Farmhouse 851

Chapter 851: Your Cultivation Is Not Enough

Gu Youyou spoke in a low voice, "There might be trouble tonight, go into the cabin first." After speaking, she turned to Gui Yunxi and said, "Once we dock, if there's a chance, run. Take care of Searcy and send her back to the Lin Family in Beijing."

Searcy's expression grew solemn, "Why do you sound like you're giving your last instructions? What's frightening you so much?"

"It's not fear," Gu Youyou said. "I just want to minimize the harm. You won't be of much help here. Just looking out for your own life would be a great help to me."

"What? I won't be of much help?" Searcy didn't like such words used about her.

She was so formidable!

"Alright, you all stop talking." Jin Zijin interrupted them, then addressed Gu Youyou, "You too, run at the first chance, and don't go to Beijing. Head to Qi Mountain to find my master."

He took out the crimson dagger and further commanded, "Set sail, we're docking. Jin Yan, you escort them to Qi Mountain. If anything happens to her, you will answer to me."

That wasn't going to happen.

Xiao Jinyan shook his head, "Why should I bother with so much? As long as you are safe, that's enough." He casually pointed to two sailors, "Escort them safely to Qi Mountain, and there'll be an extra reward of a thousand taels for each."

Jin Zijin's cool gaze shot towards Xiao Jinyan as he said indifferently, "Keep her safe; it's an order!"

"You..." Xiao Jinyan was visibly discontent, all because of this woman.

Back in Lotus Village, he had said this woman should not be kept around.

Now, look what happened. She had indeed become his Achilles' heel. Looking for this woman, he had almost lost his life.

The boat had docked, and Jin Zijin leapt ashore, his figure quickly vanishing into the darkness.

Gu Youyou watched his receding figure until it disappeared.

She didn't want to follow his instructions, didn't want to see him face Yu Jizi alone, but she understood that only by listening to him would he be at ease to confront Yu Jizi.

Once the boat was securely docked, the passengers began to disembark. Despite Xiao Jinyan's obvious reluctance, he had no choice but to follow Jin Zijin's orders, quickly leading Gu Youyou and the others away.

The dozen or so sailors with them sent two to inform Che Xiangyuan, while the others went to pursue Jin Zijin.

In the tranquil fishing village, the fishermen were deep in sleep, unaware of the deadly struggle unfolding on the sands.

Not far from the dimly lit dock, the corpses of twenty guards lay neatly side by side as if asleep, peaceful expressions on each of their faces.

Yu Jizi stood beside the bodies, with a smirk almost watching Jin Zijin.

The scene was incredibly eerie.

"My nephew, it's been a while," he said.

Jin Zijin didn’t respond, just gripped the dagger tightly.

Yu Jizi glanced at his hand and remarked, "Your thirty years of cultivation are far from enough to contend with me. The only one who could possibly match me is your master, yet distant waters can’t put out a nearby fire, and he’s gone mad."

"Is that so? How will we know if we don’t try?" Jin Zijin said coldly.

"Heh..." Yu Jizi let out a light laugh, squinting his narrow eyes at Jin Zijin, "The young these days are so cocky. But don’t worry, I won’t do much to you. After all, I am someone who abides by the rules. I’m here today just to take back what’s mine. You’ve had it for far too long; it’s time to give it back."

Chapter 852: Yu Jizi Gives Chase

Gu Youyou and her companions smoothly mounted their horses, with Searcy being the only inexperienced rider; however, led by Gu Youyou, their speed was not slower than the others. It was not until now that Xiao Jinyan began to reassess his opinion of her.

This woman, it seemed, was not entirely useless, at least she could ride a horse decently.

He just hoped that his cousin could delay Yu Jizi long enough to give them time to escape.

Searcy, however, was the most miserable. She who had just been seasick now was getting horse sick from the jostling ride.

She couldn’t take it anymore and complained, "Hey, hey, they want you, not me. Why should I have to run with you?"

As the sole successor of the Ghost Doctor, Gu Youyou only instinctively associated certain thoughts and felt that if Yu Jizi knew of Searcy’s existence, he wouldn’t let her go either. That’s why she had wanted Searcy to take refuge with the Lin Family in Beijing.

But thinking about it now, it seemed inappropriate to drag her along.

Yu Jizi didn’t know her identity, and there was no reason for him to capture her.

In a low voice, Gu Youyou suggested, "Why don’t we split up and run? Remember, don’t let yourself be caught by Yu Jizi."

After saying that, she pulled the reins to halt and handed Searcy over to Gui Yunxi, arranging things just as they had been before, for Gui Yunxi to take her back to the Lin Family in Beijing to wait.

"Why would Yu Jizi want to capture me?" Searcy asked, sensing something unusual; she was not foolish.

Gu Youyou was also not foolish and immediately concocted a believable excuse, saying, "That old pervert loves studying poisons. Who else would he capture but you?"

Meanwhile, Xiao Jinyan was frantically saying, "Why so many questions? That guy is an old bastard; he loves abducting young girls. Does he need a reason to capture you? Gu Youyou, get on the horse and let’s go."

This was indeed not the time for talking. Gu Youyou mounted her horse but was startled by a voice behind her, almost causing her to fall off.

"Leaving? And where do you plan to go?"

It was Yu Jizi’s voice. In the next moment, they saw the old man with white hair and black clothes descend from the sky and block their path.

So soon?

They had been riding for more than an hour.

And what of Jin Zijin?

Gu Youyou’s heart was filled with panic and chaos, realizing that she couldn’t escape today. She was more worried about Jin Zijin than herself being taken away by Yu Jizi.

Jin Zijin had gone to intercept Yu Jizi, but now Yu Jizi was here. Where had Jin Zijin gone?

"What have you done to him?" she asked urgently.

Yu Jizi’s smile was amiable, though overly hypocritical. He said, "Don’t worry, he’s fine. I am a man who follows rules; I won’t break them. I’m just here to retrieve what’s mine. Come with me obediently, and they... will get to leave alive."

"Yu Jizi, you dare to abduct someone in public?" Xiao Jinyan said, furious.

If it hadn’t been urgent, he wouldn’t have dared to speak to Yu Jizi in such a tone.

Yu Jizi frowned slightly, squinting his eyes as he scrutinized Xiao Jinyan, and asked, "What’s your story? How did you get involved with them?"

Xiao Jinyan snorted coldly, "Your follower Huo Li reported that doctor Gu encountered bandits. I was commanded by the emperor to retrieve doctor Gu. State Preceptor, if you take doctor Gu away in my presence, how am I to explain it to the emperor?"

"You don’t need to explain anything. I will personally speak to the emperor," Yu Jizi replied.

Xiao Jinyan stomped his foot in anger.

After speaking, Yu Jizi no longer looked at Xiao Jinyan but turned to Gu Youyou with a smile.

Gu Youyou forced a smile, looked at the three people before her, and finally, her gaze returned to Yu Jizi.

Chapter 853: Are You Just That Cowardly?

With such combat power, she was utterly defeated.

She said, "Fine, I'll go with you."

Ever since she had arrived in this world, this issue had threaded through her entire life here; it had to be resolved eventually.

She had long grown tired of constant fear and evasion.

By resolving it once and for all, everyone could finally rest easy.

Whether in life or death, she was prepared to accept the outcome.

Yu Jizi laughed and said, "Knowing the times is wise. Since you're so decisive, I won't make it hard for you. Let's go!"

He signaled for Gu Youyou to get on the horse.

Gu Youyou mounted the horse, riding up beside him.

Yu Jizi took light steps, his movements mysteriously agile, covering dozens of meters in just a few strides.

Gu Youyou spurred her horse, following after him.

Xiao Jinyan clenched his fist, a look of indignation on his face.

"Am I really this helpless? Watching him take Gu Youyou away?"

Searcy sneered at Xiao Jinyan, "You are that helpless."

With that, she took out a bamboo tube the size of a palm and urged Gui Yunxi to mount the horse with her.

Gui Yunxi was bewildered but didn’t want Gu Youyou to be taken away by the enemy either.

He pulled Searcy onto the horse, and she said, "Hurry and catch up."

Gui Yunxi replied, "Doctor Gu is willing to go with him to protect us."

Searcy urged, "I forgot to give her something, hurry and catch up."

Without saying anything more, Gui Yunxi rode hard with her, and as they were about to catch up, Searcy suddenly put the bamboo tube to her lips and blew out a white object that shot straight at Yu Jizi.

Yu Jizi frowned slightly, dodging to the side.

Gu Youyou was shocked and shouted, "Searcy, get back!"

What was she thinking? Could hidden weapons harm Yu Jizi?

This was a cheater, a freak.

But Searcy did not stop. Ignoring Gu Youyou, she swiftly blew out a second, then a third object, all of which Yu Jizi evaded with his bizarre movements.

Xiao Jinyan was astonished as he watched from behind.

What was that poison doctor trying to do? Did she think she could defeat Yu Jizi?

Even Jin Zijin was no match for him.

That’s right, what happened to Jin Zijin? He needed to find him. With Yu Jizi personally taking her, he wouldn’t blame himself for this loss, would he?

But looking at those two courting death, he just couldn’t bring himself to turn away as he started to leave.

After all, they were under his cousin’s orders to protect, and though Gu Youyou was out of options, he couldn’t let these two die here without a clue!

By then, Searcy had shot out nine darts from the bamboo tube. There were only ten in all, and now only one remained.

This last dart also missed, and was caught in Yu Jizi’s hand.

Gu Youyou’s heart skipped a beat and she said to Searcy, "What are you doing? Get away now."

After speaking, she turned to Yu Jizi and said, "She’s just a naive girl, please don’t hold it against her, senior."

Yu Jizi opened his hand and looked at the silver needle lying in his palm, his eyes growing deeper.

"To strike with a needle that seals the throat upon drawing blood, what is your relation to the Ghost Doctor?"

Gu Youyou thought to herself, ’This is bad,’ and quickly stood in front of Yu Jizi, "Senior, she is one of my disciples who has a slight understanding of the Qihuang Technique."

"A slight understanding of the Qihuang Technique?" Yu Jizi laughed heartily, "So there are still people alive, excellent, truly excellent. In that case, you can come along as well."

Searcy was furious. Just as she was about to reach into her bag for poison, she was suddenly lifted lightly by Yu Jizi, who tossed her onto Gu Youyou’s horse, and her bag fell to the ground.

It was over, all her belongings...

...

Chapter 854: Jin Zijin is Injured

Jin Zijin’s face was shrouded in gloom, blood gushing incessantly from his right hand.

Several sailors supported him and lifted his sleeve to bandage the wound. However, when they saw the wound, it startled them all.

The injury was not caused by a sharp blade; rather, it seemed as if the muscles on the arm had swelled and then burst open, leaving a ghastly and horrifying wound.

Who was that old man, and how could he possess such formidable power?

"General, are you alright?" Seeing Jin Zijin remaining motionless, the sailors were somewhat taken aback.

"Stop talking for now, let’s take the general back first and report this to General Che. We can’t handle this wound; we need to find a military doctor."

This night was destined to be restless.

Che Xiangyuan led a large number of soldiers to search everywhere near Fusang City. He even dispatched his most capable subordinate, Jie Zhongsen, to lead troops in the direction they mentioned.

Under orders to suppress bandits, Xiao Jinyan returned to the Divine Doctor Gu for help. He chased all the way to Fusang City by the East Sea, and finally found the person, but halfway there, a bizarre old man took him away and also injured another mysterious General Jin.

And that person, he guessed, was the highly favored Prince Qin by the emperor, closely guarded by him.

What should he do now?

"Search for me, check who has recently arrived in Fusang City. Interrogate all outsiders strictly," General Che stomped his foot in frustration.

He didn't know the person was Yu Jizi, so he felt that no matter how powerful someone was, they couldn't silently kill everyone at his docks and even force the skillful Xiao Jinyan into complete silence.

Of course, due to the rumors in Beijing about the Xiao Family, which said that the military ranks of the Xiao Family's sons were all thanks to the deceased Crown Princess Consort, he personally despised the fact that Xiao Jinyan lost without a fight.

Thinking back to when Grand Tutor Xiao was alive, the Xiao Family was once spirited and bold; now they merely maintained superficial grandeur relying on some old affections of the young emperor, which was truly pitiful and lamentable.

The wound on Jin Zijin's hand had been treated, and he immediately led a horse, ready to head out.

Xiao Jinyan was terrified and hurriedly stopped him, saying, "You can't leave; the injury on your hand was caused by Inner Strength, which is no ordinary matter. You need at least half a month of recuperation; riding a horse now, do you not want your hand anymore?"

"But Youyou has been taken by him," Jin Zijin exclaimed loudly. "That kind of person, his mind is filled with twisted things. I don't know what he will do to her; I can't just sit here and heal."

"You still can't joke about your arm like this. Let's do this, you ride in a carriage and we'll go back together to find Tian Jizi for help. That old freak is no longer human. We mortals can't do anything in front of him. You didn't see it; he walks faster than we ride horses. My Qinggong is barely able to keep up."

Xiao Jinyan was most skilled in Qinggong, but seeing Yu Jizi's eerie movements, he began to despise his own Qinggong for the first time; compared to him, it was really nothing.

An old freak naturally requires another old freak to deal with him. He initially thought that Jin Zijin could hold Yu Jizi off for a long time, but didn't expect him to be swiftly subdued.

Suddenly, Jin Zijin thought of something and turned his head to stare directly at Xiao Jinyan.

"What...what's wrong?" Xiao Jinyan felt somewhat uneasy under his gaze.

Jin Zijin said, "Jin Ziyuan hasn't returned yet. He should be coming back tomorrow with the fishermen. I'll go back, and you continue to stay here. You must capture him and not let him fall into Yu Jizi's hands."

Chapter 855: Trapped in the Carriage

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"Is this guy not dead?" Xiao Jinyan exclaimed in surprise.

But as he saw Jin Zijin's increasingly ugly expression, he quickly shut his mouth and said, "Alright, alright, I'll definitely catch this naughty grandson."

Jin Zijin went back to Beijing alone in a carriage. He had lost so miserably, not because his skills were much worse than Yu Jizi's but because he had almost drowned before and had not fully recovered, compounded by the boat ride.

Fearing they would worry, he had not told anyone that he was not only a non-swimmer but also seasick.

His right hand had been injured by Yu Jizi, and the prognosis was not optimistic. With his only good left hand, he picked up a cloth bag.

This was what Searcy had dropped when she was captured by Yu Jizi. Xiao Jinyan had picked it up and given it back to him.

He said that he heard from Yu Jizi that the woman was a descendant of a Ghost Doctor, her body laden with poisons—a bag filled with various kinds of poisons—so he brought it back for Jin Zijin.

Jin Zijin took it out to see. Indeed, it was full of medicines, but he did not closely examine which were poisonous and which were not.

As for Searcy's identity, he, of course, knew. Initially, he had helped in the investigation.

...

Gu Youyou and Searcy had both been taken away. Gui Yunxi originally could have left, but he decided to stay.

Yu Jizi spared him because he was a coachman, which was just as well.

In the sealed carriage, Gu Youyou and Searcy sat opposite each other, shrouded in darkness, unable to see anything.

Gu Youyou reached out to feel around, but Searcy swatted her hand away.

"What are you doing? Where are you touching? Do you want to scare someone to death in this pitch darkness?" Searcy said irritably.

Gu Youyou sighed and said, "I was trying to feel where you are."

"Where else could I be? I'm sitting right across from you," Searcy replied grumpily.

Gu Youyou thought that Yu Jizi must have been prepared in advance with this special carriage. Locking them inside a pitch-dark carriage, even requiring them to cover their eyes when relieving themselves, what was this meant to imply?

She had seen similar scenarios on television, usually meant to prevent them from remembering the route they had taken.

But Gui Yunxi was driving the carriage outside, which meant... in Yu Jizi's eyes, he was as good as dead, very likely to be silenced by murder.

Gu Youyou was shocked again and whispered to Searcy, "We need to find a way to escape."

"Do you have a plan?" Searcy asked.

"You always thought yourself clever," Gu Youyou retorted. "Shouldn't you be the one coming up with a plan?"

"No way!" Searcy said. "That old pervert is always following us. What good are plans when we can't outrun him with our legs? Besides, I lost all my possessions. I have nothing on me now."

Gu Youyou was frustrated and exclaimed, "Then why did you even bother? I thought you came up with some plan."

"I didn't want to be so disgraceful; I had to try something," Searcy stated loudly.

"Recklessly, you got the coachman involved too. We are useful, blindfolded. Gui Yunxi, after finishing driving, will be useless; he might definitely be doomed to be silenced by murder."

"Serves him right for following," Searcy muttered darkly.

Actually, she had already given him the antidote before heading to Fusang Island; only the marks on his arm hadn't faded so quickly.

He had been so ungrateful as to head to Fusang Island demanding the antidote, even volunteering to that old pervert to be a coachman, which was utterly stupid.

After a while, Searcy suddenly began to bang on the carriage walls, yelling loudly, "Stop the carriage—stop, I need to pee."

Chapter 856: Peeking at the Long Needle Eye

Gui Yunxi turned shakily, looking towards the person sitting cross-legged on top of the carriage.

He could hear their conversation inside clearly, and he thought the person above must have also heard everything clearly.

Their words frightened him half to death—firstly, he genuinely feared being killed to silence witnesses, and secondly, he was afraid that their unrestrained talk would anger the King of Hell on top of the carriage, who might just squash them dead.

Regardless, he really felt like slapping the two women inside the carriage to death.

Yu Jizi opened his eyes and nodded at Gui Yunxi.

Gui Yunxi pulled on the reins, bringing the carriage to a stop at the side of the road, his hand holding a black blindfold.

When he looked up again, he noted that there was no one on the roof of the carriage; Yu Jizi, elusive as a ghost, had disappeared without a trace.

Searcy was let out of the carriage, and Gui Yunxi hastily handed her the black cloth.

Searcy rolled her eyes at him and cursed, "Lackey!"

With that said, she grabbed the black cloth and tied it around her head to cover her eyes.

Gui Yunxi guided her behind some bushes and stepped aside, saying, "Make it quick; I'll watch out for you."

Searcy said, "Move farther away, and don’t you dare peek."

The corner of Gui Yunxi’s mouth twitched as he retorted indignantly, "Who would peek and risk getting styes? Do I look like that kind of person?"

After Searcy had taken care of her needs, Gui Yunxi helped her back onto the carriage.

On the road, not seeing Yu Jizi anywhere around, Gui Yunxi whispered near Searcy’s ear, "Stop talking nonsense in the carriage; everything’s audible from outside, that old pervert has been sitting on top of the carriage all this time."

Searcy stumbled, and if not for Gui Yunxi’s support, she would have fallen.

When she returned, she told Gu Youyou about this, and Gu Youyou, fuming, banged hard on the roof of the carriage and cursed at the old pervert several times before she calmed down.

Thus, there was no peace throughout the journey; the two women kept jeering and taunting each other inside the carriage.

Gui Yunxi glanced at the person on the roof of the carriage, who remained calm, seemingly oblivious to everything.

If it weren’t for him always opening his eyes immediately upon being called, Gui Yunxi would have thought the old man had entered the legend of a meditative trance and wasn’t listening to anything at all.

Gui Yunxi felt he was wrong to have warned them.

...

Jin Zijin hadn’t immediately gone to Qi Mountain; his master was getting old and couldn’t rely on him for everything.

Besides, he first needed to go to Sanqing Temple to find Yue Rujing—Gu Youyou had been taken; what about the other medicine people?

Coincidentally, on that day, Yue Rujing received a message; just when he was anxious about how to convey this news to his senior brother, the senior brother returned.

Yet today's senior brother looked different from usual.

His face was pale, and after being poisoned, it was rare for him to look this white.

His appearance was weak, his eyes pitch black—a senior brother like this was the most terrifying.

"What happened?" Yue Rujing couldn't wait to tell him the important news and hurriedly asked Jin Zijin.

To him, no matter how big the problem was, his senior brother's well-being was more important.

Jin Zijin had been injured and was exhausted from traveling, his body severely depleted.

He sat down on a low stool and said weakly, "Youyou has been taken away by Yu Jizi. Are the medicine people in Lingnan still safe?"

A tremor went through Yue Rujing's heart, as that was exactly what he was going to discuss.

What should they do now?

Yue Rujing gripped the letter his father had sent and hid it behind his back.

Jin Zijin glanced at him weakly and said, "Bring it here."

"Senior brother," Yue Rujing moved his hand back further and took a step back.

Jin Zijin sighed, "Were they also taken away?"

Chapter 857: All Other Medicine Men Also Disappeared

"Senior brother!" Yue Rujing, with worry written all over his face, said, "Don’t worry, I will go and rescue them."

Jin Zijin took a deep breath and asked, "Tell me, what happened?"

Yue Rujing pondered for a moment before replying, "My father sent a message, saying that all the medicinal slaves were abducted overnight. It was... it was Zhang Quansheng’s doing, in collusion with the people of Nanzhao. However, he didn’t gain an advantage either. My father had long wanted to kill him; this was the perfect opportunity to frame him with the crime of treason and have him escorted to the capital in chains. On the way, they killed him, staging an escape attempt where he unwittingly fell off a cliff and died. By removing this major malignancy from Lingnan, it will be easier to eradicate the smaller ones."

Zhang Quansheng was dead, but the medicinal slaves had fallen into the hands of Yu Jizi. Once he gathered all the medicinal slaves, he would surely make his move. Yue Rujing said, "Senior brother, you should recuperate in Sanqing Temple while I go to rescue them."

Jin Zijin shook his head and said, "No, there’s no need to rush to their rescue now. Go to the East Sea, make contact with Xiao Jinyan, and ensure Jin Ziyuan’s safety. It would be best to have him hidden in the Ministry of Punishment’s Prison. No, even the Ministry of Punishment’s Prison is not safe. Go to Qi Mountain and leave him with our master."

I can only apologize to our master, I thought. At his age, I am still causing him trouble.

If the news about Jin Ziyuan gets leaked, those from the Anti-King Factions won’t care what place Qi Mountain is; they are bound to make trouble.

But Qi Mountain is the only place Yu Jizi fears; aside from Qi Mountain, I really don’t know where else Jin Ziyuan can be safely hidden.

Yue Rujing was also aware of these considerations. Clenching his fists tightly, he said, "Why don't we just kill that boy Jin Ziyuan and turn that old man's efforts into a wasted effort."

"Absolutely not!" Jin Zijin decisively refused and said, "If Jin Ziyuan dies, his dream's shattering will make him act desperately, and there's no telling what he might do. But I am certain Youyou won't survive as long as Yu Jizi is alive. We not only mustn't kill Jin Ziyuan, but we also need to ensure his safety."

Yue Rujing was very uncomfortable inside but knew that Jin Zijin's points were valid.

To them, Gu Youyou had become more than just a dispensable medicinal slave; she had once saved his life. How could he possibly not care about her life and death?

"Alright, I'll leave now." Looking at Jin Zijin, he added with worry, "Senior brother, I see your injuries are serious. What happened?"

Jin Zijin replied, "Nothing serious, just crossed paths with Yu Jizi and exchanged a few moves. At that time, I was feeling seasick and nauseous, holding it in." He slapped the table fiercely, full of regret, and said, "I shouldn't have held it in. I should have vomited all over that old bastard."

Yue Rujing's mouth twitched, and he turned and left Sanqing Temple.

...

After half a month's journey, Gu Youyou and her companions finally alighted from the carriage.

They were led down and blindfolded.

She heard Gui Yunxi speaking to Yu Jizi, saying, "The carriage can't go any further, and it is difficult for them to walk while blindfolded. Should we let them remove the blindfolds?"

Yu Jizi replied, "No matter, give each of them a cane and tie them up with a rope."

Consequently, with Gui Yunxi in the back and Yu Jizi leading the way, each of them holding one end of the rope, Gu Youyou and Searcy walked in the middle, each holding a cane, clumsily following as they climbed the mountain.

Both cursed incessantly; heck, there’s no need to treat prisoners like this.

It’s bad enough being tied up with ropes, but why blindfolded?

And having to climb a mountain blindfolded at that, what if they accidentally fell into a ditch?

Chapter 858: Identical Ancient Tomb

But that old face, which had cultivated for more than eighty years, was not something that two young maidens could outdo with their scolding, no matter how much they cursed to the skies, it seemed as if he heard nothing.

Gui Yunxi couldn’t stand it any longer and said to Yu Jizi ahead, "Senior, please say something, these two ancestors..."

Yu Jizi hadn’t said anything when he was cursed in return.

"Gui Yunxi, are you seeking death? Believe it or not, I could poison you into a mute."

"Driver, whose side are you on? If not relying on you to help vent our anger, you shouldn’t be helping that old immortal speak either!"

Over there, Yu Jizi just laughed and said, "I’ve lived for decades, and there have been many who cursed me behind my back, perhaps even more vulgarly than they do, but no one has ever dared to curse me to my face. This is good too; it lets me know what those people used to say about me."

Gu Youyou: "..."

Searcy: "..."

Gui Yunxi: "..." Truly an old immortal’s perversity, to find amusement in being cursed?

Having no idea how long they had walked, the people in front finally stopped.

Gu Youyou listened quietly, not knowing what Yu Jizi was doing. The noise sounded like the rumble of large, ancient machinery.

When those sounds stopped, they had their ropes pulled again, entering a colder place.

Gu Youyou listened carefully, sensing with her body.

From the echo of their voices and that moldy smell, she guessed they had entered a passage, and one that hadn’t been opened for many years at that.

She had no idea what this eerie place could be.

After a while, Yu Jizi finally stopped.

Gu Youyou felt him drop the rope, then walk forward a few steps, and after a while, she heard the click of something being turned; then a heavy stone door opened.

Voices came from inside, both men and women.

Seemingly spotting Yu Jizi, everyone quieted down, with a few men calling out "Master" to Yu Jizi.

Yu Jizi hummed in acknowledgment but did not respond further. Gu Youyou and the others were pushed inside, and then the heavy stone door automatically closed behind them.

Only then were they allowed to remove the black cloth that had covered their faces.

Having not seen light for a long time, their eyes felt gritty.

Gu Youyou opened her eyes, only to be stunned by what she saw.

Not to mention the people inside, the place itself was all too familiar to her.

Wasn’t this the ancient tomb behind Lotus Village, complete with the coffin in the center?

No wonder she had felt a sense of familiarity earlier.

But that couldn’t be right!

Gu Youyou was very clear; that ancient tomb had long been destroyed, and the entire hill had collapsed. This place couldn’t possibly be that tomb.

It wasn’t that tomb, yet it was built exactly the same; what was going on here?

Inside the ancient tomb were five cowardly women and four men in black.

One of them was Zhuo Qing, whom they hadn’t seen for a long time.

Over there, Gui Yunxi, who was but a humble commoner, was already petrified, staring wide-eyed at the large coffin in the middle.

He spoke through chattering teeth, "Master... This is an ancient tomb, isn’t it?"

"Correct!" said Yu Jizi indifferently.

Searcy whispered into Gu Youyou’s ear, "What does he want by bringing us to this ancient tomb?"

Gu Youyou’s face turned deathly pale as she shook her head in bewilderment.

Meanwhile, Yu Jizi was giving instructions to his disciples, "Zhuo Qing, keep an eye on them."

"Yes, Master."

Yu Jizi hummed in acknowledgment, then cast a meaningful glance at Gu Youyou and the other two before turning and walking toward the ancient tomb’s stone door.

The stone door, just like the one at the ancient tomb where Gu Youyou had been before, opened by itself when a leaf from the Promortal Divine Tree was pressed.

Chapter 859: I am the Kitchen Maid

Gu Youyou had done the same back then, but she hadn’t succeeded. It was only after she decoded the Innate Eight Trigrams that she managed to open the tomb, but it also destroyed the chamber.

But how had Yu Jizi and the wild uncle from that time managed to open it normally?

There must be another twist to this mechanism.

The stone door had closed again, and the people inside the tomb began sizing up the three newcomers.

Zhuo Qing, already well-acquainted with Gu Youyou, looked at her and chuckled, "Aren’t you the one who runs fast? Ha... thought you could escape the monk but not the temple? In the end, you still obediently showed up."

Gu Youyou retorted fiercely, "Give me another chance, and I will definitely stab you in the back."

Zhuo Qing’s face darkened suddenly, and he huffed coldly before turning to Searcy and Gui Yunxi, "Who are the two of you? Why did the master bring you here?"

Apart from Jin Ziyuan, everyone else was present. What are these two here for?

Searcy, being quite haughty, naturally ignored him. She started exploring the tomb on her own.

Gui Yunxi grinned sycophantically, "I'm a coachman. The grandmaster hired me to drive the carriage. This brother here, the first stop south of Beijing has a carriage business owned by a family named Gui—that's my family."

Zhuo Qing, puzzled, said, "The master hired a carriage driver too?"

Gui Yunxi chuckled, "Yes, yes. With a person like the grandmaster, surely we can't expect him to drive the carriage himself."

... That seemed to make sense.

But why didn't the master send a disciple to do such work?

Zhuo Qing then caught Searcy, who was wandering around, and called her over.

"Hey, you by the coffin, come here."

Searcy only turned around, looking at him with contempt, but didn't approach.

Zhuo Qing, unsure what to make of her, simply asked, "And you are?"

Searcy scoffed and said, "Your master asked me to prepare your daily meals. I am the Kitchen Maid!"

"..." Gu Youyou shivered.

"..." Gui Yunxi's legs went weak, almost failing to stand.

Zhuo Qing raised an eyebrow, slightly gleeful. The master had been thoughtful enough to even bring them a Kitchen Maid. They, the gentlemen, were tired of serving the few herbs people and eating poorly every day. Thankfully, the master had brought a Kitchen Maid.

He said, "In that case, you will take care of the meals from now on. Yishan, take her out and have her cook for everyone!"

...

Indeed, Jin Ziyuan had returned with the fishermen because, at that time, there was poor weather, and they had to wait for two days on the island before coming back.

Jin Ziyuan felt seasick, and Xiao Jinyan was already prepared. As soon as Jin disembarked, Xiao had grabbed him, and at that moment, Jin lay drugged inside the carriage.

To avoid Yu Jizi, he had cleverly spread his news in five different directions, claiming that he had captured a surviving traitor and planned on returning to Beijing to report.

He followed one group, and later Yue Rujing also brought another.

Xiao Jinyan’s group, which had the most guards, took the closest official road to Beijing.

Yue Rujing’s group secretly hurried to Qi Mountain.

Additionally, three other groups went in different directions, while the real Jin Ziyuan, drugged unconscious, was stuffed into a carriage that circled around Dongzhou before returning to Fusang City, hidden inside General Che Xiangyuan’s camp.

To prevent Jin Ziyuan from being snatched, Xiao Jinyan generously left the credit of catching the rebel to him, so that Che Xiangyuan could guard Jin without reservation.

This was a private decision, not disclosed to Jin Zijin. At the moment, Jin Zijin was in Qi Mountain.

Chapter 860: Crazy or Not

Tian Jizi was lying on the kang, fast asleep, while Jin Zijin sat on a low stool beside him, speaking in a hushed voice.

"Master, Zijin is eternally grateful for your care in this life. At this point, I really shouldn't disturb you; I should let you live out your days peacefully on Qi Mountain. Yet, Zijin is dull and less skilled, failing to measure up to Yu Jizi even after years of your meticulous teaching. If we don't stop him now as he conducts his ritual, he will be even harder to conquer once he has obtained a younger body. Master, your lifelong wish has been to restore the Dao Sect to its orthodox roots and keep it independent from the Imperial Court. If Yu Jizi cannot be killed, then that wish is unattainably distant. Master, if Zijin dares to ask you to leave seclusion, does that make me an unfilial disciple?"

Just a second ago, Tian Jizi was sound asleep, but at the next second after Jin Zijin finished speaking, he suddenly sat up.

He sat upright on the bed-couch, his aged eyes still piercing as they shot a look at Jin Zijin, and said, "You've managed to hold your own against him for so long and have even forced him to act personally. You've already greatly exceeded his disciple Huo Li. His real adversary has always been me. Over fifty years ago, I was defeated by his hand and have never been able to reconcile with that defeat, haha..."

Tian Jizi, invigorated, got out of bed, donned a white Eight Trigrams Robe, and triggered a mechanism in the room, pulling out a dusty sword case.

Opening the sword case, inside lay a shining golden longsword, silent.

With a smile, Tian Jizi took out the longsword and nodded slightly, saying, "Old friend, I told you, when I unsheathe you again, it will be our time to redeem our past disgrace."

Jin Zijin looked at his master in astonishment. This sword was the supreme treasure of the Dao Sect, of which he had only heard but had never seen, so it was just like this.

It was said that Yu Jizi was keen on acquiring this sword, which, like the Youying Pearl, had vanished without a trace, only to be in the master's possession all along.

At the same time, he felt some concern. It was good that Master could come out of retirement to help, but there was his intermittent mental disorder...

While he was concerned, Tian Jizi just looked at him and smiled faintly.

"Worried about the Dao Sect, worried about the Imperial Court? I think you're more worried about that female doctor! In light of the stories she's written for me over the past half-year, I suppose I do owe her a rescue, consider it payment for her efforts."

"Master?" Jin Zijin's heart was filled with mixed emotions; his master knew it all.

Tian Jizi sighed, "I don't blame you. I've known all along that you are a man of the world and couldn't possibly stay with the Dao Family forever. Neither you nor Yue Rujing belongs to it, but you don't need to worry about me or the Dao Sect. Without you, Tianzong still stands strong in defending Qi Mountain."

"But Master..."

"Do you think I've really grown senile? I've been shrewd my whole life. The most muddled I've ever been was over fifty years ago when I was defeated by Yu Jizi, a complete disaster. A person should only be muddled once; how could I remain so forever?

Let's go, let's find out where they are. It's time to settle things with him."

...

Today, the Dongzhou army camp had exploded into chaos; they had been guarding a prisoner, yet the prisoner had vanished?

With tens of thousands of men, not one knew how the disappearance had happened—he had simply vanished into thin air.

Che Xiangyuan felt the matter was too grave, and without waiting for Xiao Jinyan and the others to return, he sent a secret report to the Emperor.

The identity of the one who had abducted Jin Ziyuan was unknown, but regardless of who was responsible, such a person was too terrifying.

And Jin Ziyuan, at this moment, was following beside Yu Jizi, his eyes vacant and lifeless, mechanically moving his feet like a puppet.