

Finest 66

Chapter 66 Qin Xian'er (Part 2)

It goes without saying that this enchanting lady was none other than the top courtesan of Miaoyu Pavilion, Qin Xian'er.

Lin Wanrong couldn't help but smirk when he saw Qin Xian'er's silhouette. Courtesans, as a rule, don't want to reveal their faces too easily. They like to be mysterious and flirtatious in order to attract more attention. This was no different from the way Lin Wanrong conducted business - creating hype. He was already used to such tactics.

Qin Xian'er didn't say a word, her fingers gently plucked the strings, and a heavenly sound approached from a distance, slowly growing louder. At first, it was as soft as a clear spring flowing down a mountain, gradually intensifying like a drizzle in early spring. Listening closely, the music seemed to possess a magical power, swirling above one's head and whispering in the ear, completely captivating the listener.

"Clouds soar above the mountain peaks, the sun sets by the river, lingering by the railing, my eyes filled with misty waves.

Standing and gazing at the desolate scene by the border, a thousand miles of clear autumn, my eyes reluctantly hold back tears.

The divine capital fades away, the lovely fairy, the silk message from our parting is difficult to reunite.

The lone wild goose has no proof, it flies down to the sandbank, my thoughts are endless.

I secretly think back to the time, how many joyous encounters we had;

Who would have known that we couldn't foresee our reunion and separation, turning into rain of regret and clouds of sorrow.

Hindered from pursuing our journey.

Every time I climb mountains and overlook waters, it brings up my lifelong worries, sinking into darkness, remaining silent for days, only to descend the tower."

A pleasant female voice emerged, clear and unhurried, as if revealing a young girl's thoughts, gently expressing the sorrow and resentment in the lyrics.

This poem, titled "Melodies of the Jade Flute," was written by the famous poet Liu Sanbian from the previous Song Dynasty. Liu Sanbian, a master of poetry and lyrics, devoted his life to composing lyrics and styled himself as the "White-robed Prime Minister." His lyrics were filled with lingering emotions and tender feelings, truly the best of their kind.

As Qin Xian'er sang the poem, her voice harmonized with the music, bringing out the profound meaning and infusing the lyrics with an indescribable melancholy.

The previously noisy crowd in Miaoyu Pavilion fell silent, still immersed in the beautiful realm created by Qin Xian'er's song even after it ended.

Cheng Ruinian and Luo Yuan, the two young masters, stared blankly at the charming figure behind the beaded curtain, their faces full of admiration. When they glanced back at Young Master Guo, he was even more unbearable, his drool dripping down, looking very much like a lovesick fool.

Even the secretive stunning young master and her servant, who had their own hidden agenda, were immersed in the music and couldn't break free. After a while, the stunning young master finally sighed, "Hearing this tune today, I won't crave music for years to come. If this Qin Xian'er isn't the person I'm looking for, it would be quite delightful to become her sister."

Among the group, the most clear-headed was Lin Wanrong, who was a lower-class servant. Qin Xian'er's singing and musical skills were indeed beautiful, but to someone like Lin Wanrong who was used to electronic synthesized music, it seemed a bit monotonous.

Lin Wanrong looked around and saw Young Master Guo's infatuated expression, recalling that he had taken forty taels of silver from him and promised to draw Qin Xian'er's attention to him.

Once Qin Xian'er finished her song, she gracefully stood up. A maid on the side lifted the beaded curtain, revealing a face of heavenly beauty in front of everyone.

Her black hair was elegantly piled up, her face fair and rosy, with almond-shaped eyes, a delicate nose, and cherry lips. Although dressed in plain clothes, she seemed radiant, walking gracefully like a willow swaying in the wind, and her beautiful eyes captivating everyone around her.

Lin Wanrong's heart skipped a few beats. This Qin Xian'er was really charming, on par with the evil girl Xiao Qingxuan he had met by the Xuanwu Lake, but with an added touch of allure.

Qin Xian'er smiled, her eyes seemingly containing a mysterious magic that made people unable to resist looking at her again and again. Both men and women in the hall stared at her, seemingly captivated by her charm.

Qin Xian'er covered her lips and laughed softly, saying in a delicate voice, "Greetings, everyone. I am Qin Xian'er."

The governor's son, named Luo Yuan, was the first to react, clapping his folding fan and saying loudly, "I am Luo Yuan, pleased to meet you, Miss Xian'er."

Cheng Ruinian followed suit, saying eagerly, "I am Cheng Ruinian, greetings to Miss Xian'er."

"I am Liu Gengsheng, pleased to meet Miss Xian'er"

"I am..."

Seeing dozens of young masters trying to please Qin Xian'er, Lin Wanrong quickly patted Guo Wuchang and urged, "Young Master, Young Master, say something!"

Guo Wuchang stared at Qin Xian'er with a foolish expression, drooling and unable to speak. Lin Wanrong cursed in his heart, thinking that Young Master Guo lacked spirit.

"On behalf of my master, Young Master Guo Wuchang, Lin San, a lower-class servant from the Xiao family, sends his greetings to Miss Qin," Lin Wanrong said loudly.

Unfortunately, his voice, though loud, was drowned out by dozens of young masters introducing themselves and bowing to Qin Xian'er, leaving no one to notice the voice of a mere servant like him.

"Miss, it turns out that the rascal is a servant of the Xiao family. We have found him now." Lin Wanrong's words were overheard by the stunning young master and her servant, who hadn't been the intended audience. The stunning young master excitedly said, "Now we've found him."

She then frowned, "Although he's a bit of a scoundrel, he does have some talent. How could he end up as a servant in the Xiao family?"

Her servant replied, "He may have some knowledge, but his character is terrible. After how he treated Miss that day, he deserves to be a servant."

Seeing that no one had heard his voice, Lin Wanrong was annoyed. As the young masters, led by Luo Yuan and Cheng Ruinian, were desperately trying to please Qin Xian'er, and Young Master Guo wasn't doing anything to help, Lin Wanrong saw a teapot on the table. He grabbed it and smashed it on the ground.

With a loud "clang," everyone's attention was drawn to Lin Wanrong. Seeing that all eyes were on him, Lin Wanrong patted Young Master Guo on the back, stood up, and said, "Lin San, a servant of the Xiao family, sends greetings to Miss Qin on behalf of my master, Young Master Guo Wuchang."

Young Master Guo winced in pain, let out a cry, and quickly wiped the drool off his face. Stuttering, he said, "Mi-mi-miss Qin..."

Everyone laughed at his stammering. Qin Xian'er smiled at Guo Wuchang and said, "So this is Young Master Guo. Greetings."

Qin Xian'er had met many people and naturally wouldn't care about Guo Wuchang and Lin San. After greeting Guo Wuchang, she turned to chat with the others.

Cheng Ruinian said, "Miss Xian'er, your song earlier was heavenly, as if we were floating on clouds and savoring sweet wine. You not only possess the beauty of a celestial being but also the skill of one. I truly admire you."

Qin Xian'er covered her mouth and laughed, "Young Master Cheng, you flatter me. My humble looks and talents could hardly catch the discerning eyes of people like you and Young Master Luo."

Qin Xian'er's demeanor was charming, her eyes captivating as she spoke.

Cheng Ruinian exclaimed, "Miss Xian'er, you're too modest. Leaving your stunning beauty aside, just the melody 'Jade Flute' was so perfect and unparalleled. I have never heard anything so enchanting. You truly deserve to be called a master of our time."

"You praise me too much," Qin Xian'er modestly replied, but her face showed a hint of pride. Indeed, her musical skills could be considered unparalleled.

Chapter 67 A Startling Remark

The Governor's son, Luo Yuan, was rather anxious. Cheng Ruinian had beaten him to the punch, saying all the flattering words, leaving him unsure of how to compliment her, somewhat passive.

Qin Xian'er was alluring as she glanced around, her beauty captivating everyone present. Suddenly, a scoff was heard, the sound of disdain coming from someone's nostrils.

The sound was light, but the hall was so quiet that everyone heard it. Turning towards the sound, they saw it came from a lowly servant accompanying young Master Guo.

Qin Xian'er had seen all sorts of characters. She noticed that though this servant was a lower class, he carried himself with dignity, showing no fear typical of his kind. A smirk hung on his face, as if he held some disdain for her.

Internally irritated, Qin Xian'er kept a smile on her face and asked, "May I ask how to address this young master?"

Lin Wanrong, dressed in the common outfit of a servant - a green robe and small hat, had an obvious status. Qin Xian'er deliberately addressed him as a young master, clearly trying to make him look foolish as revenge for his contempt towards her.

Lin Wanrong was aware of her petty tricks. He replied with a slight smile, "I dare not accept the title of young master. I am Lin San, a mere servant in the Xiao family of Jinling. I have just greeted Miss Qin on behalf of Young Master Guo."

Qin Xian'er looked at him with interest, "Is it that my humble skills are not worthy of your esteemed eyes?"

Lin Wanrong replied, "The zither and the music were both good. It's just" He paused intentionally, a smile tugging at the corner of his mouth, "My young master said, there are at least three mistakes in Miss Qin's music."

At Lin Wanrong's startling words, everyone in the hall was surprised. A servant from the Xiao family was being extremely bold, making such audacious claims.

"How dare you, you insolent servant." Before Qin Xian'er could respond, Cheng Ruinian was already shouting, "How could you casually slander Miss Qin, who's as enchanting as a celestial being?"

Cheng Ruinian was enjoying his conversation with Qin Xian'er until Lin Wanrong spoiled it, naturally, he was upset. But Luo Yuan, seeing someone ruin Cheng Ruinian's moment, showed a hint of delight on his face.

Though Lin Wanrong was tough, he knew he would undoubtedly lose in a direct confrontation with Cheng Ruinian at his current strength. He pretended not to hear and focused his gaze on Qin Xian'er, waiting for her response.

Qin Xian'er gave Guo Wuchang a strange look, then smiled, "Could Young Master Guo please point out the flaws in my music?"

Guo Wuchang was drooling over Qin Xian'er, his pig-like face showed no sign of being able to critique anything.

Damn, this young master is utterly useless, Lin Wanrong cursed inwardly but said aloud, "My young master is contemplating the problem; he asked me to reply on his behalf." Seeing no objection from Qin Xian'er, he continued, "Miss Qin, if there's a flaw, it must be noticeable. Pay a little more attention, and it won't be hard to notice."

Qin Xian'er retorted challengingly, "Lin San, please enlighten me."

Ignoring the dismissive tone in Qin Xian'er's words, Lin Wanrong said: "I dare not take credit for teaching you. Miss Qin, your skills are indeed exquisite, but it's always challenging to make

progress when you're already at a high level. If I point out your flaws today, consider it as me doing you a favor. We in the Xiao family are in the business world, and we value reciprocity. Without some reward, my young master is not inclined to engage in fruitless endeavors."

Qin Xian'er paused for a moment, then burst into a charming giggle: "No profit, no incentive. You're right, Lin San. But I wonder, what kind of reward do you have in mind?"

Lin Wanrong chuckled: "It's simple, as long as Miss Qin agrees to do me one favor."

"No way!" Cheng Ruinian shouted: "What a scheme from a servant like you! Miss Qin is like a celestial being, she is not someone you can defile."

Lin Wanrong gave Cheng Ruinian a smile and said, "Young Master Cheng, are you worried about me or Miss Qin?"

Cheng Ruinian was taken aback by his remark. Indeed, if he hindered this servant, wouldn't that imply that Miss Qin's music had flaws? That would be a disrespect to the lady.

As for Luo Yuan, seeing someone spoiling his rival's good time brought joy to his heart, and he became even more interested, watching Lin San with great amusement.

Seeing Qin Xian'er still in deep thought, Lin Wanrong teased, "Miss Qin, don't overthink it. I assure you it's not as indecent as they imagine."

Qin Xian'er gave a charming smile, swaying herself to Lin San's side, and whispered in his ear, "As long as it can convince me completely, I will fulfill your wish." She smiled at Lin San, but a glint of caution flashed in her eyes, clearly wary of him making an inappropriate request.

Everyone in the hall was startled, not expecting Qin Xian'er to agree to this lowly servant's request. In their eyes, having a servant point out flaws in Qin Xian'er was like a lunatic's dream.

"Miss, does Qin Xian'er's music really have flaws? That guy talks so confidently, I wonder what his game is?" Xiu He asked softly.

The handsome nobleman coldly replied, "That scoundrel may be a libertine, but he does have some skills. He doesn't seem to be bluffing."

Seeing Qin Xian'er standing next to Lin San with a smile, the handsome nobleman looked at her with disdain and couldn't help but mutter, "This shameless vixen!"

Lin San turned a blind eye to Qin Xian'er's bewitching gaze and laughed out loud, "In that case, I won't hold back."

Qin Xian'er giggled, "I'm all ears for your guidance, Lin San."

Lin San said: "Miss Qin, your skills are exceptional, which I do not deny. However, it's precisely because of this that you might easily fall into misconceptions. Take the piece you just played, for example, there are three issues."

Qin Xian'er's eyes never left him, seemingly absorbing his words.

"First, the music is too monotonous and dull. It's well known that a harmonious combination of sounds is like a dragon and phoenix showing auspiciousness. A single guqin, even if it's made from millennium-old wood, can't produce two different sounds. If you could integrate other instruments, like the sheng or the xiao, for mutual cooperation, the rhythm could be richer, and the harmony could be enhanced."

Qin Xian'er was taken aback, she quickly asked, "Different instruments have different rhythms. When mixed together, wouldn't it create noise?"

Lin San replied, "Miss Qin, how would you know the effect if you've never tried it? If you don't attempt, you'll never discover anything new. I suggest you try it, there may be a pleasant surprise." This was Lin San's advice based on his experience with electronic music arrangement, and it was quite reasonable.

Qin Xian'er thought for a long time, then nodded and said, "Your advice is well received, Lin San. I have learned a lot."

The handsome nobleman, who was also well-versed in music, pondered for a while and then understood. She glanced at Lin San and quietly said, "This rogue does have some insights."

"Secondly, you focus too much on technique. Miss Qin's guqin skill is indeed extraordinary, but you fail to infuse your own feelings into it. Remember, the player's emotions are what truly control the instrument. If the musician doesn't play with genuine emotions, the beautiful sounds will be hollow and fail to touch people's hearts deeply."

Imagine a courtesan playing the guqin and singing every day, how could she possibly infuse genuine emotions? Lin San was making an educated guess, but it made sense.

Qin Xian'er pondered for a while and didn't refute, seemingly accepting the point.

"Thirdly, your performance is overly dramatic and affected. To put it nicely, your song seems to force a feeling of sorrow. To be blunt, it's an affected lament. Miss Qin, you are still young, and I assume you haven't yet experienced these matters of love. This kind of melancholic song does not suit your heavenly voice and you've yet to grasp its essence."

Lin San said with a smile, implying that she was still a young girl who had not experienced such things, and her song full of lament was nothing but affectation.

The handsome nobleman, upon hearing Lin San's words, couldn't help but feel some admiration. As Lin San pointed out, the latter two flaws were quite evident, yet no one seemed to realize them. Even she, who prided herself on her mastery of music, was no different from Qin Xian'er, often forcing feelings into her compositions. From this perspective, Lin San's keen observation and ability to see what others couldn't indeed made him a rare talent.

Qin Xian'er thought for a long time, her face alternating between red and white. She felt somewhat unconvinced, but she couldn't refute his points. All she could do was huff lightly, expressing her attitude.

Confident he had her cornered, Lin San, seeing her upset face, didn't mind and deliberately asked, "Miss Qin, have you conceded in your heart?"

Qin Xian'er's facial expression fluctuated mysteriously before she suddenly broke out into a charming smile, staring at Lin San, "I am willing to satisfy any request you have, Lin San."

Her gaze was fixed intensely on Lin Wanrong's eyes. As she lightly chuckled, a bewitching glow emanated from her eyes. Lin Wanrong found it increasingly hard to look away. Before him, Qin Xian'er was a sight to behold - her almond eyes, finely arched brows, rosy cheeks, and jade-like complexion were captivating. Her slightly parted, rosy lips seemed to whisper sweet nothings. Her

voluptuous figure pressed close to him, and a faint, intoxicating feminine scent wafted into his nostrils.

The most enchanting feature was her eyes. It was as if a faint light was emanating from them, drawing Lin Wanrong in, making it impossible for him to break away. In his heart, a devilish voice whispered to him, "Relinquish your request to Miss Qin, relinquish your request to Miss Qin."

"Lin San, what do you request of Miss Qin?" Lin San only heard Miss Qin's dreamy voice. Her words carried an odd enchantment that left Lin San with no will to resist.

"I have no request to" Lin San, succumbing to the mysterious voice in his heart, began to speak when he was interrupted by a loud crash. A teapot from the floor above had fallen and shattered into pieces.

Miss Qin staggered slightly, her complexion paled. She glanced upstairs but saw nothing unusual. Lin Wanrong, jolted by the noise, regained his senses. He recalled what had just happened, and it seemed as if he had been under some sort of spell, almost agreeing to her request. Could there be something strange in her eyes?

"Miss, are you alright?" Xiu He asked softly.

"That Qin Xianer is indeed not simple. That scoundrel nearly fell for her tricks," said the handsome young man. It was she who secretly manipulated the situation, throwing the teapot from a table upstairs to wake Lin San.

"Could this Qin Xianer be the person we're looking for?" Xiu He asked.

"Even if she isn't, she must be related in some way," the handsome young man replied, her eyes emitting a chilling glare as she stared at Miss Xiao.

Seeing Lin San regain his senses, Qin Xianer knew her plan had failed. Being a cunning woman, she feigned shyness and lowered her head, saying, "Lin San, why are you staring at me like that?"

Those in the hall, unaware of Lin San's near fall under Qin Xianer's spell, saw their intimate exchange and started chattering. Cheng Ruinan had already rushed forward, standing in front of Qin Xianer and addressing Lin San, "You audacious servant, how dare you disrespect Miss Qin!"

Miss Qin hid behind Cheng Ruinan, feigning a weak demeanor while a cunning smile flashed across her eyes. Lin San, being a shrewd individual, pondered over the situation. Although he wasn't sure what kind of spell he had fallen under, it was undoubtedly this Qin Xianer who had played a trick on him.

Lin San felt a surge of anger, a cold smile surfacing on his face, "Miss Qin, since you have conceded, it's time for me to state my conditions."

"You dare? Seize this disruptive servant!" Cheng Ruinan ordered loudly.

"Wait, wait." The Young Master called Luo Yuan stepped forward and asked, "Brother Ruinan, what rule has Lin San violated?"

"Er..." Cheng Ruinan was momentarily speechless. Everyone in the hall heard Lin San's bet with Miss Qin. If Luo Yuan weren't here, he might have been able to smooth this over by force to win over Miss Qin's favor. But now Luo Yuan, the son of the governor of Jiangsu, was present. His father and the governor Luo Min were at odds, and he himself had a feud with Luo Min's son. This situation might not be so easy to defuse.

Luo Yuan smiled at Lin San, then covertly gave him a thumbs-up, as if to say, I've got your back, bro.

Seeing that Luo Yuan was not much older than Dong Qingshan and quite good-looking, plus his sister's good relationship with Dong Qiaoqiao, Lin San felt some goodwill towards this Young Master Luo. He returned Luo Yuan's smile.

At this point, Young Master Guo, noticing that Lin San was about to make a move on Miss Qin, also came to his senses and hastily said, "Lin San, don't be rude." Having finally obtained an opportunity to get close to a beauty, he quickly flashed a flattering smile at Miss Qin, "Miss Qin, I hope Lin San didn't frighten you."

Miss Qin laughed, "No, Lin San and I were just betting. I'm willing to admit defeat. I wonder what Lin San's request is?"

Young Master Guo quickly said, "How dare I make any requests of Miss Qin?"

Miss Qin didn't give him any face and said, "I'm not asking you, Young Master Guo, to make a request. I lost to Lin San, so I'm asking him."

Damn, she's trying to stir up discord between master and servant, Lin Wanrong thought angrily. He said to Miss Qin, "My request is on behalf of my young master." He whispered to Guo Wuchang, "Young Master, don't you want Miss Qin to see you in a new light? Just keep quiet and watch what I do."

With that bait, Guo Wuchang immediately nodded, "Alright, Lin San, I'll listen to you."

Lin San gave Miss Qin a glance, a mysterious smile appearing on his face, "Since Miss Qin is a woman of her word, I won't hold back."

For some reason, Qin Xianer felt a twinge of fear at his smile. He wouldn't really make that kind of request, would he? Her heart pounded a few times, and she clenched her small fist.

Chapter 68 Singing Eighteen Touches (Part 1)

Even though Cheng Ruinian and Luo Yuan were at odds, they both jumped when they saw the lascivious smile on Lin Wanrong's face. Could this servant really have the audacity to make an outrageous request?

Of course, the two men had slightly different concerns. Cheng Ruinian was worried that this servant might steal his thunder, while Luo Yuan was a mix of admiration, appreciation, and amusement.

"Miss, what kind of request do you think he'll make?" Xiu He asked in a whisper.

Seeing Lin Wanrong staring intently at Qin Xian'er, the extremely handsome young master felt irritated and snapped, "This man is cunning and strange. Who knows what crazy idea he has in mind. Just look at his disgusting smile; he must be planning something devious. Xiu He, when the time comes, take my sword and kill this scoundrel once and for all. This will save me from having to look at him again."

"Ah? Kill him?" Xiu He was genuinely taken aback.

Seeing a hint of fear in Qin Xian'er's eyes, Lin Wanrong didn't care if it was real or not. He felt incredibly satisfied. He took a few slow steps to stand in front of her, watching her with a smile, yet not saying a word.

They were standing very close to each other. The fragrance from Qin Xian'er's body entered Lin Wanrong's nose, a scent so intoxicating.

Qin Xian'er was wearing a soft gauze around her bosom. Her full chest rose and fell with each breath, her slender waist twisting slightly. Following her curves down, her enchanting buttocks appeared and disappeared from Lin Wanrong's sight, creating an indescribable temptation.

In her pitiful state, Qin Xian'er stuck out her chest a little, looked at Lin Wanrong coquettishly, a spark in her eyes. She even stuck out her small, vibrant tongue and lightly licked her enticing red lips, softly saying, "Young Master Lin, please be gentle with me."

This little girl truly knew her charm. A wicked fire rose in Lin Wanrong's heart, and a hot breath escaped his nose. Looking at Qin Xian'er, a wild gleam in his eyes, he said word by word, "Iwantyou"

Crash, the sound of numerous teacups shattering on the ground. Not only were Cheng Ruinian, Luo Yuan, and Young Master Guo dumbfounded, but Qin Xian'er's heart also pounded. Damn, this guy really has guts, many men thought enviously.

The handsome young master handed her long sword to Xiu He, gritting her teeth, "Quick, kill this scoundrel."

Seeing everyone's eyes on him, as if ready to chop him to pieces, Lin Wanrong continued with a smile, "tosinga littlesong"

Pheweveryone in the hall let out a long sigh of relief. This servant was sensible enough not to make an excessive demand. Besides, hearing Qin Xian'er sing was what everyone wanted, so they all withdrew their murderous looks from him. Some were even somewhat grateful to him. It was because of his proposal that they had another chance to listen to a voice as beautiful as a celestial melody.

Upon hearing Lin Wanrong's words, the handsome young master was first taken aback, then she burst out laughing. This scoundrel liked to keep people on tenterhooks by pretending to be profound.

"Miss, what should we do? Should we still kill him?" Xiu He, holding the precious sword, asked.

The young master gently shook her head, "Let's wait and see."

Upon hearing Lin San's previous statement, Qin Xian'er's face flushed, and a murderous intent appeared in her eyes. But when she heard his following words, she was dumbfounded. She finally realized that she had fallen for this servant's trick and he had made a fool of her.

Qin Xian'er glanced at him with infinite charm and with a sweet smile on her face, "Whatever the young master asks for, Xian'er will surely deliver. But may I ask what song would the young master like to hear?"

Lin San laughed heartily, "If I asked for a certain song, could Miss Qin perform it?"

Qin Xian'er was fully confident in her skills, she nodded proudly, "Of course, as long as the young master can name it, Xian'er will not disappoint you."

Lin San chuckled inwardly, feigning a thoughtful expression on his face. After a long pause, he said, "As a humble servant, I have no knowledge of music and haven't heard many good songs. However, when I entered this courtyard just now, I heard a young lady singing a charming tune that really caught my fancy. Therefore, I would like to request Miss Qin to perform that song."

Qin Xian'er saw the sly smile on his face, which was identical to his strange expression earlier. She had a bad feeling, but singing a small tune was as easy as flipping her hand for her. She didn't believe that this servant could come up with anything tricky.

"I just need to know the name of the song, and Xian'er will surely satisfy young master." Qin Xian'er's charming smile made the men in the hall dry-mouthed.

"Miss Xian'er, do you know how to sing 'Eighteen Touches'?" Lin San asked with a smile. His voice was soft, but everyone could hear it clearly.

[The Eighteen Touches or Shiba Mo (Chinese:) is a traditional Chinese folk song with many variants throughout China. The song is flirtatious, bawdy and erotic in nature, considered vulgar and tasteless it has been banned numerous times.[1]

There are male, female, and duet variants. Some versions start with a touch of the hair, followed by nape, with each subsequent touch becoming increasingly intimate. The female versions often feature an attempted seduction through offering to allow a man to touch her in various places, some male versions a seduction through promising some reward if she allows him to touch her there. The duets pair each offered or threatened touch with a consequence, e.g. "...I can't touch you there, if I do you'll die of bliss."]

Silence!

Absolute silence!

The men in the hall gaped, and the women covered their mouths, all looking at Lin San in disbelief.

The previously arrogant Master Cheng Ruinian stretched his neck, staring blankly at Lin San, clearly shocked by the servant's astonishing words.

The young master of the Governor's Mansion, Luo Yuan, covered his mouth tightly, suppressing his laughter. His face was full of playful admiration. He thought, This servant, damn interesting.

All the young masters in this hall were regulars of the red-light district, so they all knew what 'Eighteen Touches' was. If it was about having a drink and singing 'Eighteen Touches', it would be lively. But to ask this top-notch courtesan who sells her talent, not her body, to sing this provocative tune was utterly audacious. Not to mention Qin Xian'er's unparalleled beauty, her world-class music skills alone made it somewhat demeaning for her to perform a simple tune. But they never thought that this wicked servant would be so vulgar as to ask Qin Xian'er to sing such a frivolous erotic song.

The men in the courtyard suddenly had a strong feeling, wondering what it would be like if this top-notch courtesan sang 'Eighteen Touches'. They might even thank this servant named Lin San for giving them a chance to see the seductive performance of the top beauty of Qinhuai River singing 'Eighteen Touches'.

Even though Qin Xian'er has encountered all kinds of people, at this moment, seeing this servant look down on her so disdainfully, her face pales for a moment. She glared fiercely at Lin Wanrong, the light in her eyes fierce enough to kill him ten thousand times over.

The extraordinarily handsome young master's face flushed in embarrassment. She looked at Lin Wanrong from a distance, spat lightly, and muttered under her breath, "This lowborn fellow truly is a rogue. Despite having a bit of talent, he's so utterly disgraceful."

"Afraid to sing, are you?" Lin Wanrong looked at Qin Xian'er, the corner of his mouth curving into a cold smirk, thinking, What kind of courtesan are you? This young master detests those of you who are pretentious.

Even though Qin Xian'er was a courtesan, she was genuinely pure and virtuous, and held a high status. How could she endure such an insult?

She bit her lip in resentment. Thankfully, she still had some self-control, and remembered her promise. She looked at Lin Wanrong, a hint of shy embarrassment in her eyes. "Young Master, could we change the song? I've never sung this one before, and I'm afraid I won't be able to."

"Unable to sing?" Lin Wanrong took a few steps forward, approached another singing courtesan, and took her hand. "This lady can sing it, why can't you?"

The courtesan, long accustomed to a life without dignity, found Lin Wanrong's words resonating with her. As if emboldened, she bravely met Lin Wanrong's gaze, a glint of tears in her eyes.

Qin Xian'er's face shifted from red to white, her chest rising and falling with emotion. She suppressed the anger in her heart. Despite her beauty and the flirtatious charm of her anger, to an outsider, it seemed as if there was a romantic exchange between the two.

Seeing that bewitching look in Qin Xian'er's eyes again, and the resentment on her face enough to melt any man's heart, Lin Wanrong knew that this girl was up to her seductive "magic" again.

He had been fooled before, and remembering that he had already fallen for it once, he dared not meet her gaze. He turned his head and said loudly, "Miss Qin, even though you are the most favored courtesan in Miaoyu Pavilion, loved and adored by all the young masters, at the end of the day, you are still part of Miaoyu Pavilion. Even though you are beautiful and talented, a brothel is a brothel, not a theater or restaurant. What is sold here are bodies and smiles. The other ladies here may not be as beautiful as you, but fundamentally, there is no difference between you and them. They are your sisters. If they can sing, why can't you? Does being beautiful put you above your sisters?"

The other courtesans were all women, and although they sold their bodies, they still retained some dignity. Lin Wanrong's words stirred their hearts. Why should she only sell smiles while they must

sell their bodies? Some of the courtesans, reminded of their own hardships, discreetly wiped away their tears. They felt vindicated, their eyes were drawn to Lin Wanrong, full of emotion and fiery passion.

Lin Wanrong's words were meant to stir up tension between Qin Xian'er and the other courtesans. Yet, they only garnered sympathy from everyone present, and nobody could refute him.

Regardless of what others might think, Lin Wanrong sighed and slowly recited,

"Speechless in the slanted evening sun of Qinhuai, every home by the water reflects the red makeup. Spring wind oblivious to the changing jade countenance, still the songs of joy circle the painted boats. Under the bright moon, hearts are breaking!"

With just a few simple sentences, he encapsulated the world-weariness hidden behind the glamour of Qinhuai. Those who were forced to put on a smile in the courtyard were all pitiful women, each with their own heartbreaks. These short twenty-odd words expressed their desolation, evoking deep emotions.

Qin Xian'er was stunned for a moment before she let out a long sigh, "Your talent is admirable, Young Master."

Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Miss Qin, you don't need to admire me. All of this knowledge I have is taught by my Young Master. If you are interested, you should spend more time with him. I believe you won't be disappointed."

"Oh, really?" Qin Xian'er looked at Young Master Guo with a smile, her voice sweet, "I wonder if Young Master Guo would give me that opportunity?"

Chapter 69 Singing "Eighteen Touches" (Part 2)

Hearing those words, the men in the hall were immediately envious. It was clear that Miss Qin Xian'er was inviting Young Master Guo. Such a golden opportunity, once seized, would inevitably lead to being a guest in Miss Qin's private quarters.

Lin Wanrong shot several glances at Guo Wuchang, and Young Master Guo finally showed a touch of intelligence, realizing that Lin San was creating an opportunity for him. He quickly got up and bowed, saying, "At Miss Xian'er's command, I dare not disobey."

Qin Xian'er returned the bow with a smile, then glanced at Lin Wanrong, a hint of shyness appearing on her face. "As for this little song, would you mind if I sing it for you alone, Young Master?"

Qin Xian'er's eyes were as beautiful as a painting, her smile carrying a hint of coquettishness. She seemed shy, yet her eyes were as calm as still water, betraying no sign of unease.

Lin Wanrong laughed, "I'm just a crude person. If the lady feels like it, please spend more time talking with my Young Master. As for the song, whether it's sung or not, it doesn't really matter anymore."

Qin Xian'er slowly walked up to Lin Wanrong, her body close to his. Her eyes seemed to gaze at him, yet there was a playful look in them. Lin Wanrong remembered the tricks she had used before, almost causing him to lose his soul, so he quickly distanced himself a bit.

Seeing his movement, Qin Xian'er couldn't help but blush, covering her mouth to suppress a giggle. Her body slightly trembling, causing the curves of her chest to create a delightful wave. She opened her lips lightly, "You seemed eager just now, but now you seem so reserved. Are you playing hard to get?"

Lin Wanrong chuckled, "Miss Qin, you're like a fairy. In front of you, how dare I play such games? That would be a laughingstock."

Qin Xian'er heard his sarcastic remark, knowing that her attempt to bewitch him with her eyes had been seen through. She sighed softly, whispering, "How am I a fairy in your eyes? To you, I'm just a courtesan who can't even sing 'Eighteen Touches.' If it wasn't for this body, you wouldn't even give me a glance."

She bit her lower lip, her eyes filled with melancholy, sounding resentful. To those unaware, it could be mistaken for her acting coy. However, Lin Wanrong was utterly clear-headed. Courtesans like her took pleasure in toying with men. If he foolishly believed that he was favored by her, he'd be utterly mistaken.

Seeing Qin Xian'er still pretending to be shy, Lin Wanrong couldn't help but laugh inwardly. He said, "'Eighteen Touches' is a good song. You should learn it well. If you don't mind, I am quite familiar with it, perhaps we could delve into it further."

His words, not only frivolous but entirely debasing, caused Qin Xian'er's face to flush. She gave him a stern look, turned around, flicked her sleeves, and ascended the building.

With Qin Xian'er's departure, the previously silent brothel was lively again. The two girls by Lin Wanrong's side were smitten by his audacious remarks, leaning into him with their voluptuous bodies.

Lin Wanrong chuckled and said to Guo Wuchang, "Young Master, Miss Qin will invite you in for a chat shortly. I'll wait for you outside."

With Lin San's assistance, Young Master Guo's dreams came true, making him particularly delighted. He exclaimed, "Lin San, I didn't expect you to be so resourceful. If things work out between me and Miss Xian'er in the future, I will definitely repay you handsomely."

Called him fat and he started panting. This Young Master Guo really did have a fearless ignorance. However, Lin Wanrong liked this kind of straightforward person with no hidden agenda, though a bit naive, his honesty was a plus.

While the two were talking and laughing, they suddenly saw a Young Master named Luo Yuan coming over with a smile, he made a fist salute to Guo Wuchang, "Is this Young Master Guo? I'm Luo Yuan, nice to meet you, Brother Guo."

Guo Wuchang hurriedly stood up and returned the salute, "So it's Young Master Luo, I'm honored." Although Luo Yuan referred to him as 'Brother', he knew his status was far inferior to Luo Yuan's, and naturally, he didn't dare to act superior.

Luo Yuan smiled and said, "I feel like I've seen Brother Guo somewhere before, where could it have been?"

Guo Wuchang responded respectfully, "Last year at the governor's birthday, my father took me to your mansion."

"Oh, and who is your father"

"My father is Guo Quanyou, the county magistrate of Suzhou, Ning County." Guo Wuchang said.

"Oh, so you're the son of Mr. Guo. No wonder you looked familiar, my apologies." Luo Yuan laughed. In fact, he couldn't remember Guo Quanyou at all, but as a warm-hearted person, he didn't want to admit it.

Young Master Guo, seeing that the governor's son actually recognized his father, felt a sense of being flattered. He, who was unskilled and incompetent, was far removed from the powerful and influential young masters of Jinling. Today, seeing the governor's son take the initiative to strike up a conversation, he was naturally thrilled.

Luo Yuan laughed twice, his gaze falling on Lin Wanrong. He said to Young Master Guo, "Earlier, I saw this Brother Lin speaking so eloquently, full of wit and intelligence. It's impressive that you could mentor such a talent, Brother Guo, I'm quite envious."

Guo Wuchang wasn't that dull. He knew Luo Yuan was interested in his servant, and he quickly said, "Lin San, come and greet Young Master Luo."

Lin Wanrong had a good impression of Luo Yuan, who had helped him out during his heated debate with Cheng Ruinian. He smiled and made a fist salute, "Lin San, a servant of the Xiao family, at your service, Young Master Luo."

Luo Yuan laughed, "Brother Lin, there's no need for such formality. I just find you to be an interesting person and want to befriend you. If you act distant, it might seem awkward."

Despite Luo Yuan being the son of a governor, he was approachable and didn't have the arrogance of those young masters, which made him far better than Cheng Ruinian. Lin Wanrong also dropped the formalities and laughed, "Earlier, thank you, Brother Luo, for speaking up for me."

Luo Yuan waved his hand and said, "Brother Lin, you're too kind. I just can't stand people who clearly have no ability but always like to point fingers and criticize others. On the contrary, you, Brother Lin, are both brave and strategic, your insights and courage are beyond anyone I've met, I truly admire you."

He glanced around, then lowered his voice and said, "What you said to Miss Qin earlier really resonated with me. I'm annoyed that I didn't think of it myself. Otherwise, I wouldn't have let you take all the glory, and I'm sure Miss Qin would've seen me in a new light."

Luo Yuan was straightforward and closed the distance between them in just a few words. Most people, due to their status, would naturally not dare to befriend the governor's son, but Lin Wanrong

was different. He didn't see himself as a servant and had no qualms about becoming friends with Luo Yuan. He chuckled and said, "To be frank with you, Brother Luo, I always feel that no matter how beautiful the girls in the brothel are, they are still brothel girls. As for women, give them a bit of attention and they'll set up a dye shop, all the pomp and circumstance is just to hook us men. I, for one, won't let them get their way. I've never let a woman ride on my head."

Luo Yuan slapped the table and laughed, "Brilliant! What you said is absolutely brilliant, Brother Lin. These women, if you don't discipline them for three days, they'll start causing a ruckus, we can't spoil them."

Lin Wanrong heartily agreed with this view. Luo Yuan, however, furrowed his brows and said, "However, this Qin Xian'er, not only is she beautiful, but she also has a unique arrogance. I've asked to see her several times, but I've never had the chance. That Cheng Ruinian, as far as I know, hasn't had much luck either. Today, hearing your words, Brother Lin, felt like a weight off my chest, it was truly satisfying."

Lin Wanrong looked puzzled, "Wait, Brother Luo, aren't you here for Miss Qin?"

Luo Yuan nodded and then shook his head, "Qin Xian'er is indeed a beauty, it would be a lie to say that I don't admire her. However, seeing how she looks down on all men, it's naturally unpleasant for me. Regrettably, I'm not clever enough to deal with Qin Xian'er. Fortunately, you, Brother Lin, appeared tonight and shattered Miss Qin's arrogance, restoring the face of us Jinling men."

Lin Wanrong broke out in a cold sweat. He had merely had a verbal spat with a woman, but now it had been elevated to the level of fighting for the honor of men.

Seeing Lin Wanrong's puzzled expression, Luo Yuan chuckled, "Don't tell me you don't believe it, Brother Lin. There are many people who think like me. Only those unlearned fools always like to play at being sophisticated by following in others' shadows."

While he was talking, his eyes were fixed on Cheng Ruinian in the distance, a cold smirk on his face. Needless to say, the person he referred to as following in others' shadows was naturally the son of the Commander-in-Chief.

These power struggles among the young masters, all involved contests of power. Before he could figure out the situation, Lin Wanrong didn't want to get involved, so he just smiled and said nothing.

Suddenly remembering something, Luo Yuan said, "Hehe, Brother Lin, do you have any idea what it's like when Miss Qin sings the 'Eighteen Touches'? How does it compare to the seductive Xiao Taohong from Lichun Courtyard?"

This young man, filled with lust but lacking in courage and with a thin skin, really lacked the knack for courting girls. Seeing Luo Yuan indulging in his fantasies, Lin Wanrong found it somewhat amusing and said, "Brother Luo, I haven't heard Xiao Taohong sing, but I'm sure the taste of Miss Qin's singing won't disappoint."

Luo Yuan sighed, "I'm afraid I won't have that good fortune. But you, Brother Lin, and you, Brother Guo, you two might have some hope."

Seeing Luo Yuan sighing, Lin Wanrong laughed and said, "Brother Luo, when it comes to pursuing girls, to be honest, it's actually extremely simple."

"Oh?" Hearing this topic, Luo Yuan immediately perked up, "Brother Lin, do you have any insights? Please share them with me." Even Young Master Guo, who had been pretending to be serious on the side, also brightened his eyes and perked up his ears to listen to his words.

Chapter 70 Whos Helping Whom to Redeem? (Part 1)

Drawing from his experiences in his previous life, Lin Wanrong smiled and said, "There's nothing to it but to be bold, observant, and thick-skinned. That's my three-word mantra."

"Bold, observant, and thick-skinned?" Luo Yuan furrowed his eyebrows, "What does that mean? Brother Lin, could you elaborate?"

"Being bold, as the name suggests, means to be courageous. If you fancy a young lady, you should bravely strike up a conversation with her. It's better to make a mistake than to let an opportunity pass."

Better to make a mistake than to miss an opportunity? That was a ruthless strategy. Both Luo Yuan and Young Master Guo gave a thumbs up.

"Being observant involves paying attention to the girl's emotions. Notice when she's happy or upset, remember her birthday, know when her aunt comes to visit"

[Aunt comes to visit means having a period]

Seeing the puzzled looks on their faces, Lin San quickly explained, "Oh, by 'aunt,' I mean a relative from her family. Anyway, depending on the situation, you should present yourself differently. Be gentle, domineering, or wretched to stir up her dominating, maternal, and soft instincts. Make her feel your presence when you're around and miss you when you're not."

This was quite profound, and it was a bit too much for the two of them to comprehend. Such things could only be understood through experience, and Lin San couldn't explain it any clearer.

"As for being thick-skinned, it goes without saying. When pursuing a girl, never give up easily when faced with setbacks. Keep going, fight harder, until she's moved by your persistence."

After Lin San finished speaking in one breath, Luo Yuan and Guo Wuchang were left stunned. Such methods of pursuing girls were indeed unthinkable, but upon further reflection, they made a lot of sense.

Lin San continued to chat with Luo Yuan and found they had a lot in common. Although Luo Yuan came from a bureaucratic family, he didn't have the usual arrogance. He was young, but his conversation was refined, and his knowledge was extensive, spanning from astronomy to geography. He was fond of all kinds of oddities. His indulgence in pleasure was just a youthful inclination, driven by his rivalry with Cheng Ruinian.

Luo Yuan's interests resonated with Lin San, who was a connoisseur in these areas. When Lin San talked about astronomy, geography, and various strange matters, Luo Yuan was not only unfamiliar with them, but he hadn't even heard of them.

In a short while, Luo Yuan was bombarding Lin San with questions, growing more and more amazed and admiring of Lin San with every response. Even Young Master Guo, attracted by all the novel topics, occasionally chimed in with questions. The three of them were engaged in a lively chat, and time flew by quickly.

After a while, a maid came up to Guo Wuchang and said, "Master Guo, my Young Miss requests your presence."

Guo Wuchang, engrossed in Lin San's stories, was a bit taken aback by this and stammered, "Who's your Young Miss?"

Lin San, defeated by Guo Wuchang's oblivion, quickly stood up and said, "Please tell Miss Qin that my Young Master will be there shortly."

"Right, right," Guo Wuchang finally remembered his appointment with Miss Qin, and quickly got up, "My dear lady, I'll follow you right away."

Lin San gave a wry smile at Guo Wuchang's haste, thinking it was quite unbecoming for a man. He wondered when Guo Wuchang would ever mature.

The maid then said, "My Young Miss instructed me to ask Young Master Lin and Young Master Guo to accompany her. She said that she wants to properly express her gratitude for your valuable advice today."

Remembering that enchanting look of the young miss, Lin Wanrong felt his heart skip a beat. He put on a smile and said, "My dear miss, I shall pass. All the knowledge I shared comes from my Young Master, who is much more learned than I am."

The maid giggled and said, "My Young Miss said that if Young Master Lin doesn't come, she will pack her things and join him tonight."

"What" Lin San, Young Master Guo, and Luo Yuan all stood up in shock, their mouths wide enough to fit a large egg.

The girl is trying to trick me, was Lin Wanrong's first thought. If others heard this, they would surely gang up and kill him.

To clear his involvement, Lin Wanrong quickly said, "Miss Qin loves to joke. Since she insists on inviting me, it would be rude not to go. Young Master, shall we go together?"

Although he would love to face Miss Qin alone, Guo Wuchang knew his limits. He feared that Miss Qin would see through him and kick him out in no time. Having Lin San along would naturally make him feel more at ease. So he nodded and said, "Since Miss Qin has kindly invited us, Lin San, you should come with me."

Luo Yuan gave Lin San a suggestive look and smirked, "In that case, Brother Lin, Brother Guo, you can go at ease. I will cover for you, ha-ha."

Luo Yuan, whom they had just met, was quite decent. Lin San felt a certain affinity with him and laughed, "Then, Brother Luo, we will have a more detailed discussion when we have time."

Luo Yuan bowed his fist and said, "Brother Lin is talented. I will definitely visit you in the future."

I'm just a lowly servant, where are you going to visit me? Lin Wanrong thought amusedly. This Luo Yuan is quite interesting.

Lin Wanrong and Young Master Guo followed the maid, crossing the main hall and heading upstairs.

The men in the hall knew that these two were favored by Miss Qin and were going to visit her. Perhaps one of them would even become the favored guest of this pure and elegant courtesan. They were filled with envy.

Cheng Ruinian watched their retreating figures, frustrated. However, his rival Luo Yuan seemed to have made friends with them, leaving him with no immediate solution.

"What shall we do, Miss?" Xiu He asked her master.

The beautiful young master bit her lip and said, "Follow them, let's find out what Miss Qin is up to."

Lin San and Young Master Guo followed the maid into a large room on the second floor. The room was clean and serene, with the scent of sandalwood wafting through the air, invigorating the spirit.

There were calligraphies and paintings hanging on the wall. Lin Wanrong couldn't tell who the authors were, but Young Master Guo was taken aback. These were the works of renowned scholars of their time. Although he seldom studied, he still recognized the names. He knew that Miss Qin was famous for her beauty, but he hadn't expected her to have connections with so many distinguished people. Young Master Guo felt somewhat inferior.

Seeing Young Master Guo's dejected expression, Lin San hurriedly asked, "Young Master, what's the matter?"

Young Master Guo sighed and said, "These calligraphies and paintings are made by the most famous artists of our time. The gap between Miss Qin and me is truly vast."

Lin San thought, At least he has some self-awareness. However, Young Master Guo had been kind to him, so he wouldn't kick him while he was down. He smiled and said, "Young Master, people have different destinies. There's no need to envy them. Although this room is full of famous paintings, I don't see Miss Qin attaching great importance to them. I guess her interactions with these people are rather superficial. Knowing everyone in the world, but not having a single close friend, Miss Qin is actually quite pitiful."

This conversation highlighted the difference between Young Master Guo and Lin Wanrong. Facing the same situation and both not understanding calligraphy and painting, Young Master Guo felt self-pity, while Lin Wanrong managed to perceive the host's mindset.

After sitting in the room for a while, a maid came and invited Young Master Guo, saying, "Master Guo, please follow me."

Lin Wanrong also wanted to follow, but the maid stopped him, saying, "My young miss asked Young Master Lin to wait here for a while."

Although Lin Wanrong's original intention was to facilitate for Young Master Guo, he felt somewhat disgruntled when Miss Qin showed no respect. He thought, What's she showing off for? I will make her sing "Eighteen Touches" later.

When Young Master Guo was around, they could chat. But now that he was gone, Lin Wanrong felt a bit bored sitting alone.

After sipping some of the fragrant pine nut tea served by the maid, he was about to move around when he heard a woman's voice from inside the room, "Knowing everyone in the world, yet having no close friends. Young Master Lin, is this how you see me?"

The bead curtain was lifted, and a graceful figure walked out from the inner room. It was the stunningly beautiful Miss Qin.

She seemed to have just taken a bath, her hair hanging loosely, her face blushed, her eyes twinkling with a hint of a smile, and a faint jasmine fragrance emanating from her body. This simple and elegant appearance made her beauty even more extraordinary.

"So, the young miss was hiding in the room listening to me talk. I'm really flattered." Lin Wanrong said with a smile.

"I wasn't eavesdropping. I live in this room, and Young Master Lin spoke a bit too loud, so I happened to hear that sentence," Miss Qin replied with a charming laugh.

"So, can I be considered as a guest in Miss Qin's boudoir then?" Lin Wanrong joked.

"Only just barely," Miss Qin's smile became even more radiant.

So, it turned out that this room was Miss Qin's private chamber. No wonder the outer room was decorated so elegantly.

Suddenly, Lin Wanrong remembered something. The maid had led Young Master Guo out earlier, presumably not to see Miss Qin. Damn, if Young Master Guo isn't careful, those maids might gang up on him.

Miss Qin's eyes sparkled, as if she knew what he was thinking. She covered her lips and giggled, "You're quite a smooth talker, but you also have some loyalty. Don't worry, your Young Master will be well taken care of."

Since she said so, Lin Wanrong felt relieved and laughed, "He is my Young Master, of course I should care. But Miss Qin, why did you come to me instead of seeing my Young Master?"

Miss Qin gave him a glance and snorted, "Hmph, don't think I don't know. Those words were all fabricated by you, trying to tarnish Young Master Guo. I won't fall for your tricks."

She frowned slightly, looking a bit annoyed but also amused, like an innocent young girl who was endearing. From these few sentences, it was hard to tell which were true and which were false.

Lin Wanrong wasn't fooled by her. He laughed, "Miss Qin, don't mind who said it, just tell me whether the words were right or not."

Miss Qin said with a fit of feigned anger, "There's some truth in it, but how could I admit it in front of so many people? I'm a lady after all."

Miss Qin pouted, her beautiful eyes glanced slightly, her face showing a hint of annoyance and shyness, truly a captivating beauty.

Lin Wanrong knew himself well. Miss Qin's act in front of him wasn't because she had taken a liking to him, but she must have some kind of plan. Recognizing this, Lin Wanrong felt no apprehension and laughed, "Let's put all that aside. Miss Qin, have you learned the little tune I wanted to hear?"