Farmhouse 841

Chapter 841: Man's Plans Can't Compare to Heaven's

Jin Zijin was still vomiting, and if Gu Youyou had guessed correctly, he would spit out the Zhuzhao Pearl, and she herself had just spit out what was supposedly the mythical Youying Pearl.

However, everyone assumed the Youying Pearl to be inside Jin Ziyuan's stomach; as for when it ended up in her own stomach, Gu Youyou guessed that it was probably Yu Jizi, that old cunning rascal, who had played a huge joke on everyone. He kept it a secret from the world and placed such an important thing on her.

Who could have thought of that?

Alas, who can predict what happens in this world?

In those years, by sheer accident, Yu Jizi found little Gu Youyou, they set her up, killed her parents, and imprisoned her openly.

Unexpectedly, the little girl suffered abuse from her aunt and uncle and didn't live long enough to be freed, but instead, Gu Youyou's soul arrived.

She wouldn't stay there waiting to die, and by more sheer accidents, Jin Zijin was brought to her.

Until now, here she spat out the Youying Pearl, achieving liberation; Yu Jizi probably never expected this.

Even the most calculating people cannot outwit fate or destiny.

This is what's called fate!

Gu Youyou simply wanted to burst out laughing; that old immortal definitely felt like crying now.

Searcy, amazed at the miraculous scene above the lotus pond, said, "No wonder there's a rumor among the common people that Immortal Mountain exists on Fusang Island, perhaps some Great Fairy had attained enlightenment here?"

Gu Youyou knocked on her head, "You always talk nonsense."

At that moment, Jin Zijin had almost finished vomiting.

As Gu Youyou had said, what he spat out was a red stone, the Zhuzhao Pearl indeed.

Unlike the Youying Pearl which stayed suspended in midair, it directly entered the water.

Once the Zhuzhao Pearl entered the water, although the water remained red, it clarified the scenes within the red water.

Similarly, the patterns of veins on the surrounding rock walls were clearly visible, emitting a strange glow.

These two stones were not as simple as meteors; perhaps there really were extraterrestrial beings.

And those strange mutated animals and plants on the island might have undergone mutations due to some kind of radiation.

The deadly pearl had finally been expelled from the body, and removing the remaining poison was only a matter of time.

Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin looked at each other, though both looked ragged and haggard, they could not hide the joy in their hearts and laughed at each other.

Countless schemes and calculations, no one expected this turn of events; who knows if Yu Jizi could succeed without this pearl?

Jin Ziyuan saw this scene with a complex expression.

So the Zhuzhao Pearl he had been searching for was on Jin Zijin.

Seeing Gu Youyou’s expression, she must have known the pearl was with Jin Zijin long ago.

But she hadn’t told him and he continued to search foolishly.

Just like now, as they looked at each other and laughed, they excluded everyone else, treating everyone as outsiders.

In vain did he always think that he and Gu Youyou were of the same kind, their destinies so similarly intertwined.

Inside the rock wall, the noise of many rats burrowing could be heard. Jin Zijin’s eyes darkened, and he said, "The fire might have gone out; the rats are coming back, everyone be careful."

From that half-human-height gigantic rat hole crawled out not a rat but a person.

"Gui Yunxi?" Searcy exclaimed in surprise.

Hadn’t she asked him to wait in the inn? Yet he had run here.

She didn’t like disobedient people.

Gui Yunxi, while rubbing his almost broken back, shouted loudly, "Hurry, hurry up, this hole is wrong, it looks like it’s about to collapse."

Chapter 842: Seawater Backflow

He was the last to come down, and by the time he did, the rats had already rushed to the fire, so he wasn’t poisoned. However, as an ordinary person, he didn’t possess Jin Zijin’s agility, and it took him forever to climb out of the twisting, tortuous rat holes.

No sooner had he finished speaking than Gu Youyou heard some strange noises.

Not just the sounds of rats, but also... water?

Water was gushing into the cave loudly. Positioned beneath a funnel, if her guess was right, this deep cave was already below sea level, so they must be under the sea now.

If the seawater were to backflow, the consequences would be unimaginable...

But as fate would have it, the more they worried, the more it happened. The earth shook violently, and water started leaking from the cracks in the stone walls around them. One, then two—more and more fissures began seeping water.

Gui Yunxi’s face turned deathly pale; he regretted ever having climbed out.

He immediately grabbed Searcy’s hand and ran toward the rat hole. Searcy was confused for a moment, then forcefully yanked her hand free and yelled, pointing at the rat hole, "Why run? Do you think we still have time to escape through this hole?"

Indeed, the rat hole was only half a person tall and very long with several twists and turns; they would be drowned long before they could get out.

"What do we do?" Gui Yunxi looked like he was about to cry.

Searcy snapped, "Who asked you to come? Didn’t I tell you to stay at the inn and watch our horses and carriage?"

"..." He didn’t want to come either, but Jin Zijin and Xiao Jinyan insisted on dragging this scapegoat along, claiming it was to avoid being caught off guard.

He didn’t understand what they were talking about.

Gu Youyou calmed down and yelled at them, "Come here quickly! We can’t make it through there. We have to swim up from the sea."

Everyone realized the severity of the situation as more and more water flowed in, gradually submerging their ankles, then their knees. The rats that squeezed into the cave swam on the surface, choking on the water.

Ordinary rats could swim, but it was unknown whether these mutated ones could.

Jin Zijin approached the area where the water sound was the loudest and the stone walls seemed thinnest, and began to fiercely smash the stone wall.

He told everyone, "Once we break through here, we can escape from this spot. This hole should be not much lower than the sea level; we can swim out."

Gu Youyou, a strong swimmer, couldn’t help but worry about the others, "Can you all swim?"

Ziyuan nodded, then went to help Jin Zijin break the wall.

Gui Yunxi also nodded and said, "I can."

Searcy dithered, her demeanor suggesting she couldn’t, which only increased Gu Youyou’s concerns.

She said, "Then stick with me, I’ll take you out."

After speaking, she quietly instructed her on how to hold her breath and breathe, emphasizing that the most important thing was to stay calm; if she held her breath, there was no need to be afraid—she would bring her out.

Suddenly, there was a loud splash—the stone wall broke.

A huge hole ten feet in diameter opened up, and a massive influx of sea water poured in, filling the cave in an instant. They held their breaths as the seawater flooded in and began to swim out.

She had told Searcy not to panic, but Searcy did panic, blindly grabbing around with her eyes closed.

Gu Youyou momentarily couldn't grab her hand, but spotting the rope still tied around Searcy's waist from earlier, she grabbed the rope and pulled, just as effectively leading her out.

But unexpectedly, someone else was quicker than her and snatched Searcy away.

It was Gui Yunxi, the coachman who had fallen for Searcy's trick.

Chapter 843: Life After Catastrophe

He grabbed Searcy and made frantic gestures at Gu Youyou, looking very anxious.

In this critical moment, Gu Youyou actually understood and swiftly turned her head to look behind her.

Not far behind Gu Youyou, she saw another person who couldn't swim.

Jin Zijin?

This guy can't swim, why didn't he say so earlier? She seethed with anger.

At the same time, her heart nearly stopped in fear.

And why the hell did he suggest swimming out by breaking through the stone wall if he couldn't swim?

Seriously, it was life or death—Gu Youyou hurriedly swam towards him, grabbed his hand, passed a breath into his mouth, and then desperately swam upwards.

The water wasn’t deep here, and once out of the cave, they could see the azure sea and blue sky.

But what no one expected was that another person didn’t rush to come out but instead turned back into the cave and dived into that lotus pond to fetch the Sun Zhuzhao Pearl.

...

Another group of people was stunned as the seawater poured into the cave, quickly rising to waist level.

Fortunately, it only rose to their waists and did not go any higher.

Otherwise, given their current situation, escaping would have been difficult.

Seeing that the water no longer rose, everyone felt a sense of relief after a narrow escape.

They would climb up once they had recovered.

However, it seemed they had forgotten something—Jin Zijin had gone into the mouse hole to rescue someone and hadn’t come back.

Xiao Jinyan was terrified and said, "Jin Zijin is still in the cave; I have to save him."

Everyone’s faces paled with shock, breaking out in a cold sweat.

Someone immediately grabbed hold of Xiao Jinyan, saying, "General Xiao, you can’t go, the water’s already here, and those mouse holes are already submerged. It’s been so long, the person is definitely... gone."

Xiao Jinyan staggered, nearly unable to stand.

If Jin Zijin drowned, what future would the Xiao Family have? If he went back, wouldn’t his father be the death of him?

"No, I have to save him; he can’t die..."

Several people firmly restrained Xiao Jinyan, consoling him, "General Xiao, that hole is too deep; you can’t go."

"Yes, this place is strange. We should hurry back and report this situation to General Che."

Xiao Jinyan was dragged back by the people, and those red mice died or were injured in droves due to the flood, with only a few surviving and frantically crawling out.

Many monkeys were gathered on the mountaintop, fearful of the cave. Seeing the maddened red mice coming out, they were completely frightened and no longer dared to guard the people inside—they fled for their own lives.

In this way, they were able to safely return to the mountaintop and then safely descend the mountain to the ship.

...

Gu Youyou and the others had already safely reached the ocean’s surface. She gasped for air, still holding onto Jin Zijin tightly.

Suddenly, she remembered asking him a foolish question back in Lotus Village, inquiring who he would save first if she and Yue Rujing both fell into the water.

At that time, Jin Zijin’s serious face had a hint of awkwardness. Thinking about it now, his statement that he didn’t know how to swim was true.

It was hard to imagine someone like Jin Zijin being a non-swimmer and a stubborn one at that.

After catching her breath, she saw Jin Zijin’s condition and got a fright.

He had choked on water; he needed emergency treatment, artificial respiration.

Fortunately, the shore wasn’t far away; she quickly dragged him onto the shore.

On the other side, Gui Yunxi and Searcy were pulled ashore. Likewise, Searcy was motionless, unsure if dead or alive.

But she couldn’t concern herself with that now; she needed to administer emergency aid one by one—she had to save Jin Zijin first.

Chapter 844: Artificial Respiration

Gui Yunxi thought Searcy was already dead, crying a mixture of snot and tears, she shouted loudly, "Hey, hey, you poisonous woman, you can’t die, where’s my antidote? You haven’t given me my antidote yet. My parents are still waiting for me to come home, I can’t die here..."

Gu Youyou yelled at him, "Coachman, stop pushing her and quickly save her like I am."

She was teaching Jin Zijin how to give mouth-to-mouth, to resuscitate and revive his breathing.

There, Gui Yunxi was completely dumbfounded, but saving someone was important, he couldn’t care about anything else and did the same to Searcy.

But Searcy hadn’t swallowed much water, so he first pressed on her chest like Gu Youyou had done, and felt the soft touch under his palm. In an instant, his whole body went stiff.

She was a woman, truly a woman.

He was stunned, his hands uncontrollably trembling.

There, Gu Youyou was giving mouth-to-mouth to Jin Zijin when he saw that scene; his entire body’s blood boiled.

Looking down at Searcy’s pale lips, he forcefully swallowed his saliva.

He muttered under his breath, "Don’t blame me for taking advantage, that’s the method of rescue taught by Doctor Gu, I’m doing this to save you. Of course, no need to thank me, I’m doing this for my own antidote. If it weren’t for the antidote you have, I wouldn’t save you even if it killed me."

After saying that, he closed his eyes, resigning himself to his fate.

However, a moment later, his eyes suddenly shot open.

No, how could he do this? He had touched what he shouldn’t have touched, and he could not kiss what he shouldn’t have kissed.

Painfully, he shouted at Gu Youyou, "Doctor Gu, let’s switch places?"

Wouldn’t it be better to switch with someone of the same sex for this sort of thing?

Gu Youyou retorted irritably, "Stop your nonsense, do you want her to die?"

Gui Yunxi: "..."

But just as he closed his eyes and was about to lean down, Searcy woke up.

Upon seeing this, Searcy became furious, slapped him away, and sat up.

"Are you trying to kill yourself by doing this to your lady?"

That slap wasn’t light; a red handprint quickly appeared on Gui Yunxi’s face, and with a wronged look, he covered his face and glanced over at Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin.

Searcy followed his gaze to see, under the brilliant sunset, a man and a woman were performing such shameful acts on the beach.

No, it seemed like the woman was forcing the man who passed out onto the beach and shamelessly taking advantage of him.

This sight was too eye-piercing, even for someone ’special’ like Searcy, she couldn’t bear it.

It was not even dark yet, and here they were committing lewd acts in broad daylight, it was utterly shameless.

Gui Yunxi plaintively said, "See, I was following what Doctor Gu did."

As soon as Searcy heard this, she became even angrier and slapped Gui Yunxi again, and this time Gui Yunxi covered the other side of his face, overwhelmed by the blows.

Searcy furiously said, "She has no shame, and you’re copying her lack of shame? I’ll smack you to death."

Saying that, she kicked him again.

Gui Yunxi rolled and scrambled to dodge.

Searcy got up from the beach and chased after him, with Gui Yunxi running even faster. Thus, one chased after the other across the beach, accompanied by Searcy’s angry scolding and Gui Yunxi’s pleas for mercy.

After the first-aid procedure, Jin Zijin finally coughed out water and came to.

Gu Youyou was relieved to death, seeing him wake up, she was so moved that she cried her eyes out.

"You finally woke up, I was afraid you had been choked to death by a few gulps of seawater. You fool, if you can’t swim, why did you break the rock wall? And why didn’t you say anything when I asked?"

Jin Zijin was still weak. He looked at Gu Youyou and gently caressed her face, letting out a soft laugh.

"I’m just glad to be alive, now I don’t have to suffer anymore."

Chapter 845: Missing One Person

"It’s good that you’re still alive; at least you won’t have to suffer anymore."

Was he still worried about those two beads?

Gu Youyou sighed and hugged him tight, saying, "If it meant losing your life over those beads, I’d rather never come here again. I have medicine anyway, I could just live on meds for the rest of my life."

"But every month when you’re in pain, isn’t it like going through life and death?"

Gu Youyou blinked in surprise. Was he referring to when she experienced Kuishui?

The coldness in her body was so severe, and there was no cure for it.

"It’s alright now, we’re safe and you won’t have to endure the agony of burning flames; this trip has been profitable for us."

The sky was getting darker; the sun had already crossed the horizon, and soon nothing could be seen.

They had to find the big ship or a cave as quickly as possible while there was still time.

Gu Youyou helped Jin Zijin to his feet and shouted to Searcy, who was chasing after Gui Yunxi, "Stop fighting, come back now."

Searcy and Gui Yunxi stopped their pursuit and returned to Gu Youyou's side.

Only then did she realize someone was missing. She couldn't see Jin Ziyuan anywhere and anxiously asked, "Where's Jin Ziyuan?"

Everyone snapped out of their daze, shaking their heads; no one knew his whereabouts.

Gu Youyou put down Jin Zijin and said to Gui Yunxi, "Let's go look for him." Then to Searcy and Jin Zijin, she added, "You two find a clean spot, start a fire, and dry your clothes. We'll be back soon."

"Hey, wait a second!" Jin Zijin called out to Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou knew he wasn't too fond of Jin Ziyuan, but simply sighed and said, "We came here together, and he's saved us before; we can't just abandon him."

Jin Zijin pondered for a moment and replied, "Alright, go and come back quickly, and be careful."

Many red rats had survived in the water, but they were terrified like birds startled by the mere twang of a bowstring. Seeing people, they scattered in all directions, not daring to attack them anymore.

Gu Youyou and Gui Yunxi swam in the sea, loudly calling Jin Ziyuan's name, but there was no response.

Night was quickly falling, and if they continued like this, they would lose their chance to find him.

Gu Youyou asked, "Did you see whether he came out or not?"

Remembering that moment when everyone was fleeing for their lives, Gui Yunxi had been solely focused on escaping with Searcy, paying no attention to Jin Ziyuan.

He shook his head and said, "I only saw you guys behind me, I didn't notice him. We were all carrying people and swimming slowly; I thought he had already left, as he should have been much faster than us."

Gu Youyou hadn't noticed him at that time either. Jin Zijin was like a fish out of water—in such a situation, she was nearly scared to death, let alone aware of someone else.

"Let's go back to the shore to see if he's already there. Perhaps he went to a far-off beach."

The two swam back to the shore and continued calling for Jin Ziyuan on the beach.

Fusang Island wasn't enormous, but it wasn't small either. If they walked the entire circumference of the beach, it would take more than a dozen hours—a whole day.

Jin Ziyuan was an important person; if he died, then Yu Jizi's plans would be completely ruined.

Yet when Gu Youyou thought of Jin Ziyuan not surviving, she couldn't feel happy at all; she only felt an unrelenting desolation.

And overwhelming guilt!

They had come here together, he had pleaded with Huo Li for her, how could she let him perish here, how could she...

Her nose filled with the sourness of remorse, Gu Youyou walked along the beach, her legs trembling slightly.

She couldn't tell if it was the cold from her soaked clothes or fear.

Night had completely fallen, and they still hadn't found Jin Ziyuan.

Chapter 846: Looking for Someone

Gui Yunxi opened his mouth several times before finally speaking out, "Doctor Gu, let’s go back. They’ll be worried if we don’t return soon!"

Right, Jin Zijin and Searcy were still waiting. Gu Youyou paused and said, "You go back first, reassure them, and tell them I’m fine. I’ll look a bit longer."

The island was fraught with dangers. How could he let Gu Youyou search alone?

Reluctantly, Gui Yunxi could only continue following Gu Youyou.

They had already searched far along the beach when Gui Yunxi suggested, "Let’s search in the woods. Perhaps he went ashore and found a place to stay overnight."

Gu Youyou thought it made sense, so they plunged into the woods.

The woods of Fusang Mountain were bustling that night.

Perhaps due to an accident in a pit, those red rats had scurried out.

They dashed around the mountain, terrifying all the other creatures, creating utter chaos.

Fortunately, every creature was concerned with its own safety. Thus, no animal actively attacked Gu Youyou and Gui Yunxi.

In the woods, Gu Youyou’s voice carried far and finally got a response.

"Are you looking for me?"

On a large tree, Jin Ziyuan was sitting there.

His clothes were half-dry, his eyes seemingly lifeless.

Found him, and he’s alive?

Gu Youyou was both shocked and overjoyed, then immediately furious.

"Where the hell were you? We searched in the sea for half an hour, nearly swimming back into that cave. And look at you, back early but hiding in these woods like a monkey, I’m nearly hoarse from shouting and you didn’t respond? Have you got water in your brain?"

It was the first time in her life she had been so angry that she hurled swear words.

She was always a refined person.

Jin Ziyuan looked lost, jumped down from the tree, and waited until Gu Youyou had finished scolding before he slowly said, "I’m not one of you, so why should I respond?"

Gu Youyou, "... "Really want to slap this guy to death.

She coldly laughed and said, "Alright, I thought too much; we’re fools. You’re right, you’re not one of us. I must be crazy to be searching for you everywhere. Fine, go wherever you want from now on, whether you live or die, it’s none of my business."

With that, she turned and walked out of the woods, striding back the way they had come.

Gui Yunxi looked at Gu Youyou, then turned to Jin Ziyuan and said, "Doctor Gu was genuinely worried about you. We thought you hadn’t made it out and searched the sea for a long time. If I hadn’t stopped her, she was even planning to go back into that cave."

He glanced at the angrily departing Gu Youyou and added, "We've been looking for you for a long time. I tried persuading her to go back, but she wouldn't. Searcy and the others are still waiting outside. You be careful; I'm leaving too."

...

Xiao Jinyan was completely devastated throughout. He was dragged onto a boat on the shore, still in a daze.

Jin Zijin had died just like that? His cousin, dead? He couldn't believe it, how could he believe it?

To protect him, his elder brother endured that substitute, they supported Empress Guifei and the Second Prince against the Empress's faction, all because his aunt's son was still alive.

After surviving so much adversity, how could he die in such a strange place?

"General Xiao, please accept my condolences; the weather might turn bad in a few days. We must hurry back while the weather is still good, as we don't have much food."

Chapter 847: Dead or Not?

Xiao Jinyan stared blankly at Fusang Mountain rising from the earth, unable to hear a word anyone else was saying.

He knew that this trip had cost them Jin Zijin, and now he was the Xiao Family's sinner.

The Xiao Family's years of restrained behavior seemed utterly meaningless.

"General Xiao," someone said urgently, "please give the order to weigh anchor!"

Everyone was anxious, but without a word from Xiao Jinyan, they dared not initiate the process themselves.

The sun had just risen, and they saw many red objects moving toward them across the sea, causing astonishment among those who had never seen such a thing.

Someone exclaimed loudly, "Look! What are those things?"

Those who saw the small red furry-like spheres immediately stiffened.

Some were dead bodies floating, being tugged up and down by fish in the sea; others were alive, struggling intensely. If they didn’t get to shore soon, it looked like they wouldn’t have much chance of survival.

Those items were the dreaded red-haired rats.

"It’s those rats!" they exclaimed in surprise.

But how could those rats be appearing on the sea?

Someone shouted, "Could it be that their burrow broke open and seawater flowed in, causing the rats to swim up to the sea from the hole?"

If that was the case... someone boldly suggested, "Perhaps General Jin hasn’t died, maybe he swam out too."

There, with a face as gray as death, Xiao Jinyan’s eyes suddenly lit up with hope, but just for a moment, before deflating again like a punctured ball.

He waved his hand and said, "He’s a landlubber with no chance of survival."

Yet one soldier wouldn’t give up, saying, "General Jin can’t swim, but maybe some of the others in the cave can. They could have helped him swim up." He pointed in a direction, "All these rats came from over there. Let’s go look there. Even if the people are dead, maybe we can find bodies that surfaced. Look, many rat corpses have floated up."

Hearing this, Xiao Jinyan’s hope was rekindled.

Right, since the bodies of the rats had surfaced, even if his cousin had indeed drowned, his body might also still be out there. Dead or alive, they had to find him. If he really drowned in the sea, he couldn’t let his cousin’s body feed the fish.

The rat corpses attracted a lot of fish, and standing on the beach, Gu Youyou couldn’t help but remark, "Eating these irradiated rats, I wonder if there will be a bunch of mutated fish coming out."

Searcy, curious, asked, "What do you mean by ’irradiated’ fish?"

Gu Youyou replied, "Haven’t you said those two pearls came from a meteorite? I think so too. So, those strange things in the cave must be caused by extraterrestrial objects. These rats ate the water from that lotus pool and turned out like this. And the rock above isn’t ordinary rock which is why the grass growing there is so strange."

Gu Youyou was distracted, so she briefly explained to Searcy, who still only partially understood.

This cave wasn’t new to them; people had been here thousands of years ago.

If she wasn’t mistaken, the people from the Dao Sect took the Youying Pearl back then and also took quite a few Yin Stones, nurturing the Youying Grass.

And an ancestor of the Imperial Family took the Zhuzhao Pearl and created the Flame Pool.

Of course, perhaps they hadn’t taken the stones—it could be that just with these two pearls, after thousands of years of radiation, their surrounding environment had transformed to what it was now.

Chapter 848: Better Dead.

"One of these men became the ancestor of Dao Sect, while the other gained supreme imperial power. Yet, for many years, these two forces mutually restrained each other, continually controlling the citizens of this nation. Who knows what deals they had between them?"

"Perhaps no one knows these legends anymore, or perhaps among those few leaders, some stories still exist."

"Last night, all the animals on Fusang Island were restless; they dared not wander about, so they found a safe cave to light a fire and dry their clothes. Only at dawn did they dare to leave the cave and look for other people."

"Uncle Gu Chaosheng had arranged to pick them up in three days, and since only one day had passed, there were still two days until they would arrive."

"They decided to first look for the boat that Jin Zijin had brought, to see if it was still there. If it was, they planned to take that boat."

"Anyway, there was one more person on the island, Jin Ziyuan, who wouldn’t leave with them. He likely wanted to wait for Uncle Gu, so they could follow the boat back first."

"Xiao Jinyan led a few people with good water skills to search the sea, while Gu Youyou and others walked along the beach. Her hearing was sharp, and from afar, she could hear voices."

She said to Jin Zijin, "It seems like Xiao Jinyan’s voice calling you."

"They quickened their pace, and sure enough, they saw several people floating in the sea. Unable to find any more, they considered diving into the deep sea to look for the entrance to that cave."

"’Cousin... Jin Zijin,’ Xiao Jinyan shouted with joy upon seeing the unharmed Jin Zijin on the beach."

"He was a decent swimmer and quickly made it to the shore, punching Jin Zijin, and said between laughter and tears, ’I thought you wouldn’t make it out of that cave, you scared me to death! Hey, are you a land duck or what? Who brought you out?’"

Jin Zijin smiled and looked towards Gu Youyou.

Xiao Jinyan’s expression darkened, appearing somewhat embarrassed and uneasy.

He felt he should say thanks at this moment, but to her, Gu Youyou? How could he say it?

This was the fourth time Gu Youyou had met Xiao Jinyan. The first time, he had tried to kill her, only to be stopped by Jin Zijin.

The second time was when her foolish cousin took her to a matchmaking event. Intent on ’keeping it within the family,’ her cousin planned to introduce Gu Youyou to her cousin at the Ducal Residence, but he looked down on her, humiliating her.

Although Yue Rujing had helped her retaliate later.

The third time was during the dragon-raising ceremony for the Dragon King and Dragon Mother, where they had joined the incense offering, and he had warned her.

This was their fourth encounter.

Gu Youyou knew in his heart, he had a strong aversion to her, and she didn’t make it hard for him, merely saying to Jin Zijin, "Everyone is fine, let’s go."

They all boarded the boat together. Xiao Jinyan couldn’t help asking, "And what about Jin Ziyuan, that guy? Wasn’t he with you?"

Thinking of Jin Ziyuan made Gu Youyou angry, and she said, "Dead."

"Dead?" Xiao Jinyan was stunned, then burst out laughing, "Haha, that troublemaker is dead, good riddance, good riddance indeed. Ah, it’s a pity I couldn’t find his body; otherwise, I could have taken it back to claim merit."

Gu Youyou gave him a look of disdain and turned to enter the cabin.

...

Back in the cabin, Gu Youyou checked both her and Jin Zijin’s health. The residual toxins in his body weren’t severe and would soon be cured with her medicine.

As for her own health, during her days on Qi Mountain, she and Searcy had studied many kinds of medicine, all effective on animals but somehow ineffective on herself. She had thought it was due to prolonged poisoning, but now it seemed it was because of the Youying Pearl in her body, hindering any progress.

Chapter 849: On Fate

The pearl was gone, and the cold poison in her body was bound to be purged sooner or later.

But once the poison inside her body was cured, the initial bond between them would no longer exist. Amid her joy, she couldn’t help but feel a touch of melancholic loss.

"Zijin, have you ever thought about what you’ll do after the poison is cured?"

They hadn’t been together in a long time, and this time, Gu Youyou felt something different from before, a sense of wistful loss.

She leaned against his chest and clutched his clothes tightly.

Jin Zijin placed his hand over hers and said softly, "What are you thinking about? The bond between us has nothing to do with the poison." He knew what was on her mind.

"Nonsense, if it weren’t for suppressing the poison, you wouldn’t have taken me out of that room."

But Jin Zijin didn’t agree, and said, "This is not a bond; this is fate. Youyou, do you believe in fate?"

"Fate?" Gu Youyou thought hard with her head bowed, "Is there really fate between us?"

Gu Youyou remembered Xiao Jinyan saying that even if there was fate between her and Jin Zijin, it would be a calamitous one.

But she heard Jin Zijin say in a deep, resonant voice, "If not fated, among the six realms, throughout the three thousand great worlds, among millions of enlightened beings, why does my smile bloom only for me and yet it’s only with you I come to meet?"

Gu Youyou was stunned for a moment and looked up at him.

Perhaps it was because the wind had picked up at sea, the boat swayed more violently than before, and the objects in the cabin rattled. Beside his high-bridged nose, the shadows flickered and danced. Under his long eyelashes, his eyes, dark and profound, seemed to gaze into an unfathomable universe.

Yet, her heart seemed to merge with this boundless darkness.

She wrapped her arms backwards around his waist, tightening her grip, yet she smiled and said, "You are a disciple of the Dao Family, why are you quoting Buddhist scriptures? I hear that in Zhuzhao Country, Daoism is esteemed while Buddhism is neglected, and the monks have been chased away to other countries."

Jin Zijin said softly, "Many Buddhist teachings indeed have some merit. The fact that they have been passed down to this day and have not been extinguished speaks to their extraordinary nature. Esteeming Daoism over Buddhism is not something to be proud of. It is allowing the Dao Family to grow unchecked that brings peril to the court. Belief, in essence, should be a field where all schools flourish."

It was hard to imagine such words coming from his mouth. His faith had always been in Daoism, holding the Sanqing in high regard, yet now he was speaking these words.

Gu Youyou felt that there were things in his heart that she was increasingly unable to understand.

He had always been a complex person.

The ship sailed on the sea for a day and only berthed at night.

They didn’t dock at a civilian pier, but at a military dock reserved for the East Sea Naval Forces.

Normally, there should have been many guards here, but today was odd. There was not a single guard on the dock, only an old man in black with white hair, standing erect against the wind.

The sailors steering the ship were all stunned. What was going on?

Who was this old man?

Having been in the naval forces for many years, it was their first encounter with a military dock void of naval forces, and instead, an old man waiting there.

"Could we have gone to the wrong place? In this pitch darkness, the elder there clearly looks like a father waiting for his son to return home."

"How could we be wrong? I’ve been in this line of work for more than a decade now, and I know this waterway better than the way back to my own home."

If so, what was the situation at hand?

"Don’t rush to dock just yet; go and inform General Xiao."

Xiao Jinyan came out following a sailor with a befuddled look on his face. Upon seeing the old man on the dock, he was just as puzzled.

Chapter 850: Yu Jizi Followed

The night was dark and distant. In the pitch-black environment, the old man’s white hair seemed to carry its own glow, making him instantly noticeable.

Yet his face remained unclear.

"Who is this?"

The sailors shook their heads, "We don’t know!"

With that appearance... In the whole world, with white hair and black clothes, Xiao Jinyan could only think of one person. The State Preceptor Yu Jizi?

Damn, the State Preceptor Yu Jizi?

If he was coming, it was certain that he was here for Jin Zijin.

He felt his cousin was in big trouble and hurriedly told the sailors, "Don’t dock yet, just wait."

After speaking, he rushed into the cabin to inform Jin Zijin of the situation.

Jin Zijin furrowed his brows deeply upon hearing the news and looked at Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou turned pale. She had a bad feeling that the thing she had been worried about was about to happen.

Over the past few years, Yu Jizi had always been a looming threat, never laying a hand on them. But this time he had shown up in person. Since Yu Jizi was here, he wouldn’t be like the fool Huo Li who would just issue a warning or resort to dirty tricks. So they...

Her heart tightened, and she hurriedly ran up to the gangway. She looked in the direction of the dock but couldn’t see the Yu Jizi the others spoke of. The dock was empty.

At that moment, several sailors on the gangway were whispering to each other in confusion, "Where did that old man go? Hey, how did he disappear?"

"Yeah, he was still here just now. How could he suddenly vanish?"

They rubbed their eyes, finding it hard to believe that a living person could just disappear into thin air.

"Could it be that it’s too dark and we were seeing things?"

"How could that be? His white hair was almost as bright as the moon. I saw it clearly; he was just standing there."

Just now he was standing there, but now the place was empty.

Gu Youyou believed that they hadn’t been mistaken; there really had been someone there just moments ago, and that person must definitely be Yu Jizi.

Because she had witnessed Tian Jizi’s miraculous movements and profound Qinggong back at Qi Mountain.

If Tian Jizi could do it, then Yu Jizi surely could too.

At that time, when Tian Jizi left Gu Youyou’s house, she felt the same as they did now, as if she had been seeing things.

Jin Zijin stood beside Gu Youyou, looking at the deserted dock with a grave expression.

Xiao Jinyan, who had followed out with a knife in his hand, looked puzzled, "I saw him just now, too, how could he be gone?"

He asked the others, "Where did that old man on the dock go?"

Everyone shook their heads, having no idea where the old man had gone.

According to the size of the dock, there should have been at least twenty people stationed here, but now those twenty were nowhere to be found.

If anything had happened, not a single word of it had leaked out.

The presence of such a powerful entity inevitably made everyone extremely nervous.

Searcy and Gui Yunxi heard the commotion and came out of the cabin. Searcy was a bit seasick and pale-faced. Her facial wound from a few days ago had begun to fade with treatment, but even with her pallor, it still looked like she might be swept away by the sea breeze.

Gui Yunxi said, "With you looking like that, why come out to catch the wind? Better go back inside."

As he spoke, he noticed they were at the dock and voiced his surprise, "No need to go back in now, we'll be getting off the ship soon."

Searcy gave him a glance and then turned to look at Gu Youyou.

She asked, "Has something happened? You all have such stern faces, and we're not docking."