Farmhouse 561

Chapter 561: Torture Her to Death?

He handed her an orange and said, "Aqing, don't take all the blame upon yourself. It's not your fault. If there's anyone to blame, it's me for being useless, for not securing for you the position of a principal wife, always letting others ridicule you as a concubine. But in my heart, there's only one principal wife, and that has always been you."

Concubine Du broke into a smile through her tears, wiping them away and handing half of the orange to Second Young Master Xie, saying, "I knew Master cares about Aqing the most. Master, have some orange."

Xie Qinyun felt so disgusted by Concubine Du's pretentious act that she couldn't stand them flaunting their affection in front of her by sharing oranges, and indignantly said, "Second Brother, what should I do? Is it possible that I, a legitimate daughter, would really end up as a concubine in someone else's house?"

Only she knew that the Emperor was selecting consorts for his sons, as Father Xie had only told her. Therefore, in Second Young Master Xie's mind, it was impossible for his sister to become someone else's concubine, unless it was to be a concubine of the Imperial Family.

But given his sister's temperament, she certainly wouldn't enter the Imperial Family.

He angrily said, "Nonsense! You are the only daughter of our family, which family would dare to make you a concubine?"

Become a concubine? Of course, he would never let Xie Qinyun become a concubine in someone else's house. The concubine of his own house had already broken his heart. His beloved woman was a concubine, and even with his constant protection, she had ended up leading such a life. If his sister became a concubine in someone else's household without a husband's protection, wouldn't she be bullied to death?

Xie Qinyun, clutching her handkerchief, said, "Then you must think of a solution for me. I've already reached the age of marriage, and if a matchmaker comes knocking one day, you surely can't..." She looked at Concubine Du and said with grievance, "You surely can't let her arrange a marriage for me, can you? That would be utterly humiliating."

It all still came down to the issue of Concubine Du's status. Second Young Master Xie looked at his sister, then at Concubine Du, and felt utterly exasperated.

"Maybe we could..." he began to say, perhaps suggesting that woman should take the lead. But recalling how that woman was even more petty than Aqing, he felt even less assured entrusting his sister's marriage matters to her.

Without a capable woman in the household to take charge, it truly was troublesome.

The two women were both waiting for him to finish his 'maybe we could,' but he seemed to stall, unable to complete the sentence.

Faced with two pairs of expectant eyes, he could only mumble, "Perhaps in a couple of days, I'll talk to Big Brother and ask him to marry a principal wife and bring her home quickly."

"Big Brother?" Xie Qinyun wilted in her chair as if deflated, "By the time Big Brother marries a new sister-in-law, I'll have become an old maid. I might as well wait for you to torment the Second Sister-in-law to death and let Concubine Du take her place."

Xie Qinyun's seemingly casual remark instantly chilled the atmosphere in the room.

Concubine Du, sitting awkwardly to the side, looked at Xie Qinyun with eyes that now harbored a few more traces of resentment.

Second Young Master Xie's face darkened, his anger apparent, as he said coldly, "Who taught you to speak like this? Was it that woman?"

Xie Qinyun quickly replied, "If she were capable of teaching someone to talk like this, she wouldn't have ended up in such a plight."

Second Young Master Xie looked at Xie Qinyun, his eyes growing increasingly intense. Xie Qinyun knew this was a sign of his growing anger, but, having come this far, she was unwilling to back down so she decided to stand her ground.

Well, she might as well speak up for that woman one last time. If Second Brother really didn't want to keep her, then she could only blame her own bad luck.

"Today, I heard from Miss Lin that she was gravely ill, so I went to visit her at her courtyard. But I didn't expect Second Brother to be so heartless. Knowing she was seriously ill, you even feared that her maid might go out to get medicines, so you simply locked up her courtyard gate. Second Brother, I understand what you mean—you resent the eldest daughter of the Du Family for occupying the principal wife's position. Our family can't divorce a wife, and with Father pressing down, you can't divorce her, so the only option is to shorten her life."

Chapter 562: Why Lock Her Yard

For five years, without anything to eat or drink, she became so thin that she hardly looked human. This time her illness was severe, she couldn't even get out of bed. I heard doctor Gu say that if she doesn't get medicine within three days, she'll be nearly gone. Congratulations, big brother, your long-held wish is about to come true, and congratulations to Madam Du, you're about to be promoted. When that time comes, I'll have to call you..."

"Shut up!" Xie Er, the second young master, clenched his fist and struck the tea table beside him. The teacup trembled violently, and the tea splashed out, causing Madam Du to cry out in alarm. She hurriedly stood up and stepped aside!

"Big brother!" Xie Qinyun was also startled and stood up, retreating two steps.

The maids and old women behind her all knelt down, whispering, "Second young master, the young miss is still young, with an unguarded mouth. You adore her the most, please do not hold this against her."

"Get out!" Xie Er, the second young master, shot a fierce glare at the maids and old women behind Xie Qinyun and scolded loudly.

The maids and old women hesitated, glanced at their young miss, and considering the second young master's furious state, they also stood up and left.

In the room, only three people remained. Xie Er, the second young master, once again turned his gaze to Xie Qinyun, asking coldly, "Who exactly taught you to say these things? Was it that woman? This is your last chance."

Xie Qinyun bit her lip tightly and didn't say a word, leaving in a huff of disappointment.

What could she possibly hope for when her big brother's blindness had long been incurable?

His wife's weak character was beyond help, and her predicament was well deserved.

Madam Du, this cunning and petty person. It wasn't that she wouldn't receive retribution, just that the time had not come yet. Hmm, she had never borne a child; perhaps that was her retribution.

...

Xie Qinyun left angrily, and Xie Er, the second young master, was equally angry. He ordered someone to confine Xie Qinyun, not allowing her to leave her own courtyard.

There was something peculiar about today's incident. Allowing her to leave would only create more chaos; he needed to close the doors and investigate thoroughly.

Upon returning, he found Madam Du kneeling on the ground, looking uneasy.

With her head lowered and shoulders trembling, she cried, "My lord, I am at fault in this matter."

Seeing her admit her mistake so quickly, Xie Er, the second young master, breathed a sigh of relief and bent down to help her up.

"Take your time and speak up. What are you doing this for?"

He had intended to ask her about the woman’s illness and the matter of her having someone lock up that courtyard.

"Yes, my lord." Madam Du stood up, taking her seat on the stool with a hesitant and careful demeanor, pitiful and never daring to look into his eyes.

"I truly didn’t know that my sister was sick until just now when the third young miss mentioned it. Since you confined her, she and her maids haven’t come out, and they haven’t allowed anyone else to enter. You know my sister’s temper—she doesn’t let anyone into her yard; who would dare disobey? Do you remember that incident from our childhood? When we were at the Du Residence, a servant who disobeyed was beaten and sold by her."

Xie Er, the second young master, nodded; he still remembered that incident.

Miss Du had always been arrogant and domineering in his memory, as she was the only legitimate daughter of the Du head without a son. Since she was young, the Du head and his wife doted on her greatly.

Madam Du continued, "The people who bring meals daily don’t dare to enter the courtyard, so they can only leave them at the entrance for Cuiya to pick up. Aside from Cuiya, she doesn’t see anyone, so I truly didn’t know she had been sick for many days."

Xie Er, the second young master, sighed, looking at the crying beauty before him and offering her a handkerchief.

"Look at you, crying over her. Is it worth it? Now, tell me, what about the matter of locking her door?"

Chapter 563: No Becoming Spirits After the Founding of the Nation

Hearing this, Concubine Du, who had just dried her tears, began to cry again and said, "Today is the third miss’s hairpin ceremony, and I worry... with so many guests around, I fear it might turn out like a few years ago, during father’s birthday celebration. Husband, you said she wasn’t to come out and had me host it, yet she still made an appearance and humiliated me in front of so many people. I’m afraid that incident will happen again, which is why... I took it upon myself to have her courtyard locked."

Having said this, Concubine Du was already unable to speak through her tears.

Jie Residence’s second young master patted Concubine Du’s back and whispered consolations, "It’s all right as long as you explain it clearly. Now, no more tears; it’s getting late, you should rest."

After speaking, he stood up and walked outside, his heart inexplicably filled with restlessness and unease.

Ayun said she was going to die, and father loved her so much. If she were to die for these reasons, it would surely be blamed on Aqing again, even if it was unintentional. But if it really resulted in a loss of life, it would seem intentional.

She deserved to die, but she couldn’t just die like that.

After leaving Concubine Du’s courtyard, the second young master of the Jie Residence headed straight for the most secluded courtyard within the estate.

Meanwhile, Concubine Du was helped up by her maid, her eyes fixed bitterly outside the door; her gaze was so chilling that it startled the maid at her side.

"Madam, why don’t you... Why don’t you rest first?"

Privately, Concubine Du’s maids all addressed her as madam.

Concubine Du, with a calm and faint glance, bore no resemblance to the pitiful little girl from before; her eyes were filled with viciousness.

"Go, see where the second young master has gone."

The maid bit her lip, glanced outside the courtyard, and said softly, "Looking at that direction, it’s the courtyard of Miss Du."

No one dared to refer to Miss Du as the second young mistress in front of her, so they always called her Miss Du, a practice also tacitly approved by the second young master.

He had condoned many things she had done, which is why Concubine Du dared to act so recklessly.

A clatter of shattered cups echoed around the room; it turned out that Concubine Du had knocked over a set of tea utensils on the table.

Broken bowls and dishes lay scattered on the floor, followed by the furious bellowing of Concubine Du, "That bitch, why hasn't she died yet? Her mother oppressed mine for a lifetime, so must I be oppressed by her for a lifetime too?"

"Madam, please calm down!" The maids hurriedly knelt down to plead.

"Calm down?" Concubine Du sneered, "Go, go see when that bitch will die."

...

Jin Zijin furrowed his brow as he watched the busily working woman.

If he hadn't heard from the servants of the Lin Residence that she only returned at night, he would have never known, she hadn't rested at all during the day, and had gone straight to the Jie Residence after leaving his place.

"My affairs aren't urgent; why do you disregard your own well-being so much?"

He was afraid she would come to him again, weak and gasping for air, needing to be saved. Such a scare was enough once; another few times might scare her to death.

"Today was a good opportunity," Gu Youyou said indifferently.

She continued writing down the research findings of the past few days. She refused to believe that she couldn’t solve the poison.

Those damn pearls of ice and fire, said to be transformed from Sacred Beasts, who really knows what nonsense that is?

In ancient times, there were many folklore and myths about strange and supernatural beings. If it weren’t for the prohibition against such creatures gaining sentience after the founding of the nation, there would likely be many more today. Such things can neither be fully believed nor entirely dismissed; indeed, some things are inexplicable and unresolvable through science. But these legends have persisted, and she had never seen them, so she had decided... to temporarily disbelieve them.

Jin Zijin didn’t know that Gu Youyou’s thoughts were drifting at that moment, as he pondered in his heart how to discipline this woman so he could rest assured.

Chapter 564: Tonight You Serve in Bed

Her temperament really made it easy for her to get into trouble.

"Considering how useless I am, forcing you to help me, if you should overexert yourself to the point of harm, I’d feel distressed. To ease my mind, shouldn’t you be a bit more obedient, hmm?"

Jin Zijin covered his own chest, his gaze earnest yet somewhat... fleeting. This man, when not putting on an act, was inscrutable, but when he did, his eyes shone clearly. Gu Youyou stopped writing, studied his face, and suddenly laughed aloud.

"Speak properly, I’m not used to this from you."

"Huh? Speak properly?" Jin Zijin straightened up, adjusted his posture, and seriously said, "Speaking properly means I have no way to deal with you, so I’m seeking your pity for this heart of mine."

"You... hahaha..." This time, Gu Youyou laughed so hard she trembled, and the pen she held dropped to the floor.

She stood up, spun around, and sat on his lap, pressing her hand to his chest as she said, "You've been especially good today, and your words have pleased me, so... should I grant you the honor of sharing my bed?"

After finishing, she looked at him somewhat nervously, with some expectation, yet feeling that her words were too abrupt.

Her thoughts swirled in her mind, then she felt that what she had said was not wrong.

He had said before that he wanted to be that darn State Preceptor, right? Afraid of failing Sanqing, he had to remain chaste until he could retire with honors, then he would marry her openly and bring her to his side.

Logically speaking, they could then consummate the marriage.

But now that he was no longer pursuing the role of State Preceptor, focusing instead on uncovering the truth behind his mother's wrongful death, seeking revenge for her, and finding the person behind the plots from back then. Finding the Princess who was taken away, the person who swapped identities with him.

Not being a Taoist anymore meant no more owing Sanqing, so they should consummate the marriage now, shouldn't they?

Realizing this, Gu Youyou relaxed and drew his head closer, earnestly gazing at him.

"Is that not allowed?"

Seeing his expression grow increasingly uneasy, Gu Youyou felt both disappointed and anxious.

"Youyou!" He took her hand and laid it down, sighing softly, "What you just said is not appropriate, not something you should say."

"Huh?" Gu Youyou was stunned.

What did she just say? Sharing the bed?

Good heavens, such words from a maiden are only uttered when her virtues are locked away in a cabinet, and he replies that it’s not right?

Is he truly a saint? He’s so hard to please!

"Sharing a bed, that’s something concubines do, you are not one, and neither am I."

Snort...

Gu Youyou felt severely hurt, as if she were on the verge of coughing up blood.

Does he have to be so serious?

"It’s one thing to talk about it privately, but this is Beijing, you need to be careful with your words and actions. I don’t know what your previous world was like, but in this one, it’s like this; perhaps a word said carelessly or an unintentional action can cost someone their life. If offending someone you shouldn’t have is due to some inadvertent mistake... you’ve seen the situation with me and Ajing; there are many things we can’t directly intervene in. Do you understand?"

His lengthy explanation made Gu Youyou become serious, she began to ponder deeply.

The things she mulled over were more than Jin Zijin anticipated.

Speaking of which, Jin Zijin’s status was quite high, as Tianzong’s leading disciple, he did not need to kneel before the Emperor, and the high officials of Beijing would show him some respect. Even in such circumstances, was he unable to get involved in the affair of his mother from back then?

Jin Zijin was the kind of person who always kept things to himself, and he certainly wouldn’t discuss matters he was unsure of, unrelated to whether he trusted or not, this was just his nature.

Chapter 565: Beauty Under the Moon

Perhaps it was not that he couldn’t infiltrate the matters of that year, but rather that the opponent was too strong, their background too complicated. They were so powerful that he couldn’t shake them, and their situation was so complex that his influence couldn’t penetrate.

Act cautiously, yes, one should act cautiously.

Gu Youyou patted her forehead and sighed. This place was nothing like Qingshui Town or Taohua Village, nor like Lingnan. This was Beijing. Having been here for so long, she shouldn’t always use modern thinking to consider the problems of the ancient times. If she didn’t integrate herself, she indeed wouldn’t even know how she’d die.

"Zijin, you’re right," she wrapped her arms around his neck again and said, "I just can’t wrap my head around it at the moment. After all, I’ve spent over twenty years there, and my personality has long been formed. But don’t worry, I’m quick to learn, and I won’t cause you any trouble."

Jin Zijin smiled and said, "Knowing the times, understanding when to advance or retreat, that’s good."

Gu Youyou said, "But don’t get smug, okay? I agree with your advice because I think these little details are trivial and won’t cause injury. I can do that, but it doesn’t mean I don’t have a line I won’t cross. If someone goes too far with me, I will fight back with my own methods to the end."

"Hmm, you are someone with principles," Jin Zijin didn’t argue with her further and instead carried her to the bed.

"It’s late, and you’re not well. You should rest soon."

Looking at the pitiful brush lying on the ground, Gu Youyou said, "But I haven’t finished writing yet."

Jin Zijin frowned. He couldn’t understand a thing Gu Youyou wrote, and he didn’t like this feeling, as if there was a barrier between them.

He said, "Just tell me whatever you want to do. Why must you insist on doing everything yourself?"

Gu Youyou replied, "I have to do this myself, it’s something that could save both our lives. Xuanzong must be keeping a tight watch, and since we can’t just throw Jin Ziyuan and you into a furnace to boil, after much thought, I still think my method is better."

"How confident are you?"

Gu Youyou’s face darkened as she said, "Before I make it happen, I hate it when people ask me how confident I am."

Jin Zijin: "..."

"Alright, let’s sleep."

Gu Youyou turned over and said, "Just like that, we’re going to sleep? Did you forget to say something to me?"

"Hmm, you handled the Jie Family incident well."

"What else?" Gu Youyou huffily stuffed a pillow at him.

"The Imperial Family’s daughter-in-law will have their body inspected by a matron before getting married."

"Ah...?" Basically ## screwed.

Gu Youyou was at a loss for words.

"I don’t want you to be criticized."

Shoot...

The revolution has not yet succeeded; the effort must continue!

...

At the Octagonal Pavilion, a beautiful woman gazed downward with a contemplative look. In her hand under the moonlight was a damaged green collar ribbon, and she anxiously waited for her maid to bring the needle and thread to mend it.

"Madam, here are the needle and thread." Two maids came, one holding a basket filled with various silk threads, the other holding a palace lantern.

"Quick, give them to me." The beauty carefully set down the collar ribbon, took the basket, and selected the right color.

The other maid moved the palace lantern closer to help her discern the colors more clearly.

But the light was still inadequate. The woman tried several similar silk threads, but was not satisfied, her elegant eyebrows knitted together in frustration.

The maid by her side whispered, "Madam, this collar ribbon is made of silk from Jinxiu City’s Jin Family and embroidered by the Yu Family. I’m afraid... we will not be able to mend it properly."

"Jin Family, Yu Family?" The woman looked at the collar ribbon with distress and asked, "Then you two shall go to Jinxiu City first thing in the morning and ask the Jin and Yu families to mend this ribbon for me."

Chapter 566: Finding Someone to Repair

The maid was in a dilemma and said, "The Jin Family is easy to find, but the Yu Family... Madam may not be aware, but there's no one left in the Yu Family. I'm afraid the complete embroidery of the Yu Family is..."

"What? Lost to time?" The beauty raised her eyebrows, her expression carrying a hint of anger.

The maid hurriedly knelt down, kowtowed, and then said in a trembling whisper, "Madam, it's true that there's no one left in the Yu Family. However, years ago, the Yu Family had a daughter who married into the household of the then Magistrate Du. That Madam Du also passed away a few years ago, leaving behind a daughter who is now the lawful wife of Jie Residence's second young master. That second young mistress of the Jie Family is the sole heir of the complete embroidery technique."

The beauty paused for a moment, seemingly lost in thought as she looked at her collar tie slashed by the sword. After a while, she said, "Prepare a generous gift for me. Tomorrow we shall visit the Jie Residence."

"Yes, Madam!" The maid took her basket and returned to the inner chamber, but another maid was anxiously watching the beauty's chest.

"Madam, let this servant tend to your wound please!"

The beauty seemed to remember her injury only then, looking down at the blood that had merged with her red dress. The damp sensation made her aware that she was indeed bleeding.

There was a touch of paleness on her face, but she smiled lightly and said, "It's nothing serious, just a little wound."

Indeed, just a little wound. If he hadn't lacked the intent to kill, how could it be just a little wound?

Let the blood flow then. If tears cannot flow, can blood not either?

"That assassin..."

The beauty waved her hand and said, "He’s already escaped. Don’t bother with the assassin. We must not let word of this incident spread. Once the Empress’s birthday is over, we will return to Xizhou."

The maids had no choice but to withdraw.

...

Miss Du of the Jie Family knew that the second young master would come tonight. Every time something like this happened, he would come, scolding and humiliating her.

When she first married him, she still harbored a glimmer of hope and would resist. Gradually, she realized that once his heart had turned, no matter what you did, right or wrong, you were always in the wrong. So she gave up hope, no longer daring to ask for anything, and tried to avoid them.

But sometimes, just wanting to hide isn’t enough.

And just because you don’t fight back, it doesn’t mean you can avoid those hurtful insults.

But that’s okay, she had gotten used to it. Over the years, she had learned to automatically ignore those harsh words and live in her own world.

The second young master of the Jie Family arrived at the most secluded courtyard in the Jie Residence with a servant. One of the doors to the courtyard had been violently thrown to the ground, and the other hung precariously from its red-painted frame.

He frowned and asked the servant beside him, "Who did this?"

Who in the Jie Residence would dare to do such a thing? Even if he didn’t know, he could guess.

"Perhaps it’s the young mistress... It was said that she visited this courtyard today."

Oh, that’s right, Ayun had been here, which explained what had happened just now.

It was indeed this woman—cannot stay peaceful even on the verge of death.

He furiously kicked down the other door and stepped into the courtyard.

He hadn’t been there since she moved into the courtyard two years ago.

In his recollection, it was the most isolated courtyard in the Jie Residence. He never visited it, which is why he had her move there, so he could be out of sight, out of mind.

By the moonlight, he saw the state of the courtyard, and a flicker of surprise crossed his face.

"Why is it so dilapidated?"

Weeds grew wild everywhere; the desiccated lotus pond was full of cracked, filthy mud. The pavilion on the pond, Shuixie, had nowhere to sit because the blue tiles on the roof were mostly broken. The rain had rotted the two willow wood benches.

Chapter 567: Let’s Get Divorced

The servant said softly, "This courtyard has always been neglected, with no one to maintain it, so naturally, it has fallen into this state." However, he didn’t say that, instead he replied, "I’ve heard that the young... Miss Du doesn’t fancy outsiders entering her courtyard."

"Oh..." Jie Erye understood and let out a cold snort.

Indeed, Aqing had mentioned that the woman didn’t like others entering her courtyard.

Alright, then let it be.

Passing through the dilapidated corridor and Shuixie, Jie Erye finally arrived at the main hall of this deserted courtyard.

Miss Du, wearing a thin garment, sat upright in the main hall, seemingly waiting for someone.

Indeed, she was waiting for him. The woman had everything figured out and naturally knew he would come tonight, so she deliberately sat there waiting.

"Erye, Xintong is ill, so I won't get up to greet you properly, please forgive me."

She was indeed sick, sick to the point where she couldn't leave her bed. Secondly, ever since he had come to loathe her completely, she felt there was no need to humble herself before him anymore, because being right or wrong in his eyes always turned out to be wrong.

Jie Erye scrutinized the sitting woman. A dim oil lamp sat beside her, her hair done in a simple style, and her expression was as flat as still water.

Yes, that was just like her. She used to be domineering, but since she had moved into this courtyard, the times he had seen her could be counted on one hand, and each time he had seen her, she looked just like this.

His father felt sorry for her when he saw her like this, saying her heart had died, and that it was their fault for making her this way.

But he felt that this woman was always good at putting on an act. If she didn't harbor resentment, then why would she be so impolite? If she truly didn't care about anything, then how did she know he would come tonight?

At this thought, a surge of anger welled up in him.

"All of you leave. I have some words to speak with her alone."

Cuiya, seeing her mistress stubbornly getting out of bed with difficulty, was reluctant to leave, but was pulled away by the servant Jie Erye had brought.

Only the two of them remained in the room, with a dying oil lamp.

A moment later, Jie Erye's angry voice filled the room, startling the flickering flame: "Hmph... Drop that pretentious facade. I'm here to warn you not to try acting pitiful in front of my family, not to try to drive a wedge between my relatives. You think you're pitiful, but have you ever considered who caused all this?

Before you made the decision to marry into the Jie Family, I warned you. It was your own foolish fantasy, thinking that holding the title of my principal wife, you could do whatever you wanted?

Do you see now? Aside from the name of principal wife, you've gained nothing. I will not let you enjoy that glory, so you might as well abandon any delusions of going out and seeing other people."

Miss Du's brow twitched, and she suddenly asked, "So, was it your idea to lock the door?"

"My idea?" Jie Erye said indifferently, "Yes, it was my idea."

Since it was Aqing who had the door locked, what did it matter whether it was my idea or not.

Miss Du gave a wry smile. "So, your visit tonight was just to warn me how much you despise me. You really didn't have to, because I've always known."

"It's best that you know," Jie Erye felt a stifled feeling for some reason.

Miss Du breathed a sigh of relief, recalling what Gu Youyou had said to her today. She said, "If that's the case, why don't we divorce? I will speak to the Jie family head about it tomorrow."

In front of him, she didn't call the Jie family head 'father,' otherwise, he would argue with her again and throw sarcastic remarks. It didn't matter to him what she called him, so why should she bother about such formalities?

Chapter 568: Discussing Divorce

"You wish to divorce me?" Master Jie thought he had heard wrong. She actually proposed a divorce?

"Yes, a divorce. I believe I have done nothing wrong; it is you who disdains me, so it shall be a divorce."

Hmph, what's the difference between a divorce and sending a wife away? Right, the Jie Family does not allow sending a wife away, hence she speaks of divorce.

"Is this true?"

Even though he heard her say such words himself, he still couldn't believe it. Was she really willing to divorce? What did divorce mean for a woman? She had used all means to marry into this family.

Miss Du looked up and surveyed the room - the decaying doors and windows, the leaky roof, not a single warm spot on her body.

Scarcity of food and clothing, not even enough candlelight to brighten the place - wasn't that enough?

He wouldn't let her occupy this position forever. If she didn't leave, death was the only option.

She was the only one left of the Yu Family; the skill of Yu embroidery could not cease in her hands. She couldn't just die in this desolate courtyard! After realizing all this, she continually aspired to survive.

With a bitter smile, she said softly, "You are after my life; why should I stay? The art of Yu embroidery must not end with me."

"I am after your life?" Master Jie exclaimed in surprise.

As the words fell, he immediately remembered that she lived here at his bidding. When she fell ill, he had locked the courtyard gate to prevent her from seeking medical treatment. It was Aqing who did it, but it was also on his orders, so wasn't that tantamount to him desiring her death?

Seeing her speak so calmly about the divorce, he didn’t know why, but a sense of panic rose in him.

Wasn’t relinquishing her position as the principal wife what he had always wanted? Why the panic now?

Master Jie hurriedly shook his head, casting aside the inexplicable emotions in his mind, and sighed, "It’s rare for you to see the light on your own. If I had known it would come to this, why go through all that trouble in the beginning? It has caused unrest for the entire family. Very well, if you can convince father to agree, we will divorce."

Miss Du’s eyes showed no emotion, only her face was too gaunt and pale. She nodded slightly and said, "Thank you! I will definitely persuade Master Jie to agree!"

Master Jie suddenly scrutinized her, and by the faint light of the fire, he saw her harrowing sickly appearance and felt a sudden pity for her.

Perhaps it was because she would soon be irrelevant to him; he found he no longer abhorred her as before.

Neither of them spoke, and the room fell into a silence that was almost eerie.

Just as Miss Du was about to speak, Master Jie preempted her.

"Despite everything, Master Du has been an old acquaintance of the Jie Family, and you are his daughter. After our divorce, I cannot treat you too unfairly. I will have the Accountant’s Office give you some silver, to ensure you have no worries about food and clothing later in life."

However, Miss Du replied indifferently, "That won’t be necessary. The Yu Family’s embroidery workshop and the Du Family’s properties are all in my name. Once I leave your family, I will manage those neglected shops and estates back to prosperity."

Master Jie grew somewhat irritated upon hearing this.

This woman, even now, couldn’t she comply a little? Must she still argue with him over money?

He said angrily, "Our agreement is a divorce, not sending a wife away. If you leave empty-handed, where will that leave the honor of the Jie Family? The Yu Family’s embroidery workshop has been closed since your mother’s death, and what property does the Du Family have? A few neglected estates and a decrepit house that no one would buy even if it were sold cheap. How would you manage? As a woman, do you still intend to conduct business in public?"

"Fine!" To prevent him from uttering anything more offensive, Miss Du had no choice but to shut him up with that word.

Chapter 569: If You’re Leaving, Then There’s No Need to Endure Anymore

"You..." Jie Er Shaoye was choked up, his heart growing increasingly stifled as he sneered, "When did you acquire such a resigned demeanor? It’s utterly disgusting."

Upon hearing these words, Miss Du suddenly clutched at her chest, where a sharp pain was throbbing.

Even though she had developed a heart as strong as stone through repeated injuries, it couldn’t withstand his hammering.

What more did he want from her? Whatever he said went, and it wasn’t as if she owed him anything, yet she had to suffer so much.

Taking a deep breath, and then another, Miss Du felt like she was exhaling more than she was inhaling, as if she were on the verge of fainting due to the discomfort.

Jie Er Shaoye, seeing that something was amiss, hesitated for a moment but still picked up the teacup from the table and handed it to her.

"Don’t you die on me tonight."

Miss Du took the cup of cold tea and drank it down in one gulp. The cold sensation slid down her throat, clearing her mind a bit.

Yes, she couldn’t die tonight.

She was about to leave, so why should she endure this man’s verbal abuse?

Thus, she raised her head and stared at him with a look of hatred she had never shown before.

She was in pain, and all the hurt he had caused her made her feel it. She regretted, regretted not seizing the opportunity, and when she knew that the person he liked was her sister, she still clung to that marriage contract.

Perhaps her stare was too intense because Jie Er Shaoye couldn’t help but take a step back.

"What are you doing?"

"What am I doing?" she also wanted to know what she should do. She said, "I never wanted to do anything. It was always you who thought I wanted to do something. So I ask you, what do you think I want to do now?"

Jie Er Shaoye stared at her, at a loss for words, only to hear her continue, "You say I’m the source of unrest in the Jie Family, fine, I’ll leave. You think I deserve compensation, fine, I’ll accept it. But you also say my resigned demeanor is utterly disgusting! I really don’t understand why someone can be so repulsive to another. Whatever you say goes, and in the end, I’m still utterly disgusting to you. So please tell me, what am I supposed to do?"

"I..." Jie Er Shaoye was at a loss for words.

In the past, when she defended herself, he could always find a multitude of faults with her that left her speechless.

But why did her words this time leave him without a reply?

"Forget it, I've already decided to leave. You'll only have to endure your disgust for me for another two days. If you really can't stand it, you might as well go stay on the estate outside the city for a few days. You can return after I've moved out."

She dared to speak to him in such a way? He was stunned again.

In the past, hadn't she always been timid when facing him? Even though she might be fierce in front of Aqing, she never dared to be so presumptuous in his presence!

So, she's grown bold because she's leaving, is that it?

Fine then, since she's leaving.

Jie Er Shaoye snorted angrily and stormed out, slamming the door behind him.

Seeing the maid kneeling outside the door, he suddenly remembered the woman he had seen outside the wall during the day, saying that she had been prescribed a medicine.

She was leaving, but she could not leave the Jie Family in such a weak state; that would be the talk of ridicule.

Indeed, he had to cure her illness so that they would owe each other nothing.

"Bring me the prescription that Doctor Gu gave your mistress," he demanded.

"Young... Second Young Master!" Cuiya paled with fright. She didn't know why the Second Young Master suddenly wanted the mistress's prescription.

But since the Second Young Master never liked the mistress, she instinctively guarded against him.

A flash of fierceness crossed Jie Er Shaoye’s eyes as he coldly said, "You and your mistress are cut from the same cloth. Do you think I’d harm your mistress? Bring it to me."

Chapter 570: She’s Leaving

Isn’t he just going to harm Miss? With that said, Cuiya dared not give her the prescription.

When the Young Miss of the Du Family in the room heard it, her weak voice came through: "Cuiya, give it to him."

"Miss..." Cuiya was so aggrieved she was about to cry.

Her poor Miss really had a hard life.

But since the Miss had spoken, she had no choice but to obey, and could only take out the neatly folded prescription she had been hiding close to her body.

Upon receiving the prescription, Second Master Jie finally left triumphantly.

Cuiya returned to the room and curled up beside her pitiful Miss, crying her heart out, while the Young Miss comforted her: "Don’t cry, these years I’ve dragged you down with me. When I get better, we’ll leave, and I’ll take you to a good life."

After being enlightened by Gu Youyou and thinking it over for an afternoon, she finally came to terms with it.

Life is one’s own, and whether it’s good or bad, it’s lived for oneself. Her persistence only led to that person’s extreme disgust and caused those around her to suffer too. She had been too foolish before.

Having known that Second Master Jie went to that deserted courtyard, how could the Concubine Du sleep? Only after seeing that Second Master Jie, who had been gone for over an hour, had finally returned did she hurriedly follow him.

"Husband, the night is deep and the dew is heavy. Aqing has prepared hot water for you; how about soaking your feet?"

The intelligence of Concubine Du lay in her reluctance to casually inquire about those matters. If the man was willing to talk, even without asking, he would still speak; if he didn't want to, asking would just annoy him. Otherwise, how could she have so firmly locked in the man's heart?

Second Master Jie patted Concubine Du's hand that came up to help him and sat down in a chair, waiting for her to attend to his foot washing.

The woman's soft, white hands pressing on his feet felt very comfortable.

Second Master Jie's irritability slowly subsided.

He took out a prescription and after looking at the names of the herbs inside, he said, "This is the prescription Doctor Gu gave to your sister. Once her illness is cured, she will leave the Jie Family, and then I'll find a suitable opportunity to make you the official wife."

Concubine Du's hands froze instantly.

She didn't ask about how Doctor Gu had prescribed medicine for that woman; instead, she was astonished that she would leave the Jie Family.

"Why would my sister leave the Jie Family?"

It was impossible for the Jie Family to divorce a wife, so she never brought up the matter of asking Second Master Jie to divorce her, only hoping that she would die early.

"I am divorcing her," Second Master Jie said indifferently.

"Divorce?" That required the agreement of both parties, something Concubine Du had never even considered.

For a woman to leave her husband’s family, especially one from the high ranks of Beijing’s rear houses like theirs, was simply unheard of.

"Does she agree to it?" Concubine Du found it hard to believe that the Young Miss Du would agree to a divorce. Were it her, she would rather die in the Jie Family than divorce; she had to hold onto her position as the official wife.

Second Master Jie frowned slightly, gave a light nod, and said, "Yes, she agrees. In fact, she was the one who suggested it!"

"She suggested it?" Concubine Du could hardly believe her own ears.

What was this woman thinking? Was she still that Miss Du who always dominated her?

"Why does she want a divorce?" Concubine Du couldn’t help but ask.

Second Master Jie sighed and said, "She said that the exquisite embroidery of the Yu Family can’t be lost in her hands. She wants to go to Jinxiu City to start up the Yu Family’s Embroidery Workshop."

Starting an embroidery workshop? Concubine Du sneered. A woman without parents, kicked out of her husband’s home, thought an embroidery workshop was that easy to start?

Hmph, she really wanted to see how that embroidery workshop would start up and how quickly its doors would close.