Farmhouse 531

Chapter 531: Going to the Jie Family

"Poison!" Gu Youyou stated bluntly.

Lin Qianqing swallowed hard.

It is said that doctors save lives, but my cousin is somewhat special; she is also a poison doctor, not only saving lives but also harming them.

And when it comes to making poisons herself, her expression is unpredictable, showing great composure.

I can’t discuss this topic with her; I’m not cut out to be a doctor, so I won’t learn these things from her either.

"I can’t come tomorrow, Qinyun is having her coming-of-age ceremony, and I have to go."

"Qinyun?" Gu Youyou found the name somewhat familiar.

"Yes, Xie Qinyun. I introduced her to you last time we went to see the plum blossoms. She’s the daughter of Zuo Zongzheng, the youngest legitimate daughter of Jie Family, and the only daughter. She had the closest relationship with me when we were in school."

"Jie Family’s official!" Gu Youyou murmured, recalling what Jin Zijin had mentioned to her the day before yesterday about the internal affairs of Jie Family’s residence.

Lin Qianqing loves to gossip about the internal affairs of officials’ households; discussing these things with her couldn’t be more appropriate.

As Gu Youyou casually pounded the herbs, she asked nonchalantly, "I also want to join the excitement; would it be appropriate if I went?"

Lin Qianqing, of course, was eager to bring Gu Youyou along.

"Quite appropriate, naturally! I was indeed hoping to invite you, cousin, to accompany me, but I thought you were too busy, so I didn’t mention it."

"I can’t be busy all the time; I need to rest too," Gu Youyou said with a sheepish smile.

"Exactly, that’s the right approach."

Gu Youyou, appearing to have reservations, asked, "Then tell me, are there any taboos when visiting their home?"

Finally, the conversation was steered to the crux of the matter.

"What taboos could there be? It’s similar to our family. Just follow me; I am very familiar with their home. However..." Lin Qianqing suddenly hesitated, looking somewhat troubled.

"What’s wrong?" Gu Youyou sensed that this was what she was eager to hear.

"Oh, their family!" Lin Qianqing sighed, lowering her voice, "Remember this when you go: the second sister-in-law who comes out of their house is not the legitimate wife of her second brother but a mere mistress. That woman is no good. If she addresses you, don’t respond; I’ll deal with her. If you encounter her alone, just keep your distance."

Gu Youyou nodded, then said, "We are going to celebrate Miss Qinyun’s coming-of-age ceremony; we’re not there to deal with her. But from what you said, it seems we might actually run into her?"

"That shameless woman," Lin Qianqing spat, continuing, "You’re unaware; the Jie Family ancestors had a rule that a man should take only one wife, without any concubines. After the passing of Zuo Zongzheng’s wife and the wife of the eldest son of Jie Family, they didn’t remarry. Yet, that shameless woman somehow bewitched the second young master of Jie Family, breaking the family rule and getting herself married into the family as a mistress.

It would be one thing if she just married in, but she’s always undermining her sister-in-law, causing her to be confined by the second young master of Jie Family for years. With only these two women presiding over the household, and her sister-in-law confined, naturally, she receives the guests. Hmph, the less you want to see her, the more she thrusts herself into people’s presence. She’s just a mistress; how could we, legitimate daughters, demean ourselves to approach her? Now it’s gotten out of hand. I heard she’s overseeing Qinyun’s coming-of-age ceremony, and many legitimate daughters who initially intended to attend are now reluctant, much to Qinyun’s chagrin!"

Gu Youyou earnestly listened while mashing the medicinal juice, seeming to discern something and softly chuckled as she poured out the concoction.

Chapter 532: Pulling Out the Poisonous Tooth

"So, Lord Jie isn’t going to do anything about it?"

Lin Qianqing sighed, "How could this be easily managed? He might be able to address it once, but can he handle it every single time? It involves his son’s personal affairs. All Lord Jie does is stroke his beard and sigh, saying, ’If only Madam were still alive.’"

Lin Qianqing imitated Lord Jie, stroking an imaginary beard as she spoke, and both women couldn’t help but laugh.

Just hearing the story was enough to give one a headache, so Lord Jie must feel troubled himself, unable to do anything about it.

Gu Youyou had strained the prepared medicine through a cloth, then she took a drop of the medicine made from the blue grass and placed it in a small dish, which already contained some black, paste-like liquid. She mixed these medicines together, and then, she actually proceeded to feed the poisoned liquid to the mice she had been carefully experimenting on.

Heavens, what on earth did she want to do?

"Cousin, that’s poison!" Lin Qianqing exclaimed, her eyes widening in shock.

"I know," Gu Youyou replied calmly.

"Then why are you feeding it to the mice? They will be poisoned to death."

"They won't." Gu Youyou carefully fed each mouse some of the mixture and said, "They will be poisoned, but not to death, I've taken just a small amount."

At that moment, Yue Rujing entered with a jade box, and upon seeing the scene before him, he was taken aback, but then seemed to understand something.

He shook his head and sighed, "It's useless. Had I known you wanted me to find these things just for this, I wouldn't have helped you. It's a waste of my time."

Gu Youyou paused in her task, uncharacteristically offering no retort.

She wasn't sure if this would work. This was a method for extracting serum, a technique no one had used in this era, and the toxin was no ordinary poison but some kind of witchcraft.

Turning to Lin Qianqing, Gu Youyou said, "You go out for a while. I am about to feed the snake, and you are afraid of these creatures. I don't want to scare you."

Lin Qianqing shrank her neck and glanced at the blackened cage before hurriedly making her exit.

"Alright, I'll go help outside. Be careful, Cousin. The snake you're raising is a venomous one from the North; one bite is certain death."

"Mhm, got it. Off you go."

Once Lin Qianqing had left the backyard, Yue Rujing chuckled softly, sauntering along and said, "What is it you want to tell me? You even sent your cousin away."

"She is afraid of snakes," said Gu Youyou.

"Ha, an excuse."

"Then what do you think I want to tell you?" Gu Youyou replied irritably.

While speaking, she moved to bring over the cage of the venomous snake she was keeping nearby. This snake was strangely shaped, its entire body silver-white. It didn’t hibernate in the winter, and ironically, was seldom seen in the summer. The locals named it the Ice Snake.

"You’re really going to feed the snake?" Yue Rujing asked in surprise.

He shook the jade box in his hand and said, "Aren’t you going to ask what I’ve brought for you?"

Gu Youyou, looking somewhat weary, set the cage on the table and said, "We’ll talk about that later. Help me with something first."

"Me, help you feed it?" Yue Rujing shifted his gaze to the Ice Snake and shuddered.

He was afraid of snakes, too!

Of course, he didn’t voice this fear, not wanting Gu Youyou to make fun of him.

Gu Youyou shook her head, "I’m not asking you to help me feed it."

Yue Rujing breathed a sigh of relief.

"You help me extract the venom from its fangs."

Yue Rujing nearly stumbled over at that.

What in the world was this woman up to? Extracting venom from a viper’s fangs? Was that any different from pulling a tooth from a tiger’s mouth?

"You... you must be joking—this is no laughing matter at all!"

Better let me feed it.

Chapter 533: Bitten

"I’m not joking, you know." Gu Youyou was indeed tired, developing the antidote had worn her out, leaving her with no energy for a war of words with him.

Seeing that she wasn’t kidding, Yue Rujing grew even more scared. He exclaimed, "You really want to take it?"

Obviously, Gu Youyou nodded.

"This creature is the most poisonous snake in Zhuzhao Country, getting bitten by it is no joke—you’d be dead for sure, you know that?"

"I know," Gu Youyou nodded again, "that’s why I need your help. It’s too dangerous to do it alone. Last time I tried to extract its venom, I nearly got bitten."

Yue Rujing stood frozen on the spot, his mouth twitching once, then again, as if he was about to lose his mind.

She had actually extracted venom before, and she did it alone?

Yue Rujing set down the jade box, closed his eyes, and with the resolve of a warrior facing death, rolled up his sleeves to grab the snake.

"How do we do this?" His heart was racing. Damn woman, of all things to fuss with, it had to be a poisonous snake.

What was even more fatal was that his senior brother had ordered him to support Gu Youyou unconditionally.

No, later on he had to talk to his senior brother about this; it was too dangerous.

Not getting bitten by the snake this time didn't mean they'd be lucky the next time.

Gu Youyou picked up a bottle for the venom and said, "You just need to hold it, I'll handle prying open its mouth to get the poison."

The snake didn't look big, a grown one was only as thick as a chopstick. But its body was icy cold to the touch, holding onto it with its bone-chilling coldness was something Gu Youyou couldn't bear, and the snake was strong as well as slippery, so that's why she asked Yue Rujing for help.

Yue Rujing took several deep breaths before mustering the courage to grab the snake.

His hand was shaking so much that Gu Youyou couldn't bear to watch.

"Don't shake, it's highly toxic but not fierce."

"Who's shaking? I'm just a little cold."

Gu Youyou didn't bother to argue with his obstinacy; she could tell Yue Rujing was somewhat scared.

Right, it was a poisonous snake after all; even Yue Rujing must be a bit scared.

"It's quite tame, it won't bite you as long as you don't hurt it," Gu Youyou assured him patiently.

"Hmph, since when is a snake 'tame'?" Yue Rujing said grumpily.

Seeing that Gu Youyou hadn’t taken the opportunity to mock him, he gathered his courage once more and reached for the Ice Snake.

The icy chill of the snake seeped into his hand, helping him understand why Gu Youyou didn’t extract the venom herself and asked for his help instead.

When Yue Rujing managed to grab hold of the poisonous snake, Gu Youyou quickly took out a pair of chopsticks, grabbed a piece of frozen meat, and held it up to its mouth. The Ice Snake immediately opened its jaws wide to bite at the item on her chopsticks.

Seizing the opportunity, Gu Youyou hurriedly stuffed the prepared bottle into its mouth and reached out to press down on its head.

The sudden scare forced the poisonous snake to instinctively release the venom stored in its fangs, squirting it all out at once. Seeing that she had collected enough, Gu Youyou was finally satisfied and put away the bottle.

"Okay, you can put it back now."

Seeing that Yue Rujing hadn’t moved, Gu Youyou lifted her head to look at him. She burst into laughter when she saw Yue Rujing with his eyes closed, a resigned expression on his face.

"You’re that scared, huh? It’s a good chance for you to build some courage."

"What? I help you and you still make fun of me?" Yue Rujing opened his eyes, his cheeks flushed as he glared at Gu Youyou.

Embarrassing, she had seen through him after all.

Gu Youyou let go of the snake’s head, signaling to Yue Rujing that he could put the poisonous snake back in its cage.

At that moment, the poison snake that they had disoriented earlier suddenly turned its head and bit towards Yue Rujing’s chest.

Chapter 534: Drug Abuse

The bite was so sudden that they all didn’t have time to react.

Yue Rujing screamed in agony, letting go of the poison snake and clutching his chest.

Gu Youyou was startled, glanced at Yue Rujing, and hurried to capture the fleeing snake.

"Wait for me, don’t be afraid, I’m here, you won’t die."

It was too dangerous if the creature got away; it had just been milked for venom and was likely agitated. If it bit someone else, that would be terrible.

Fortunately, the snake was still dazed and didn’t get out of the courtyard before Gu Youyou caught it and tossed it back into the cage.

Yue Rujing, lying on the ground, was covered in a layer of frost, curled up in agony.

"You... you said this snake was docile. I... those who are bitten by it, no one... no one survives. Am I going to die... you killed me... you woman... are... our nemesis..."

That was before it felt threatened, alright.

Gu Youyou couldn’t explain to him; let him curse as much as he wanted. As a qualified doctor, she could tolerate all kinds of emotions from patients, and simply soothed him, "Don’t talk, don’t be afraid, I will save you."

"Who... are you fooling?" Yue Rujing grabbed Gu Youyou’s hand and said, "In... in my life..."

His hand was colder than hers. Fortunately, the venom just taken from the Ice Snake wasn’t much, so Yue Rujing could still speak so clearly to her.

Gu Youyou pulled her hand free and whispered softly, "Be good, don’t talk, conserve your strength, I’ll be back soon."

Gu Youyou got up to fetch her tools.

Yue Rujing shouted, "I told you not to leave, listen... listen to my... last words..."

Gu Youyou soon entered with a box and water, saying, "I told you that you’re not going to die. Who wants to listen to your last words?"

Yue Rujing was undoubtedly an extremely disobedient patient, and even with Gu Youyou’s professional ethics, she did not enjoy dealing with such patients.

He talks too much for someone about to die.

She quickly tore open Yue Rujing’s clothes and began to clean the wound on his chest with Qingshui.

A small bite, but it was both purple and white.

"What... what are you doing, woman?" Yue Rujing was even weaker than before but still struggled with the last of his energy against her pushing and pulling.

His demeanor, like that of a chaste woman resolute against dishonor, frustrated Gu Youyou to no end. His resistance would only cause the snake venom to spread faster.

"I told you not to move. If you don’t listen, I will call for help, and it will be you who ends up embarrassed."

Seeing the frost forming thicker on Yue Rujing’s body, Gu Youyou suddenly realized... the wound was so close to the heart.

This is bad!

Gu Youyou’s expression became solemn, not daring to take the situation lightly any longer.

And there was that virtuous woman still fighting desperately against her, preventing her from cleaning the wound.

"Do you not want to live? Is that it?"

Yue Rujing absolutely could not die like this.

Gu Youyou glared fiercely at him and, without regard for much else, pressed her head against his chest and began to suck out the poison with her mouth.

"You..." Yue Rujing, flailing his hands, was obviously shocked. That warm pair of lips pressed against his chest, drawing out the venom with each suction.

"What... what are you doing? You’ll... you’ll die! We’ll... both die."

Taking a breath in between, Gu Youyou said indifferently, "I won’t die. Don’t you know that my medicine for the past ten years has contained some Ice Snake venom? At worst, my condition will worsen a bit."

The medicine she took only contained a little bit of the venom, much less than she was sucking out now, but she didn’t say that.

Chapter 535: Save Him

Because she could not just stand by and watch Yue Rujing die, even if she risked being poisoned herself, she had to suck the venom out.

"Step aside, don't..."

Gu Youyou pressed down on his arm, saying, "Don't move. If I were to die from the poison, could I still live? Princely Heir? Just think I'm doing this to save myself. If I can't save you, I shall die with you."

Having said that, Gu Youyou once again leaned over his chest to suck out the poison from his blood.

Gu Youyou understood what Yue Rujing was being awkward about – it would be bizarre if a man with ancient mindset didn't entertain strange thoughts.

But there was no other choice. She wouldn't do this unless absolutely necessary.

She was a doctor. Not to mention sucking out poison, she would perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation if necessary – all to save a life.

Yue Rujing had already passed out, and Gu Youyou continued to draw out mouthful after mouthful of his poisoned blood until the frost on his eyebrows lessened.

Gu Youyou felt very dizzy. She shook her head and straightened Yue Rujing's clothes.

She had intended to help him dress, but her head was spinning so severely that she feared she might not be able to hold on.

Turning around, Gu Youyou took a special tool from her medicine box, a steel syringe needle.

This was the first time she had used such a needle since she had traveled to this time. Indeed, in Beijing, the craftsman's skill was excellent, and the needle was well-made.

She took out the only vial of Ice Serpent Serum she had prepared and injected it into Yue Rujing's body, after which she completely lost consciousness.

...

Jisheng Hall's signature doctor hadn't been seen for a day, and some of the high-profile patients were quite critical.

"We have come specifically to see Doctor Gu for treatment. If she won't come out, we will wait here."

When patients said things like that, it actually hurt the other doctors' feelings.

Gu Youyou's Jisheng Hall had recruited two external doctors. One of them, a male physician who treated common febrile diseases, had been wooed away from another medical clinic by Yue Rujing's mix of grace and coercion. Hearing the complaints of the two female patients, he didn't take a stand but instead just stroked his beard and chuckled deeply, continuing to diagnose and treat other patients.

The other was a female doctor in her fifties who had retired from the palace. She might not be good at treating other diseases, but she had some skills when it came to women's ailments. Many ladies from noble families in Beijing had been blessed by her services. It wasn't easy getting such a person to join Jisheng Hall – even the Lin Family's elderly Madam had to intervene at the beginning.

Of course, after a discussion with Gu Youyou on the subject of women's diseases, she held Gu Youyou in the highest regard, which is why she agreed to come.

Having served as a female doctor in the palace for many years, she was not short of silver to spend; therefore, she had taken up practicing not for the money, but for the prestige.

However, the words of those two women just now made her feel like she had lost face. She admitted that her medical skills were inferior to Gu Youyou's, but that didn't mean they should belittle her like that, right?

She snorted in a mocking tone: "Madam and Miss, what incurable disease have you contracted that only Doctor Gu must intervene? Back when this old woman served in the palace attending to the noble ladies, none were this fussy."

Implicit in her words, you ladies are putting on airs greater than those of the noble ladies in the palace.

Hearing the initial part of her statement, the mother and daughter were ready not to let the old midwife off the hook, determined to have a serious talk with her. But upon hearing the words "noble ladies of the palace," they became cautious and observed Doctor Cui up and down.

"This doctor, are you from the palace?"

Doctor Cui snorted, raised her eyebrows proudly, and calmly continued to treat the other women.

One of the attendants explained: "Madam Hua, Miss Hua, this is Doctor Cui, whom our Jisheng Hall had spared no expense to invite. Doctor Cui served as a female physician in the palace in earlier years, mainly treating diseases unique to women. If the two of you have such illnesses, seeking treatment from Doctor Cui is just as good as from Doctor Gu."

Chapter 536: Something Happened

These two were not relatives of high-ranking officials but rather magnates of commerce and trade. Although their family was wealthy, they lacked power and hence did not recognize Doctor Cui from the palace.

Hearing mention of the palace naturally left no room for doubt, and the elder Madam Hua, beaming with smiles, eagerly brought her daughter to Doctor Cui, saying, "This humble woman is blind to Mount Tai and hopes Doctor Cui won’t take offense. It’s not that I doubt Doctor Cui’s skills, it’s just that my daughter’s condition... before, it was Doctor Gu who examined her, and she had prescribed some medicine to take, stating that we should come back today... for a follow-up."

Miss Hua hastened to add, "Right, right, for the follow-up."

Gu Youyou had a habit of asking patients to return for follow-ups, which the two doctors, after a long tenure at Jisheng Hall, were well aware of.

Of course, they did not have this practice themselves. In their view, if a patient recovered, they naturally would not come back, nor was there a need. If not cured, patients would come back on their own even without being told to do so for a follow-up.

Seeing the mother and daughter’s sudden change in attitude, Doctor Cui’s brows gradually relaxed.

She was accustomed to bringing up her past experiences in the palace and relished the adulatory looks from others.

Only after sufficiently establishing her stature would she attend to the mother and daughter.

Before Gu Youyou had emerged, Shopkeeper Hu, responsible for the dispensary, found Lin Qianqing, who was dividing medicines, and said, "Miss Lin, may I trouble you to ask in the backyard when Doctor Gu will be out? She mentioned that she consults for four hours each day, and it’s getting late. In a little over an hour, we’ll have to close up."

The backyard was where Gu Youyou conducted her experiments, so everyone in the medical hall knew that, unless necessary, outsiders were not allowed in.

Of course, Lin Qianqing was allowed to come and go freely.

Thus, Shopkeeper Hu had no choice but to ask Lin Qianqing for help.

Lin Qianqing herself had been waiting left and right without seeing Gu Youyou and Yue Rujing come out and was already feeling somewhat annoyed. Since Shopkeeper Hu had made such a request, she handed the remaining undivided medicines over to him, stood up, dusted off her hands, and said, "Then I’ll go in and take a look."

"Ah! Thank you so much, Miss Lin."

My cousin and the Princely Heir were inside feeding snakes and perhaps had some matters to discuss, but they had really been in there for quite a long time.

Lin Qianqing, previously preoccupied with her tasks, now felt increasingly uneasy and quickened her pace towards the backyard.

Pushing open the door, she had several thoughts in mind, but she could have never imagined such an eye-searing scene.

What did she see? Behind several plum trees, she vaguely made out two overlapping silhouettes. Her cousin was lying on top of the Princely Heir, a posture far too intimate, stirring wild imaginations.

Moved by the noble principle of "see no evil," she initially intended to close the courtyard door.

But she immediately sensed something was amiss. Why were they motionless? Could something have happened?

With that thought, Lin Qianqing hurriedly gathered up her skirts and ran closer to inspect.

Their postures were indeed compromising, and the Princely Heir’s clothes were visibly... disheveled!

Gu Youyou’s face was buried in Yue Rujing’s chest, so she couldn’t see her expression. But Yue Rujing’s pallid complexion and the frost on his eyebrows were all too clearly visible to her.

Indeed, something had gone wrong.

Lin Qianqing cried out loudly and rushed to pull Gu Youyou up.

"Cousin, cousin, wake up, what’s happened to you?"

Gu Youyou showed no response; her complexion was terrifyingly pale, and like Yue Rujing, her eyebrows, too, were frosted over.

Lin Qianqing turned pale with fright and extended her hand, trembling as she reached for Gu Youyou’s breath.

The bone-chilling cold that struck her the moment she touched the tip of Gu Youyou’s nose immediately startled her so much that she quickly withdrew her hand.

Chapter 537: Testing Poison With One’s Own Body

So cold?

Lin Qianqing was momentarily stunned, as if scared silly, before the pain tore through her heart and lungs again.

"Cousin, what’s happened to you? Were you bitten by that Ice Snake? I’ve heard that those poisoned by the Ice Snake feel this icy chill. Cousin, how could this happen..."

Gu Youyou was not awakened by her crying, but Yue Rujing suddenly coughed a few times and slowly opened his eyes.

"Princely Heir Yue?" Seeing Yue Rujing awake, Lin Qianqing stopped crying and looked at him in surprise.

She had thought that Yue Rujing was dead. Both of them were showing symptoms of Ice Snake’s poison, which was said to be absolutely fatal.

"I..." As Yue Rujing spoke, he felt his throat to be incredibly hoarse.

He lifted his hand heavily and touched his chest where the snake had bitten him.

Lin Qianqing looked at Yue Rujing, then at Gu Youyou.

If Yue Rujing wasn’t dead, what about her cousin?

"Princely Heir Yue, what has happened to you? Were you bitten by an Ice Snake?"

Yue Rujing, touching his hand, said hoarsely, "Yes, I was bitten by an Ice Snake, and Gu extracted the poison for me."

"What? My cousin sucked the poison for you, then she..."

Yue Rujing, seeing Gu Youyou, who was uncertain whether dead or alive, was shocked. With suddenly summoned strength, he pulled her from Lin Qianqing's arms and felt for the pulse at her neck.

Lin Qianqing watched anxiously, asking, "How is she? Is my cousin still alive?"

After a moment, Yue Rujing breathed a sigh of relief and said, "Her pulse is very weak, but she's still alive for now."

"That's great, Princely Heir Yue, please save my cousin," Lin Qianqing also breathed a sigh of relief.

Yue Rujing furrowed his brows tightly and took several deep breaths to regain his strength.

"I can't neutralize this poison. We need to find my senior brother."

"So now..." Lin Qianqing tensed up again, "Should we go ask for his help?"

She knew of Yue Rujing's senior brother, the principal disciple of Tianzong, who resided in Beijing. She didn't know if it was possible to invite him.

"There's no time," Yue Rujing said through gritted teeth as he stood up, and picked up Gu Youyou, "You must prepare a carriage immediately; we're taking her to Sanqing Temple."

"Oh, right away!" Lin Qianqing quickly got up and ran outside.

There were horse-drawn carriages, rickshaws, and various vehicles in the medical hall—Gu Youyou said these were collectively called ambulances. The vehicles were equipped with simple resuscitation tools, perfect for transporting patients.

Shopkeeper Hu saw Lin Qianqing, who had gone to the back yard in search of Gu Youyou, running out pale-faced and before he could ask, she urgently ordered, "Quick, prepare the fastest ambulance."

So urgent?

Before Doctor Hu could say anything more, he saw the pale-faced Yue Rujing staggering out, carrying Gu Youyou.

Without needing further instruction, Shopkeeper Hu personally harnessed the carriage. In a short while, they had Gu Youyou on board.

Many people witnessed this scene, and after the carriage had left, someone asked, "Was that Doctor Gu just now? What happened to her?"

How could Shopkeeper Hu know what had occurred? Those who were informed had left with the carriage, and he knew nothing.

But as the shopkeeper of Jisheng Hall, he couldn't be ignorant. After pondering, he could only say, "Doctor Gu has been researching a medicinal formula recently. If successful, it could cure several previously untreatable diseases. However, there's been an accident. Doctor Gu tested the medicine on herself and was poisoned."

"Ah? Doctor Gu was poisoned for testing medicine on herself?"

"My, Doctor Gu is really... self-experimenting with poison. No wonder she's so adept at curing typhoid!"

Chapter 538: Completely Trust Her

"Yes, but testing poisons on oneself is just too dangerous."

"Having just seen Doctor Gu unconscious, could something go wrong? Doctor Gu isn't in danger, is he?"

Shopkeeper Hu wiped away his sweat—this he could not answer. He also did not know what condition Gu Youyou was in now.

Doctor Ji from Jisheng Hall stroked his beard and sighed, "Healers who test poisons on themselves have existed since ancient times. There was the legendary Emperor Shennong, who tasted all kinds of herbs. In the end, he died from the poison of a rupturing grass, leaving behind the legend of Shennong tasting all the herbs. If Doctor Gu really... alas! What a pity, what a pity. Doctor Gu is so young, in the prime of life..."

Everyone fell silent.

"This... really, if something were to happen to Doctor Gu, it would be such a regret."

All present shared in the sighs of regret and concern.

On the other side, the carriage carrying three people swiftly left the city gates, rushing towards Sanqing Temple on the outskirts of Beijing.

Yue Rujing's strength gradually returned, and seeing Gu Youyou growing more deeply poisoned, he became increasingly worried.

Lin Qianqing wrapped Gu Youyou in a thick blanket, continuously whispering complaints, "How could you get bitten by a snake, Princely Heir Yue? With your outstanding skills, how could you be so careless? I heard that although the Ice Snake is highly toxic, it's usually gentle and doesn't bite people without cause. How on earth did this happen? If anything happens to my cousin, how am I going to explain it to my grandmother..."

Lin Qianqing, a person brought up in a feudal society, dared to voice these concerns in the presence of Yue Rujing, whose status was much higher than hers, indicating she had greatly overstepped her bounds. So she didn't dare to speak too loudly, only murmuring her complaints in a soft voice.

Yue Rujing was so worried about Gu Youyou's possible death, he was out of touch with reality and didn't hear her speaking at all.

The atmosphere in the carriage was somewhat strange.

As for Yue Rujing's initial view of Gu Youyou, he, like Jin Zijin, simply saw her as a remedy for his ailment, never really considering her as a person.

As for her difficult temperament and disobedient nature, at most he saw her as a high-grade antidote. Isn't a rare medicinal herb usually hard to handle? So he didn't pay too much attention.

What was her identity? A spy or a lunatic, it didn't matter. As long as he kept a close watch on her when using her, and once he finished using her, he could discard her as he wished.

Through gradual contact, he felt that unbeknownst to him, the 'remedy' had taken on a different significance in their hearts.

What her true identity was also didn't seem important anymore. As his senior brother said, if she was a spy placed by others at their side, the goal should be to win her over and make her one of their own.

Human hearts can change.

While guarding against her, they also took advantage of her abilities until they really realized that she was just like them, a grasshopper on the same string. They gradually let down their guard and grew somewhat more favorable towards her.

After all, a good man does not quarrel with women, and where he could, he made concessions for her.

But this did not mean that he completely trusted her.

He didn't care what his senior brother thought, but Yue Rujing, no matter what, was not planning to trust this woman completely because, in his view, she could not possibly be the original Gu Youyou.

But now? He had been poisoned by the snake, and she had saved him without regard for her own life and death.

What was this woman thinking? Was it truly only because if he died, she would have to join him in death?

But he was alive now, and she might not be.

Yue Rujing’s mind was in turmoil. The firm beliefs he had held seemed to have cracked like an eggshell, as though they could collapse at any moment.

Chapter 539: Bring to Senior Brother

Gu Youyou would risk her life to save him, which was beyond his expectations.

"Who goes there, halt!" It was two Taoist acolytes who stopped the carriage.

The carriage came to a halt, its momentum tilting it forward, and the preoccupied Yue Rujing also snapped back to reality.

Ignoring Lin Qianqing’s resentful and fearful gaze, he lifted the carriage’s curtain and said to the acolytes outside, "It’s me, step aside."

The two acolytes were slightly startled and hurriedly brought their hands together in salute, "Second Senior Brother, this carriage..."

"Step aside, do you want to take responsibility if you delay the important matters?" Yue Rujing was always amiable, known by all disciples of Tianzong. But, when he spoke these few words now, his voice was filled with an unprecedented fury, heavy as iron, each word laced with indescribable malice.

Seeing the usually gentle Second Senior Brother speak in such a tone for the first time, the two acolytes didn’t dare to say anything more and quickly stepped aside.

The coachman drove the carriage directly into the Taoist Temple, stopping only when it could go no further.

Alone inside the hall sat Jin Zijin, who was surprised when he heard the sound of hooves and people outside.

Who would dare to drive a carriage in here? Even the Emperor wouldn't show such disrespect to the holy ground of the Dao Sect.

"What's happening outside?" Jin Zijin was asking the acolyte standing guard outside the hall when, abruptly, the vermilion door was kicked open.

Frowning, Jin Zijin looked up just in time to see Yue Rujing carrying the unconscious Gu Youyou into the hall, his expression filled with unprecedented fear and panic.

Lin Qianqing followed, gasping for air.

She had run in after them.

"What happened?" Jin Zijin quickly stepped forward to take Gu Youyou from Yue Rujing's arms, feeling the icy touch of her skin, and guessed the reason by looking at her complexion.

Yue Rujing knelt down with a thump, his face brimming with grief and self-blame.

"Senior Brother, it's all my fault, I was carelessly bitten by an Ice Snake, and Gu Youyou sucked the poison out for me."

The bite of an Ice Snake was lethal even if the poison was sucked out immediately. Jin Zijin did not concern himself with how Yue Rujing managed to stay alive but immediately carried Gu Youyou into the inner hall.

"Hey, hey, cousin sister..." Lin Qianqing hadn't caught her breath yet when she saw her cousin carried away by a white-robed Taoist. She didn't get a clear look at the person and he didn't say a word; how could she feel at ease? She hurriedly followed them.

Yue Rujing, having reached his limit, began to feel weak in his arms and legs but still managed to pull Lin Qianqing back at the last moment.

"Don’t go in, that’s my Senior Brother, he will save her. I can’t hold on much longer, I need to rest for a while. You keep watch at the door, don’t let anyone in."

Yue Rujing collapsed to the ground, unable to get up again.

The poison in his body and the antidote from Gu Youyou’s blood had started to take effect, his body was extremely weak, and the outburst of energy to bring Gu Youyou to his Senior Brother had drained all his strength.

He lay on the ground, gasping for air. Lin Qianqing worried about Gu Youyou but couldn’t ignore Yue Rujing either and had to drag him to a low couch first.

"Princely Heir Yue, my apologies." As a respectable lady, although different from the average daughter of a noble family, it was not proper for her to directly touch a strange man’s body, so she announced herself first.

Lin Qianqing exerted great effort to pull Yue Rujing onto the low couch, and after a while, he sank into a deep sleep.

...

He sliced open the veins on his wrist, bright crimson blood flowing like a small stream.

In no time, a large bowl was filled to the brim.

Jin Zijin’s hands were trembling; he had never felt such panic before.

After swiftly stopping his own bleeding, he picked up Gu Youyou and fed her the freshly drawn warm blood.

Chapter 540: Awakened

Because she had been drinking that medicine for years, the effect of the Ice Snake poison on her was different from others, which is why she was still alive now.

However, the deepening chill in her body was not a good thing.

The medicine she had taken in recent years was in vain, Gu Youyou at this moment was just as when he first met her, equally icy and bone-piercingly cold.

Back then, he had given her his blood to drink, and this time too, it would take his blood to suppress the poison.

A bowl of blood was fed to her, with a few drops hanging at the corner of her mouth, Jin Zijin gently wiped it off with his pristine sleeve.

A moment later, he sighed softly, "I thought you and Ajing didn't get along, but I didn't expect that at the critical moment, you would still risk your safety to save him. Youyou, thank you."

Since Yue Tingfang entrusted Yue Rujing to him, their lives had been bound together. If Yue Rujing truly died from a snake bite, he wouldn't know how to explain it to Yue Tingfang.

Owing the Yue Family so much already, he dared not owe them any more.

Taking off his clothes, he used his own body heat to slowly bring her back to warmth, much faster than using a heater.

The sun was setting in the west, and the day was already turning late.

Lin Qianqing watched the darkening sky with worry and fear.

Yue Rujing was still asleep, her cousin hadn't come out yet, and there was no sign of movement in the room.

Seeing that they hadn’t emerged so late, the family was probably already sending someone to the medical hall to look for them. In a little while, they would likely find this place.

She didn’t know how to explain this commotion to her family.

"Knock knock knock..." There came a sound of knocking at the door.

Lin Qianqing was startled, hastily getting up to deal with it.

"What is it?"

The Taoist lad outside said, "Is Miss Lin inside?"

Lin Qianqing was slightly taken aback, realizing in an instant what was going on.

What she had feared had come to pass, her family had found her.

"Yes," she answered.

The Taoist lad said, "Miss Lin, Butler Qiu from the Lin Residence is here, what about this..."

"I know, ask Butler Qiu to wait a moment, just say... my cousin is having an attack of her illness and is undergoing treatment."

This was a way to delay for a bit; Butler Qiu wouldn’t dare to barge in, but once he relayed this message back to the family, grandmother would start to worry too.

If her cousin was fine, it would be alright, but what if something bad happened?

She felt like she had lost a clump of hair in the span of just one afternoon from worry.

Time passed as slowly as a snail crawling, and the people inside still hadn’t come out, Yue Rujing continuing to sleep.

She looked at Yue Rujing, stirred the fire in the stove to make it burn more fiercely and added another quilt for him.

The poison of the Ice Snake was highly cold; she hesitated again and again, but still reached out to check Yue Rujing’s temperature.

It was warm, which meant that the snake poison inside his body was no longer a serious threat, otherwise, it should be ice cold and bone-piercing.

"Princely Heir Yue." Lin Qianqing tried calling him.

There was no response; after a moment, she pushed him slightly.

"Princely Heir Yue, Yue Rujing!"

The night had already fallen, Lin Qianqing lit a lamp, and by the dim light, she looked at Yue Rujing.

His eyelashes trembled slightly, as if he was about to wake up.

That was good, she had been nervous for hours and finally let out a sigh of relief.

Yue Rujing slowly opened his eyes, then saw the girl lighting a lamp before him.

"You’ve woken up?" Lin Qianqing said with delighted surprise.

His head a little sore, Yue Rujing held his forehead and propped himself up to sit.

Looking carefully, he could finally see the person before him clearly.

"You’re still here!" He glanced at the sky and shook his head, "How long have I slept?"

"About three hours," Lin Qianqing said.