensational—and what she thought most likely—was that these two were actually brothers separated by a villain. Both became orphans, with Jin Zijin somehow ending up adopted by the Tianzong Sect Leader of the Dao Family, turning into the renowned and powerful eldest disciple of Tianzong.

Meanwhile, his poor brother ended up in the hands of Xuanzong because he was born a pure Yin male and was successfully turned into a medicine man by Xuanzong, placed behind Lotus Village on the mountain.

And the most brutal twist: someone poisoned the elder brother, who would need the Youying Pearl from his brother’s body for the antidote, and then spread clues for the elder brother to go and rob the Youying Pearl.

Goodness, such bloody drama. If it were true, it would be incredibly cruel.

While Jin Ziyuan seemed to be lost in thought, Gu Youyou was considering the sensational scenarios when he suddenly fell silent for a long while.

Gu Youyou looked at him worriedly, gently trying to get his attention, "Jin Ziyuan!"

He didn’t respond.

"Jin Yi?"

Only then did Jin Ziyuan come back to his senses and said, "Don’t worry, he will not turn out to be my brother. My parents only had me as their son, and moreover... the person he killed up in those mountains was my biological father."

"Ah...?"

This last sentence was undoubtedly a bombshell.

So that would mean...

Jin Ziyuan gave a bitter smile and said, "I know what you’re thinking, but it’s impossible for me to work with him, because he is the man who killed my father."

Now things were truly awkward. Gu Youyou shrank back instinctively, stepping away without meaning to, not wanting to be too close to him.

Chapter 353: Opening

Jin Ziyuan noticed Gu Youyou’s intention and said, "Don’t worry, he is him, and you are you, I won’t take revenge on the innocent."

Hehe...

Other than a bitter smile, Gu Youyou truly couldn't do anything.

Originally, she had thought that since they shared a common enemy, the State Preceptor of Zhuzhao Country, as long as Jin Ziyuan was willing to take out the Youying Pearl and cure Jin Zijin of the poison, they might even become friends, and then confront the State Preceptor together.

She hadn't expected that there would be the vendetta of a son for his slain father between them.

And that wild man uncle, he really was Jin Ziyuan's father.

She wondered what feelings a father harbored as he, day after day, year after year, personally administered poison to his own son.

But Gu Youyou knew that the wild man uncle truly loved his son; he cleaned him up meticulously, and the loving gaze in his eyes when he looked at him couldn't be faked.

...

Having everything prepared, Jisheng Hall could open tomorrow.

On September twenty-third, it was propitious for opening businesses and moving into homes, but sacrifices to the earth and thanking the gods were to be avoided.

Jisheng Hall in Lingnan finally opened. Gu Youyou had only managed to recruit one attendant for now, preferring quality over quantity. She wasn't in a rush; it was fine to start the business like this.

Even though they had no foundations in Lingnan, because the house was situated in a premium triangular location, it still attracted quite a few neighbors looking on curiously.

In addition to the sign over the door, another sign was erected and also covered with red cloth.

The onlookers were abuzz.

"What kind of shop is this?"

"I heard it’s a medical clinic, opened by two outsiders. The doctor who will be consulting is a woman."

The crowd was surprised, "A woman practicing medicine? Can she be trusted?"

Someone laughed, "If you don’t trust her, then don’t go to her for treatment, right? An outsider with no reputation at all, this is just fooling around. I tell you, it’ll open today and close within a month. They really think they’re Divine Doctors or something, an outsider and a woman at that, daring to open a clinic in Lingnan City."

Gu Youyou’s ears were sharp, and naturally every word fell clearly into them. She just smiled and busied herself with the opening arrangements.

"Ay, look, there isn’t even a single person here to celebrate, just opening quietly like this?"

"They are outsiders, and they don’t have acquaintances here, naturally, there’s no one to celebrate."

"Then they really don’t understand the ways of the world too much, even if they are outsiders, they could still get to know their neighbors better, right? If you get familiar, wouldn’t people come to patronize the business?"

"Are you dumb? They are opening a medical clinic, even with familiarity they can’t possibly come to support the business for the sake of it."

"Even if they had a few people come to drink a cup of tea, that would still be better than being so desolate."

Just then, an inconspicuous servant appeared with a rather large box. The wrapping clearly indicated that it was a congratulatory gift.

"Oh, someone is actually sending a congratulatory gift!"

"How come they only sent a servant over?"

Upon seeing Gu Youyou, the servant said in a hurry, "Doctor Gu, this is a congratulatory gift from our Madam. Madam originally intended to come in person, but unfortunately, she caught a bit of a chill last night and couldn't make it, so she sent me to deliver this gift."

Gu Youyou received it with a smile, "Thank you, young man. Please give my regards to Madam and wish her a swift recovery."

Did Gu Youyou not understand these subtle gestures? It seemed they had already thoroughly investigated her ancestry and realized that she was indeed just a country girl from a village, not worth making connections with.

The gift was sent only out of consideration for Jin Zijin's face; after all, Jin Zijin was Yue Rujing's senior fellow disciple.

Chapter 354: Offering Medical Services Altruistically, Free Consultations?

Gu Youyou couldn't be happier, for her small temple could hardly accommodate the grand Buddha that is the Madam of Lingnan.

On the other hand, Yue Ruxue was still indignantly unresigned.

"Grandmother, are we really not going? That country girl is opening her clinic today, and I just want to see how she, a mere country girl, can establish herself in Lingnan City."

The Marchioness replied irritably, "Axue, you just want to see her embarrass herself, don't you? She's an outsider, and on her first day, it's bound to be quiet and deserted. Is there even a need to look?"

"Mother, if it’s quiet and deserted, that’s even better. I just want to go have a look!"

"You!" The Marchioness extended her slim jade-like finger and tapped Yue Ruxue’s forehead lightly, saying, "How on earth are you going to manage when you’re married with that foolishness of yours? Do you truly not understand your grandmother’s intentions?"

The old Madam glanced at Yue Ruxue, then sighed, "This foolish girl, truly worrying this old woman to death."

One by one they called her a fool, and Yue Ruxue pouted, feeling wronged.

On the other side, Yue Rushuang explained with a smile, "Younger sister, Grandmother and Mother don’t want us to go, and they have their thoughtful reasons. Think about it, that Gu Youyou originally had no reputation in Lingnan City, but if we go, then she will be connected to our Marquis Residence.

With just the reputation of our Marquis Residence, her fame would rise overnight, wouldn’t it? By doing so, we wouldn’t be vexing her, but helping her!"

The old Madam nodded in satisfaction while looking at Yue Rushuang and said, "Ashuang is indeed more astute. Axue, I know you’re upset and want to humiliate her, but what if you publicly shame her? At most, people will consider your quarrel child’s play. Becoming embroiled in an argument with the Marquis Residence’s young lady would only further prove her unusual relationship with our residence. You, rather than looking for trouble now, why not wait a few days? Let her think that her clinic can’t keep running, and then humiliate her. Wouldn’t that be even more satisfying?"

After hearing the old Madam’s explanation, Yue Ruxue happily agreed.

"Fine, we’ll wait a few days."

Meanwhile, the Marchioness looked at Yue Rushuang’s expression as if she wanted to skin her alive.

Angry at her own daughter’s lack of ambition, and at this illegitimate daughter for always stealing the limelight.

"Today, the opening of Jisheng Hall's Lingnan branch, for the first month of opening, abides by the healer's spirit of helping the world without charge — free medical consultations!"

Gu Youyou pulled down the red cloth covering the plaque of Jisheng Hall and then unveiled the red cloth on the vertical plaque next to it as well.

The crowd of onlookers was substantial, and upon seeing the words on the plaque clearly, their surprise was immeasurable.

"Helping the world without charge, free medical consultations?"

Free medical consultations meant that seeing a doctor required no silver!

Whispers in the crowd turned into an uproar.

Everyone was stunned by the four words 'free medical consultations'.

A bold person asked, "Free medical consultations, does Jisheng Hall really provide treatment with no need for silver?"

Banxia knew that Gu Youyou had a sign stored inside the house, covered up tightly, but had no idea it was inscribed with 'free medical consultations'.

She looked at Gu Youyou with astonishment, completely unable to understand why she would do such a thing.

Gu Youyou smiled and responded to the inquiring crowd, "Indeed, for the first month of opening, there will be free medical consultations. Not only for this opening month, but from now on, the first three days of every month will be free of charge. Additionally, Jisheng Hall will occasionally hold public welfare activities for free medical consultations. For instance, during the prevalent season for colds, we will offer more free consultations and provide free preventative medicine for colds. Moreover, for families with

difficulties and for patients who struggle with medical expenses, we will appropriately reduce medical costs, ensuring that whether rich or poor, no one will worry about receiving treatment."

Chapter 355: The First Patient

Gu Youyou’s words echoed through the crowd, bringing a mix of reactions.

Those who didn’t believe her looked at her as if she were some kind of freak, thinking she was joking.

"A doctor offering free consultations? Wouldn’t that be a loss? And to offer free consultations three days a month, as well as at unscheduled times, not to mention providing medicine for free? Even the long-established medical halls in Lingnan have never done such a thing. As a newcomer, are you not afraid that the wind might blow your tongue away?"

But for those who believed her, there was an overwhelming sense of joy, and they couldn’t wait to give it a try.

A young man timidly approached and asked, "Doctor, is the treatment really free?"

Gu Youyou tapped the sign that read "Dedicated to healing the world, consultations without charge," and said, "Of course it’s really free, or else you can smash this sign."

The young man immediately perked up and said, "Doctor, please take a look at me. The night before last, I was traveling and got caught in the rain, and now I’m sneezing and have a runny nose. I wasn’t planning to see a doctor, figured I’d just tough it out, but since it’s free here, I thought I’d give it a try."

"Of course, come in!" Gu Youyou stepped back to the consultation desk, donned a blue coat, and put on a mask. Then, placing a small pillow-like cushion on the table, she motioned for the young man to stretch out his hand.

The onlooking crowd craned their necks, having never before witnessed such a method of treatment, and thus, the murmuring began.

"Why is she putting on another layer of clothing? Isn’t she hot?"

"Yeah, and she’s covering her face too. What does that mean?"

Someone who fancied themselves in the know said, "After all, she is a woman. It’s not good for her to show her face; it’s much better for her to cover it."

The crowd nodded in sudden understanding.

"Right, and that loose gown is also to conceal her graceful figure."

...Each assumption was a further distortion of the truth.

"Can she really practice as a woman?"

"Oh my, look, she’s touching that young man’s hand. It’s said that her husband is right there beside her, and he can actually watch as his wife touches another man’s hand."

"She’s dedicated to healing the world, and a healer must be compassionate. You’re making senseless noise. She might stop offering free consultations at any moment."

Gu Youyou simply smiled in response to these comments.

Changing people’s mindset isn’t something that happens overnight. Being a female doctor was something she couldn’t change. What she could change, however, was proving through her own abilities that women were no less capable than men.

After examining the young man’s condition, Gu Youyou took up a fine brush and wrote a sequence of beautiful small characters.

This was to make it easier for others to read.

"Doctor, is my condition serious?"

After finishing the prescription, Gu Youyou said, "It’s nothing serious; your cold is not severe. If you want to get better quickly, take this prescription to get the medicine, and take it three times a day immediately. If you don’t want to get the medicine, just keep warm when you go back, and drink plenty of hot water. Young people have strong constitutions; you can recover without medication."

The young man looked surprised and said, "I have a cold, but I don’t need medication, just need to keep warm and drink more hot water to recover?"

Gu Youyou replied, "Your case is a mild cold, so you indeed can recover well. But if it is not controlled properly and becomes serious, you will need to get the medicine."

The young man looked doubtful and said oddly, "Then I’ll follow the doctor’s advice, go home, put on some extra clothes, and drink more water."

Gu Youyou nodded, "That’s right."

He pocketed the prescription Gu Youyou had written, thanked her, and left.

Outside, the curious spectators hurried to grab the young man and asked, "How was it, can she heal?"

The young man had a complex look on his face as he replied, "It’s hard to say."

"Hard to say? What do you mean?"

Chapter 356: I’ve Been Learning My Skills for a Long Time

He spoke with some difficulty, "This female doctor said that my illness does not require medication, just drinking more water will cure it."

"What?" The crowd began to stir, their gazes shifting toward Gu Youyou with strange expressions.

"Hey! Thought we’d found a good doctor, turns out she’s a fraud."

"Exactly, who gets cured without medicine? If water could heal, why would anyone open a medical clinic? Patients would just stay home and drink water."

In the tea house opposite, several elders sipped their tea and chuckled.

"Thought we had a formidable competitor here, but it's just a naive little girl. Water can cure, huh, you should drink more."

Another person laughed loudly, saying, "I'm not sick, you drink more!"

All these voices reached Gu Youyou's ears, yet she merely smiled faintly and said nothing.

At dusk, Jisheng Hall closed its doors, and Gu Youyou seemed quite pleased, whereas Banxia had a look of worry on her face.

She wanted to say something, but remembering she was just a little helper, she didn't say a word. Instead, she went to the backyard to boil water with a heavy sigh.

Jin Zijin also wore a grave expression, seeing as Jisheng Hall had only one patient on their opening day. They didn't charge them and even after treatment, the patient dismissed them that way, resulting in no one coming for free consultations anymore.

A few days prior, Gu Youyou had brought home a sign in secrecy, calling it their winning trump card. She showed it to no one, and it turned out to be nothing but a sign offering free medical consultations, which greatly disappointed him.

Using the allure of 'free' is good, but free doesn't necessarily mean valuable.

Free advantages in other tangible things might be fine, like if it were free steamed buns, many would happily come to try. But free medical consultation? Who would joke with their own health?

"Youyou!" Jin Zijin didn't really want to discourage her and struggled for a long time before finding some gentle words to comfort her: "I know you have excellent medical skills, but it is indeed hard for a woman to practice medicine. I still have some personal savings; we aren't short on silver. Perhaps we should close the clinic."

Gu Youyou wasn't upset upon hearing this; she just smiled lightly and said, "How can I abandon my undertaking halfway? Now that Jisheng Hall has opened, I will not disgrace its name and will continue to operate it."

Continue to operate? But if no one seeks treatment, how can it remain open?

"Those from the Marquis Residence are waiting to see you fail, you really are..."

"I know they want to see me make a fool of myself, but I can prove with my ability that they won't see that happen. The illnesses other doctors can cure, I can cure; the illnesses they can't, I can also cure. What I rely on is nothing but my own skill, the result of many years of study. I cannot let these abilities go to waste, otherwise my masters would know and curse me to death."

Jin Zijin was taken aback by Gu Youyou's determination and also noticed the other things she had said – many years of study, masters.

"Your medical skills and handwriting... weren't acquired overnight, were they?"

"Indeed!" Gu Youyou made no attempt to conceal it, saying, "I've told you the story of the 'Yellow Millet Dream' before, I wonder how much of it you believed?"

Jin Zijin said nothing, fixing his gaze on her intently.

Gu Youyou smiled faintly, "Even if you do not believe a single word, what has happened to me can only be explained this way."

Recalling the past, her tone became somewhat melancholic, "I began practicing that handwriting at the age of six, and achieved some proficiency at fifteen. It wasn't that I was too slow, mainly because there

was so much I had to learn, and the time I could spend on handwriting was limited. As for medicine, I've been exposed to traditional Chinese medicine since I can remember – it's my family heritage. I formally started learning Western medicine at eighteen, studying far away for four years."

Chapter 357: If You Don't Leave Me, I Won't Leave You

The things she spoke of could certainly not be found in Gu Youyou; she was still so young. He thought, indeed, she was not Gu Youyou.

Jin Zijin's expression was obscured in darkness, ambiguous to the observer.

"What is... traditional Chinese medicine, what is Western medicine?" With too many questions to ask, Jin Zijin chose this unfamiliar term.

Gu Youyou said, "The Qihuang Technique that we talk about is traditional Chinese medicine. The theory based on empirical evidence that I talked about last time to Yue Rujing is Western medicine."

He remembered the way Gu Youyou treated Yuancheng's illness and, after some time, heard Jin Zijin mutter, "So it really is possible to treat illnesses that way."

Looking back at her, even though her appearance hadn't changed at all, Jin Zijin felt like he was seeing through her, as if he were seeing another person—someone both familiar and foreign.

"Youyou!" Jin Zijin felt a sudden tightness in his heart because for an instant he felt she was so distant, as if she came from another world.

"Will you always stay here?"

He did not know why he suddenly asked such an irrelevant question. Perhaps it was because, for a moment, he felt she was very distant.

Gu Youyou said, "I have nowhere else to go, I will go wherever you go. Haven't we agreed on that?"

At least that was how it was for now, unless he decided to abandon her. Otherwise, she really would have to keep following him.

If you do not abandon me, I will not leave.

Gu Youyou spoke to him casually, as they usually chatted. Hearing her words, Jin Zijin abruptly relaxed.

He curled his lips into a smile, his smile gradually spreading, instantly warming the entire room.

"Alright, I won't ask who you are or where you come from anymore. I believe in your 'delusion'; from today onwards, you are just you, unrelated to your name or identity."

Gu Youyou was stunned and stared straight at him.

Jin Zijin waited with a warm smile for her response.

As time ticked away, Gu Youyou didn't realize how long she had been in a daze until Banxia came out from the back courtyard, carrying a hot water basin with grace.

"Sister Youyou, you've been tired all day; take a wash to refresh yourself."

Gu Youyou gave Banxia five taels of silver a month, an opportunity that couldn't be found elsewhere, even the maids in wealthy households weren't worth that much.

So she felt she should be more diligent, do more work, to earn those five taels of silver.

Gu Youyou blinked her eyes, gradually coming back to her senses.

She had finally melted the heart of that extremely guarded man; she was finally able to occupy a place in his heart, and he was finally willing to trust her.

She said in a low voice, "My name is Gu Youyou." Then, she added, "I’m not lying to you."

Unknowingly, a blush crept onto her face, her words soft and gentle, like feathers brushing over his entire body.

Banxia tactfully placed the water down and retreated, returning to her own room in the back courtyard.

She had never been alone with a man, and the interaction between Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin instinctively made her feel embarrassed.

After Gu Youyou washed up, she then said to Jin Zijin, "You should wash up too; Banxia must have heated a lot of water."

"Mhm, you go up to rest first. There’ll be a lot to do tomorrow."

Tonight was destined to be an extraordinary night, although there had only been one patient for the grand opening, the onlookers had been numerous. They sneered or jeered or intentionally asked questions to embarrass her, but throughout it all, she faced it alone, always with a smiling face.

It was quite exhausting, but she just couldn’t sleep.

Chapter 358: Ignition

It wasn’t long before Jin Zijin’s footsteps could be heard coming up the stairs, he had arrived.

Gu Youyou was somewhat nervous, lying on the innermost side of the bed, wearing thin underclothes, and feigning sleep with her eyes closed.

Just like always, he lifted the covers and lay down beside her, nothing more than a hug, with no further advances.

Thus, the two of them awkwardly, stiffly maintained that position for quite a while.

In the end, it was Gu Youyou who couldn’t bear it any longer and turned over to face him.

Her eyes wide open and, borrowing the moonlight, they were exceptionally bright.

"Aren’t you sleeping yet?" Jin Zijin asked.

"Why aren’t you sleeping?" Gu Youyou retorted.

Jin Zijin was caught off guard by her question, feeling like her clear eyes were about to suck him in, making him feel uneasy all over.

He had to close his eyes to avoid looking at her.

He said, "I will sleep now."

Gu Youyou snorted with laughter, clearly sensing his embarrassment.

She said, "I’m going to sleep too!"

With that, she directly pulled his arm to pillow under her neck, and with both hands reaching forward, she hugged his sturdy waist.

Jin Zijin got such a fright that he suddenly opened his eyes, and then looking down at her head bumping about, he didn’t know where to put his hands.

"You..."

Just as he was about to say something, she interrupted, "So it’s fine for you to hug me, but I’m not allowed to hug you? You’ve had your fill of clinging, it’s about time you gave some back."

Jin Zijin slightly furrowed his brows, feeling that there was a difference between him hugging her and her hugging him.

However, her taking the initiative didn’t seem to be a problem.

Just that...

"Can you sleep if you’re holding on this tightly?"

"What about you?" Gu Youyou asked back just the same.

"I..." Jin Zijin felt her soft body pressing against his own.

He didn’t think he could sleep like this, so he replied, "I can’t sleep."

Chapter 359: Do I Have to Teach This Too?

"Gu Youyou, I really want to chop off these restless hands of yours!" he said hoarsely.

The warm breath in the blanket became exceptionally ambiguous.

Gu Youyou chuckled, her light and shallow voice emerging from her cherry-red lips, "Don’t be in a hurry, there are many more restless places, you can chop them all off together."

Oh, where else? What else did she want to do?

Gu Youyou wrapped her arms around his waist, inching closer to him, her snowy face also drawing nearer. In the darkness, he seemed to see his own reflection growing larger in her pupils.

That annoyingly enticing smile on her lips, as if in mockery of him, yet seemed to be seducing him.

She really did it on purpose... who says she doesn’t understand, she understands too well.

Every move she made was exactly right.

"Are you deliberately trying to seduce me?" he asked.

He wanted to chop her, but where could he really chop her, it was better to bite her to death, he thought.

Seeing those lips sweet as cherries, he felt he had found an opening and couldn’t help but caress the back of her head, then fiercely bit down hard.

He felt she was doing it on purpose, tempting him to commit a crime, why would she think that way?

He felt women should be more reserved.

Gu Youyou groaned in pain, it really hurt, he was actually biting her.

Annoying, she had been busy for so long, and he actually couldn’t kiss.

She squirmed restlessly in his arms, pushing a little, until he felt her resistance and gradually eased his grip.

This truly was an unpleasant kiss, Gu Youyou turned her head aside, ending the kiss.

Now it was Jin Zijin’s turn to be astonished, and he asked, "Isn’t this what you wanted? Why are you dodging?"

So annoying, this Taoist! He’s really so chaste, he can’t even do this.

Gu Youyou glared at him, annoyed, "Haven’t eaten pork, haven’t seen pigs run, do I have to teach you this sort of thing too?"

I have to teach?

Heavens, those three words were like firecrackers, exploding in Jin Zijin’s mind with a buzzing sound.

Does a man like him need to be taught by her? He just felt the timing wasn’t right yet. And, he was a man deeply cultured in etiquette, treating illness was treating illness, never daring to step over the line.

But...

He suddenly thought of another question and looked at her in surprise.

She mysteriously knew so much, even about this?

Or was it, her so-called dreams, she actually... Upon this thought, he couldn’t stay calm anymore, once again fiercely covering her lips with his, carrying an angry, punishing intensity.

Gu Youyou, of course, had no idea about the convoluted thoughts in his mind, assuming that her words just now had wounded his pride, and he was eagerly seeking validation.

This petty man.

She had no choice but to respond to him tenderly.

Jin Zijin felt her tenderness on one hand, but on the other, it only added to the discomfort in his heart.

Thinking too much, the heat within him began to subside slowly.

Suddenly, he stopped moving, not responding at all to her fervor.

Gu Youyou finally felt that something was off and stopped too.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

Jin Zijin looked down at her, his eyes appearing to hide a mysterious sea of stars.

"I... have something to tell you," he said.

She thought, he's really annoying, is there anything that can't wait until later, why does he have to pick this time?

"What do you want to say?" she had to ask patiently.

It's not the first time, why is he being so awkward? He wasn't this awkward back in the mountain woods.

Chapter 360: Send Abao Over

Could it be that he really has some peculiar tastes? Did he truly need to wait until she fell asleep?

Gu Youyou felt this was a very serious question, which concerned lifelong happiness—it needed to be made clear before anything else.

"Tell me, if one person holds a grudge against another person's parents, does that mean they hold a grudge against that person as well?"

"Huh?" What a leap—how did we get there?

Gu Youyou thought his question twisted her brain, and she couldn't help but gather her fleeting thoughts to seriously consider it.

Seeing her confusion, Jin Zijin made his question even more straightforward: "If the other person's parents have already received their retribution, should they continue to hold a grudge against their offspring?"

His question was odd, but not without reason; Gu Youyou suddenly thought of Jin Ziyuan.

One person holds a grudge against another person's parents.

Their parents had already received retribution, meaning revenge had been taken. The question was whether to continue holding a grudge against the next generation.

Oh my, wasn't he talking about himself and Jin Ziyuan?

Jin Zijin had a feud with the wild man, Uncle, Jin Zijin's death led to the wild man's death, and he was asking whether he should continue to deal with the wild man's son, Jin Ziyuan?

Of course not.

Gu Youyou looked up at Jin Zijin, shook her head vehemently, and said, "One should be responsible for one's own actions; when will the cycle of vengeance end? Since the enemy has already faced retribution, their family members shouldn't be implicated. Otherwise, the hatred will be passed down from generation to generation, never ending."

Jin Zijin agreed with her. He nodded, having made up his mind.

He would reply to Qin Changlin tomorrow, allowing him to help if he could; after all, those two kids were still Gu Youyou's younger siblings.

"Um, that..."

"Time for bed."

Gu Youyou gritted her teeth and hammered him with a tirade, infuriated by his excessive behavior.

...

Early the next morning, Yue Rujing brought over Abao.

Abao had actually arrived in Lingnan several days ago. Yue Rujing unexcpetedly hadn’t delivered him directly to Gu Youyou, but instead took care of him for a few days—truly...

"Hey, don’t glare at me. I didn’t bring him over because I saw you were busy and didn’t want him to suffer. He’s had it so good with me; this little guy eats half a sheep a day. I don’t know how he fits it all in his belly."

Seeing Abao looking robust and imposing, Gu Youyou didn’t pursue the matter further.

On the other hand, Jin Zijin seemed less than pleased and said, "In that case, you should deliver half a sheep here every day."

"Why?" Yue Rujing blinked and asked.

"You’re the one who spoiled Abao’s appetite. I can’t afford to feed him half a sheep a day."

Yue Rujing: "... Big brother, you’re bullying me again."

He was actually doing it on purpose, wanting Gu Youyou’s quiet medical clinic to be unable to afford Abao.

"Also, you didn’t come yesterday, so you owe a congratulatory gift," Jin Zijin stated without a change of expression.

With an aggrieved tone, Yue Rujing said, "It’s not my fault. Grandmother locked me up."

Gu Youyou was stunned for a moment, then shook her head with a laugh.

The old lady was indeed afraid of her riding on the coattails of the Marquis Residence, but luckily, she had never thought of doing so.

"Big brother, starting from today, you should come with me to the military camp," Yue Rujing said.

"Oh?"

"My father mentioned it; you understand what he means."

Jin Zijin looked at Gu Youyou and added, "Maybe in a few days, Youyou still needs an apprentice."

Yue Rujing looked at Jin Zijin in surprise and said, "You’re going to be her apprentice?"

"I’m staying to help."

Gu Youyou had just taken Abao to the backyard to meet Banxia and had come out when she heard their conversation.

She quickly said, "You focus on your things; I don’t need that many people for the time being."