Farmhouse 401

Chapter 401: The Game of Carrying the Wife

The taste couldn’t be described with any adjective, especially bitter, yet not entirely so, all in all, quite distasteful.

Gu Youyou turned her head to vomit, but Jin Zijin covered her mouth.

"You can’t spit it out, didn’t I tell you? No matter how bad it tastes, you have to endure it."

How annoying!

With her mouth covered by him, Gu Youyou mumbled, "It seems it’s not you who has to eat it?"

As she spoke, she saw a deepening in his eyes, and he bent down to kiss her lips.

Gu Youyou’s eyes widened as she saw the flickering of his pupils, growing deeper and more profound, reflecting her face.

He was...

He released her, and her cheeks flushed, almost matching the color of red sesame seeds.

Did he actually choose this way to feed her those disgusting things? To share her bitterness?

Taking a deep breath to slow her almost racing heart, she spoke softly, "You didn’t have to do that; one person’s suffering is surely better than two."

"Nonsense," Jin Zijin brushed the snowflakes off her head and said, "If we share the hardship, then it’s no longer hardship."

Gu Youyou strangely thought of that saying: men and women working together will not feel tired!

But she etched his words deep into her heart: If we share the hardship, then it’s no longer hardship.

At that moment, she didn’t understand why it was no longer hardship.

"Come on up." Her thoughts, drifting who knows where, were interrupted by his voice.

Jin Zijin had slightly bent his knees, turning his back toward Gu Youyou, signaling her to climb onto it.

This wasn’t the first time he had carried her on his back, but ever since her health had improved, it seemed they hadn’t played this "carrying the bride" game.

Looking ahead at the fairly even mountain path, Gu Youyou smiled and jumped onto his back.

Uh, a bit awkward. She was dressed too warmly and didn’t manage to jump up, which might make it difficult for him to carry her.

Just as she was thinking of jumping down to try again, his sturdy arms already lifted her by supporting her hips.

Uh, embarrassing. He used to hold her legs.

"I... I should probably get down," she said.

He actually gave her bottom a playful squeeze and said, "This is quite comfortable."

Gu Youyou: "..."

Wrapped warmly, Gu Youyou lay on his back, finally not appearing so fragile.

In the quiet snow-capped mountains, their faint laughter could be heard:

"Banxia said there’s snow lotus on this mountain, why haven’t we reached it after walking so long?"

"We’re not high enough; we should find some if we climb that mountain ahead."

"Oh, right, snow lotuses require a very high altitude to grow."

"Altitude?"

"Yes, altitude is the height measured from sea level. By the way, Zijin, have you ever seen the sea?"

"Of course, I’ve seen it. Eight hundred li to the southeast, there’s a sea. That... Gangqin you played last time at the Marquis Residence was from across that sea."

"Ah, do you know what’s on the other side of the sea?"

"I don’t know."

"Haha, I knew you wouldn’t know, but I do."

"You know? What is there?"

"Blond-haired, blue-eyed monsters!"

Jin Zijin: "..."

Their overlapping silhouettes progressed further away, their voices gradually fading into the snowy wind. In the lonely mountains, only their footprints remained.

...

Chapter 402: Meeting Jin Ziyuan Again

"Ah, so many, there are still so many here!"

The desolate mountaintop was filled with the woman’s bursts of joyful and excited exclamations, making the discomfort of altitude sickness she experienced earlier disappear without a trace.

"Your basket is almost too full," Jin Zijin couldn’t help but remind her.

Gu Youyou looked at the snow lotuses covering the ground and then at the small basket, her beautiful eyebrows knotting in frustration.

What a miscalculation, she thought, expecting the snow lotuses to be rare—so rare she might only pick a few—she brought a small basket, never anticipating that the snow lotuses would be as plentiful as cabbages.

Jin Zijin laughed, "If it comes to it, we’ll just come again. This place is hidden; not many people can find it."

"Hmm?"

"Snow lotuses are precious, don’t be greedy. You see them everywhere here, but do you know that in the mountains of Lingnan, this is the only spot with so many? They are hard to find elsewhere."

"Ah?" Gu Youyou was stunned. They weren’t cabbages?

"If you pick them all at once, are you not planning to leave some for seeds?"

"Leave some!" Gu Youyou immediately said.

Precious things are most vulnerable to overharvesting. Upon hearing Jin Zijin's words, she truly shouldn't pick any more.

She withdrew her hand, still a bit reluctant to leave the remaining snow lotuses behind.

But today's haul was indeed not bad; she should feel content.

"Let's go, down the mountain," Jin Zijin said.

They were almost at the peak, and it was still early; Gu Youyou looked up at the mountaintop and said, "Why don't we go up and take a look? The view from the top of a snow mountain must be breathtakingly beautiful."

Estimating the time, they had enough to get down the mountain. It was a rare outing, so Jin Zijin didn't refuse.

But as they approached, the person hidden on the other side of the mountain clenched their fists tightly.

The millennium-old Heart-Cooling Snow Lotus was at the summit, and should they go there, they would surely discover it. He had been waiting for over two months–how could he allow his efforts to come to nothing now?

Youyou...

In front of that person, she smiled like a blooming flower, even more dazzling than the snow under the sunlight.

He smashed his clenched fist against the snowy wall, causing a cascade of snow to tumble down.

The man paused, looking at his own fist, then raised his head, only to see that the other man had already caught up.

"Zijin, where are you going?"

Gu Youyou certainly heard the voice, but didn't know who it was. Meanwhile, Jin Zijin, who had just agreed to go to the mountaintop with her, had already chased after it.

Seeing the person he was chasing through the snow, Jin Zijin unhesitatingly took out the bell he always carried with him.

The bell rang in the vast snow mountain, and the person leaped away swiftly.

Gu Youyou clapped her hand over her mouth in shock, finally getting a clear look at the person.

Jin Ziyuan? What was he doing here?

Could it be that the thing he was seeking was also on this snow mountain?

The relationship between Jin Ziyuan and Jin Zijin was something that Gu Youyou wasn't sure about, but the wild man, Uncle, had certainly died because of Jin Zijin, and he had been continually searching for Jin Ziyuan. Having formed an enmity over the killing of a father, even if not for the Youying Pearl, she felt that Jin Zijin would eradicate Jin Ziyuan completely.

Remembering their similar eyes, Gu Youyou always felt that these two men with similar names had some different connection, and furthermore, Jin Ziyuan, like her, was a medicine man.

The death of one evokes the sorrow of another of the same kind; Gu Youyou didn't wish for Jin Ziyuan to just die like that.

Looking at the slippery slope beside her, she made a decision in her moment of urgency.

She ran forward again, calling out as she went, "Jin Zijin... "

The wind carried Gu Youyou’s shouts far into the distance.

She was gambling!

They were close to the mountaintop. Before the avalanche, Jin Zijin would come back to save her.

Indeed, she saw the figure ahead pause and look back at her.

Chapter 403: Avalanche

Gu Youyou stopped running and turned to look at him.

At the same time, Jin Ziyuan also came to a halt.

The three of them looked at each other; a moment later, snowflakes began to fall from the sky, even though the sun was blazing overhead.

Gu Youyou looked up and saw above the mountain peak, a rolling expanse of white snow tumbling down en masse.

Her body shuddered in horror, and she fell to the ground, watching him rush toward her using his Qinggong.

She had won the bet.

She was truly despicable.

Gu Youyou suddenly felt moved, her heart souring with emotion, "Jin Zijin, I’m sorry, I am selfish too."

The quiet of the snowy mountains was broken by the sound of an avalanche. Amidst it, a wild laugh could be heard, "Hahaha, I never expected... you have so many interesting identities."

In an instant, Jin Ziyuan’s figure disappeared into the snow-covered mountain.

He had fled.

As Gu Youyou was struck by fear, she fell into a solid embrace; Jin Zijin was running with her through the air.

The avalanche was fierce, but fortunately, they were not far from the mountain’s summit, and the snow was not thick.

He held her behind a huge rock, shielding her tightly in his arms.

The rumbling did not stop but even intensified, yet they were safe because the sound came from below the mountain.

Still unsettled, Gu Youyou poked her head out from Jin Zijin’s embrace and stood up, craning her neck to look down the mountain.

She hoped Jin Ziyuan wasn’t crushed by the avalanche; with his martial skills, he likely wouldn’t be.

"What are you looking at?" Jin Zijin’s cold voice sounded from behind her.

"I..." Gu Youyou paused, then said, "The avalanche is terrifying; I was checking where it had reached."

Gu Youyou met Jin Zijin’s inscrutable gaze, feeling an inexplicable sense of oppression.

He watched her for a long time before saying in a low voice, "You know to scream even when you’re afraid? Remember, don’t gamble with your life."

Gu Youyou shuddered; had he seen through her?

He had seen through her and did not blame her, but instead told her not to gamble with her life.

This only made her feel more guilty.

She lowered her head, speaking softly, "I think he is quite pitiful, just like me. If you are after the Youying Pearl, could you... could you not kill him? Maybe after we overthrow the State Preceptor, he may hate the State Preceptor even more than I do? The enemy of my enemy is my friend, right?"

Jin Zijin’s pupils constricted. He looked at her quietly for a moment before saying, "Some things... you oversimplify."

"I..."

"I understand what you mean! Enough, let’s go back."

He ended the conversation.

She worried that her repeated assistance in helping Jin Ziyuan escape might create a rift between them, but she did not regret her actions.

Following behind her, Jin Zijin’s face was expressionless, but his mind was racing. A sudden thought struck him, and he abruptly turned his head to look back at the mountain’s summit.

...

"What? Stop looking for the Youying Pearl for now?" Yue Rujing was nearly furious.

"Why, senior brother? He walked right into my territory. I was confident I could catch him, and now you say to stop looking? Huh, senior brother, you must be joking, right?"

"I am not joking," Jin Zijin said with a firm look in his eyes. He was serious about what he was saying and had considered it carefully.

Maybe Youyou had a point.

"Then what about the poison in your body? Shall we keep that woman strutting around you triumphantly?"

They had grown up together since they were young, and from the age of eight when they left home, he had always been by his side.

Chapter 404: Watching Tigers Fight from the Mountain

This was the first time, the first time he spoke to him in such a tone, even though just a few days ago he had been beaten up by him for the sake of that woman, and then made a fool by her, he endured it all for his senior brother’s sake.

Who would have expected that before they found the Youying Pearl, that woman was his senior brother’s life?

But why had they suddenly stopped looking when the Youying Pearl was already within their grasp?

Remembering that Jin Zijin had not come to the military palace yesterday, Yue Rujing’s gaze suddenly darkened.

He exclaimed, "You saw him yesterday? You know his whereabouts, why didn’t you call for me?"

Jin Zijin looked calmly at Yue Rujing’s nearly out-of-control eyes and said, "I did indeed see him, but it was just a chance encounter."

He knew his senior brother would never lie to him, especially not on such important matters of right and wrong.

Thus, Yue Rujing felt somewhat relieved and gently nodded his head.

"Where? I'll bring people to look for him."

"He might have never been hiding in the city. I came across him on the snowy mountain. He ran away, there's no need to waste effort searching."

After glancing at Yue Rujing, he added, "As I said just now, there's no need to look for him for the time being. Since he's out of control, there's someone else who is even more eager to find him than us. Instead of deploying such great effort, it's better to rest first and watch the tiger fight from the mountain."

"..."

Jin Zijin sighed and said, "I've been looking for six years, I'm tired, and besides, not searching now is more interesting than searching, isn't it?"

Suddenly, he realized that he had been enlightened by Youyou.

Yue Rujing suddenly understood as if enlightened and cracked a childish smile, saying, "Senior brother is indeed formidable, I understand now. Hehe, I will let the news of him being in Lingnan spread right now; I wonder if our martial uncle will twist his nose in anger upon hearing that he's in Lingnan.

A woman medic of Four Pillars Pure Yin was in our hands, and now, the leader of the Sun-Moon Medics is in my territory. I wonder if he will dare to commit the great taboo and make a move against Lingnan Marquis Residence?"

Jin Zijin felt both amused and exasperated as he said, "Stirring up such big trouble? Aren't you afraid your father will beat you?"

"How could that be trouble? Seizing the opportunity to weaken Yu Jizi's power, my father couldn't wish for more."

After his self-satisfaction, Yue Rujing looked at Jin Zijin again and frowned. My senior brother is as gentle as jade, such a good man will have to spend more days in the hands of that malicious woman.

"Alright, I need to return early today."

If he knew what his senior brother was going back to do, he would vomit blood in frustration.

Last time after picking lotuses on the snowy mountain, although Gu Youyou had not developed a cold toxin, her feet, which were farthest from her heart, had turned into red lumps like pig's trotters, and walking was now somewhat difficult.

It was her own fault; feeling guilty on the way down the mountain, she refused to let Jin Zijin carry her and insisted on walking by herself; moreover, her shoes had leaked. The cold, piercing snow water that flowed into her shoes had frozen her feet numb.

Upon returning home, Jin Zijin had kept a stern face as he boiled hot water for her to soak her feet, holding her in his arms all night, warming her, fearing she'd get cold again.

Not being moved would be a lie, for instance, right now, he was patiently washing her feet with a medicinal liquid he had prepared from herbs.

For her, with her small delicate feet, his hand seemed very big, capable of wrapping around her foot completely. He patiently washed with the medicinal liquid, then patiently applied the medicated ointment. This wasn't the first time he had washed her feet; during times when she was severely ill, he had taken care of her in the same way. Watching the top of his head as he bowed down, she found herself lost in a trance.

In two lifetimes put together, only he had ever treated her this way.

...

Chapter 405: An Invitation from Marquess Yue

The medical clinic had just opened when Gu Youyou received an invitation.

Gu Youyou held the invitation with utter speechlessness.

It had been sent by Marquess Yue, and she really couldn't figure out why Marquess Yue would send her an invitation? Moreover, the timing was calculated to be just after Jin Zijin had left.

Regarding Marquess Yue, Gu Youyou had only met him a few times. Last time she had won a game of chess, and Marquess Yue had laughingly said he wanted to have a rematch with her sometime. Could it be he wanted to play chess with her?

She thought that couldn't be it, that must have just been a jest from Marquess Yue.

Moreover, according to what Jin Zijin had said, the State Preceptor might be making a move on Lingnan soon, and Marquess Yue himself must be busy dealing with that. So, where would he find the time to send her an invitation for a duel?

Could it be that Yue Rujing went home and whined to his old man?

Gu Youyou was so startled her heart trembled!

But then she thought, how could that be? Her brother wouldn't kill him.

So, she continued to space out.

"Sister Youyou, you've been spacing out. What's the matter?"

Gu Youyou shook the invitation in her hand and said, "I'm really worried whether or not to go. There are so many things to take care of in the clinic, and I don't want to go. But then again, I feel it would be rude not to."

Naturally, Gu Youyou couldn’t tell Banxia that the trouble was because of an invitation from Marquess Yue.

After hearing this, Banxia hurriedly said, "If it’s a friend of Sister Youyou, then just go. I’m here at the clinic, and at worst, we can hang a ’closed for consultation’ sign outside."

Gu Youyou rolled her eyes speechlessly and said, "Is this how we’re supposed to run a clinic, fishing for three days and sun-drying the nets for two? Running a clinic like this is just asking for disaster."

Banxia didn’t understand what Gu Youyou was talking about, and feeling aggrieved by her words, called out to Sister Youyou.

Gu Youyou waved her hand and said, "Alright, do as you say then. Go check how the repairs in the backyard are coming along and tell them to hurry up."

She had already bought the backyard of the neighboring pancake shop. Fortunately, the property wasn’t expensive. Although it was run down, the area was large, and most importantly, it only cost five hundred taels, which was a drop in the ocean compared to modern real estate prices.

"Alas! Even if I don’t want to go, I must, and I must go quickly," Gu Youyou murmured to herself, holding the invitation as she headed out the door.

A servant from the Marquis Residence guided Gu Youyou as she rode in the carriage, and it was only upon arrival that she realized this place was not the Marquis Residence.

Hey! What was Marquess Yue up to, bringing her to a small courtyard in a small alley?

The servant opened the door and invited Gu Youyou in, then closed it again, locking himself outside and Gu Youyou inside.

She felt increasingly puzzled.

Gu Youyou saw Marquess Yue in the courtyard, his silhouette very similar to Yue Rujing's—like father, like son.

He turned his face to her, revealing a warm smile, and only then did Gu Youyou clearly see the half-unrolled painting he was holding in his hands.

"Greetings, Marquess!" Gu Youyou bowed respectfully.

Marquess Yue hummed in acknowledgment, raised his hand, and gestured for her to stand up.

Gu Youyou straightened up and intently looked at the painting in his hands.

Although the scroll was only half-unrolled, Gu Youyou could see that it was a portrait of a woman painted in the style of ancient beauties—exquisite though it was, it was not quite capable of making the subject appear truly attractive.

Marquess Yue said, "I have invited Doctor Gu today because I have a favor to ask."

He used the word "I" and "ask" for a favor. His demeanor was extremely humble, making Gu Youyou, as puzzled as a monk scratching his head, apprehensive and unsure of what he was about to do.

"Marquess, you honor me too much. Please speak freely. If there's any way I can be of assistance to the Marquess, it would be my good fortune."

This was the first time Gu Youyou referred to herself as a "common girl"; previously, whether in front of the old madam or Marquess Yue, she had always referred to herself as "I". She did not fancy those strange titles from feudal society and never wanted to place herself in a position of vulnerability unless absolutely necessary.

Chapter 406: Painting for My Old Friend

And the people of the Marquis Residence, loving the house and its crows, had never made things difficult for her on account of Jin Zijin; at worst, they just thought her a country bumpkin ignorant of proper manners.

"Mm, come with me," Marquess Yue gestured invitingly.

Gu Youyou followed Marquess Yue into the house with trepidation, and then into the study.

On the broad desk lay neatly-sharpened charcoal, brushes, paper, and various colored paints.

Uh, Gu Youyou was stupefied.

It wasn't her fault her mind raced; just now, Marquess Yue had been engrossed in a painting of a beauty. Before Gu Youyou entered, he had clearly been lost in contemplation. Recalling how she had captivated everyone with her charcoal drawing on New Year's Eve, she assumed that besides the old Marchioness, Marquess Yue too must have been unable to forget the Nine Heavens Mysterious Lady she had fabulated.

"Do you want me to draw the Nine Heavens Mysterious Lady for you?" Gu Youyou asked.

Her dazed expression was a bit more simple, a bit less sharp, and the slightly tense atmosphere in the room instantly eased.

This was a special woman, Marquess Yue thought.

It was no wonder Jin Zijin had chosen to marry her.

"Doctor Gu, having a piece of the Nine Heavens Mysterious Lady Picture is already a stroke of great fortune for the Marquis Residence, how could we be greedy for another? Today, I have asked Doctor Gu to come because I wish for you to paint a portrait of an old friend of mine." He unrolled the painting in his hand and said, "Paint this lady using your style of drawing."

Gu Youyou stared at the beauty in the painting for a long time, no longer daring to speculate about anything.

It is often said in palace intrigue dramas, the more you know, the quicker you die.

Even a fool could see that Marquess Yue was preoccupied with the woman in the painting, and this woman was not his wife, the Marchioness.

No wonder he had sneakily asked her to come here instead of going directly to the Marquis Residence.

Gu Youyou wondered if the woman in the painting could be the mother of that young mistress, Marquess Yue's dearly departed concubine.

Gu Youyou said with a light smile, "Then please hang the painting on the wall," pointing to the wall across the room.

Unexpectedly, Marquess Yue stood by the wall holding the painting, unwilling to hang it.

"Is this position suitable?"

Gu Youyou's mouth twitched, thinking to herself: This truly must be the woman he loves.

"Alright, that spot will do!"

Gu Youyou couldn't bother with fancy words to flatter this ancient Marquess anymore because wherever this godlike figure stood, she felt an immense psychological pressure. She just hoped she wouldn't end up painting the beauty to resemble Marquess Yue.

Gu Youyou began by sketching the general outline of the beauty with charcoal and asked Marquess Yue, "Marquess, please take a look. Do these eyebrows and eyes resemble her?"

The posture was almost there; the main thing was the eyebrows and eyes.

Marquess Yue put away the painting and came over to take a close look at what Gu Youyou had drawn.

The simple outline of the lady in the drawing bore some resemblance to the one in his memory.

He rummaged through his memories of her and suddenly picked up a brush to add to the eyebrows and eyes, sharpened the chin, and gave the lady's lips a slight lift.

With his alterations, the woman in the picture instantly took on a different aura.

Her eyebrows were like distant hills dyed with greenish-blue ink, her eyes like cut water, her nose tall and delicate, her lips slightly upturned. Amidst the soft features of her face was an undeniable, vivid valiance.

Having been born a warrior, Marquess Yue liked his women to have a heroic spirit, even if they were gentle; it was a case of like attracting like.

Gu Youyou understood.

"Alright, it should be about there," Marquess Yue said.

He took the painting and walked towards the corner of the wall, yet seemed somewhat reluctant to take his eyes off the rough draft.

Just a rough draft was enough to affect him in this manner; clearly, Marquess Yue was a man of deep emotions.

Gu Youyou had already memorized the painting, and only coloring was left to do. There was no need for him to stand in the corner holding the painting anymore, but considering the increased pressure she'd feel if he stood next to her, she said nothing.

Chapter 407: A Petty Person Seeks Revenge

Mixing colors, shading, Gu Youyou didn't dare to paint quickly this time. It took almost half an hour for Mo Yue to paint, before she was satisfied with the coloring of the woman in the painting.

She used realistic methods, striving to make the skin and eyes resemble a real person as closely as possible, and the woman, by nature, was as beautiful as a painting.

The gentle upturn of her lips seemed ready to burst into laughter at any moment.

Gu Youyou had already put away her brushes and wiped her hands.

Marquess Yue, who was lifting the painting, was still stretching his neck by the wall.

Gu Youyou actually almost forgot about him, how frightening!

She hurriedly said, "Marquess, I have finished painting, please come and see if it resembles her."

Marquess Yue strode over excitedly, his gaze landing on the face of the woman in the painting, staring mesmerized.

Gu Youyou stole a glance at him, noticed he was motionless, and so she moved back a bit.

Marquess Yue’s adoring gaze upon the woman in the painting was so obvious, even a fool could tell, so it must indeed resemble her, right?

"It does, it’s very lifelike!" Marquess Yue voiced after a while, with a click of his tongue, "She should indeed possess this charm."

Marquess Yue turned back to look at Gu Youyou, his face filled with excitement, and then he deeply bowed to her.

Gu Youyou was startled; he was paying respects to her.

Gu Youyou hastened to say, "Marquess, what is this for? You flatter me too much."

But he said, "Thank you, Doctor Gu, for your help."

Help?

"I must ask Doctor Gu not to mention this to anyone, including Jin Zijin."

Gu Youyou understood, nodding repeatedly.

In Lotus Village, if you spoke too much, you might even get beaten up, let alone in front of Marquess Yue.

This was his secret. He was willing to humble himself, probably for the sake of Jin Zijin. If it weren't for her relationship with Jin Zijin, the safest approach for him would likely have been to silence her permanently.

That's what they always did on TV.

...

"Creeping out of the alley like that, anyone can tell you're up to no good, looks like I'm doing the people a favor," Yue Ruxue said with a venomous look in her eyes toward Gu Youyou.

She embarrassed herself on New Year's Eve, and instead of vindicating her, her grandmother and parents were afraid she would cause trouble, so they confined her to the house.

Now that she was finally released, the first thing she naturally wanted to do was to take revenge on Gu Youyou.

"Be ready, as soon as she turns this corner, we strike."

"Yes, young lady!" Two men dressed as house servants beside her responded.

Gu Youyou, having just returned from painting for Marquess Yue, with her keen ears, heard the familiar voice from afar. On approaching, she realized that the miss from the Yue Family intended to teach her a lesson.

As the saying goes, better to provoke a gentleman than a villain, and this young lady’s temper really took the cake.

It was truly an experience to see a girl rushing to become the other woman, infatuated with an older man.

Gu Youyou walked down the alley without betraying any emotion, listening to the voices, knowing they would spring their trap once she turned into the alley ahead.

Heh... She sneered inwardly and as she was about to step into their ambush, she suddenly stopped, choosing instead the road opposite.

Taking this route back to Jisheng Hall was a bit longer, but ahead was the main street, bustling with people.

Since they had chosen an alleyway to catch her, they obviously intended to carry out their deed discreetly, which meant they were wary of crowded places where it would be difficult to act.

On the main street, with plenty of people around, it would be easier to run away; she had the advantage in time, location, and social dynamics. It seemed the young lady would come up empty-handed! Gu Youyou thought gleefully.

"Young lady, she’s heading to the opposite side," one of the house servants, seeing Gu Youyou not falling for the trap, said in desperation.

Yue Ruxue naturally saw it too, and unable to reconcile with watching her opportunity slip away, she kicked the back of the servant who spoke up and shouted, "Then what are you waiting for? Go after her!"

"But young lady, that street..."

Chapter 408: Trapped in a Sack

"I don’t care, if you two can’t get it done today, I’ll send you to be the front-line soldiers."

"Ah...?" That was the position in a battle where one was most likely to die first. Usually, that role was reserved for those who had made mistakes, or for slaves of lower status. How could they possibly do it?

The two house servants had long faces and cried, "It won’t do, miss. I have an eighty-year-old mother and a three-year-old child at home. If I die as a front-line soldier, they’ll have no one to take care of them."

"That’s right, it’s the same with me."

As Gu Youyou walked farther and farther away and these two useless things were still wailing, Yue Ruxue nearly fainted from anger.

"Then why aren’t you going?" she roared.

"Yes, yes, we’re going now," the two house servants stammered, stunned by Yue Ruxue’s roar.

Gu Youyou bought some buns at the Bun Shop, wrapped them in wax paper, and started to weave through the crowd towards Jisheng Hall.

She knew there were two people following her.

She frowned slightly. It was broad daylight and the street was not empty. Could the damnable girl from the Yue Family really dare to do something to her right on the street?

Gu Youyou’s principles were too strong, and she was too rational. Every decision she made was accustomed to being preceded by thorough consideration. She could not understand those who acted without thinking of consequences, but Yue Ruxue, in her desperation and hatred for her, had the audacity to try something on the street.

Gu Youyou, a frail woman, was suddenly bagged by Yue Ruxue’s two fairly skilled subordinates on the busy street, and the buns she held fell to the ground.

"Yue Ruxue, what do you think you’re doing?" The two house servants were swift in their actions. Gu Youyou only got out one sentence before her mouth was gagged.

The commoners nearby were startled, and mothers with children hurriedly protected their kids and moved aside.

"What’s happening here, a daylight abduction?"

"Is there no law and order?"

The people on the street murmured in hushed tones, and, seeing the ferocious looks on the two men, no one dared to step forward to help Gu Youyou.

Yue Ruxue, standing far in the crowd, smiled and snapped her fingers at them. The two men expertly hoisted Gu Youyou onto their shoulders and quickly left the scene.

"Ah, the person who was just captured seems to be Doctor Gu!" A woman who had seen it all recognized Gu Youyou. She had been treated by Gu Youyou before. Although she only caught a glimpse of Gu Youyou just as she was being shoved into the sack, that glance was enough to recognize her.

"Doctor Gu?" The crowd began to grow restless.

"We can’t let Doctor Gu be taken away by villains. Hurry, stop those two."

"Right, right, I'll go to the Governor's Office and report this."

With a leader, the momentum to capture the criminals rose. One person stepped forward, and ten followed; in no time, loud shouts to release Doctor Gu were heard along the entire street.

Several men who could run fast were already chasing in the direction where Yue Ruxue had departed. Yue Ruxue's expression turned ugly as she clenched her teeth.

"You two, hurry up. I'll block those troublemakers."

"Alright, alright, miss, be careful."

They weren't exactly afraid of having captured Gu Youyou, as they were threatened by the young mistress, but they were scared of being caught on the spot by the mass of people.

Abducting someone on a busy street in broad daylight was something only Second Miss Yue could think of.

If they were caught by the furious crowd, who knows if they would make it to the Governor's Office for justice before being beaten to death by the public right there and then.

Now, since Yue Ruxue was willing to fend off the crowd for them, they were naturally very happy about it.

Chapter 409: Report

Two people carried Gu Youyou as they ran swiftly; at the turning corner of the alley, Yue Ruxue blocked the way, halting the pursuing crowd.

"Everyone stop right there, this is the private affair of the Marquis Residence. Anyone who dares to intervene will have only themselves to blame for my lack of courtesy."

Yue Ruxue glanced at a row of bamboo poles leaning against the wall, kicked one out with her foot, and seized a rod thick as a small arm. With graceful efficiency, she swung it in a sweeping motion, forcing the advancing crowd to retreat several steps.

The ordinary folks had never seen such a spectacle before. Faced with this fierce and imposing lady of the Yue Family, they looked at each other in dismay.

After a moment of silence in the scene, someone murmured in a low voice, "It’s broad daylight, even the Marquis Residence can’t do as they please."

The expression on Yue Ruxue’s face turned instantly grim.

When one person took the lead, another voice, louder than the first, followed, "What has Doctor Gu done? Why does the Marquis Residence want to capture her?"

"What does it have to do with you? I will capture whomever I wish!" Unable to come up with a reasonable response, Yue Ruxue simply resorted to brute force, and that was how unjust she intended to be. What could you all possibly do about it?

"How can you be so unreasonable?" The voice was yet a little softer.

Bullying the crowd to the point of speechlessness.

Seeing that the two house servants had already gone far, Yue Ruxue, holding onto her dignity, did not want to argue with the commoners. She smiled proudly, lifted her chin, propped up the bamboo pole, spun around, and quickly disappeared in the depths of the alley.

The misses of the Yue Family are all capable of joining the battlefield, and the ordinary people dared not to engage in a hard fight with them, let alone catch up. Resigned to their helplessness, they looked at each other and could only let her leave.

"What should we do now?"

"Let’s go, let’s go to the Marquis Residence to find the Marquess. How can Miss Yue be so arrogant? Today she brazenly took Doctor Gu away; tomorrow it could be any one of us."

"Right, right, let’s go to Marquess Yue to demand an explanation. Marquess Yue is not that kind of person; he will surely handle it justly."

So, the common folks hurried off to the Yue Residence to find someone.

Banxia anxiously waited, unable to get Gu Youyou back, becoming increasingly agitated.

Just then, someone came to deliver a message. "Miss Banxia, oh dear, what are you still dazed for? Your Doctor Gu has gone missing."

"What?" Banxia had been feeling uneasy all this time. Could it be that something really had happened to Gu Youyou?

"Madam, what happened? Could you please explain in detail to Banxia?"

So, the woman narrated the incident she saw on the street today of Gu Youyou being captured and taken away.

After hearing this, Banxia turned pale with fright. She knew that Gu Youyou and her husband had some connection with the Marquis Residence, and it should have been a good relationship, but why was the Marquess’s daughter troubling Gu Youyou?

This won’t do; she had to inform Jin Zijin as soon as possible.

Banxia locked the door of Jisheng Hall, put out a closed-for-business sign, and hurriedly ran towards the city outskirts.

She couldn’t ride a horse, but luckily, due to years of gathering herbs in the mountains, her physical condition was still decent.

Panting for breath, she ran to the Lingnan Barracks, where she was stopped by the sentries.

"Who goes there?"

The barracks were a critical military area where ordinary civilians were not allowed near. Anyone approaching would be thoroughly interrogated before being allowed to leave.

"I... I have urgent news for someone, for Big Brother Jin, Jin Zijin. Do the officials recognize him?"

Jin Zijin’s fame was quite significant within the Lingnan Barracks, so of course, they knew of him.

The two guards exchanged looks, and one of them asked, "Who are you?"

Banxia said, "I’m here to deliver urgent news. His wife encountered trouble in the city and was captured by villains; now her life and death are unknown... "

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Chapter 410: Blocking the Door

Marquess Yue was still immersed in the portrait of the woman, his mind adrift as if his soul had traveled to another world, utterly unaware that his house was in turmoil.

The Marquis Residence in Lingnan had always been held in high esteem for many years, when had there ever been an incident where common folk blocked the door?

The Marchioness, leaning on her large cane and supported by her two daughters-in-law, stood at the entrance. To prevent the crowd from rioting, many guards stood in front of them with weapons at the ready.

"Marchioness, in broad daylight, your Marquis Residence took away Doctor Gao, yet you cannot state her crime. How do you justify this to the people? If you cannot provide a reasonable explanation, we truly won’t be leaving," they said.

There was safety in numbers, and they were not afraid of the Marquis Residence.

The Marchioness had no idea that Yue Ruxue had left the residence today, nor about the trouble she had stirred up. Seeing her head maid approaching, she asked in a low voice, "Did you find out anything?"

The head maid replied, "The second young miss is indeed not in the residence, she left early this morning, and took two house servants skilled in martial arts with her."

Hearing this, the Marchioness's complexion darkened, and she clenched her teeth in frustration.

This thoughtless girl, if the people were right, then it must have been her doing.

The Madam of the Marquis Residence was twisting her handkerchief, her face ashen.

It was she who could not withstand Yue Ruxue's pestering and agreed to let her go out for the day. Now that there was trouble, she dreaded how the Marquess and the Marchioness would scold her.

Facing the angry crowd, the Marchioness couldn't afford to lose the people's support and could only offer an apologetic smile, "Rest assured, everyone. If indeed it was our young miss who did this, I assure you that Doctor Gao, and all of you, will receive a satisfactory explanation."

After finishing her words, she turned to the butler beside her and said, "You take a few people to find the young miss and Doctor Gao. She has always had a good relationship with Doctor Gao, capable of all kinds of mischief, but this time, they've gone too far."

Her voice was not low, and everyone heard her.

The butler, understanding, hastily smiled and said, "Yes, I'll go right away. Marchioness, please rest assured, they might just be causing a ruckus in fun, they could return soon."

The onlookers: "..."

The old lady of the Yue Residence said that Miss Yue and Dr. Gao were just causing a ruckus in fun. Although they were somewhat skeptical, they could not say more until they saw the persons involved.

The influence of the Marquis Residence was evident, and even if they wanted to downplay the situation by finding an excuse that they were just playing, let alone outright deny it, no one would dare to speak out.

The Marchioness hadn’t sent people to drive them away, which was considered merciful—at least she was willing to let someone go and find them.

"Alright, we’ll wait here for Doctor Gao," someone in the crowd said loudly.

The several Madams were helpless and could only let the commoners block the entrance of the Marquis Residence, forcing them to close the door with a forced smile.

Soon, another person came quickly to report, whispering something to the Marchioness.

The Marchioness, who hadn’t gone far with her daughters-in-law, had to stop, her face grim.

She narrowed her eyes and coldly said to the person beside her, "Bring them all in, detain them in the west wing, and wait for the Marquess to return and deal with it."

"Yes, Marchioness," they replied.

The Marchioness then told a maid, "Send someone to the military camp to call for the Marquess to come back home."

She clearly didn’t know that Marquess Yue hadn’t gone to the military camp today.

The Madam furrowed her brow and asked, "Mother, do you know who has come?"

The Marchioness glared at her sharply and said, "Who else could it be? The Governor’s Office!"

The affair had alerted the Governor’s Office? The Yue Family suppressed the Governor’s Office but didn’t like dealing with them.

The Madam became even more nervous, regretting her decision deeply.

She shouldn’t have let that little nemesis go out and cause trouble.

You say you want revenge, why not strike where no one’s around? Leaving evidence in the street is utterly foolish; how did I give birth to such a dunce?

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