Farmhouse 361

Chapter 361: The Patient with a Hidden Illness

Yue Rujing said, "Exactly, she doesn't have even one patient, so she's sitting around doing nothing herself. Why does she need an apprentice?"

Jin Zijin always felt uneasy about Youyou facing everything alone.

Running a medical clinic was not easy. When there were no patients, it wasn't a matter of being too busy, but the mental pressure was something he didn't want her to bear alone.

He said, "Youyou is new here and not familiar with Lingnan City."

"Oh my goodness!" Yue Rujing made a peculiar face. "Since when did you become such a worrywart, Senior Brother? Even Miss Gu is more decisive than you. She's already said she doesn't need your help. If you're really that worried, I'll find her an apprentice."

Gu Youyou certainly didn't want Yue Rujing to find her an apprentice, and she responded angrily, "Go, go, go! All of you, leave! Who asked you to find an apprentice for me?"

She shooed Yue Rujing and Jin Zijin out like she was driving away flies.

The two of them would be better off staying in the military camp; that way, they wouldn't have time to bother Jin Ziyuan.

She just hoped he would find that important thing quickly and leave even quicker.

Uh, it seemed like she was a bit of a turncoat.

"Sister Youyou, who are you chasing away?" Banxia was busy in the backyard, and when she heard Gu Youyou's voice raised in the act of driving people away, she hurried out to see.

Gu Youyou said, "It’s nothing, just a beggar."

"..."

Banxia thought about how their clinic had not had any business yet, and it made sense to chase away beggars.

But wait, that didn’t seem right... She was sure she’d heard something about an apprentice.

Well, if beggars were coming to apply for the apprenticeship, they should definitely be chased away.

"Ah, I’ve prepared breakfast, where is Big Brother Jin?"

With this reminder from Banxia, Gu Youyou suddenly remembered that Jin Zijin hadn’t eaten yet and she had driven him away.

Ah! Never mind.

"Let’s eat. He has gone out for some business."

Today was the second day since Jisheng Hall opened, and it was still quiet and empty. From time to time, passersby pointed at the door and murmured to each other; whatever they said, it wasn’t nice.

Gu Youyou didn’t care at all and enjoyed the peace. She was teaching Banxia how to make some medicinal pills and ointments.

Banxia, however, had a worried look on her face.

"Sister Youyou, we haven’t had a single patient. What should we do?"

Gu Youyou laughed, "That’s good, it means the folks in Lingnan City are all in good health."

Banxia was speechless for a moment, unable to respond.

Did this have anything to do with whether the people of Lingnan City were healthy or not?

As the sunset deepened, the sky slowly darkened, and the streets became bustling with pedestrians. The lights of the night market also gradually lit up, and Jisheng Hall finally welcomed its first patient on the second day of opening.

It was a middle-aged woman with a cloth wrapped around her head. After entering the room, she took the head cloth off.

"Big Sister, what’s making you uncomfortable?"

Gu Youyou took the initiative to inquire.

The woman looked anxious and a bit embarrassed. After much hesitation, she finally lowered her voice and asked, "Do you really treat any kind of illness for free here?"

Gu Youyou pointed to the sign that Banxia was carrying into the room and said, "Of course, I mean what I say."

"That..." She seemed uneasy and uncomfortable, a look Gu Youyou was familiar with. It was the look of someone with an embarrassing secret illness.

Instead of pressuring her, Gu Youyou waited patiently for her to speak on her own.

She understood that mindset all too well; the more you rushed someone like that, the more embarrassed they’d become, and they might get scared off without saying anything.

"Don’t rush, please take a seat first, and take your time. When you’re ready, you can talk."

Gu Youyou directed the woman to a stool reserved for patients and signaled Banxia to bring over a cup of hot water.

Drinking warm water tends to help people relax when they’re feeling tense.

After taking a few sips of hot water, the woman started to speak.

Chapter 362: Unintentionally Planting Willows

"Ever since I gave birth to my youngest son, Kuishui has always been irregular, and... and very itchy. That area, it’s embarrassing to reach down and scratch. Since all the doctors are men, I was afraid to go see them, so I just endured it. I heard there was a female doctor who opened a clinic and doesn’t charge, so I decided to give it a try. Doctor, do you think my condition can be treated?"

Gynecological disease?

Gu Youyou raised her eyebrows, feeling sympathetic.

All right, the severe lack of female doctors in ancient times meant many women suffered from such embarrassing ailments without seeking help, often until death. If she truly became a gynecologist, it wouldn’t be a bad thing at all.

"Sister, come with me, I need to take a look."

"Ah, this... this..." the sister stood up, feeling utterly uncomfortable.

Gu Youyou could fully understand her discomfort; it was no surprise that she felt pressured given such conservative thoughts.

She said, "We’re all women, don’t be embarrassed. A woman needs to take good care of herself, and this is far less awkward than giving birth."

Hearing her say this, the woman had an epiphany. Indeed, having her take a look was much better than childbirth.

She wasn’t some sheltered young girl; what was there to be embarrassed about?

After examining her and taking her pulse, as well as asking some questions, Gu Youyou wrote her a prescription.

"Boil the water using this prescription and wash with it, morning and evening," she said, and then wrote another prescription, "This is to be taken orally, three times a day. If there’s no improvement within two days, come back to see me; if there is improvement, return in three days. You can get the medicine from my clinic or any other pharmacy."

The sister, unable to read, just remembered that she held the wash prescription in her left hand and the oral prescription in her right. She asked, "Will it be more expensive here than other places?"

Gu Youyou smiled, understanding her concern.

She was probably worried that although the consultation was free, the medicine might be overpriced, making the free consultation a joke.

Gu Youyou explained, "Each pharmacy has different sources for their stock, so there will be some price differences. I am only responsible for diagnosing and prescribing; the choice of where to get the medicine is up to the patient."

After pondering over the prescription for a while, the sister still felt it was better to get the medicine from Gu Youyou.

After all, it was a remedy for that kind of ailment.

"Alright, I’ll buy the medicine from you."

Hearing her say this, Banxia, the attendant, was overjoyed.

They had finally made a sale.

Banxia couldn’t read much, but she had memorized all the names of the medicinal ingredients; she might not recognize every character in a book, but she knew every name on the medicine cabinet.

Gu Youyou was quite confident in letting her dispense the medicine.

After the patient had left, it was time to close up.

After locking up, Banxia excitedly said to Gu Youyou, "Sister Youyou, I finally understand why you weren’t in a hurry. It turns out the patients we were waiting for... hehe, they can only come when there’s hardly anyone around!"

Gu Youyou: "..."

"We just opened yesterday, and under those circumstances, it really wasn’t suitable for such patients to come in. Even during the day, it wasn’t proper, and now as we close, it’s perfect," she continued excitedly, "And there’s more, now I understand the purpose of your free consultations. With these ailments, would they feel comfortable taking the prescriptions elsewhere? Haha, they’d have to buy their medications from our pharmacy, right? Ah, Sister Youyou, I truly admire you!"

Gu Youyou was speechless; sometimes inadvertently one might succeed where they least expect to.

Was she really destined to be a gynecologist?

...

Chapter 363: Seen in the Adult Film

"Youyou, Banxia mentioned someone came in as a patient today?" Jin Zijin was even more excited than Gu Youyou about their first patient.

Gu Youyou was momentarily startled. This girl!

"Yes, an older sister, treating...women’s illnesses," she replied.

Jin Zijin was taken aback, and then immediately fell silent.

As a man, asking about women’s diseases, really!

It was supposed to be an encouragement for her to have a patient.

"Your ’dream within a dream’...was it very fascinating?" Jin Zijin brought up another question that had been haunting him all day, and because of this, his intelligence seemed to be offline. Today, his strategies were utterly defeated by Yue Rujing, never before had he been so humiliated.

She’s really quite something, perfectly designed to counter him. Since meeting her, how many times had she disturbed his thoughts, this bewitching woman.

Gu Youyou was taken aback once again, not realizing the special connotation in his words. As she recalled her other life, she suddenly felt a wave of melancholic reflection.

The past is gone, why reminisce!

"No matter how splendid, it was still just a dream," she said.

Jin Zijin stood against the candlelight, his face unclear. A moment later, his faint voice came through again.

"Was there someone in your dream that you found unforgettable?" he pressed on.

Someone unforgettable?

Gu Youyou pondered for a moment and said, "There was one, but my departure might have been better for him."

The only thing she couldn’t let go of was her grandfather. He had worked tirelessly to help her rise to power. Now that she was gone, there was nothing left to fight for, and he could live out his years in peace.

The two worlds were strikingly similar. She thought of Gu Feng.

With her gone, Gu Feng too, could recuperate properly.

Even though her aunt and uncle held animosity against her, they were still filial.

"Who is he?" Jin Zijin seemed determined to get to the bottom of it.

Gu Youyou finally sensed something off about Jin Zijin.

She walked over to him, moved the oil lamp from behind him to the front, and saw his face clearly.

Not too pleased, and with a deep sense of grievance.

"What exactly do you want to ask? Just say it, I’ll tell you the truth, I, Gu Youyou, keep my word," she said.

Her straightforwardness made Jin Zijin embarrassed to continue questioning.

"Forget it, let’s sleep," he said.

Gu Youyou’s face darkened, not willing to let it go.

Just as Yue Rujing had said, he really had become bothersome.

"No sleep until you clarify," she insisted firmly, pushing him back into the chair.

The position was somewhat suggestive, as if she were about to straddle him.

Jin Zijin frowned, feeling irritated inwardly: "Do you behave like this with others?"

"Who?" Gu Youyou asked.

"The one in your dream?"

Gu Youyou, piecing together his previous remarks and odd reactions, swiftly understood what was bothering him, being clear-headed as she was.

She chuckled and then sat on him decisively, making the suggestive posture a reality and said, "You're overthinking it. In dreams or reality, there's nobody worth doing this for. Except for you, reassured now?"

Gu Youyou liked to be frank with her own people, speaking directly to avoid misunderstandings.

But Jin Zijin was a stubborn man. Nobody's perfect, and she had to accept this little flaw, so she tried her best not to be stubborn herself.

"So you..." he began to ask why she knew so much.

Gu Youyou was about to reply with a witty remark about her quick wit being common knowledge, but instead, she said, "Saw it in a movie."

Jin Zijin: "..."

Alright then, there was too much he didn’t understand.

He scooped her up, all the gloom in his heart vanished, and he laughed heartily: "Let’s go to sleep." I’ll make a comeback tomorrow.

...

Chapter 364: Delivering Pears

Jisheng Hall encountered a repeat customer on its third day of opening.

The young man who came for a consultation on the first day was now holding two autumn pears, his face brimming with a smile.

"Doctor Gu, just as you said, my cold is really gone. My nose isn’t stuffed, and I’m not sneezing anymore; I didn’t take any medicine, just drank a lot of warm water. Look, you didn’t charge a consultation fee, and I don’t have much to thank you with. These are pears from my own yard, here are two for you to taste."

That he had recovered so quickly was something Gu Youyou had expected—the young man was young and didn’t need medication for such a minor ailment.

"Your illness wasn’t serious and didn’t require medication to begin with. I’ve said that I am offering free consultations, so how can I accept your pears?"

The young man insisted on giving Gu Youyou the pears, and said embarrassedly, "That day... I said some unpleasant things, causing no one to come here for free consultations. I feel very ashamed. There’s nothing valuable at home, but the pears from the pear tree are sweet. Please accept them; otherwise, I’ll feel uneasy."

Seeing that Gu Youyou wouldn’t accept them, his face turned red, and he placed the pears down and ran off, afraid that Gu Youyou would come after him.

"Hey..."

The young man ran off swiftly and disappeared into the crowd as soon as he exited the door.

Banxia was surprised and asked, "Can drinking lots of water really cure illnesses?"

Noticing how intelligent Banxia was and her familiarity with various medicinal properties from a young age, Gu Youyou intended to train her to become another female doctor, so she patiently explained to her the many benefits of water.

"From a broader perspective, water is the basis of all life, and nourishes all things in the world. Life begins with water, so you must not underestimate the role of water. Of course, not all illnesses can be treated by simply drinking more water. As they say, if that were the case, there would be no use for medicine. Like that young man, in the early stages of a cold, his body was strong enough not to require medication, and drinking more water was sufficient for his recovery."

Banxia took every word of Gu Youyou to heart and went off to practice writing.

Gu Youyou gave her one of the pears, saying, "Let’s each have one."

Banxia shook her head hastily, saying, "I shouldn’t take it, you and Brother Jin should each have one."

Could Jin Zijin lack pears to eat? He is probably accustomed to daily delicacies.

Gu Youyou said, "Never mind him, he doesn’t like pears."

Thanks to the young man’s tireless promotion and the allure of free consultations, they welcomed their third client, then the fourth...

Although they all just took home the prescriptions in the end, it still gradually increased the popularity of Gu Youyou’s Jisheng Hall.

She wasn’t in a hurry. Nothing is easy, especially a medical hall—it takes time to build a reputation.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and she had just taken the first one.

Two days later, the elder sister who had come for gynecological issues returned. This time, she didn’t cover her head with cloth, but instead came over directly in the evening.

She grabbed Gu Youyou’s hand excitedly and said, "Doctor Gu, it worked, it really worked. The medicine you gave me—after just one wash, the itching stopped. After washing for two more days, even ’that’ color turned back to normal. It’s not yellow anymore; it’s the normal color you described.

I came here mainly to thank you. Hey, it’s so troublesome for women to get this kind of ailment, too embarrassed to go to a medical hall and only able to endure the discomfort. Luckily, you’re a female doctor."

Gu Youyou offered words of comfort and then said, "Let me have a look!"

This time, she wasn’t shy; she went directly into a small partition with Gu Youyou for her examination.

Chapter 365: She is a Gynecologist

Gu Youyou finished reading and wrote another prescription, then said to her, "This is a topical medicine, you don’t need to use it, give it to your husband."

"Ah?" The eldest sister opened her mouth in surprise.

Gu Youyou knew that it would not be easy for her to accept and that she might fear being swindled, so she quickly explained, "Or, you can choose not to get the medicine now, go back and ask your husband, and if he also has any discomfort, you can come back for the medicine."

How could she not know whether her husband was unwell? Still surprised, she asked, "Doctor Gu, you’re really godlike, how did you know my husband is also unwell?"

Gu Youyou said, "This kind of disease naturally affects both husband and wife as one. If you get better and he doesn't treat it, you could relapse after a while."

"Alright, alright, I'll take the medicine!"

...

Another month or so passed, and Gu Youyou's Jisheng Hall had gone from a joke no one cared about to a bustling clinic. She successfully proved her doubters wrong with her own abilities.

Now, who would dare look down on her as a female doctor?

Her reputation, especially among women's circles, had soared. Before Gu Youyou's arrival, aside from a few well-off families who employed somewhat medically knowledgeable female doctors, most women, suffering from embarrassing ailments, endured in silence. But the advent of Gu Youyou's practice had become their salvation.

Doctor Gu even offered free consultations for three days every month.

Even without buying medicine, sharing knowledge about women's health care with her was incredibly beneficial!

Yue Ruxue, who waited to see Gu Youyou fail, was utterly frustrated and ended up smashing her favorite porcelain vase.

"Didn't they say her clinic would close after a month at most? Why then has her business picked up?"

Yue Rushuang said helplessly, "Who would have thought that she would be the only female doctor in Lingnan City?"

Pu Rouyin, their cousin, said, "Second cousin, what's there for her to be proud of? I heard she only treats the girls from the Flower Alley."

"Really?" Yue Ruxue's eyes lit up.

"It's true, and what's more, people specifically choose the first three days of the month to go because it's free."

"Free? That wretched woman, she really knows how to win people's hearts. We'll go to Jisheng Hall too. I must meet her tomorrow."

Yue Rushuang and Pu Rouyin's faces paled in fear. Their grandmother had explicitly instructed them not to cause trouble at Jisheng Hall, and they were tasked with keeping a close eye on Yue Ruxue.

Yue Rushuang said, "Little sister, why quarrel with a woman who seeks public attention? You are the only legitimate daughter of our Marquis Residence. Isn't it beneath your dignity to compete with her? Instead of watching her clinic, you might as well visit the military camp more often. I heard that brother Zijin is at the camp every day, learning military strategies from our father."

Pu Rouyin also quickly said, "That's right, second cousin, we are daughters of the Marquis Residence. If we all go to her clinic, people will certainly not think we are there to cause trouble; they might think we are there for treatment, and the diseases they treat there are not at all honorable."

Yue Ruxue was taken aback; that seemed to be the case indeed.

How unlucky, not only had she opened a clinic, but it was also one that treated those kinds of diseases. She definitely didn't want to be misunderstood.

Yue Rushuang added, "She's a doctor; if brother Zijin marries her, it could very well be related to his gratitude toward her. Haven't we seen enough stories of lifesaving debts repaid with marriage? Brother Zijin's feelings for her surely aren't genuine. Such gratitude can't sustain a lifetime. If you can't stand the thought of her taking Zijin away, then go and win back Zijin's heart."

Yue Ruxue found this even more sensible; thinking of Jin Zijin, she showed a shy smile, "Alright, I'll listen to you, big sister. We will go to the military camp tomorrow."

...

Chapter 366: Erya’s Wedding is Coming Soon

Despite all efforts to nurture flowers, they don’t bloom; carelessly planting a willow, it thrives into a shade-giving tree—this saying couldn’t be more accurate.

Gu Youyou became a gynecologist by chance, which unexpectedly saved her a lot of trouble, both openly and covertly.

Lingnan is a large city, and it wasn’t possible for Jisheng Hall to be the only doctor’s practice, belonging to Gu Youyou.

There were also two centuries-old famous medical institutions, three struggling small clinics, and five pharmacies that didn’t provide medical consultations, only dispensed medicines.

As Jisheng Hall opened its doors, all eyes were fixed on her.

From initially being the subject of jokes to now, with her business flourishing, they were unable to sit idly by.

One anxious voice said, "Should we teach her a lesson? She’s an outsider..."

An elder raised his hand, stopping the speaker, and said, "No, she’s just a woman treating other women’s ailments, what’s the difference between her and a doctor from Yanliu Lane? Lowering ourselves to challenge her would only diminish our status. Let’s wait and see. As long as she doesn’t treat many other diseases, we’ll leave her be."

"But hey, these women come to her not just for women’s issues. Now the whole of Lingnan City knows that Jisheng Hall has a female doctor and they think it’s more appropriate than seeing a man for their problems—they consult her for all kinds of ailments."

How could this be allowed to continue? There were no shortage of women in Lingnan City and they were more prone to illnesses than men. Was she aiming to snatch half of their business?

The elder furrowed his brows.

Gu Youyou flipped through her abacus, calculating this month’s income and expenses.

To be honest, she didn’t like using an abacus and found it a bit clunky, but there was no choice; there were neither calculators nor spreadsheets here, and all accounting had to be done manually, making the abacus the best option under the circumstances.

"Sigh, it’s no use having apprentices; it would be better to hire a professional accountant," she murmured.

Jin Zijin tuned the oil lamp to make it brighter and suggested, "If you’re going to hire anyone, hire a woman."

Gu Youyou looked up and asked, "Why?"

"Hiring a male accountant could hurt the business."

Gu Youyou: "..." It seemed she was quite the renowned gynecologist.

Given the stubborn nature of ancient times, the advice from Zijin made perfect sense. If a man were to be seated here, one couldn’t guess how many women might feel embarrassed to step in.

"Are you taking Abao to the military camp again tomorrow?"

"Yes, Abao’s size could frighten people if he stayed at the clinic."

With the New Year fast approaching, Abao had grown to the size of an adult wolf, an admittedly frightening sight.

Jin Zijin added, "They keep some fierce Tibetan Mastiffs in the military camp, and Abao seems quite happy playing with them."

Gu Youyou frowned, put down her pen, and gave a wry smile, "Actually, I prefer the sight of Abao chasing butterflies."

She had not expected Jin Zijin to have intentions of turning Abao into a warlike wolfhound.

After securing the ledger, Gu Youyou cast her eyes on a package nearby, saying, "Considering the days, Erya and Shunzi's wedding must be approaching, right? These are the gifts I prepared for them, have a look and see if they're suitable."

It had been a while since they last received a letter from Qingshui Town, and Jin Zijin's expression turned expressionless.

He remembered the last letter mentioning that Erya and Shunzi's marriage arrangement might fall through, as Shunzi's family wouldn't accept someone like Erya.

Erya's father had killed her brother and his wife, beast-like characters, and her mother had committed suicide; if she were to marry into another family, she'd also have to bring her young brother along, a burden indeed.

With circumstances like hers, it was feared that any decent family would refuse to take her, meaning the marriage arrangement was likely doomed.

"Youyou, perhaps we shouldn't bother with the gifts."

Sending them now would only be like rubbing salt into their wounds, wouldn't it?

Chapter 367: I Know Lei Qianqian is the Killer

Looking at Jin Zijin's expression, Gu Youyou could only give a wry smile. After a while, she said, "You've found out too, haven't you?"

"About what?"

Gu Youyou sighed, "Haven't you already thoroughly investigated our family's affairs? And you found me in time. If not for knowing about the deal between Gu Wu and Xuanzong's people, how could you have appeared so promptly?"

Jin Zijin and Yue Rujing had both witnessed Gu Youyou jumping down, and it was Yue Rujing who had said so. No wonder Jin Zijin was adamant that she had attempted suicide by jumping off a cliff, that moment of illusion really did look as if she had jumped intentionally.

"You know about it too?" asked Jin Zijin, surprised.

Over these past few months, Gu Youyou had not shown any signs of it, she indeed had great forbearance.

Gu Youyou, however, said, "I was hiding among the trees and overheard their conversation. Gu Wu didn't just sell me to Xuanzong's people, he also killed my parents over a decade ago. I haven't spoken up because I didn't want to think about it. I don't want to think about it because I am helpless right now.

Zijin, in this world, Grandpa is very important to me, he can't endure such a shock. If he knew about this, he wouldn't be able to handle it. He has already lost his eldest son, and if he were to lose his younger son as well, he couldn't bear it. For Grandpa's sake, to let him live a few more years, I am willing to let it go for now."

After listening, Jin Zijin gently patted her back and sighed, "Your way of thinking is correct."

"And there's more..." Gu Youyou looked at the oil lamp, where the flames gently flickered in her clear pupils, "Grandma's death was suspicious, and that Lei Qianqian might just be the murderer."

Jin Zijin was momentarily stunned. When he first saw the injuries on Grandma's face, he too felt something was amiss, but then the people from Xuanzong came looking and he had to deal with them with all his might, so he didn't dwell on that matter.

As for Lei Qianqian, they just didn’t know a stranger, not even what she looked like; anything was possible. Now, hearing Gu Youyou mention it, it really wasn’t simple at all.

Gu Youyou was equally unacquainted with Lei Qianqian, so how had she concluded that Lei Qianqian was the murderer if grandma had died under strange circumstances?

"Do you know something?" he asked.

Gu Youyou lifted her head and said, "Do you remember Grandma making a scene at Jisheng Hall before that?"

Of course Jin Zijin remembered; he had asked about it at the time, and Gu Youyou had replied to him that those people meant nothing to her, just a nuisance.

Gu Youyou continued, "Grandma said that Lei Qianqian was pregnant and asked me to get Qin Changlin to see her. She and Dabao had not been married for long, so at the time I thought she had just upset her stomach and didn’t take it seriously, but it turned out she really was pregnant."

"What do you mean?" Jin Zijin was slightly shocked.

"The child she’s carrying may not be related to Dabao. Grandma must have taken my words to heart, which is why she brought her to see the doctor. If Grandma suspected the child wasn’t from the Gu Family, why would she protect her at all costs? Don’t forget, she was a selfish person."

Jin Zijin nodded, feeling what she said made sense.

"My guess is that Grandma knew the child wasn’t from the Gu Family, and Lei Qianqian... killed her to silence her."

After thinking it over, Jin Zijin said, "Do you need my help to confirm this?"

Gu Youyou replied, "The reason I told you this is precisely that. The Gu Family can’t be raising someone else’s child. If Grandma was wronged, justice must be served."

He said, "Alright, then I’ll have someone look into it."

Gu Youyou said, "Mm, it’s best to find out who that man is. Also, don’t alert them, I’m not in a hurry to expose this. Otherwise, it would make things too easy for my Second Uncle and Aunt. They should continue to raise someone else’s child for a while, to avoid confusion about who is kin and who is not."

Chapter 368: Youyou Invincible

Jin Zijin glanced at them for a moment and suddenly burst into laughter, "You, you really are... one to hold grudges."

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "I’m letting them off easy, you have no idea. That Huang Xiangwen once made me drink rat poison. If I hadn’t been so clever, I would have been poisoned to death in that dark room long ago. Having them raise someone else’s child for a few days and then telling them that the beloved grandchild, who they think is theirs, is actually a bastard, that’s the kind of revenge that truly satisfies one’s heart!"

"Alas!" Gu Youyou sighed, then continued, "It’s just Dabao... Never mind, in the future, I’ll find him a good girl to make it up to him."

In doing this, she actually had her own selfish reasons—it was also for her grandfather. The great-grandson he had longed for turned out to be someone else’s seed. If she revealed the truth now, it would probably kill him from anger.

Unfortunately, Gu Youyou still didn’t know that the grandfather she was trying to protect had been angered to death long ago.

Jin Zijin felt a pang of heartache and pulled her into his embrace, a matter he couldn’t yet disclose to her, so he had to keep it hidden for the time being.

...

In the largest military camp in Lingnan, Yue Ruxue rode a white horse to a stop in front of Jin Zijin, dismounted with agile grace, and her smile blossomed like a flower.

As the daughter of a warrior family, she and her sister had learned martial arts from a young age, and she knew how to ride horses and handle firearms.

"Big Brother Zijin, will you spend the New Year at our place this year? You always celebrated with our family in the past."

Jin Zijin said, "Of course not, I have to spend it with Youyou at our own home."

Yue Ruxue clenched her silver teeth in frustration—it was Gu Youyou again.

She had been guarding him for months in the military camp, and no matter what she said, his next sentence was bound to bring up Gu Youyou.

({ "Big Brother Zijin, do you think I ride well?"

"Very well, but you’re not as good as Youyou."

"Big Brother Zijin, you’ve injured your arm, let me bandage it for you?"

"No need, Youyou is a doctor."

"Big Brother Zijin, the military camp gets a holiday tomorrow, let’s go have fun in the countryside?"

"No, I’m going with Youyou to collect herbs in the mountains."

"Big Brother Zijin..."

"I have to get back, Youyou is waiting for me to have dinner!"})

Reflecting on her experiences over the past few months made her furious. Attempting to get close to Jin Zijin, she felt she was just humiliating herself. This was not the 'marriage out of obligation' her sister had talked about; he was clearly deeply in love with that country girl.

How could this be? How could he be so deeply in love with a girl from the countryside?

The more she thought about it, the more indignant she became, yearning to crack open his head and see what was inside.

After all, she was the sole legitimate daughter of the Marquis Residence.

She had someone investigate in Qingshui Town's Lotus Village, and that woman was indeed just a daughter of an ordinary farming family, and moreover, an orphan.

No, she had to get Big Brother Zijin to celebrate the New Year at her house.

Huffing with rage, she galloped away on her horse toward Yue Tingfang's tent.

"Father, will Big Brother Zijin spend the New Year with us?"

How could her father be unaware of his own daughter's thoughts? He sighed, blaming himself. Why had he made such a statement without Zijin's consent back then? The little girl had taken it to heart, seeing Zijin as her future husband, waiting all this time for him to come back.

And now here they were, a whole host of troubles.

"Stop thinking about it, you and Ayan are not suitable."

Yue Ruxue protested loudly, "Why are we not suitable? Father, it was you who said that I would marry Big Brother Zijin when I grew up. You've been toying with me like a monkey, and now you say we are not suitable."

Yue Tingfang said, "He's much older than you, I didn't think it through, and moreover, he's already married. Do you want to be someone's concubine?"

Yue Ruxue flew into a rage, "How can I be the concubine? If anyone's to be the concubine, it should be that country girl."

Chapter 369: Take a Seven-Day Yearly Holiday

Hearing these words, Yue Tingfang's mouth fell open in surprise.

He had thought Yue Ruxue was just throwing a childish tantrum and that it would be over in a few days. He never expected her to harbor such thoughts.

"What nonsense are you spouting?"

"I'm not talking nonsense, I'm serious. I don't even mind if he takes a concubine first, what more do you want from me?" Yue Ruxue said with a face full of grievance.

"You're crazy." Yue Tingfang slapped a book on the desk with a smack, causing Yue Ruxue to step back in fright.

But she still held her chin high, her face defiant.

"Ayan wants to marry someone of equal social status, do you match up to him?" Yue Tingfang chided.

"What does equal social status mean?" Yue Ruxue blinked, looking utterly clueless.

"He has no parents, he's a lone soul, he should find a wife who is also parentless and alone. If you want him to take a fancy to you, wait until your mother and I are dead," Yue Tingfang said in a fit of pique.

"What?" Yue Ruxue's face was a picture of shock.

So he has this kind of peculiarity.

No wonder then, Gu Youyou really is without parents.

"Hmph, the older you get, the less sense you make. Starting tomorrow, you are not allowed in the barracks. Go home and practice your embroidery properly. Get out quickly, you're making me irritable just looking at you."

Yue Tingfang shooed her out like he was chasing away a fly.

"Father!" Yue Ruxue was extremely depressed; it was only then that she remembered she had come to see him because of the New Year.

"I asked if Brother Zijin will be spending New Year's at our house?"

Yue Tingfang said, "I haven't asked him yet. Hey, what does it have to do with you? Even if he does come, it will be with Doctor Gu, so you might as well forget about it."

Yue Ruxue paused for a moment, then hurriedly backed out.

Very well then, come together, just when I was looking for an opportunity to deal with you.

...

The New Year was approaching, and according to the customs of her past life, Gu Youyou planned to take a seven-day holiday.

As a hospital, it should normally have someone on duty, but since Jisheng Hall was staffed only by her and Banxia, they decided to forgo duty and just closed the doors.

The past few months had brought in a decent income, so Gu Youyou gave Banxia an additional month's salary, saying, "Here, this is your year-end bonus. Plus, I'm giving you seven days off, go home and have a good time with your family!"

"Ah, so much?" Banxia was startled and delighted, saying, "Sister Youyou, you already pay me five silver pieces a month, which is a lot, how can I accept more... "

"Silly girl!" Gu Youyou tapped her on the forehead and said, "You're the first employee I've ever seen who thinks they are paid too much. Five silver pieces a month might be too much for just preparing and dispensing medicine, but you live here at Jisheng Hall, help me cook, clean the house, and do all sorts of maid's duties, so the money is not too much at all. Just take it, it'll also help you buy something nice for your family, impressing them."

Impressing them, Banxia was slightly taken aback.

Indeed, she needed to impress.

Ever since the day she got married and her husband had an accident, she had been living like a shadow of her former self.

She used to be so proud, literate, knowledgeable in medicine, and skilled in accounting, surpassing all the girls in eight neighboring villages.

But since that incident, as high as she had held her head before, was as hard as she fell afterwards.

She became the unbearable bad luck charm everyone avoided, destined to not marry again in this life, dependent on her family to support her. So while she was young, she worked hard, hoping that her brother would treat her kindly in old age for the tough work she did when she was young.

Impressing them, she had never thought in her life that she would have a chance to do anything but bring shame to her family.

Looking at the additional five silver pieces in her hand, Banxia was close to tears.

Chapter 370: Innocent Chat

"Face-saving, good, I'll buy more things to bring home, face-saving," Banxia covered her mouth as she spoke.

Gu Youyou watched her, sighed, and gently patted her shoulder before heading upstairs.

The ancient people's superstitious and pedantic thoughts were truly harmful. Banxia was such a good girl; whoever married her would be fortunate. Yet just because of an accident, they all avoided her like the plague.

Really, the accident wasn't even her fault.

...

"We won't open the medical hall tomorrow, where shall we go for fun?"

She had hung the closed sign in front of the door before the end of the day, which essentially meant they were closed from tonight onward.

This was their second New Year together, and after some thought, Jin Zijin said, "The Lin Family might send someone over."

The Lin Family? Wasn't that Gu Youyou's maternal family?

Actually, she didn't know much about Gu Youyou's maternal family. All she had heard was that Youyou's uncle had become Top Scholar in his youth and later held a high-ranking position in Beijing. Now his whole family resided there and cared quite a bit about their niece, sending over money for medicine every year.

The amount wasn't large, but those fifty taels were more than enough to buy medicine from Doctor Zhou.

The State Preceptor had carefully calculated the cost of the medicine for Gu Youyou; the Gu Family being farmers couldn’t afford anything too expensive.

"Zijin, how much do you know about the Lins in Beijing?"

Jin Zijin understood her meaning. It was time to tell her these things, and he said, "Your uncle, Lin Xingyi, is a Great Scholar of the First Rank in the Imperial Court, deeply favored by the... Emperor, he is a highly sought-after favorite in the court."

That powerful?

"How does he compare to the State Preceptor?" Gu Youyou asked.

Jin Zijin paused before saying, "The position of the State Preceptor is unshakable even by the Emperor. He is different from the court officials; his role is connected to the lifeblood of the nation."

Hearing that, Gu Youyou’s eyes dimmed slightly.

"So, our enemies are more formidable than the Emperor?" she said with a bitter smile.

"However, the State Preceptor cannot participate in politics," Jin Zijin said.

Gu Youyou didn’t believe it, saying that was fine in theory, but with so much power, how could one adhere to such rules?

"Yet they still managed to mobilize the garrison troops of Yangguan City."

Jin Zijin gave a bitter smile and said, "Yes, he didn’t get involved directly, only reported bandits near Qingshui Town."

Saying the State Preceptor couldn’t participate in politics, but he still influenced the imperial power of Zhuzhao Country.

Not being in politics, there were legitimate ways to be involved.

"Since the Lin Family knows I’ve come to Lingnan, could they be implicated because of me?"

Jin Zijin stroked her hair and said, "His enemy is Tianzong; the Lin Family is not worth his effort to target."

He wouldn’t act, but that didn’t mean other forces wouldn’t take the opportunity to do so. Of course, he didn’t need to share that with Youyou.

"Why would they target Tianzong? Because of the Youying Pearl?" Gu Youyou asked curiously.

Jin Zijin said, "Of course not, is it for the position of State Preceptor?"

"..." So complicated.

He laughed and said, "The position of State Preceptor has always come from the Dao Family’s Tianzong and Xuanzong. They’re competitors against Tianzong. Do you think he would fight for it?"

Of course, he would fight.

This news was too important for Gu Youyou; she had thought the State Preceptor was invincible, as even the Emperor feared him. It turned out his position was not that secure after all.

If the next State Preceptor turned out to be Jin Zijin’s master, then what they would face wouldn’t be the State Preceptor but merely a contemptible Taoist, wouldn’t the pressure on them vanish instantly?

"How often do you elect a new State Preceptor?" Gu Youyou asked, hopeful.

"Once chosen, until he dies."

Gu Youyou: "..." The passion that had just been ignited was doused by a bucket of cold water; they would still have to contend with the State Preceptor.

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