Farmhouse 461

Chapter 461: The Daughter-in-Law Comes to Kill

"I've come back this time specifically to take you and our son home. The woman at my house has given birth to three daughters and now, she has injured herself and can't bear children anymore. If you come back with our son, I will divorce her immediately and remarry you. How about that?"

Jin Zijin released Lei Qianqian's acupoints, and Gu Youyou then asked with a smile, "Say something, will you? He's asking if you agree. The man is the child's biological father, after all."

Agree or not? Lei Qianqian, who had just been determined to sever all ties with Jing Wen, found herself tempted by his words.

Jing Wen's wife had given birth to three daughters and later injured herself wielding blades and staffs, unable to have more children—a fact well known to Lei Qianqian.

No matter how good the Gu Family was, the child was not their flesh and blood. She always worried and feared that someone would find out the truth. Now, Gu Dabao also knew.

But Jing Wen was different—he was the child's biological father, and the Jing Family, who owned a dyeing workshop, was much wealthier than the Gu Family. Most importantly, if she married Jing Wen, she could move back to the town.

"Really?" asked Lei Qianqian.

In her excitement, she momentarily forgot that it was Gu Family's home, and that Gu Dabao and Huang Xiangwen were still there.

"Of course, it's true. I've come for you and our son," Jing Wen earnestly said.

Gu Dabao and Huang Xiangwen's expressions underwent a drastic change. With such shameless admission, what was there left to say?

Gu Dabao felt completely weak and couldn’t utter a word for a long while.

Huang Xiangwen, like a rooster poised to fight, had bright red eyes and lunged at Lei Qianqian.

"Lei the harlot, what wrong has our family ever done to you, for you to deceive us like this and make us all revolve around this bastard..."

As Lei Qianqian was pushed to the ground, Huang Xiangwen, straddling her, slapped her face repeatedly, cursing continuously with foul language.

The child, who had been thrown to the ground, cried loudly. Jing Wen dragged himself over, cradling the child with heartfelt pain, not even glancing at Lei Qianqian from beginning to end.

"Oh my, what a chubby son I have, my own son! The Jing Family has a male heir at last, hahaha..."

Inside the house, between the crying and cursing, the outsiders could hear all; they presumed Lei Qianqian’s cries were severe. Unaware of the situation, the neighbors were afraid that something serious might happen and continuously called at the door.

"Aunt Huang, open the door! Who are you beating up? Don’t let it get out of hand, especially since Gu Wen has just been incarcerated."

"Let’s talk this over calmly, what has Qianqian done to upset you so much?"

"Hurry up and open the door!"

Another urgent round of pounding on the door commenced, followed by a woman’s shouting: "Open up, open up! Is that Jing last name inside, and that shameless hussy?"

The onlooking crowd exchanged looks, understanding the situation as they listened to the commotion and observed the furious approach of the woman, coupled with a few burly men carrying sticks and ropes.

Some curious soul asked, "The gentleman who went in earlier was called Jing Wen, are you...?"

"I’m his wife!" the woman declared loudly.

The crowd came to a sudden realization, taking a step back to give way to the woman and the men with her.

"So the gentleman named Jing who went in earlier is this lady’s husband, but he came for Lei Qianqian..."

"Shh, don’t speak of it—being aware is enough!"

Hearing this voice, Jing Wen, regardless of feeling pain all over, clutched the child and struggled to get up, running towards the backyard in the commotion.

Unable to wait any longer for the door to be opened, the woman lost her patience and shouted loudly, "Break the door down for me."

Chapter 462: Having a Fierce Wife

Such a fierce woman!

Gu Youyou did not want her door to be smashed in, so she got up to open it.

Jin Zijin stopped her, saying, "Let me do it!"

Gu Youyou felt that was also sensible, in case Jing Wen’s wife did not recognize Lei Qianqian and mistook herself for that woman, how frustrating that would be.

She retreated to the backyard, blocking Jing Wen’s path.

Just moments ago, he couldn’t even stand up; now, carrying a child, he could climb walls.

Gu Youyou looked down on such a man who dared to act but not to own up, and with a kick, she sent the stool propping him underfoot flying. He lost his balance and tumbled down from the top of the wall.

Gu Youyou caught the child effortlessly.

Later, this scoundrel might end up getting beaten; if the child got hurt, that wouldn’t be good.

No matter what, the child was innocent.

But the child... Gu Youyou now took a closer look. She had observed several times that his limbs moved clearly awkwardly, and he couldn’t even sit up at his age. Could it be... congenital cerebral palsy?

The fierce woman outside had already entered with five or six men wielding clubs and looking menacing. Lei Qianqian had been beaten by the furious Huang Xiangwen until her face was so swollen it was unrecognizable.

She looked around the courtyard, didn’t see Jing Wen, and shouted, "Where is that damned man hiding? If you don’t come out now, are you waiting for me to come find you? Once I find you, you’re dead."

From this, it was clear that Jing Wen was actually afraid of his wife.

Lei Qianqian had just managed to get up, then slumped down to the ground again.

Such a woman, it would be strange if she could tolerate her.

Gu Dabao still knelt on the ground as if he had lost his soul, Gu Youyou came out of the backyard with the child in her arms, and the fierce woman caught sight of her instantly, glaring at her menacingly. Gu Youyou knew she had been misunderstood.

Gu Youyou quickly clarified, "Don’t get the wrong idea, the red-faced woman on the ground is Lei Qianqian, your husband is in the backyard, he was about to climb over the wall and run away, I’m just a bystander."

Upon hearing this, the woman immediately stormed towards the backyard with a blaze of anger and after a short while, dragged Jing Wen out.

Gu Youyou watched in amazement; she really dragged him out, that woman was so strong.

Jin Zijin explained to her in a low voice, "This woman’s family is involved in armed escorting."

Gu Youyou: "..."

"Jing Wen, if you don’t explain yourself today, I will break your legs," said the woman.

Jing Wen cowered before the woman like a mouse before a cat, repeatedly admitting his mistakes, "Madam, I won’t dare again, please spare me this time!"

"What about this wretch?" She kicked Lei Qianqian with her foot.

While Lei Qianqian winced in pain, she still looked at Jing Wen with hope.

Gu Youyou felt a pang of sorrow. At this point, she was still pinning her hopes on this man who obviously only obeyed his wife. If she had any sense, she would join forces with Gu Dabao. If she would bite back and insist that Jing Wen forced himself on her years ago, then there might be a chance for things to take a turn.

What a pity...

Alas! And through this, it was apparent that Lei Qianqian truly had feelings for her first love, a scumbag. As for Gu Dabao, she was just looking for a fall guy.

Jing Wen hastily defended himself, "This wench seduced me first; she has fancied me for many years, couldn’t bear me marrying you, and kept seducing me. I avoided her for three years, but... I still fell into her trap..."

"What?" The woman’s eyes widened as she stared incredulously at the woman with a face as swollen as a pig’s head, "There are actually such shameless women in this world? Looking like that? My dear, you could actually go through with it?"

"This wretch is underhanded; your husband couldn’t guard against her all the time," Jing Wen replied.

Chapter 463: Snatching the Son

Lei Qianqian’s face turned pale with terror as she shouted, "You’re talking nonsense. We’ve been married for three years, when have I ever seen you? I was truly mourning my father, and just as the three-year mourning period ended, you came to me, saying you didn’t like the woman at home who couldn’t bear you a son, and that you wanted to divorce her to marry me. However, when I became pregnant and went to find you, you just found an excuse to hide. I had no other choice but to marry someone else."

After she finished her tirade, she was met with a resounding slap. Jing Wen’s wife was the daughter of a security escort firm and had learned martial arts since she was young. Her slap was the equivalent of ten from Huang Xiangwen.

That slap knocked out two of Lei Qianqian’s teeth, filling her mouth with blood.

Lei Qianqian looked at the woman who had hit her in horror.

Huang Xiangwen was sitting to one side, supporting Gu Dabao, cursing under her breath, clearly furious. Seeing that Lei Qianqian got slapped, losing two teeth in the process, she immediately clapped her hands in approval.

"Good hit, beat to death that shameless whore."

Before anyone knew it, quite a few villagers had come in to watch the drama. They craned their necks for a better look, and seeing that no one was stopping them, pushed a little closer.

"Oh my, who would've thought Lei Qianqian would be so shameless."

"Yes, wasn't she said to be the Scholar's Family's daughter? How could she turn out this way?"

Jing Wen's wife continued to curse loudly, "You have the nerve to seduce someone else's husband, and you still think you're the one wronged here?"

Lei Qianqian, frightened of this woman, glanced at Jing Wen and saw him looking at her with disdain, so she completely gave up hope.

How could she ever trust such a man? She had harbored fantasies about him, and even after all this, had actually asked him if it was true. Lei Qianqian really was ridiculous.

She looked at the child Gu Youyou was holding and suddenly laughed, "Your Jing Family is treacherous and disloyal. As soon as my father died, you married someone else. There's nothing left to say now. Whether you say I seduced you or you forced me, it's pointless. This child is your seed, but I gave birth to him, and you can't take him away."

"Of course I will take him," Jing Wen replied loudly without even thinking.

Surprisingly, Jing Wen's wife didn't explode with anger at his protective stance towards the child but looked over at Gu Youyou and then asked Jing Wen, "Boy or girl?"

Jing Wen happily responded, "Madam, it's a son, a big chubby little boy!"

Then, to the astonishment of everyone present, the woman was overjoyed and strode forward toward Gu Youyou, intent on taking the child.

Gu Youyou didn't fight her directly and simply handed over the child.

"Oh look, it really is a son, a big chubby little boy, my husband, we have a son now."

Everyone: "..."

Lei Qianqian was expected to pay for her grandmother's life; the Gu Family wouldn't want this child, who naturally should go back to his biological father.

Since the Jing Family's fierce wife couldn't bear a son herself... this twist of fate...

Suddenly, Lei Qianqian's eyes turned bloodshot as she sprang up and charged toward the woman holding the child and roared, "He's my son, give him back to me."

Before she could get close, the woman kicked her away.

"Look at what you are, daring to compete with me for a man and a child."

The crowd looked on with mixed feelings, as opinions bubbled up.

"Lei Qianqian really is shameless."

"The Gu Family is really unlucky, such a pity for Gu Dabao, such a good child."

"That woman really knows how to accept things, holding her husband's child with another woman as if he were her own. Could it be she can't have a son?"

Chapter 464: Investigating the Death of the Huang Family's Elder

"You..." Lei Qianqian now knew what it meant to be formidable. Like a madwoman, she got up again and charged at the woman, shouting furiously, "I'm fighting you for this, give me back my son..."

Why did good days turn into this? It was impossible to stay with the Gu Family any longer, and Jing Wen could never remarry her, not even as a concubine.

And her child was about to be taken away.

This child was the one she had finally managed to save, her own flesh and blood, her future support. How could she possibly give him to someone else?

Halfway through her charge, Lei Qianqian suddenly stopped dead in her tracks, staring blankly at Gu Youyou.

That’s right. It was her. She was the one who had caused all of this. If it weren’t for her, she would still be living well in the Gu Family.

"Gu Youyou, it’s you. Why did you do this? We have no grudges, why would you ruin me?"

Lei Qianqian extended her arm, pointing at Gu Youyou.

The others also looked towards Gu Youyou, with a blank expression on Huang Xiangwen’s face.

It was Gu Youyou who had caused the family to end up like this. But if she hadn’t exposed the matter, their whole family would still be in the dark, raising someone else’s son.

Thinking this way, it seemed they should be thanking Gu Youyou instead.

Gu Youyou slightly curled her lips, glanced around at everyone, and said softly, "You’ve finally hit the nail on the head. Why did I do it, why did I want to ruin you. Do you really not know?"

Lei Qianqian’s pupils shrank, and she took a frightened step back. "What... what do you mean?"

With a thud, a group of people walked in, the leader of whom said, "If you don’t remember, I’ll help you recall it."

Everyone looked towards the sound and saw, to their astonishment, the County Magistrate.

The County Magistrate, with his secretary and a group of government officials, strode in.

The County Magistrate himself had come?

The onlookers, shocked by this development, hurriedly stepped back and were about to kneel in greeting.

The County Magistrate raised his hand and said, "I am here on a private visit to assess the people's conditions; everyone, please stand."

From the moment the County Magistrate arrived, both the principals and the onlookers behaved themselves. The County Magistrate looked at Jin Zijin, who merely nodded slightly towards him.

Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin stood together, far away.

Jing Wen and his wife also stood as far away as possible, clutching their child, frightened lest their child be taken away.

As for the people she had brought with her, they were protecting them on all sides.

Huang Xiangwen stood to one side supporting Gu Dabao, while Lei Qianqian, pressed to the ground by two government officials, knelt in terror.

The County Magistrate said sternly, "Lei, do you know why I have arrested you?"

Lei Qianqian was shaking like a sieve with fear, yet she stubbornly replied, "I do not know."

"What a feigned ignorance," the County Magistrate waved his hand, and several doctors came in, one of whom was Doctor Sun.

The County Magistrate said, "Doctors, please tell us what the late Gu Huangshi consulted you about over a year ago before her death?"

Why bring up the late Huang Family? The crowd was horrified.

One of the doctors stepped forward, bowed, and said, "My lord, the late Gu Huangshi inquired of me about how soon a pregnant woman should begin to vomit. I replied that it starts at around thirty days at the earliest and fifty days at the latest."

The County Magistrate nodded slightly and waved him away.

He stepped back, and another came forward.

This doctor gave the same answer as the previous one; the late Huang Family had consulted several doctors about the early symptoms of pregnancy.

Why would she ask several doctors the same question?

Lastly, Doctor Sun also spoke, saying that the late Huang Family had brought Lei Qianqian to his house and asked him to take her pulse. He confirmed that Lei Qianqian was pregnant, which should have been joyous news, but the late Huang Family showed no happiness and, with an odd expression, hurriedly took Lei Qianqian away.

Chapter 465: You Killed Her

The villagers of Lotus Village had known the elders of the Huang Family for many years, understanding that the grandmother was unhappy about her daughter-in-law’s pregnancy. Who were they trying to fool? Unless the child wasn’t of the Gu Family’s bloodline.

As it happened, this child really wasn’t the Gu Family’s bloodline.

All being natives of Lotus Village, they naturally knew that Lei Qianqian had not been married into the Gu Family for long before she began to vomit extravagantly. The two Huang ladies of the Gu Family had not been shy about praising her for having a promising belly.

One busybody even said that she had seen her secretly throwing up by the river on the fourth day after her marriage. When she approached and inquired, Lei Qianqian claimed she had a bad stomach.

The purpose of the County Magistrate's questioning – wasn't it to suggest that Gu Huangshi had known before her death that Lei Qianqian was carrying an illegitimate child?

Huang Xiangwen suddenly released Gu Dabao, rushed to kneel before the County Magistrate, and said, "Your Excellency, are you implying that my mother had actually suspected that the child in her belly wasn't of the Gu Family's bloodline?"

"Indeed," the County Magistrate said.

Huang Xiangwen suddenly realized and said, "Yes, yes, there was something off about mother during that time; she wasn't herself, out early and back late, not in the fields, nor at home. We had no idea where she went. She must have been visiting the doctor. Then she..."

Huang Xiangwen gasped in horror, casting a shocked glance at Lei Qianqian, then asked further, "Your Excellency, do you mean to say that my mother wasn't actually killed by a fall, but that Lei Qianqian murdered her to silence her?"

What...

As soon as Huang Xiangwen voiced this, there was an uproar among the crowd!

If that were true, then Lei Qianqian was not only a **** but also a venomous woman.

Terrified out of her wits, Lei Qianqian scrambled on the ground and loudly exclaimed, "Nonsense, I didn't! It was the carriage that flung Grandma away. She and the coachman fell into the ravine and died."

"And you?"

Gu Youyou immediately followed up with a question.

"I..." Lei Qianqian said in a panic, "I went down into the ravine to find Grandma, but she was already dead."

At this moment, Gu Dabao, who had been silent for a long time, suddenly stood up, his eyes reddened, his demeanor lost and despondent, followed by an expression of utter disbelief.

"Didn't you say you fell into the ravine with Grandma, and that she protected you all the way so you came out unscathed?"

Right!

The crowd suddenly realized.

Old Mrs. Huang was dead, the coachman was dead, yet Lei Qianqian, a pregnant woman, came out fine, and so did the child. It seemed incredible at the time.

But since Lei Qianqian came back, she kept saying that Old Mrs. Huang had protected her, and that it was only because of her that she and the baby could survive, which was why Old Mrs. Huang died so miserably. But considering the suspicions raised by the County Magistrate, Old Mrs. Huang knew that the child Lei Qianqian was carrying was illegitimate, and knowing Huang's temperament, it would have been odd not to drag her to drown in the pond, so why would she protect her?

This question from Gu Dabao left Lei Qianqian completely without a response.

The County Magistrate slammed his hand on the table, bellowed, "Wretched woman of the Lei Clan, won't you confess the truth? How did you murder Gu Huangshi!"

This burst of fury made Lei Qianqian tremble all over. She looked around at everyone, realizing there wasn't a single person she could lean on.

Lei Qianqian’s heart sank, knowing that she was truly finished.

She looked at Gu Youyou and asked loudly, "Was it you? How did you know?"

Gu Youyou spoke indifferently, "Yes, it was me. And I knew because Grandma had come to Jisheng Hall to look for me, telling me that you were pregnant. Right then, I told Grandma that either you had a stomach ache or the child you were carrying was an illegitimate one."

"You..." Lei Qianqian gasped in shock, and then whispered, "So you knew all along. Why didn’t you expose me sooner?"

Gu Youyou said, "Because Grandma was already killed by you, and Grandpa was sick and couldn’t handle the shock."

Chapter 466: Dividing the Family

"Hmm, so that’s it! Then, you came back this time just to expose me, didn’t you?"

Gu Youyou didn’t speak. There was nothing more to be said about what had happened afterward. She tugged at Jin Zijin’s arm, no longer wanting to stay.

They pushed through the crowd and walked out, while Lei Qianqian was on her knees in front of the County Magistrate, recounting the details of how she had killed the elder Mrs. Huang.

Both inside and outside the door were crowded with onlookers; at the entrance stood Erya and Sanya.

From the moment they had left this family, they had vowed never to step half a pace into this courtyard again. Although they really wanted to barge in and demand why Lei Qianqian was so malicious, they did not do it in the end.

Lei Qianqian was convicted and executed for her crimes, and the child was taken away by Jing Wen, which ended any ties with the Gu Family.

...

Three days had passed since the incident, and on this day, Huang Xiangwen came with Gu Dabao and Gu Erya Sanya to the thatched cottage on Beiban Mountain.

Sanya held no grudge against Gu Youyou, nor was he afraid anymore. He washed sweet potatoes while talking to Gu Youyou about fun things.

When Huang Xiangwen and the others arrived, the smile on his face vanished in an instant.

He said, "Eldest sister, I don’t like them. They drove my mother to death. Erbao even teamed up with Wang Ergou from the village to bully me!"

Gu Youyou just smiled and patted the back of his head, saying, "If Erbao apologizes to you, would you forgive him?"

Sanya never seemed to have considered the prospect of Gu Erbao apologizing to him and only looked at Gu Youyou in shock.

He shook his head and said, "Impossible!"

Yet he wondered, if Erbao really did apologize, would he truly forgive him?

"Youyou, Sanya!" Huang Xiangwen walked in front, his complexion not looking too good, as if he had gone gray overnight, which made the already graying hair on his head look even grayer.

But in his usually darting, mischievous eyes, there was now an uncommon calmness and guilt.

Such an expression was rare on Huang Xiangwen’s face.

"Second Auntie!" Gu Youyou looked at them and responded softly.

Inside the house, Erya and Shunzi heard the sound and came out, standing at the doorway.

Huang Xiangwen forced a smile, then called out to Erya and Shunzi.

Shunzi smiled back, but Erya just turned her head away indifferently.

Huang Xiangwen smiled awkwardly, quickly taking a box from Gu Dabao's hands. She said, "Here are all the property and land deeds of the Gu Family, along with the existing money. Youyou, this is what we previously agreed to give you to handle."

She raised her hand and handed it to Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou reached out to take it and opened the box.

Sanya looked at Huang Xiangwen and then at Gu Youyou in disbelief.

Erya watched Huang Xiangwen with surprise.

Gu Youyou said, "Alright, since Second Auntie has thought it through and can distinguish between kin, I will divide it in front of everyone."

Huang Xiangwen said with shame, "Youyou, we were wrong. I remember what you said at your mother's funeral. Second Auntie has thought it over these past few days and feels that you made a lot of sense. Our parents are gone, and if we as the younger generation continue to fight amongst ourselves, this family will eventually fall apart."

Gu Youyou didn't respond. She couldn't forgive Huang Xiangwen, she just wanted to be fair to her brothers and sisters.

She quickly checked the property deeds, land deeds, and money, then handed them out to Erya and Dabao respectively.

"Eldest sister!" Erya, holding what she had received, was utterly astounded.

Dabao hesitated to accept it, saying, "Eldest sister, it’s all given to us, and you have nothing."

Gu Youyou replied, "I have opened a medical clinic in Lingnan, and the business is not bad. I don’t lack these things—take it."

Chapter 467: Going to Beijing

This was also her indirect way of telling them where she had been over the past year or more, Lingnan.

Lingnan, oh, how far away it is.

"Big sister!" Dabao bowed his head, almost on the verge of tears.

Seeing his haggard face, Gu Youyou knew the matter with Lei Qianqian had hit him hard. She only said softly to him, "That Lei Qianqian was not suitable for you, Dabao. You deserve better. You should be happy that Lei Qianqian has been executed, because we have avenged our grandmother and now you can find a better girl, right?"

Gu Dabao nodded gently and could no longer hold back his tears.

Gu Youyou walked past him towards the two younger ones. Erbao took a few steps back, hurriedly avoiding her.

It seemed his fear of the "ghost sister" was not easy to dispel.

Sanya started laughing and reached out her hand to her.

"Big sister!"

Gu Youyou crouched down and gently patted her head, saying, "Sanya is the most well-behaved."

...

The Gu Family's house went to the uncle's family, and the Gu Family's silver was taken out to build another set of courtyards for Erya and Sanya, near that thatched cottage.

The rest of the estate was divided equally according to the number of people; this was the result of Gu Youyou's distribution.

"The matters of Lotus Village have finally come to an end, I wonder when the next visit will be."

Inside the carriage, Gu Youyou whispered to herself in a low voice.

Jin Zijin, who was driving the carriage, turned his head to the side and chuckled again.

Youyou had said "visit again," not "return."

The carriage moved smoothly forward and was only two days away from Lingnan, but at that moment, the way was blocked by a carriage coming from the opposite direction.

"Whoa..." Jin Zijin brought the horses to a stop.

Gu Youyou got out of the carriage and asked, "What's happened?"

Before Jin Zijin could reply, a person had already disembarked from the carriage ahead.

"Miss Cousin, is Miss Cousin in the carriage?"

The person who had gotten down from the carriage ahead was wearing a thick fur coat; it was Lin Family's butler, Butler Qiu.

Butler Qiu only came during New Year's, but it was still a good half-month away from the New Year. Why had he come so early?

"Butler Qiu!" Jin Zijin dismounted first, then helped Gu Youyou down.

"Ah, indeed it's Miss Cousin and Cousin-in-law!" His expression was anxious, and without waiting for Gu Youyou to ask, he hurriedly said, "Miss Cousin, can you come with me to Beijing right now. The old Madam is ill, and I'm afraid that... Ah! She just wants to see Miss Cousin. I was actually on my way to find Miss Cousin in Jisheng Hall in Lingnan, but was told she had gone back to Qingshui Town. I did not expect to meet her on the way here."

Hearing this, Gu Youyou turned her head to look at Jin Zijin.

They had talked about going to Beijing before, and Jin Zijin had said the time was not right, but now...

I'm afraid the matter of going to the Lin Family is not simple.

Jin Zijin furrowed his brows and thought for a moment, then nodded gently at her and said to Butler Qiu, "Then let's go to Beijing together."

Gu Youyou looked at Jin Zijin in surprise, thinking, Don't we need to go back to Lingnan first? We're almost there.

Butler Qiu agreed repeatedly, "Good, good, now I'm relieved. I was afraid Miss Cousin and Cousin-in-law would find it inconvenient."

As they headed in the direction of Beijing, it was not long before they reached a sizable city to rest in.

Butler Qiu had planned to invite Gu Youyou to Beijing, so he had brought quite a few people with him: himself, four coachmen with two carriages, one maid and a nanny to take care of Gu Youyou, eight guards from the household, along with Jin Zijin and Gu Youyou, making a total of fifteen people—a rather large convoy.

In the inn, Gu Youyou, who had been lost in thought all day, finally had the opportunity to speak alone with Jin Zijin.

"Zijin, going to Beijing this time might be a trap. Why are you still jumping in?"

Chapter 468: The Lin Family People

Jin Zijin said, "But it’s possible your maternal grandmother is truly ill."

Gu Youyou was silent.

He continued, "Always hiding isn’t a solution, it’s better to boldly face them. Beijing is their main stronghold, but at the same time, it’s where the forces are most complex. There are advantages and disadvantages, it all depends on how you use the situation."

After some thought, Gu Youyou found some sense in his words, but... life from now on would probably be even harder.

Sigh, confronting troubles as they come rather than hiding seemed to be not a bad idea after all.

She then asked, "Will your identity be of any use in Beijing?"

Jin Zijin looked at Gu Youyou in surprise, then averted his gaze after a moment, his expression a bit strange.

Perhaps the plan really needed to change, and he had to call Yue Rujing over.

He said, "Yu Jizi is getting old, and the preparation for the next State Preceptor has begun. I’m one of the candidates."

"What...?" Gu Youyou was shocked.

"But... I won’t be for much longer."

Gu Youyou remained silent.

...

By the time they reached Beijing, the New Year celebration had already passed.

Beijing truly lived up to its reputation as the most vibrant part of Zhuzhao Country; even nearly a month after the New Year, the streets still brimmed with festive atmosphere.

The bustling streets were adorned with big red lanterns and couplets.

The carriage stopped in front of a grand estate with a plaque bearing the name Lin Residence. By the time their carriage arrived, the entrance was already filled with people.

"Is this Youyou?"

As Gu Youyou got out of the carriage, she saw a middle-aged man standing at the very front of the crowd, who, judging by his attire, must be her uncle, Lin Xingyi.

Gu Youyou bowed respectfully and called out crisply, "Uncle!"

"Haha, it really is Youyou!" Lin Xingyi laughed heartily, looking Gu Youyou up and down.

She resembled her sister a bit but was much paler.

Her sister had been a village girl, accustomed to labor, whereas Youyou, from a young age...

Sighing at the thought, that was all he could do.

The matters of Tianzong and Xuanzong were such that not even as a Minister could he intervene, let alone the Emperor, and at that time, his influence was unstable, rendering him helpless.

With so many political enemies, he couldn't offer her more help even if he wanted to.

Many people stood behind Lin Xingyi, and an attractive woman stepped forward, smiling at Gu Youyou as she said, "So this is Youyou, you've grown up so well, it looks like you really are better now. Your eldest sister's spirit in heaven can probably rest in peace, and mother should be happy now."

"Hello, Auntie!"

The one who could speak to her like this had to be Lin Xingyi's official wife.

Madam Lin nodded with a smile and introduced the children behind her to Gu Youyou.

"Cousin, my name is Lin Qianqing, your elder female cousin!"

This girl looked quite like her mother, around fourteen or fifteen years old. Her closeness to her mother revealed she was her biological child.

She was the legitimate eldest daughter of the Lin Family, as the butler had informed her.

"Cousin, I am your cousin, Lin Shenxing!" The boy looked around the same age as Lin Qianqing; he was only half a year younger and the only son of her uncle, but his mother was not the aunt but one of the uncle's concubines. Although he was born out of wedlock, he had been raised by the aunt because his mother died at his birth.

"Cousin, my name is Lin Zixin!" Lastly came a ten-year-old girl, also born to one of her uncle's concubines, which the butler had mentioned to Gu Youyou.

The group of women standing behind were all her uncle's concubines.

Looking at this array of beauties, Gu Youyou’s mouth twitched.

Chapter 469: Their Plan

Uncle is certainly blessed in his marriage.

Auntie’s face didn’t look too good as she stood up to shoo them away, but she softly said, "All right, all right, it’s cold in the wind, better to have your cousins come inside first. These children, knowing they have a cousin coming, were so excited everyone got up early!"

One of the maids next to her said, "Madam, the eldest miss was so excited she didn’t sleep all night."

"You talk too much!" Lin Qianqing tapped the little maid’s head.

Lin Xingyi laughed heartily and said, "Your aunt is right, everyone is indeed very happy to know you’re coming. But it’s cold outside, and Youyou isn’t in the best of health, so let’s go inside first."

"Okay, Uncle!" Gu Youyou was invited into the Lin Family’s home as an honored guest; Jin Zijin stood far away by the carriage, and as she stepped over the threshold, Gu Youyou paused and looked back at him.

"Youyou, what’s wrong?" Madam Lin asked.

Gu Youyou slightly curtsied towards Jin Zijin and said, "Thank you, Taoist, for accompanying me on this journey!"

This was what they had agreed upon on the road.

Under Gu Youyou’s persistent questioning, he revealed why he could not be a candidate for State Preceptor.

Because a State Preceptor, like his master Tian Jizi, leads a life similar to a monk and cannot marry.

If Jin Zijin were to vie for the position of State Preceptor, he would have to give up Gu Youyou, which was one of the reasons he hadn’t touched her.

Ten days earlier

Gu Youyou asked, "If you don’t compete for State Preceptor, whom will Tianzong choose?"

Jin Zijin replied, "Ajing would be the most suitable. I’ve already sent him a letter asking him to hurry to Beijing. If he rides and takes the eastern route, he won’t be much slower than us."

Gu Youyou chuckled bitterly and said, "If you put it that way... I feel that if you don’t enter the competition, Tianzong’s chances of winning are zero."

Jin Zijin’s eyes darkened slightly, he looked at her with a bit of heartache.

"I am already married," he said.

Gu Youyou shook her head and asked, "Does Marquess Yue know?"

"Marquess Yue?" Jin Zijin looked at Gu Youyou somewhat puzzled.

Gu Youyou said, "Does Marquess Yue know you intend to compete for State Preceptor?"

Jin Zijin understood her words now, pondered for a moment, and said, "He doesn’t know!"

Gu Youyou chuckled bitterly and whispered to herself, "No wonder." Marquess Yue knew he was married but didn’t stop him, whereas Yue Rujing had a lot of objections.

"You should go!" Gu Youyou said.

Jin Zijin’s expression darkened further, and he reminded her again, "I am already married."

"But you have never touched me." Speaking of this made Gu Youyou somewhat distressed as she said, "We didn’t even worship the heavens and earth when we got married. Apart from my identification being with you, how could we seem like husband and wife? We lack both the name and the reality of marriage. So... you have never really given up. Before, you said that when it was time to come to Beijing, you were not afraid of that old Taoist, you just hadn’t figured out how to settle me, right?"

Jin Zijin was stunned, his long eyelashes fluttering as he looked at Gu Youyou with increasing sadness.

"Youyou!" he gently pulled her into his arms, letting her lean against him, and said, "You’re right, I hadn’t figured it out. But now I have. Let Ajing do it, I will support him with all my might."

"That’s not good!" Gu Youyou pushed him away and said, "The State Preceptor cannot marry, but Yue Rujing is the lifeblood of the Yue Family. If he doesn’t marry, wouldn’t the Yue Family be left without a successor?"

With the situation in the Yue Family, if Yue Rujing did not carry on the family line, those women would surely fight them to the end.

Chapter 470: Decision

Upon hearing this, Jin Zijin fell silent for a moment before saying, "The State Preceptor position can be relinquished, if he wants to take a wife and continue the family line, he only needs to hand over the position of the State Preceptor immediately."

"And then what?" asked Gu Youyou.

"Before that, Tianzong must cultivate the next State Preceptor."

Gu Youyou gave a bitter smile, how was any of this as easy as he made it sound? Jin Zijin must be the one Tianzong was painstakingly grooming to be the State Preceptor. If he were to back out, it would undoubtedly catch Tianzong off guard.

And Xuanzong, they indeed have a legitimate heir to the State Preceptor.

How could someone hastily trained by Tianzong compare with someone meticulously prepared by others for many years?

Moreover... even if Yue Rujing takes over, it’s not guaranteed to succeed, so whichever way you look at it, it’s a loss.

With Jin Zijin relinquishing power, it would also be a significant obstacle to their efforts of undermining Xuanzong’s influence.

Gu Youyou raised her head and gently caressed Jin Zijin’s cheek, asking, "What were your plans before?"

"Hmm?"

"I mean... before you fell in love with me, what were your plans?"

Jin Zijin’s eyes deepened.

He tried to recall what his plans were before that, and they seemed somewhat hazy now.

He had not thought about what to do with her for a long time.

It must have been... before he brought her back to his thatched cottage.

The poison in his body was nearly uncontrollable, and not far from where he lived was an antidote, but it belonged to a medic raised by Xuanzong.

He had considered it for quite some time.

He was secretly hiding in Lotus Village searching for the Youying Pearl, and if he carelessly meddled with Xuanzong's medic, he could easily expose himself.

But to suppress the toxins within his body, he still went ahead and did it. And he involved another person he had long been reluctant to involve, having them clean up all traces along the way.

That's why the news from Gu the Third had not been sent out, and why the affair of the medicine at Doctor Zhou's also remained unreported.

As for Gu Youyou... at that time, to him, whether he acted or not, she would have died sooner or later. Although he used her, he also saved her, so they were even. When his affairs were concluded, he planned to explain everything to her; he never expected things to turn out the way they did.

He gave a bitter smile. It was just as she had said; he had always kept that exit route, he truly owed her an apology.

He touched her lips lightly and said, "What I thought before doesn't matter, what I've decided now is..."

"No..." Gu Youyou interrupted Jin Zijin before he could finish.

She said, "Our marriage lacked the proper rituals, we did not bow at the altar, and we have not consummated our relationship. As for our Lingnan... I believe Marquess Yue will find a way to not leak a single word. So, I think you should still compete."

"You..." Jin Zijin looked at Gu Youyou in shock.

"Just as you said, one can be a State Preceptor halfway without committing to it for a lifetime. Since Yue Rujing can serve for a few years and then step down, so can you."

Jin Zijin's expression changed. With or without her, this was what he had planned; he couldn't be the State Preceptor for his entire life, he had more important things to do...

Gu Youyou continued, "The main point is that you stand a better chance than Yue Rujing. If you want to win over Xuanzong, you must secure the State Preceptor position. Zijin, good things take time, as you've said, let me wait for you. My answer is that I will wait for you..."

Jin Zijin had already instructed the butler Qiu not to reveal too much about Gu Youyou's situation, so only Lin Xingyi from the Lin Family was aware of their affair.