

Keyboard Immortal

3. The protagonist in Jinyong's wuxia novel 'Duke of Mount Deer'.

Chapter 3: Lightning From Nowhere

Translator: Pika

Snow opened her mouth to speak, but Zu An cut her off hastily. "The truth is, I tripped and fell into the pool. Snow tried to save me, but she accidentally slipped and fell in as well. Thankfully, I can swim a little and was just barely able to save her."

I have no clue who wants me dead. It's better to maintain the facade for now, until I figure out what the hell is going on.

Snow's face turned livid with rage, but she couldn't squeeze out a rebuttal.

"Is that really what happened?" Chu Chuyan turned to Snow. "You are soaking wet. Go clean up and change your clothes, then come eat with us."

After saying her piece, she drifted off gracefully without another word. Zu An resisted the urge to drop a sarcastic remark. She floats around everywhere in white robes, as if her feet aren't even touching the ground. If I saw her at night, I'd swear she was a damned ghost.

His attention was soon captured by another problem at hand. "Snow, where can we wash up? Shall we go together?"

"Piss off!" Snow snapped. If it wasn't for the fact that I'm indecently attired right now, I swear I'd beat this idiot up so bad that even his own mother wouldn't recognize him. She cast a mournful look at her snacks scattered across the ground before stamping her feet and storming off.

Fortunately, Chu Chuyan had sent a servant to guide Zu An. He was brought to a room where he bathed and changed his clothes. Now that he was finally clean, Zu An walked up to the mirror in the room and scrutinized himself in it. Despite being much skinnier, he looked more or less similar to his old self. He sighed in satisfaction, "Still a handsome devil. I might not be a match for Pan An, but I'm still a smidge better than Ximen Qing." [1]

He was looking forward to sharing a meal with his freebie wife, but she simply had some servants deliver his food to him.

“What the hell, man? Am I a prisoner or something?” It dawned on Zu An that the position of a drafted son-in-law was even lower than he had imagined. Apparently he wasn’t even worthy of joining them at the table for meals!

“I refuse to be treated like a beggar!” Zu An couldn’t fathom why the previous owner of this body had been willing to endure such insults. He shoved the dishes aside in a huff, but the aroma of food was overpowering. It didn’t take long for his stomach to protest angrily.

Zu An hesitated. In the end, he decided that a man should be flexible and know when to bow down. Thus, he pulled the dishes back toward him and began devouring them ravenously. I gotta say, this chef is pretty damn good.

Satisfied, Zu An began to ponder how he was supposed to survive in this world.

He rummaged around the room for some paper, then wrote ‘Tips for Surviving Transmigration’ at the top of a blank page.

His mind began dredging up various bits of information from the many webnovels he had enjoyed in the past, but it didn’t take long for him to drift off into fantasies about having a computer, the sensations of playing mobile games on his iPhone, the joy of trolling the hell out of people on internet forums...

Before he knew it, the sky had turned dark. Wait a second. What was I planning to do earlier? He stared at the empty sheet before him with twitching eyelids before crumpling it into a ball and tossing it away. I’ll go outside for a stroll. Let’s see if I can learn anything about this world.

Clearly, the previous owner of this body had lived a miserable life in this world. I am, by nature, a kind and helpful person. I need to help this dead guy get his own back and raise his status.

With the help of his silver tongue, he was able to glean the location of Chu Chuyan’s residence from some servants. As he approached her chambers, Snow’s voice sounded from within. “Miss, do you want to eat some sunflower seeds?”

“I’ll pass. You shouldn’t eat too many either. You might just end up cracking your teeth.”

“You’re scaring me again, young miss! Which reminds me. That guy’s becoming increasingly hard to handle. He used to be fine, but he seemed... off, today.”

“Yes, he does seem different today,” Chu Chuyan agreed. Zu An was a bit anxious to hear that, but she quickly continued, “It might be due to the lightning strike. Could it have messed his mind up?”

Snow guffawed loudly, arms wrapped around her belly. As Zu An stood outside, speechless, he heard her laughter die down, and she cut off abruptly with a snort. "Young miss, why haven't you confronted him over what happened last night?"

Chu Chuyan said calmly, "The events of last night were quite bizarre. I'll discuss it with Mother and Father tomorrow before I decide what to do."

Zu An was delighted. It seems my freebie wife is quite clever. It seems I won't have to employ too many of those tired old tropes I saw in the tv series.

"You're letting him off too easily," Snow muttered. "Why didn't the lightning just kill him? You wouldn't have to waste your time with that piece of trash that way, young miss!"

Chu Chuyan rebuked her. "Don't say such things in the future."

For some reason, perhaps because Chu Chuyan hadn't mentioned what had happened by the pond, Zu An began to think that perhaps his freebie wife had nothing to do with the scheme against him after all. Wait. The hotter a woman is, the better she is at lying. I can't let my guard down.

Still, Zu An could feel his temper rising as Snow prattled on and on, continuously insulting him. Enough is enough! He kicked the door open.

Chu Chuyan was startled. "What are you doing?"

"It's dark, so what else can I possibly be doing? I'm going to bed, of course." Zu An shot Snow a hard glare. Surely there is some substance in this world I can force her to take that will make her lose her voice forever. We'll see how you'll talk shit about me then!

Chu Chuyan bristled. "Then why have you come here?"

"Isn't it natural for husband and wife to sleep together?" Zu An replied casually as he sauntered into the bedroom.

"EEEEEEEP!" A miserable shriek echoed through the estate as Zu An was unceremoniously kicked out of the room.

Delighting in his misfortune, Snow gloated, "Jackass Zu, why don't you take a piss on the ground then stare at your own reflection in it? You seem to have forgotten who you are, if you think you can get close to our young miss!"

To her surprise, instead of shame or rage, Zu An's face bore an amused smile.

As I expected. Judging from his earlier interactions with Chu Chuyan, Zu An was fairly certain that they had never consummated their marriage. He had planned this little

scene to test his theory, and the confirmation he had just received pleased him. It meant that he could start from scratch with this freebie wife of his.

“Did that bolt of lightning really fry your brains?” Snow was perplexed. He wasn’t reacting the way she expected him to, and this soured her mood further.

Realizing he was in danger of giving the game away, Zu An hurriedly wiped the smile off his face and put on an aggrieved, heartbroken look. “Such injustice! I’ve never heard of a wife who refuses to sleep with her husband!”

“Shut your mouth!” Chu Chuyan’s face was bright red. With a wave of her sleeves, she shut the main door to her chambers. She could not let everyone in the estate hear his miserable howls.

Zu An continued his wailing. “If you don’t want to sleep with me, then why did you marry me? Tomorrow, I’m going to start a ruckus in the streets. I’ll muster a troop of drummers and announce the truth to everyone! We’ll see if the Chu clan loses face, or if I do!”

“You wouldn’t dare!” Chu Chuyan stood swiftly, a dangerous glint in her eyes. An imposing rippled from her body.

Zu An sniffed. “Why wouldn’t I? My reputation is already in tatters anyway. Besides, isn’t this what you want as well? To let the other rich young masters know that you are pure and unsullied...”

Chu Chuyan took in a deep breath before glaring at Zu An sharply. “You really want to sleep with me?”

“Hell yeah I do!” Zu An said excitedly. What was wrong with this silly girl? Of course I do! He wasn’t going to pass up this golden opportunity. As Eileen Chang once wrote, the best way to a woman’s heart was through her... ahem. Anyway, rice, once cooked, cannot no longer be uncooked.[2]

“Then I’ll let Snow accompany you tonight,” replied Chu Chuyan calmly.

Snow had been looking on gleefully, munching on melon seeds. At her young miss’ pronouncement, however, the seeds turned to ashes in her mouth. What the hell? “But young miss!”

Chu Chuyan glanced at her with amusement in her gaze. “His hands have already been all over you today, when he saved your life. Besides, this is part of the responsibilities of any live-in maidservant. Are you unwilling?”

Snow met her gaze and shuddered, not daring to reply. She means what she says. She bit her lips tightly, tears welling up in her eyes.

Zu An stood there, stupefied. What nonsense is this? Shoving another woman into your own husband's bed? Then again, Snow tried to kill me during the day. Let's play along and see what their relationship is exactly. He lowered himself to the bed. "My dear Snow, come hither and help me disrobe."

Chu Chuyan wrinkled her brows slightly. This fellow was much more shameless than she had imagined.

Snow cast a pitiful glance towards Chu Chuyan, but the young miss leisurely picked up a book to read, ignoring her. If Zu An had been closer, the title of the book would have been familiar to him - he had seen her reading this exact book earlier.

Seeing the young miss' indifference, Snow gave into despair. She reluctantly approached Zu An, skewering him with a vicious stare. Steeling herself, she muttered, "Get on with it, if you must! I'll just pretend like I'm being bitten by a dog." Her eyes glittered, dangerous yet uncertain, as she felt for a slender needle hidden within her hair.

Chu Chuyan peeked over the book she had been 'reading', studying Snow discreetly.

Even Zu An was beginning to feel queasy. I just wanted to play along and see what you guys are up to, but now I'm not so sure. Should I go all-in?

He turned it over in his mind, then made a decision. Screw it. If you women aren't embarrassed, why the hell should I be? Y'all want to play games? Fine, I'll play to the end. Let's see who breaks first! He grinned lecherously as he pounced atop Snow.

After what seemed like an eternity, an agonized howl rang out from the bedsheets.

"NO FUCKIN' WAY!"

Zu An stared down at his nether regions in utter disbelief, still as a statue. Chu Chuyan peered at him, only to quickly avert her gaze. Her face swiftly reddened as pity flickered in her eyes.

Snow, however, having just been granted a reprieve from execution, wasn't as kind. She put away her hidden weapons and dressed herself before mocking Zu An mercilessly. "I used to think you were just a useless man... but now, I realize that I still thought too highly of you! It turns out you aren't even a man at all! Gosh, I'm going to die of laughter!"

Zu An didn't even have the presence of mind to argue with her. His eyes brimmed with tears as he turned and slowly left Chu Chuyan's chambers, his footsteps heavy. This blow was simply too much for him. Anything else, he could deal with, but if he couldn't perform in bed with a woman, what was the point of it all?! His life's goal wasn't to become Sima Qian! [3]

He wandered aimlessly for a time, until he came upon a crooked tree. Mechanically, he took off his belt, then hung it around a branch, having decided to just end it all. Who knows, maybe if I die I'll transmigrate back to my own world.

A hoarse, aged voice snapped him out of his funk. "Your manhood has simply been affected by a unique sealing spell. It isn't completely hopeless."

Zu An looked around and saw an old man standing stooped over beside him, carrying a hoe. The old man's face was covered with countless wrinkles, and he seemed so frail that a strong gust of wind could blow him down.

More memories surfaced in his mind. He vaguely remembered this old man as the servant responsible for cleaning the flower gardens. He rarely spoke and always kept to himself, and was either ignored or bullied by everyone in the estate. Everyone referred to him as 'Old Mi'.

The previous owner of Zu An's body had been sympathetic towards Old Mi, as they were both similarly mistreated, and so, he had secretly given Old Mi some desserts before. This was why the current Zu An had some vague memories of him.

However, such details were irrelevant now. The only thing that mattered was what he had just said. "Sealed? Who put a sealing spell on me?" Could it be Chu Chuyan? But judging from her earlier behavior, it doesn't seem to be the case.

Old Mi shook his head. "I don't know either. I imagine it was placed on you when you were very young."

"Elder, do you know a way to unseal it?" Zu An grabbed the old man eagerly by the arm. After having read so many webnovels, he knew that this was no ordinary old man. Countless possibilities flooded his mind. I know this trope! He must be a retired but badass grandpa who, for various reasons, had to discard his former fame and secrete himself within the Chu clan as an ordinary gardener.

He was going to latch onto this person firmly! There was no way he was going to let this opportunity go to waste!

1. These are legendary playboys in Chinese history, their names are used sort of like how we would say Casanova or Adonis.

2. Eileen Chang was a Chinese American author who wrote many famous novels like 'Lust, Caution'.

3. Sima Qian is considered to be China's foremost historian. He offended the emperor but in lieu of the death penalty, chose to let himself to become a eunuch so that he could complete his great ambitions of writing a full history of pre-Han dynasty China.

