Farmhouse 891

Chapter 891: Search the Mountain Without Success

Jin Zijin pondered for a moment before suddenly saying, "If Master were avoiding us, it would at least mean he is safe, but I fear he is seriously injured now... If Xuanzong's people find him before we do..."

Yue Rujing's heart raced, casting aside the exhaustion on his face, he said, "Brother, you're right. I really hope that the half-dead Yu Jizi is found by us first."

Shunzi went back into the mountain today, bringing Gui Yunxi with him.

"How is Youyou?" Jin Zijin immediately asked upon their arrival.

Yue Rujing thought to himself: It's rare to see Brother so unsettled, truly rare.

"Don't worry, Big Brother Jin, sister is no longer in life-threatening danger, but she has injured her throat and still can't speak."

"That's good!" Jin Zijin breathed a sigh of relief. "Tell her, when I have time, I'll visit her and let her rest easy and recover."

Shunzi nodded and said, "I'll definitely convey the message." After a moment, he added, "Big Brother Jin, would you like to visit home when you have time? I've been keeping your house tidy."

For the first time in days, Jin Zijin smiled, though faint, it was like the dispersed sunlight clearing the previous gloom.

"Thank you, Shunzi!" He patted Shunzi's shoulder.

Gui Yunxi spoke to Yue Rujing from the side.

"Searcy said that there are several herbs that Jisheng Hall in Qingshui Town does not have; we probably need to fetch them from the palace. Princely Heir Yue, could you arrange someone to look for those herbs? Doctor Gu’s recovery would be quicker."

Jisheng Hall in Qingshui Town, unlike the one in Beijing, lacks many expensive medicinal herbs, mainly because in such a small place, no one can afford those medicines. And those who can afford them wouldn’t go to Qin Changlin for treatment; they’d directly head to Beijing.

Yue Rujing took the list of medicines from Gui Yunxi, looked at it and said, "All right, I will arrange for someone to get them."

Gui Yunxi hesitated, and Yue Rujing glanced sideways at him and asked, "Is there anything else?"

"Can this commoner ask Princely Heir Yue for a favor?"

"What favor?"

"I’ve been away from home for a long time, and my parents must be worried. Could you arrange for someone to send a message to my mother and father to reassure them, so they won’t worry too much?"

Yue Rujing laughed heartily and said, "Of course, that’s a small matter. Alright, go back to Jisheng Hall, and don’t hesitate to come to us if you need anything."

...

After searching for over a month, the three large teams still found nothing.

And the vast mountains behind Lotus Village had been thoroughly searched.

Unwilling as they were to leave, they had no choice but to do so.

That day, everyone left the mountains with mixed emotions, only Huo Li looked utterly pale, avoiding Jin Zijin and Yue Rujing.

He knew very well that if something truly happened to Yu Jizi, he couldn't compete with Jin Zijin with his abilities.

However, these were concerns for later; the urgent task was to quickly return to Sanqing Temple and unite Xuanzong's disciples.

And to ensure that everyone believed the master was still alive and would return.

As long as the master's name still held them together, no major trouble would arise for the time being.

Yue Rujing actually wanted to take this opportunity to deal with Huo Li, but Jin Zijin clearly wasn't in the mood.

He had been tirelessly following the main force searching the mountains for over a month.

The soldiers had sealed off the mountain, and the villagers, too scared to hunt, just roamed around the small hills behind the village, while the great mountains behind Lotus Village had become legendary to them.

Chapter 892: She Said It Hurts

The hunter who had seen the fairies fight returned that day and said that there were fairies in the mountains. The emperor had been searching for the Elixir of Life for many years and had finally received a revelation that a fairy had descended upon the mountain behind Lotus Village. So he immediately mobilized the troops stationed in Yangguan City and conducted a month-long search of the mountain.

Alas, nothing was found.

There were those who said the emperor was just stirring up empty air. Could mere mortals even find a fairy? Search for a month? Perhaps the fairy had flown away long ago.

Of course, these words were all spoken in secret, and no one dared to speak them openly and casually.

After a month of rest, Gu Youyou was able to sit up.

She had been freed from the restraints used to immobilize her, and she only needed to rest quietly now.

Her throat had healed as well, but it was still somewhat damaged and no longer as supple and melodious as before.

She was sitting in her wheelchair in the courtyard, basking in the sun. Under the sunlight, her porcelain skin appeared somewhat translucent, with the paleness of someone recovering from a serious illness.

Jin Zijin stood at the courtyard entrance for a long time without entering.

After not seeing her for a month, leaving her to struggle on the brink of life and death, did she faint over and over again in pain, screaming his name from the bottom of her heart while he was not by her side? Perhaps only someone as heartless as he could do so.

But he was afraid that upon seeing her, witnessing her sick and pale face, he would not bear to leave.

Yue Rujing nudged Jin Zijin from behind and said, "Senior Brother, why aren't you going in? Haven't you been wanting to see her for a long time?"

"She is resting," Jin Zijin said.

His face was somewhat gloomy, with an indistinctly troubled expression.

Yue Rujing began to smile and said, "Then you wait here. I'll go back first. Can't let Huo Li cause any chaos when he gets back."

"Mmm, go back quickly," Jin Zijin nodded and said.

Yue Rujing gave another glance at the person in the courtyard, sighed softly and said, "Senior Brother, please... send her my regards."

A while after Yue Rujing left, Gu Youyou opened her eyes.

The warmth of the sun made it easy to doze off, but she couldn’t sleep for long.

She had napped for about half an hour.

Turning her face, she saw Jin Zijin standing bewildered at the entrance.

She looked at him, slightly surprised.

He had come? How long had he been there? Why didn’t he come in?

She thought when she was dying, her mind was filled with thoughts of him; as she closed her eyes, she saw him, and upon opening them again to see him, it felt like it had been a century.

Seeing him now made her feel somewhat dazed.

Jin Zijin strode towards her, his gaze falling on the specially made wheelchair she was sitting in.

"Does it still hurt?"

His voice was very tender, soft like a pathetic and pitiable blade of grass.

"It hurts," she said.

Jin Zijin listened, and his heart suddenly clenched tight.

She said it hurt, her voice not as clear and lively as before, somewhat hoarse.

He remembered they had said her throat was injured.

He did not know how her throat had been injured, but he simply asked, "Has your throat not healed yet?"

Gu Youyou nodded gently and said, "I still ate that disgusting insect; it crawled in and out and injured my throat. But it didn't manage to take anything out from my stomach. Yu Jizi, that old scoundrel, was so furious his face turned green. If I didn't take the opportunity to mock him a few times, if I died, wouldn't I be at a great loss?"

Jin Zijin's heart ached at her words and he said, "You find satisfaction in sharp words, but isn't it you, in the end, who suffer? With an injured throat, how can you still speak?"

Chapter 893: Life Is Endless, Thus the Path Has No End

"Back then, I thought I was really going to die. I lost so much blood, those insect eggs hatched, and the insects drank my blood. There were other girls too, all struggling in heart-wrenching pain. At first, I was so scared, but gradually, I wasn't anymore. I was dying, and I couldn't do anything to that old bastard, but I could still curse him, and when my throat was ruined, I could still glare at him with my eyes..."

"Stop talking!" Jin Zijin lowered his head, covered her lips with his, and stifled the words in her mouth.

Regrettably, he got away!

Suddenly, he felt that it was better he had escaped. If he had died that day, he wouldn't be able to taste a fate worse than death. As long as he was alive, there was still a chance.

His lips gently nibbled and turned, gradually soothing the waves of palpitations she was feeling.

It took a while before he let go of her.

Resting his forehead against hers, he whispered, "I came too late, do you blame me?"

Gu Youyou said, "I did, when I was close to dying, I blamed you. But then you came, just in time, I just had enough breath left to see you."

Jin Zijin sighed, his body trembling slightly. Fortunately, he came, just in time. He pulled up the thin blanket covering her legs and said, "I'll take you home, this will never happen again."

"Mhm, good!" Gu Youyou nodded gently.

She had been out in the sun for quite a long time now.

...

Erya, having finished her confinement, came to Jisheng Hall with her newly born daughter to see Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou needed to recuperate in tranquility, so she hadn't gone to Lotus Village to see them.

The little one hadn't been named yet; her eldest son took both their names, calling him Wang Qing, and she always hoped Gu Youyou would name her daughter.

"Big sister, you're the most educated in our family. I hope this daughter can be as capable as you in the future."

Gu Youyou carefully took the baby into her arms. The little one was chubby, pale, and tenderly nurtured by Erya and Shunzi, an achievement rare for a child from a rural area in these times.

She took out a pair of small silver bracelets to play with her, and she began to laugh.

When she laughed, her eyes curved like crescents, just like the crescent moon in the sky.

Gu Youyou suddenly thought of her name.

She said, "Let’s call her Wang Yue, nickname Yue Ya. Look how her pretty eyes resemble crescents when she laughs."

Erya joyfully accepted the name, delightedly calling out ’Yue Ya, little Yue Ya.’

Knowing they were coming, Gu Youyou had prepared gifts for the child in advance, having had a pair of silver bracelets and two peace locks made.

All in silver, as gold would be too conspicuous in these parts.

She gave one pair of silver bracelets to Yue Ya, and a peace lock each to Yue Ya and Wang Qing.

Jin Zijin couldn’t stay long in Qingshui Town, so after Gu Youyou was fit enough for long travels, he took her back to Beijing.

The carriage looked very unassuming on the outside, but inside, it was comfortably arranged. Searcy and Gu Youyou sat inside, while Gui Yunxi drove the carriage, and sometimes Jin Zijin would take a turn.

The journey felt like traversing a million miles, from life to death, from death back to life, from one world to another.

She experienced all four seasons, the cycle of life and death, the changing tides, traversing mountains and rivers, from the rise of morning mists to the dispersal at twilight.

Life is endless, so the road has no end...

They traveled intermittently, taking nearly half a month to reach Beijing.

With all this turmoil, winter had already arrived in Beijing.

Chapter 894: The Prodigal Son Returns

The weather was cold, and Gu Youyou had not been in good health, but she felt much better than the first time she came.

The bloodletting in the ancient tomb had resulted in a significant loss of blood, but it had also expelled much of the cold poison from her body.

Once she got back, she just needed to adjust a few more medicinal prescriptions and drink them, and she would likely recover completely.

Although she had suffered this time, it turned out to be a fortunate mishap. The ordeal had also resolved a old family affliction she had for many years. She used this reasoning to comfort Madam Lin, and finally, Madam Lin's tear-stained face relaxed.

"Alright, alright, Youyou's fortune has come from misfortune this time, and it seems her health is finally going to improve."

Madam Lin was also very happy, saying, "Now that Youyou's illness is cured, she can live to see her children and grandchildren thrive."

Speaking of children and grandchildren, Gu Youyou felt somewhat embarrassed.

Although Yu Jizi had run off, based on what Jin Zijin had seen at the bottom of the cliff at that time, Yu Jizi had only been injured.

He probably wouldn't be able to do evil again for a while.

And with all his medicinal men dead, Jin Ziyuan had become more vigilant; it would not be so easy for Yu Jizi to make a comeback.

Jin Zijin would continue to search for them in secret. No matter what, they were now taking the initiative instead of being passive.

The evil deeds he had done should also be publicly exposed one by one at this opportunity.

There were also truths about Jin Zijin's identity and about certain events of the past...

There was still much they needed to do; the end of one story was the start of another.

...

As firecrackers mark the year's end, the spring breeze warms those who drink the festive liquor.

When the bright sun shines over thousands of households, it is time to replace old talismans with fresh peach ones.

Youyou had fully recovered and welcomed the New Year.

It was rare for the cousin to return home; to the Lin Family, the second day of the new year was busier than New Year's Eve and the first day.

This was because Lin Qianqing was coming back, and without her, Madam Lin always felt that the family was incomplete.

She knew her thoughts were wrong, but Lin Qianqing was her only daughter, and although the son born from another woman was not bad to her, without that blood connection, something felt missing.

"Oh my, Daya is coming back. You quickly check for me, are all these prepared items proper?"

With a beaming smile, He Xiang said, "Madam, everything is in order; all are of the finest quality."

"That’s good. I always get nervous when she comes back; I’m afraid there will be some oversight. Daya is no ordinary person; she’s King Jin’s consort and the future Empress. We can’t have the slightest mistake, or it would be a matter for ridicule."

"I understand, Madam. In front of outsiders, you can’t call the young miss Daya anymore. You should call her ’King Jin Consort.’"

"Oh right, look at me, I’ve got to get it right. It should indeed be ’Consort,’ [b]’King Jin Consort.’"

The arrival of King Jin with his consort at her family home was a great honor.

Long Luo was busy making preparations before dawn, yet the consort still seemed disinterested.

She pouted and squatted down, whispering to Lin Qianqing, "Consort, we are returning to Lin Residence today; why aren’t you happy?"

Lin Qianqing smiled lightly, though her smile seemed somewhat forced.

She said, "Naturally, I’m happy; I’ve heard that my cousin is at home, and her health has greatly improved. I can go and see her."

Long Luo nodded gently, "Yes, miss. Your cousin was kidnapped by thieves this time and went through a terrible ordeal. Fortunately, she’s alright now, or else what would we have done?"

Lin Qianqing suddenly remembered the words Gu Youyou had told her—that being taken by thieves didn’t mean freedom.

Not long after those words were said, the event actually happened to her.

Was this considered fate?

Chapter 895: Attending a Physiology Class

No, what kind of divine will is that? She only wished that the thief had taken her instead, and if that thief had been him, it would have been even better.

Even if death were the outcome, at least it would be outside.

Long Luo chose joyous hairpins for Lin Qianqing to wear. Seeing her emaciated little face, she sighed gently, "The princess must look better with a smile, and your dimples show only when you do. You are clearly the most honored princess in our Prince Residence, yet because of your aloofness, the Prince has been lured away by those vixens. Apart from the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month and on your birthday every year, the Prince doesn't come. Continuing like this is no solution. I'm truly afraid that when we return to the Lin Residence today, Madam will ask me about it again."

Lin Qianqing spoke in a low voice, "Tell her that I am doing very well."

"But how could this be considered 'very well'? Those women do not take you seriously anymore."

"What is there to fear? When the New Year comes, the Prince still has to accompany me back to my parents' home. If they want to go, they still need my approval. How much favor I receive is not important; the key is who's in charge in this house."

Long Luo's eyes widened, never expecting to hear such words from her own princess.

She thought, when the princess was still with the Lin Family, she was so clever, how could she not outwit a few vixenish women?

...

The Lin Residence was bustling as it welcomed King Jin and his princess. According to tradition, the men were seated at one table and the women at another.

The Old Madam of the Lin Family, Madam Lin, Lin Qianqing, Lin Zixin, Gu Youyou. The five of them gathered around the large round table, which seemed somewhat sparse.

Madam Lin was, of course, happy and, once the doors were closed, she couldn't care less about rank and decorum. She sat next to Lin Qianqing and bent down to look at her belly.

"Daya, it's been so long; is there any movement in your belly?"

Lin Qianqing's face flushed, and she pulled at the corners of her mouth, saying, "Not yet, it's not that quick."

"Quick?" Madam Lin raised her voice by an octave, but seeing the Old Madam Lin's disapproving gaze directed at her, she hurriedly lowered her voice again, "Those two Consorts and four noble concubines have entered the residence, how are you not anxious? If you, the principal wife, let the concubines take the lead, it won't just be a loss of face for you, but also for our Lin Family."

Lin Qianqing said softly, "This kind of thing cannot be rushed. What use is there in me being anxious alone? Besides, none of them are pregnant at the moment!"

"Since no one else is pregnant, you should be even more vigilant and put in more effort. Only by bearing the eldest son will you truly secure your position as principal wife."

After speaking, she looked at Gu Youyou sitting opposite her and said, "Youyou, later, take a look at your cousin's pulse to see what the issue is. If it's a physical condition, she must take medicine and cure it quickly."

Gu Youyou put down her chopsticks, unable to resist giving them a lesson.

Gu Youyou said, "Cousin is only how old, just turned sixteen, right? Giving birth at this age is not as healthy as a twenty-year-old girl. Auntie, whether it's the eldest son or not is actually not important. The key is that the child is smart and of good quality. One smart child is worth a bunch of dunces. But you don't know, giving birth to a smart child requires certain tricks."

Madam Lin highly respected Gu Youyou's medical skills and, hearing her say this, felt that it made sense, only that twenty years old seemed a bit too late – the prime time would have passed.

She automatically ignored the words "twenty years old" and focused on the words "smart."

Her eyes shining, she asked, "Youyou, do you know how to give birth to smart children?"

Chapter 896: Preparing for Pregnancy

Gu Youyou giggled and nodded, saying, "Of course I do!"

Madam Lin was extremely excited and said, "Then quickly tell your cousin, how exactly can she conceive intelligent children?"

Gu Youyou replied, "There are so many conditions, all of which must be met, and I'm afraid you'll find them troublesome."

"It's not troublesome at all. Who would complain about trouble when it comes to having children?"

Gu Youyou glanced mysteriously at Lin Qianqing before saying to Madam Lin, "Originally, it's not ideal for cousins with blood relations like this to have children, but since the Ducal Residence is a large family, and Qianqing is related to King Jin by several degrees of consanguinity, let's not discuss that.

"However, age is very important. The optimal childbearing age for a woman should be at least above twenty, with a mature body capable of conceiving a superior child. It's just like with trees— the fruit of a young tree is never as good as that of a mature tree, right?"

Madam Lin pursed her lips, indicating for her to continue.

She intended to ignore that point anyway.

"Next, if you want to have a good child, you should start preparing for pregnancy six months in advance. The days of the pregnancy must be carefully calculated, not to be taken lightly..."

Gu Youyou spouted a river of prenatal and eugenics theories, which Madam Lin had someone write down, and then had Long Luo take them back to supervise Lin Qianqing's preparation for pregnancy.

With Lin Qianqing’s slow nature, even if she couldn’t bear the first child, having an intelligent child to eliminate the trash would be an accomplishment.

No matter what, this child would be legitimate, backed by the Lin Family, the Empress, and the Ducal Residence.

After the feast, Gu Youyou chatted with Lin Qianqing.

"You don’t seem to be having a good time, but it doesn’t look like heartbreak. What’s really going on?"

Lin Qianqing smiled and said, "What else? The more women in the house, the more trouble there is."

Long Luo, fanning the flames, added, "It’s the Princess herself who isn’t happy, showing her displeasure to the Prince. At first, the Prince consoled her, but after the Consort and favored concubines arrived, he grew tired of it. He would even say that the Princess was no longer as lively as when she was younger. Miss, please advise the Princess!"

"Silence," Lin Qianqing scolded Long Luo, saying, "No one asked for your input, leave."

With a pout, Long Luo bowed and left.

Gu Youyou watched the door and sighed, saying, "Long Luo was chosen for you by my aunt and has been with you since you were young; she has your best interests at heart. It sounds like the Prince initially liked you very much. You turned your nose up at him, and with his warm face against your cold backside, he naturally lost patience over time?"

Tears welled up in Lin Qianqing’s eyes as she suddenly said, "Cousin, I really wish I were like you, inflicted with some incurable disease, at death’s doorstep at any moment. Then, no one would force me into marriage."

"So, you don’t actually despise your cousin the Prince, you just dislike that kind of life."

She nodded gently and said, "You could say that, so I really don’t care who he dotes on."

"Well then, I’m out of solutions," Gu Youyou reclined in the chair and laughed, "How shall I put it, I think your mindset is quite good. At least when he favors other women, you won’t be sad. If you want to live well, the power is in your hands; it all depends on what you want."

"What do I want?" Lin Qianqing blinked her eyes.

Gu Youyou laughed and said, "It seems I have to moonlight as a psychologist."

Chapter 897: Fun

"Just spill it already," Gu Youyou teased, making Lin Qianqing feel as if she were back to the old times, her mood gradually brightening.

"Basically, you should eat when you want, drink when you want, play when you want, and cause trouble like you always do. After all, with the support of the Lin Family, the Empress, and the Ducal Residence behind you, what’s there to fear? If those concubines try to trip you up, just look at what your aunt did. Occasionally disciplining your cousin, the Prince’s, concubines can also be quite the enjoyment..."

After returning, Lin Qianqing thought about it for a long time and suddenly felt as if she had seen the light.

Since she couldn’t change her life, why not live as if it had never changed?

...

On the third day of the new year, Miss Du from the Du Family came to visit.

Lin Madam was in high spirits because Lin Qianqing had just returned to the residence, so she allowed her to enter.

In fact, Miss Du had sent several visiting cards before, but Lin Madam had blocked them, saying that unless there was an imperial decree, nobody was allowed to see Gu Youyou, as she was not well.

Of course, Miss Du wasn't the only one intercepted. Gu Youyou was unaware of all this.

Cuiya placed a beautifully crafted box on the table, and Gu Youyou recognized it as a box for clothing that she had designed herself.

Gu Youyou exclaimed, "A new design has come out?"

Miss Du said, "Yes, the sample has arrived. It was made according to your size; you'll be the first one to wear the new piece."

Gu Youyou broke into a smile, her idea to have the new designs drawn by a painter and grouped into a beautiful booklet to distribute to VIP clients had worked out brilliantly, encouraging them to place orders directly.

To her surprise, this approach was quite a success. Now, the new products from the Manxiu Building had become a fashion pursuit for the wealthy ladies, who were willing to spend any amount of silver on them.

Gu Youyou took out the clothing from the box. It was in the style she had drawn, and the fabric chosen by Miss Du was perfect. The inside was soft against the skin, and the outside was adorned with the exquisite Manxiu embroidery—this particular piece was embroidered by her personally.

"It's not easy to see you," said Miss Du.

Gu Youyou, not knowing the reason, laughed and said, "I'm always in trouble, even my aunt is scared. By the way, how did you find the time to come to Beijing?"

"I heard about your near-death experience and wanted to visit you soon, but my people have been turned away several times by Lin Madam. I arrived in Beijing yesterday, but with King Jin and his wife visiting, it wasn't appropriate for me to call on you, so I came today."

"Oh," Gu Youyou nodded. At that moment, Xiang Chun brought tea, and she invited Miss Du to drink.

Sipping her tea, Miss Du said, "Every year at this time, I go back to the old Du Family house to stay for a few days. The Du Family has no male heirs left in my generation. As long as I'm alive, I must perform the ancestral rites. Once I'm gone, the Du Family's lineage will truly be extinguished."

She sighed, holding her teacup.

Gu Youyou was silent for a moment and then said, "So you're not planning on remarrying? You're still young—if you got married, you could have as many children as you wanted, couldn't you?" In an era with no family planning and with Miss Du able to afford it, she only had to let go of the grudges in her heart, and none of these would be issues.

When Gu Youyou herself had been a wealthy businesswoman, she had thought it through quite clearly: once she secured the Gu Family's fortune, she would marry a groom into her family, holding a grand audition to select a fine husband solely for the purpose of continuing the Gu Family line.

Thinking this, she couldn't help but laugh.

Miss Du was just about to say something, but seeing Gu Youyou's laugh, she pursed her lips again.

Chapter 898: The Coachman Outside the City Became Ill

"You think you're funny by suggesting that to me?"

"I'm sincerely offering you advice." Gu Youyou couldn't help but laugh and said, "If I were you, I would find myself a good son-in-law, someone with silver, good looks, and competence. All you're missing is someone to warm your bed. Get a compliant one to bear children, and if he disobeys, just sweep him out with a big broom, you..."

"Oh, stop, stop..." Miss Du couldn't listen anymore and said, "Those shocking words of yours, if outsiders heard, it would be terrible. You needn't worry about my affairs; I'm quite content as it is."

"Then are you lamenting that no one will offer incense for the Du Family after your death?" Gu Youyou suddenly thought of something and added, "By the way, isn't the second son of the Jie Family not in Beijing anymore?"

At the mention of the second son of the Jie Family, Miss Du's expression darkened as she said, "How would I know about his matters?"

Gu Youyou casually said, "I heard he used to frequent the Manxiu Building to see you; has it been a long time?"

Miss Du tugged at the corner of her mouth and said, "After he returned to Beijing last year for the ancestor worship, he hasn't visited since."

"I saw him when I went to East Sea Fusang City. He was dressed as a Gate Guard and had become a guard of Fusang City."

Gu Youyou always felt that Miss Du's insistence on not marrying was still somehow connected to Jie Zhonglin.

Personally, she hoped she wouldn't get involved with Jie Zhonglin anymore, which is why she suggested she remarry. But what someone else thinks, how could she control that? So she just wanted to give a reminder and see if Miss Du really didn't know, or what was going on?

Seeing Miss Du's surprised expression, it seemed she really didn't know.

After a while, Miss Du said, "The eldest brother of the Jie Family holds the office second to the Great General of East Sea in Fusang City. He arranged the guard position for the second son as a form of trial, I guess."

Miss Du didn't like this topic very much and quickly shifted it back to Gu Youyou.

"I heard your chronic condition has healed, and it's likely that Madam Lin is anxious to find you a suitable family. With your personality, you're not really suited for backhouse women."

Gu Youyou laughed it off, saying, "Well, let nature take its course. Who can guess what will happen tomorrow based on today?"

...

Her body had recovered, and the poison had been resolved, making Gu Youyou feel much lighter.

Her interest in researching those medications also waned, which displeased Searcy, who said, "How can you achieve great things with such laziness? Don’t go out today, help me check if this formula is correct."

Searcy was a very studious girl, quick at learning. If she were in the modern era, she’d be a super top student. Gu Youyou taught her everything she had learned over the years, as long as she wanted to learn, almost faster than Gu Youyou imagined.

Gu Youyou sighed that the disciple she formally accepted never learned much, and the benefits were all taken by her.

Gu Youyou pouted and said, "I haven’t entered the palace for a long time, and even the eunuch came asking after my disciple there. If I don’t go soon, an imperial decree will follow. I’m not checking it today; take a break as well. I heard the young coachman at the station outside the city has fallen ill recently, and they want you to give him a diagnosis."

Searcy frowned and said, "Are you talking about Gui Yunxi?"

"Yes." Gu Youyou nodded. "Who else could it be?"

"What illness does he have? Such a hassle."

Though she said that, she was already packing up her things.

Chapter 899: Lovesickness

Gu Youyou chuckled, "What other illness could it be? Lovesickness, of course."

Searcy was speechless——she hurled a book of Medical Skills at her, her face boiling with rage, almost igniting the room, her cheeks almost as red as Guan Gong's.

"Hey, hey! If you dare, don't leave."

"Damn, I've accepted a fake disciple. How dare you hit your master?" Gu Youyou yelled while running, creating a scene of utter chaos.

"Get lost, who's your disciple."

...

Gu Youyou arrived at the palace, and the Empress Dowager greeted her warmly, asking, "It's good that you're safe. Now tell me, what exactly happened? It seems like it involved the State Preceptor and the Heavenly Master?"

Gu Youyou explained with difficulty, "Actually, I'm not very clear myself. I had fainted at the time, and by the time I woke up, I was already at the clinic. However, I did indeed hear that Tianzong had clashed with Xuanzong, and it was quite fierce."

The Empress, with a compassionate face, sighed, "When the gate catches fire, the fish in the pond suffer. Youyou, you are those fish who suffered. Poor child, you kindly treated the Heavenly Master and then the State Preceptor, and nearly lost your own life. Sigh! Luckily, you are safe now. The Emperor mentioned that this is an internal matter of the Dao Sect, and we shouldn't speculate rashly. Let's not talk about it anymore; it's frightening."

"Yes, yes, this Dao Sect... alas, let's not say more, we can't discuss it. Anyway, Youyou, hurry and find Jiujiu. She's been fussing over your near demise and has been wanting to see you urgently."

"Yes, I shall take my leave now."

A Palace Maiden escorted Gu Youyou to Princess Jiujiu's Liuying Hall, and the Empress continued talking with the Empress Dowager. Upon seeing the departing figure of Gu Youyou, and noticing her attire, she suddenly realized, exclaiming, "Isn't the dress Youyou is wearing the new model from Manxiu Building, that hasn't been released yet?"

The garments from Manxiu Building had indeed become a luxury of the ancient upper class, often hard to obtain even with a hefty amount of Silver.

The dress Gu Youyou was wearing featured early spring plum blossoms as its theme, detailed in the album the Empress had received earlier that year. Her piece was in the lead color, Long E.

She hurriedly spoke to a nearby Palace Maiden, "Go to Jinxiu City and check if the palace pink set I ordered is ready?"

Empress Dowager burst into laughter, "Empress, are you also chasing after Manxiu Building's dresses like those young girls? The palace pink is a pale white color."

Embarrassed by Empress Dowager's tease, the Empress said, "Empress Dowager, if I don't wear them now, in a few years, I will be even more embarrassed to wear them."

The Palace Maiden also chuckled softly, whispering to the Empress, "Empress Dowager, Doctor Gu is actually the owner behind Manxiu Building. I've inquired about it, and these styles were all personally designed by her. It seems the one she's wearing today is a sample; the actual product won't be out for another ten days, according to the album."

"Oh, designed by Youyou?" The Empress Dowager was quite surprised.

"Yes, Empress Dowager, Doctor Gu is quite capable," another Palace Maiden added.

The Empress smiled, but her smile did not reach her eyes.

Lin Family's Miss was too peculiar, it seemed necessary to have someone secretly investigate, even if the Lin Family were her own people, she still needed to be cautious.

...

Gu Youyou did not manage to reach Princess Jiujiu's Liuying Hall smoothly; midway, she was stopped by Princess Jin Fengzhao.

"Halt, person ahead!"

Gu Youyou hadn't noticed the person emerging from the bushes, but the tone was not friendly.

She turned around, seeing the person hastily approaching her.

Chapter 900: Wearing the Wrong Clothes

Auntie Li, who was by Gu Youyou's side, showed an anxious face, then whispered to her, "That is Her Highness the Princess."

Gu Youyou had met the Princess once before, but the Princess had not noticed her, so she pretended not to know that the woman before her was the Princess, feigning great surprise.

She nodded gently and thanked Auntie Li for the warning, grateful for her reminder.

Jin Fengzhao stood before Gu Youyou, lofty and proud, her face filled with anger.

Yet Gu Youyou didn't know where she had offended this 'Princess.' If her memory served her correctly, this was their first encounter, and there had been no previous feud.

"Your Highness the Princess," Gu Youyou greeted her with proper etiquette, bending her knees slightly.

Feng Zhao's eyes brimmed with hostility as she said sternly, "You see the Princess and you do not kneel?"

Gu Youyou was stunned for a moment, and Auntie Li hurriedly pulled her to kneel.

But Gu Youyou, as if unaware, merely bent her knees in a normal respectful bow, and said with reverence, "Your Highness, the Empress Dowager once granted this commoner permission not to kneel before anyone in the palace except for the Empress Dowager, the Empress, and His Majesty the Emperor."

"A commoner?" Feng Zhao looked utterly astonished.

She had thought the woman before her was a lady from some Minister's family, only to learn she was a 'commoner.'

"Who are you?" The anger in her eyes grew.

"I am a doctor of Jisheng Hall, Gu Youyou!" Gu Youyou replied honestly.

"Where did you get these clothes?" Feng Zhao stared at Gu Youyou's attire, suddenly interested in this commoner's origins.

Gu Youyou glanced down at her own dress and then at the Princess's clothes, finally realizing how she had offended her.

She had intended to wear the new style as an advertisement, knowing that the ladies of the court were already accustomed to her receiving the latest fashions from Manxiu Building due to her life-saving grace to its owner. The Princess, however, who had married and rarely returned to the palace since, would not be aware.

Seeing herself in an old style from Manxiu Building, while this 'commoner,' a female doctor, wore the latest, how could she not be angered?

"Returning to Your Highness the Princess, it is from Manxiu Building," Gu Youyou answered just as honestly.

"Hmph, Manxiu Building." Feng Zhao's face turned a furious shade of blue as she said indignantly, "The palace hasn't even received this style yet, and you dare to wear it? Guards, seize her!"

With that, several wet nurses behind her immediately advanced to restrain Gu Youyou.

Gu Youyou's expression changed drastically; she had heard the Princess was arrogant and presumptuous, caring only for her own pleasure, but to think she would dare lay hands on her in the palace over a piece of clothing?

Though Gu Youyou was a commoner, she had cured the Empress Dowager's leg illness, served as a teacher for the Ninth Princess, and was the Lin Family's eldest cousin. With the Empress and the Empress Dowager as her backers, she was usually spared the troubles from other women in the palace.

"Your Highness the Princess," Gu Youyou's voice was cool and firm, neither humble nor arrogant, "to punish this commoner, merely for a piece of clothing, would seem unjust, wouldn't it?"

Auntie Li was sweating bullets on her behalf; knowing the Doctor had likely offended the Princess with her demeanor. They all knew too well of the Princess's temper—only the Empress Dowager could control her. Given their strained relationship though, the Empress Dowager was unlikely to intervene on her behalf this time.

Auntie Li, visibly distressed, knelt down and pleaded with Feng Zhao, "Your Highness, please calm your anger. Doctor Gu has performed a great service for the Empress Dowager. Could you, for the Empress Dowager's sake, spare Doctor Gu this offense?"