Farmhouse 741

Chapter 741: Treating Tian Jizi’s Illness

Gu Youyou followed Jin Zijin out of the Imperial Palace with trepidation. Once outside the palace, he immediately stuffed her into a carriage and then climbed in himself.

Gu Youyou was startled and said, "It’s broad daylight, what are you doing? It’d be terrible if someone saw us."

Jin Zijin, with a cold expression, yelled outside to the person driving the carriage, "Move, quick!"

As his words ended, with a snap of the reins, the carriage started to move.

All the way, Gu Youyou was distracted and then realized that the coachman the Lin Residence had arranged for her was nowhere to be found, and the maid waiting by the carriage had also disappeared. Now, the person sitting on the carriage driving it was someone she did not recognize.

But the carriage was still hers, and she had no idea how her aunt would explain it.

"So you’re just sending me back like this?" Gu Youyou looked up and asked.

Within Jin Zijin’s deep gaze, it seemed as though a flame was flickering. Without another word, he pressed down on her, supporting the back of her head with a kiss that was almost like biting and gnawing.

Momentarily stunned, Gu Youyou felt that this punishing kiss was only making her uncomfortable. She pushed at him and discovered that her whimpers of resistance were useless.

It wasn’t until he had vented his frustrations that he released her now-swollen lips, not waiting for her to say anything before holding her tightly again.

Gu Youyou felt that he was somewhat agitated today and understood that he was worried.

In a soft voice, she said, "The Emperor didn’t do anything to me. It’s just... I wanted to take a look at the Flame Pool and conveniently gather some water to study. I was caught by him in the process. He didn’t say much after asking me about it and just had me play chess with him."

Jin Zijin said, "Don’t mention him." He seemed even more agitated now. "I don’t want to hear about him right now."

"Alright then!"

Gu Youyou sighed and leaned lightly in his embrace.

"Where are we going now?"

"We shouldn’t return to the Lin Residence just yet. I will take you to Sanqing Temple."

"Sanqing Temple?" The thought of that disgusting State Preceptor being there made Gu Youyou feel uneasy. "Can we not go?"

"Not go? Wouldn’t that be deceiving the sovereign?" said Jin Zijin.

Indeed, he had taken her out of the Imperial Palace on the pretext of bringing her to Tian Jizi to treat him, so they had to make a trip to Sanqing Temple.

The carriage stopped shortly before reaching Sanqing Temple, and Jin Zijin got out, mounted a horse that was outside.

Once they arrived at the temple, he dismounted and invited Gu Youyou out of the carriage.

Carrying her medicine box, Gu Youyou followed behind Jin Zijin and entered a room behind Qianyuan Hall with him.

Inside, an old man with white hair lay quietly sleeping on a bed, while a young, rosy-lipped, white-toothed Taoist sat at the bedside, fanning the elder with a fan.

Seeing Jin Zijin come in, the young Taoist quickly stood up and said, "Senior brother, after much tossing and turning, the master has only just fallen asleep."

Jin Zijin nodded, "Alright, you can go down first."

Yixi put down the fan, gave Gu Youyou behind Jin Zijin a surprised look, and thought to himself: The senior brother rushed out in such a hurry, how did he bring a young woman here?

Jin Zijin softly explained, "She is the famous Doctor Gu from Jisheng Hall. I've invited her to treat our master."

The girl with the medicine box surely looked like a doctor.

But... "Does master have an illness?" Yixi asked, surprised.

Jin Zijin pointed to his head and said, "Would master confuse you and me if he weren't ill?"

Yixi suddenly understood, "Right, right, the master is ill, it's indeed time for a good check-up. Today I turned into Brother Yue, and there's nothing I did that didn't vex the master. I've hardly had my share of scolding from him." He then bowed to Gu Youyou, "Thank you for your efforts, Doctor Gu."

Chapter 742: Leaving Beijing

Gu Youyou nodded gently, struggling to suppress a smile.

Upon closing the door, Gu Youyou finally let out a laugh.

Seeing Tian Jizi deep in sleep, she quickly covered her mouth and lowered her voice, "Your master's condition is one of elderly dementia, incurable, with only the possibility to delay the worsening of his symptoms."

Jin Zijin sighed and looked at Gu Youyou earnestly, "Do you really think I asked you to come here to treat the old man’s illness?"

"Huh?" Gu Youyou paused, taken aback.

Jin Zijin glanced at Tian Jizi on the bed, "At my master’s age, it’s better for him not to have to worry. He’s happier this way, even if it means his disciples suffer a little. That’s fine."

"Oh, worry?" Gu Youyou was somewhat perplexed.

It was the first time she had encountered a patient’s family who thought it was better for the patient to be foolish, believing in the luck of the foolish.

"He has toiled his whole life for the Dao Family, for Tianzong, for this world, for us..." Jin Zijin grew more passionate as he spoke, realizing his emotions were getting the better of him, he stopped, took the seat previously occupied by Yixi, and began to fan Tian Jizi gently.

His expression grew heavy, and he suddenly let out a bitter laugh, "Protecting us all and safeguarding Qi Mountain as impregnable was not easy. The current State Preceptor is more ruthless than his predecessors; he would even disregard the agreements made by our ancestors and target the heirs of Tianzong. The previous senior brother died under dubious circumstances!"

Gu Youyou was taken aback by surprise, her gaze shifting to Jin Zijin in astonishment.

Jin Zijin said, "Don’t worry, I won’t be so easily..."

"Cough, cough..." Jin Zijin was speaking when suddenly, the sleeping Tian Jizi’s cough startled him awake.

Gu Youyou hurried over to check on him, intending to take his pulse, but he simply turned over and continued sleeping.

Jin Zijin sighed, "Let him sleep for a bit, let’s go outside first."

Gu Youyou nodded and followed Jin Zijin to Qianyuan Hall.

After dismissing everyone around Qianyuan Hall, Jin Zijin said to Gu Youyou, "Prepare more of the Elixir Pills we use in the coming days, as you may need to leave Beijing for a while."

"Leave Beijing?" Gu Youyou asked in surprise, "Why?"

Jin Zijin said, "Don’t ask why, just do it."

Seeing his serious and stern demeanor, Gu Youyou did not press further.

"...But where to?"

Jin Zijin replied, "You’ll accompany my master to Qi Mountain. Say... his body needs a long period of quiet recuperation, and in a few days, the master will insist on returning to Qi Mountain. As his doctor, you have no choice but to accompany him."

Seeing his grave manner, Gu Youyou began to feel a vague sense of worry.

She said, "Has something happened, or is something big about to happen?"

"Perhaps!" Jin Zijin sighed, "Or maybe nothing will happen at all. Qi Mountain is the safest place in the world. I wouldn’t feel at ease anywhere else."

Gu Youyou wanted to ask more but couldn’t bring herself to do it, saying only, "Then you be extra careful." She paused, then added, "I don’t have the medicinal ingredients I need here. I’ll write out a prescription, and you can have someone get it from Jisheng Hall."

"Mm, okay!"

"Also, without me returning, my uncle and the rest will definitely be worried to death, you..."

"Don’t worry, I will explain it to them."

"And another thing!" Gu Youyou remembered that the eunuch who had previously warned her in the palace was likely Jin Zijin’s man.

Since he had already positioned his people in the palace, they would certainly be able to lend a hand.

Chapter 743: Madam Lu Requests an Audience

She said, "There’s also the matter of the Emperor taking me away; I’m sure my disciple Youyou is worried. Please ask someone to send her a message telling her not to fret. And then there’s my cousin still in the palace. My aunt had wanted me to check on her, but now with what has happened, could you possibly take care of her?"

Jin Zijin laughed gently and said warmly, "Where did you find all these concerns? I’ll pass along the message to the Princess, but as for looking after your cousin, forget about it. Don’t underestimate your aunt; she grew up in that kind of family and is quite formidable."

"...Oh, alright then!"

...

Madam Lin quickly found another good match for Gu Youyou, only to be told that she had been summoned by Dao Sect to Sanqing Temple to treat Tian Jizi, and would not return for an indefinite period.

This made her furious.

"I’ve always said Youyou, a young lady, should not be practicing medical skills. Now look what’s happened: the Empress Dowager falls ill and they have her treat her, and what about those Dao Family people? Aren’t they supposed to be very skilled? Can’t they just burn some talismans and chant some

spells to make it right? Now they're also letting her treat illnesses and her return is indefinite—they're really treating her like a proper doctor?

Lin Xingyi said, "Youyou is indeed a doctor; if she isn't treating people, what else should she do? You interfered in her marriage arrangements despite being told not to; now let's see how you'll step down from this."

While they were speaking, a servant timidly came to report, "Master, Madam, a Daoist boy from Sanqing Temple has arrived, he says... he's come to pick up some daily necessities for Miss Cousin."

Madam Lin replied irritably, "What for? Didn't they just come to pick up some a few days ago?"

Madam Lin was in a bad mood, which made the servants' lives difficult too. He could only brace himself and said, "He says the Heavenly Master is returning to Qi Mountain, and Miss Cousin is currently treating the Heavenly Master, so she must go to Qi Mountain as well. Therefore... they have asked for some clothes to be prepared to take with them..."

Madam Lin, frustrated, slapped the table. "What is this all about? Does the Dao Family think they're so incredible that they don't even ask if others agree?"

Despite her words, they were helpless.

After all, they were dealing with someone personally taken away by the Emperor; if the Emperor didn't say anything, what could they do?

Lin Xingyi ordered, "Go find Xiang Chun, tell her to pack up and accompany Miss Cousin to Qi Mountain."

Meanwhile, Gu Youyou took the opportunity to draw four sets of clothing patterns for the season, as well as prepare the materials needed for these clothes. Everything was ready, and she was waiting for them to be delivered to Jinxiu City.

Producing five or six sets of clothes each season should suffice.

Additionally, she had prepared two months' worth of medicine and was just waiting for the Lin Family to deliver her things before she could possibly follow Tian Jizi to Dao Sect's ancestral land, Qi Mountain.

On the day of her departure, a Daoist boy informed Gu Youyou that Madam Lu had come to visit, asking if she would see her.

Gu Youyou remembered that Madam Lu had likely finished the medicine she prescribed a few days ago. It would be good to meet her, evaluate the effectiveness of those medicines, and prescribe the next course of treatment.

"Please let her in," she said.

Jin Zijin had arranged for her to stay in a secluded courtyard within Sanqing Temple, where the tranquil environment was suitable for her to draw clothing patterns and make antidotes.

It wasn't long before the Daoist boy brought Madam Lu over.

Behind them followed two house servants, dragging a sack that seemed to be carrying a person.

This frightened Gu Youyou considerably, and she quickly asked, "Madam Lu, what's going on here?" And why are you dragging someone?

Madam Lu gave a signal to the two house servants, who immediately understood and opened the sack.

Gu Youyou looked towards the sack. Inside was indeed a person, a woman so brutally beaten that her features were unrecognizable, her mouth stuffed with cloth. Though her face was unclear, she looked very young.

Chapter 744: None of Them Are Good People

She originally guessed that the woman in the sack must be the maid who had harmed the Madam of the Lu Residence, but the age didn't seem to match; she wondered who it could be?

Gu Youyou looked at the Madam of the Lu Residence, puzzled. The Madam glared fiercely at the woman, spat out disgustingly, and said, "This is the daughter of that lowlife who harmed me. After that lowlife committed suicide, I could only interrogate her for the poisonous recipe, but unexpectedly, she's also a tough nut to crack. She refuses to talk and even says she will only speak to you, Doctor Gu."

Gu Youyou was even more baffled as she looked at the woman, who had been beaten beyond recognition.

Although the woman had been severely beaten, there was not a trace of fear in her eyes; instead, a sort of excited madness when she looked at Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou's first thought was of terms like "perverse poison doctor."

When she was studying abroad, she had met an extremely perverse genius senior. He was handsome and intelligent but his behavior was not normal. While others researched medicine for healing, he was fixated on studying all sorts of perverse viruses, taking pleasure in the pitiful death throes of mice in the laboratory suffering from those viruses.

He was given a nickname by everyone: the perverse poison doctor.

Back then, the perverse poison doctor was indifferent to everyone except Gu Youyou. He often fed the poor mice his newly developed viruses and left them for Gu Youyou to save, essentially using her as a test subject.

Now, the look in the eyes of the young woman in the sack reminded her of the way the perverse poison doctor looked at her back in those days.

Gu Youyou's mouth twitched, but she still approached the woman and asked in a low voice, "Only tell me? Why?"

Due to the abuse, the woman's throat was a bit hoarse.

"What's the use of telling those fools? How is it different from playing the lute to a cow?"

Listen to that tone of voice despite being beaten to such a state, truly mad to the core.

The Madam of the Lu Residence, irritated to the point of itching teeth, said to Gu Youyou, "Doctor Gu, this despicable girl is even worse than her mother. Both were adept at Medical Skills, never did a thing to heal or save people but committed plenty of poisonings. In my Lu Residence, who knows how many have been victimized by these two lowlives."

Gu Youyou silently lit a candle for everyone in the Lu Residence; harboring such crazed lunatics at home was real karmic injustice.

"Then why weren't they discovered earlier, after so many years?"

At these words, the Madam showed a flicker of evasiveness on her face and said, "I regret not having dug them out earlier."

The woman in the sack indeed began to laugh creepily, saying, "Why not say why you didn't root us out earlier? Haha, isn't it because you were deluded into thinking we could cure the illness in your body? Besides... you needed us to deal with your husband's other women, didn't you?"

"Shut your mouth, you little wretch. I trusted you so much, always treated you as one of our own, but you repaid kindness with malice and even poisoned me?" the Madam was furious with humiliation and rage, and she smacked the woman's face.

In just a few sentences, Gu Youyou had more or less grasped the situation.

It seems that although the poison doctor mother and daughter weren't good people, the Madam of the Lu Residence wasn't exactly a good character either.

She surmised that the old poison doctor must possess some mysterious Medical Skills, which must have earned the Madam's trust. But with such psychopaths, their true nature—and not something those with conventional values could easily understand—might not be comprehensible. The old poison doctor poisoning the Madam might have been for her husband's affection, or perhaps not. In their eyes, a

man’s affection might mean nothing at all; it was the various poisonous substances that could satisfy their perverse desires that were truly precious to them.

Chapter 745: The Most Venomous Person

After gaining Madam Lu’s trust, it was just convenient for her to flex her muscles. Helping Madam Lu poison the concubines of the Lu Family and gaining her favor in the process, what a good deal! It’s just that they did not know why they got exposed.

This mother and daughter, who knows how many outrageous things they’ve done on behalf of Madam Lu. Madam Lu’s situation is somewhat similar to Miss Du—despite having the support of the rest of the Jie Family, Miss Du never went after the favored concubine of the second young master of the Jie Family.

But look at Madam Lu, General Lu does not favor her, perhaps even more so than the second young master of the Jie Family disliked Miss Du back then. And even Old Madam Lu does not like her, yet doesn’t she still live well? Apart from the support from her parental family, it’s mostly because Madam Lu is ruthless enough, willing to sell her husband’s favorite concubine into a brothel to be abused by others. She dared to drug General Lu and have a son of her own.

A woman like that wouldn’t have survived this long if she weren’t cruel enough.

Gu Youyou sighed; other families’ affairs were not her concern, it was enough for her to do her duty as a healer.

Gu Youyou invited Madam Lu to sit down, and meanwhile, she checked on her health.

"Madam Lu, how have you felt these past few days after using the medicine?"

Madam Lu hastily shed her fierce demeanor, speaking warmly to Gu Youyou: "Thanks to Doctor Gu’s superb medical skills, the medicine has been very effective; my beard has hardly grown at all lately." She touched her own chin.

The woman in the sack just snorted coldly, her eyes on Gu Youyou with a mocking smile.

Gu Youyou prescribed some more medicine for Madam Lu and handed her the prescription, saying, "This medicine should last you for half a month, come find me again after you've finished it. I'm going to Qi Mountain tomorrow and I'm not sure when I will return. If I'm not back, would it be convenient for Madam Lu to send someone to Qi Mountain?"

Madam Lu quickly said, "It's convenient, I just hope I won't trouble Doctor Gu."

Gu Youyou said, "I'm a doctor; you pay silver, and I treat you, there's no trouble or no trouble." She looked at the woman in the sack and then said, "But as for Miss Lu... After all, she is a Miss of the Lu Family, aren't you afraid of General Lu's blame, Madam?"

"Blame?" Madam Lu said sharply: "For all the wicked things they've done, my husband would have torn their hearts out. Keeping her alive unsettles everyone in the Lu Residence; if it weren't for keeping her alive to see Doctor Gu, my husband would have killed her and her mother long ago."

Gu Youyou: "..." It seems that when men get ruthless, they really can be even more vicious than women.

Despite being his own flesh and blood, who knows what heinous acts they committed to enrage General Lu to such an extent.

Madam Lu said angrily, "That wretched girl's mother created a new medicine, and actually used it to test on my Tianning. Luckily, Tianning didn't take the medicine, but my husband accidentally did. Although he has always been incredibly strong, he is not young anymore, not like he used to be. After taking that medicine, he pulled several maids into his room and tormented them all night, poor man, he injured his vitality, and now he's still bedridden. He's a warrior, for heaven's sake... oh dear, Doctor Gu, look at what I've just said, tsk, I shouldn't be talking about such family shame, just pretend I let out a fart, please don't think too much about it. Oh my, Doctor Gu is still a young maiden, look at my mouth, really... why can't I just keep it shut."

Gu Youyou couldn't help but feel both amused and bewildered, no wonder General Lu was so furious.

Chapter 746: Basking in Self-Satisfaction

Her mother... also sacrificed herself in pursuit of scientific truth.

"What are your plans for Miss Lu then?"

Madam Lu looked at Miss Lu with a face full of disgust and said, "Regardless, such a matter is hardly honorable. She is already dead to the Lu Residence, just like her contemptible mother, who died unexpectedly from illness. Doctor Gu, since she stubbornly refuses to reveal the formula and insists on seeing you before she'll talk, then I will leave her disposal up to you."

"...?"

Gu Youyou raised her eyebrows and looked at Miss Lu.

To speak the truth, people like them, who approach a matter with an almost insane intensity, are both despicable and yet pitifully contradictory beings.

If that intelligent mind were used properly, it would be a good thing. If used in the wrong place, it becomes a pest bringing disaster to the community.

Their ancestors were exterminated years ago; it seems they must have committed plenty of infuriating deeds before that happened.

This young lady, although young, was also smart. It would be a shame if she were killed by Madam Lu, so Gu Youyou had no choice but to take her in.

"Alright, Madam Lu, I will take her with me then. As for your medicine... come and see me in half a month's time."

"Very well, thank you, Doctor Gu!"

Madam Lu, with loathing, spat at Miss Lu and left the Taoist Temple with two house servants.

...

Gu Youyou followed Tian Jizi to Qi Mountain, on a day when the Imperial Palace was holding a grand selection.

Regretfully, such an event could not be seen, luckily she wasn't one of those women participating.

Gu Youyou and Xiang Chun sat in a carriage where Miss Lu lay behind them, and Tian Jizi and Yixi sat in the carriage in front. Jin Zijin had taken a packet of medicine from Gu Youyou and administered it to Tian Jizi to drink and then, taking advantage of his sleep, left Sanqing Temple.

The old man, if he wakes up and finds he is no longer in Sanqing Temple, who knows if he will cause a commotion.

In August, the weather had already turned cool. Gu Youyou was colder than the average person and had long since stopped wearing the thin gauze clothing, instead wearing thick cotton-padded clothes suitable for early autumn. She did look a bit more bloated than the average person!

On the first evening, their party arrived at a town and found an inn to rest for the night.

After eating and washing her hands, Gu Youyou went to check on Miss Lu in her room.

The members of the Lu Family had beaten her severely; it would be tough for her to get out of bed and move around any time soon.

Gu Youyou sat down beside the bed, looked down at her, and sighed, "Your mother's poison was superbly administered, shocking even to me. It not only changed Madam Lu's appearance but didn't harm her body in the slightest, on the contrary, it even had health-enhancing effects. This type of medicine is indeed a good thing if used on men who rely on physical strength."

Miss Lu said proudly, "That's a great tonic medicine, she should be thanking us. My mother is the most talented junior of the Ghost Doctor family; when everyone else could not escape death, only she managed to get away, so she's naturally not an average person."

Great, this ignorant girl has been twisted by her deranged mother into abnormality.

And here she is, talking about the extermination of her family as if it were something to be proud of.

Gu Youyou fell silent for a moment, then said to her, "How did you know I would save you? Did your mother teach you before she died?"

She always spoke with a sense of superiority, looking down on Gu Youyou with scorn, and laughed mockingly, "People like you, who wouldn't be jealous of the Ghost Doctor family's inherited medical skills? You kept me because I'm the sole heir to the Ghost Doctor, right?"

Gu Youyou: "..." Damn, I didn't even know what that Ghost Doctor was about.

But seeing the way this girl argued and her tone, she really was quite irksome.

Chapter 747: Why Poison

Her mother had died, she had been abandoned by her father, and she was still able to smile despite being beaten by her stepmother—she truly wasn't normal.

"What is your name?"

"Lu Xueying." She answered succinctly.

Gu Youyou nodded and said, "It's a rather delicate name, but it doesn't suit you at all. In any case, you are considered dead within the Lu Residence, so you can't use this name anymore. I'll give you a new one."

"Whatever!" She genuinely seemed indifferent, as if a name meant nothing to her.

Simply by observing her, one could tell how extreme her late mother must have been; otherwise, she couldn't have raised a child like this.

"Alright, from today on, you will no longer be called Lu Xueying, but instead... Searcy." She indulged in a bit of wicked humor—for in Greek mythology, Searcy was a fearsome and malicious witch skilled in poisoning, and she felt this name was quite fitting for a troubled girl like Lu Xueying.

Lu Xueying raised an eyebrow at Gu Youyou, finding the new name she was given to sound very odd, but she didn't dwell on it for long, quickly casting it to the back of her mind.

"Let's see how your injuries are."

Gu Youyou opened her clothes to examine the wounds on her body.

The injuries on her legs were more severe; the rest of her body was just battered by the whip. Being young and in good health, she was recovering nicely.

Healing the wounds on her legs would be more troublesome—there was a slight fracture, which had already started to deform because the optimal time for treatment had been delayed.

She had already treated her after taking her from Madam Lu the day before.

Gu Youyou re-broke the deformed leg bone, then took a wooden splint and bound it up. She didn't administer any anesthetic throughout the process, and the girl really was tough, enduring it without making a peep.

Gu Youyou looked at her leg again and chuckled lightly, "You're really tough. If you were a boy and used your tenacity on the battlefield, perhaps your father wouldn't have wanted to kill you."

Searcy sneered, "But I applied all my skills to poisoning."

Gu Youyou was left at a loss for words.

After applying the medicine to her wounds, it took a long while before she could speak again.

"So how were you and your mother discovered poisoning Madam Lu?"

With a profound indifference, Searcy spoke softly, "That day, my mother poisoned my elder brother, but my father ended up consuming it. My father was advanced in years and couldn't withstand the toxicity of the drug. Although my mother did her best to save him, he was severely injured and nearly died. My grandmother called for an Imperial Physician. With one look, he recognized that my father had been poisoned and ordered a search for the dregs of the poison, otherwise, my father would have been beyond saving.

After years of marriage, my mother couldn't bear to let my father die, so she proactively disclosed the ingredients, method of preparation, and effects of the poison to the Imperial Physician. He saved my father, and because of that, everyone learned that the poison was administered by my mother's own hand. As the truth came to light, the maids close to my mother couldn't escape. To save their own lives, my mother's closest maid betrayed her, revealing everything she had done in the residence over the years—poisoning the concubines, poisoning my father to gain favor for the Madam, as well as what she did to Madam Lu back at Mo Family..."

Having listened to the story, Gu Youyou found it somewhat bittersweet.

"Your mother, in the end, did hold some affection for General Lu, didn't she? She didn't betray Madam Lu? The things she did, she probably did mostly under Madam Lu's orders, right?"

Chapter 748: The Heavenly Master Is Sick Again

"Rare to find someone so perceptive," Searcy tossed out a disdainful look, scoffing, "She always told me that people like us can't afford to have feelings, for anyone, it's just too dangerous. I actually took it to heart, but she herself forgot. If she hadn't stepped forward, how would she have ended up like this?"

She snorted coldly, then added, "As for Madam Lu... not handing her over was the condition for sparing my life. But this tomboy, she didn't take my life, yet had me beaten half to death."

Gu Youyou: "..."

Well, it's a wonder General Lu isn't insane—if this is what his backyard is like!

"Why did your mother poison the young master of the Lu Family?" The young master is the lifeblood of the Lu Family.

Searcy suddenly burst into laughter, cold and terrifying, "Just testing a poison, does it need a reason? Besides my father, he’s the only man left in our household."

"..." Alright, pretend I didn’t ask.

The night breezes were cool.

Gu Youyou had Xiang Chun close the windows, now that they were so far away from Beijing, Jin Zijin wouldn’t come again tonight.

She was afraid of the cold, and had asked for a thick quilt from the inn so that she could sleep.

The next day, they would need to continue on their journey; before dawn broke, Gu Youyou heard angry cursing and stomping from the neighboring room.

"Damn brats, how dare you bring this old man to such a wretched place?"

Gu Youyou thought the old man must have awoken, and without caring whether she was fully awake herself, she quickly got dressed and went to the old man’s room next door.

Yixi was at a loss, but upon seeing Gu Youyou, it was as if he had seen a savior.

"Doctor Gu, please come and help me persuade my master," Yixi implored, "Master had a drink of your medicine and slept for a full day and night, and now he’s just woken up and is clamoring to go back."

Gu Youyou sighed and braced herself to appease Tian Jizi.

"Heavenly Master, the Sanqing Temple sees so many visitors every day, it’s not conducive to your recovery. Qi Mountain is quieter, and that’s better for your health."

"It’s you again, you little girl," Tian Jizi said irritably, "I’ve already said I’m not sick, yet you insist I am. What now? You want to follow me back to Qi Mountain?"

The corners of Gu Youyou’s mouth twitched as she replied, "That’s the idea."

"I’m sorry, but Qi Mountain doesn’t accept female disciples," Tian Jizi said arrogantly, lifting his chin.

Gu Youyou forced a smile, "I’m not asking to become your disciple, I’m your doctor. I may need to accompany you until you have fully recovered."

"Fine, then we’ll go back to the Sanqing Temple. I’ll be wherever Yixi is; I’m not used to being without Yixi’s service."

Yixi felt exhausted just listening.

"Master, Yixi has been here all along," Yixi pointed to his nose and said.

Tian Jizi bopped Yixi on the head in a sudden outburst of anger, "Yue Rujing, you damn brat, trying to fool me again? Keep shouting and I’ll write a letter to have someone send it to Lingnan and let your father deal with you personally."

With no alternative, Yixi found himself dodging while admitting his fault.

"I dare not, Yue Rujing is the brat, please spare me, master."

As for such an old man, Gu Youyou was speechlessly astounded and could only say, "Heavenly Master, Yixi has long since returned to Qi Mountain. Why don’t you freshen up, come downstairs for a meal, and we’ll take you to Yixi."

Tian Jizi stopped and said, "Nonsense, Yixi is at the Sanqing Temple, I know that."

"Oh, then how many days has it been since you've seen Yixi at the Sanqing Temple?"

How many days without seeing Yixi? Ever since he mistook Yixi for Yue Rujing, he hadn't seen him at all.

Chapter 749: Staying in the Eldest Senior Brother's Courtyard

He thought for a moment, then counted on his fingers, and said, "It must have been six or seven days now. Huh? Where has that kid Yixi run off to?"

Gu Youyou sighed and said, "I've told you he already returned to Qi Mountain, but you just wouldn't believe it. He's been waiting for you on Qi Mountain all this time!"

Tian Jizi craned his neck to look at Gu Youyou, surprised, and said, "He really went back to Qi Mountain?"

Gu Youyou nodded affirmatively, saying, "Absolutely certain."

Tian Jizi fell silent for a moment, but then erupted in anger, "That damned brat, actually leaving me behind to go back by himself. Fine, let's see if I don't break his legs when I get back."

Without even finishing getting dressed, he hurriedly descended the stairs.

Yixi, standing to the side, looked at Gu Youyou with a face full of grievances. What if Master recognizes me when we get back to the mountain?

Gu Youyou helplessly shrugged her shoulders and gave him a look that meant 'fend for yourself.'

"Go chase after him quickly. If your leg gets broken, I'll heal it for you. It'll be trouble if your master gets lost."

After this commotion, they finally managed to bring Tian Jizi back to Qi Mountain.

Jin Zijin had sent a letter ahead to Qi Mountain, so by the time Gu Youyou and the others arrived, the little Taoist monks had already prepared a room for her to stay in.

In a simple and modest courtyard in the back mountain, the exterior was planted with various flowers and plants, all neatly and comfortably arranged.

As Gu Youyou arrived with Xiang Chun, it was already getting late, and soon someone brought dinner, telling her, "Doctor Gu, please settle down here for now. The offerings of the mountain are humble and can’t compare to the extravagance of Beijing, so please don’t look down upon it."

Gu Youyou hurriedly said, "This place is very nice, thank you kindly, little master."

The young Daoist monk smiled and said, "This courtyard used to belong to our eldest disciple. He wrote in his letter that a female doctor would be accompanying master back to treat him and instructed us not to neglect her. He also said to tidy up his old courtyard for you to stay in. If our eldest disciple regards Doctor Gu as an esteemed guest, we naturally treat you as one too. So if you need anything at all, please don’t hesitate to tell me. You must let me know."

Gu Youyou was surprised that this courtyard was actually Jin Zijin’s.

She began to look around more attentively.

When Xiang Chun, who was tidying up, heard this, her brow furrowed, and she said to the young Daoist monk, "How can this be alright? Our Missy Gu isn’t married yet, how can she stay in a courtyard that a man has lived in before?"

Gu Youyou: "..." And just like that, she ruined the good atmosphere.

Xiang Chun’s remark had also put the young Daoist monk in an awkward position, as he rubbed the back of his head, not sure what to say.

Gu Youyou quickly intervened to ease the situation.

"Xiang Chun, what nonsense are you speaking? Qi Mountain doesn't accept female disciples; if we don't stay in a courtyard that a man has lived in, where else would you have us stay? Should they build a new courtyard just for us? It's courteous of them to tidy up the courtyard where the eldest disciple used to live for us to stay in. Don't think too much and misunderstand their kindness!"

Hearing Gu Youyou's explanation, Xiang Chun felt there was some truth to it and stopped objecting. After a while, she apologized to the young Daoist monk, "Little master, I'm sorry, it's my fault... I misunderstood."

The Daoist monk quickly smiled and said, "No problem at all, as long as you don't mind!"

After that, he spoke to Gu Youyou, "Doctor Gu, my name is Qingyang. If there's anything you need, you should come and find me. The letter from elder disciple specifically instructed me to take personal care of you."

Since this person was personally chosen by Jin Zijin, he surely could not be mistaken.

Gu Youyou smiled and said, "Then I thank you, Master Qingyang."

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Chapter 750: Choosing the Main Consort

Gu Youyou settled down in Qi Mountain, and the great selection had already been completed in Beijing.

The young ladies like Lin Qianqing had already returned to their own homes, just waiting for the Imperial Family to present the betrothal gifts.

The Ministry of Rites was incredibly busy, with both Princes taking wives, and each marrying several at that, they were almost worked to death.

Madam Lin was delighted because Lin Qianqing had indeed been chosen as the primary wife of the eldest Prince. The eldest Prince was the legitimate first-born son of the current Emperor, and although

he had not been invested as the Crown Prince, his marriage to a primary wife equated to that of the Crown Prince's, something the second Prince's marriage could not compare with.

Just the betrothal gifts sent by the Ministry of Rites required an entire courtyard to be set aside for storage.

"Seeing this imperial decree and the betrothal gifts, my heart that had been hanging in suspense finally settled down. My Lord, our daughter has been raised all these years only to be given to someone else, I truly am somewhat reluctant."

Lin Xingyi's expression was calm, betraying no joy or anger, and he just indifferently said, "Isn't this what you have been always longing for? Since your wish has been fulfilled, you should be happy."

Madam Lin was too caught up in her joy to notice the implication in Lin Xingyi's words.

"Yes, yes, it's good that she is the primary wife. In the future, Qianqing will be the most honored woman in Zhuzhao Country. Her marriage is unlike others', this wedding gown... should we go ask Miss Du from Manxiu Building to make it? Manxiu Building's reputation is quite big now, I heard that many of the Imperial consorts order their clothes from there."

Lin Xingyi only faintly said, "The Imperial Family will decide what she wears, why are you worrying about that?"

"Ah, right, right, I forgot in my excitement. Qianqing is not marrying just anyone, he is the eldest Prince, the future Emperor, and her dowry as his primary wife must be exceptionally elaborate."

The more Lin Xingyi listened, the more unpleasant he felt in his heart. It was rare for him to lose his composure, but he shot back a retort.

"He might be the eldest Prince, but whether he will be the future Emperor is hard to say. Don't forget that the Emperor's favorite is Empress Dowager Sheng and the second Prince!"

Madam Lin’s face darkened at once, and after a moment, she sneered, "What’s there to be afraid of with the second Prince? His own mother is but a maid from the Xiao Family, even if the Xiao Family stands by him, they wouldn’t support him like the Ducal Residence supports the eldest Prince."

Lin Xingyi let out a cold laugh and, staring at the self-assured Madam Lin, said, "Don’t forget, the current Empress Dowager also came from a maid’s background, and the current Emperor was raised by a maid. They favor those born of maids, the world belongs to the Emperor, and what the Emperor says, goes."

It had been many years since Lin Xingyi had spoken to her with such intense and stern words, and Madam Lin was momentarily stunned.

It wasn’t until Lin Xingyi had already strode away that she regained her senses.

She felt somewhat dispirited and anxious, turning to the maid standing by her side, Hen Xiang, she asked, "Hen Xiang, do you think the master took the wrong medicine today? Why do I feel that he’s intentionally going against me? With him protecting the second Prince like this, could it be... that he has joined the second Prince’s faction?"

Hen Xiang gasped in shock, her face changed dramatically, and she hastily advised, "How could that be? Perhaps the master is reluctant to part with the young miss, which made his words sound harsh. Madam, the master has always been loyal to the Emperor, even if he were to take sides, it would be with the eldest Prince, how could he become part of the second Prince’s faction?

Maybe... the master knows something and is not at ease with the second Prince, taking this opportunity to remind Madam."

Madam Lin was taken aback for a moment, then took a sharp breath, nodded blankly, and said, "You make some sense; perhaps I should find a time to return to the Ducal Residence and discuss this matter with my father."

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