Farmhouse 1681

Chapter 1681: Speaking Up for the Worker

Jin Luoyin: "..."

Today, Boss Zhang had a big order to ship out, and he was in a great mood, cheerfully turning around when suddenly there was a loud crash behind him that startled him and made him jump.

"Oh no, what's going on?"

"Boss Zhang? I'm terribly sorry, it's all my fault!"

A worker quickly bent down, picking up the glass shards from the ground. It turned out that Boss Zhang had suddenly turned around and bumped into a worker carrying a basket of glass bowls, causing it to fall to the ground and almost all the glass bowls to break.

Boss Zhang took a closer look and immediately jumped up, heartbroken.

"Oh dear, how are you working like this? These Tri-colored Glazed Bowls were custom-ordered by Tianhai Mountain Villa and were supposed to be used for the Young Master's coming-of-age ceremony. And you broke them?"

More workers came out from behind, carrying baskets filled with these Tri-colored Glazed Bowls.

The worker who broke the bowls felt wronged too; who told you to suddenly turn around?

But he didn't dare say it was the boss's fault, so he could only swallow his frustration and hope the boss would let him off.

As he picked the unbroken bowls out, he said, "Boss Zhang, I didn't mean it, please forgive me?"

"Forgive you? Do you know how expensive these bowls are?"

The other workers could only look at this unfortunate fellow with sympathy, while tightening their grip on their baskets.

Jin Luoyin had witnessed the whole incident and saw how pitiful the worker looked, so she spoke up, "Boss, I saw it when you turned and bumped into this worker. I think you're partly at fault too!"

"What?" Initially, Boss Zhang thought the young guy's back looked a bit like their Commandery Princess and had some goodwill towards him, but now, seeing him undermining him in front of the workers, he couldn't tolerate it.

His liking for Jin Luoyin dropped instantly, and he said, "I don't have eyes on my back. Which eye of yours saw it was my fault? Clearly, this worker wasn't careful enough."

"Of course, he's also at fault!" Jin Luoyin said, "But making him compensate alone is too much, considering it was both of yours' collision that broke a few bowls. Besides, not many bowls broke, they're not worth much. I think just let it go?"

"Not worth much? You're speaking lightly!" Boss Zhang's beard bristled, and he harshly said, "Do you know how much we'll have to compensate Tianhai Mountain Villa for delaying their business? Do you think it's just the cost of a few bowls? If we miss the delivery time, even selling you wouldn't be enough to cover the interest."

Jin Luoyin had learned some business from her mother, though not very proficient, she understood some of the rules in the trade.

If they missed the delivery time, it's not a matter that can be fixed with just the cost of a few bowls; there would be a penalty for breach of contract.

Seeing one box after another of bowls being loaded onto the cart, it looked like quite a large quantity, and the penalty wouldn't be small either.

The worker, who had looked at Jin Luoyin with hopeful eyes, now saw her frowning and turned ashen-faced, thinking he was doomed for sure.

Boss Zhang looked at Jin Luoyin with disdain, but unexpectedly, she bent down to ask the worker, "Have you sorted them out? How many bowls broke?"

The worker pointed at the shattered bowls on the ground, saying, "Five!"

Five, huh! Jin Luoyin smiled brightly, stood up, and said to Boss Zhang, "Boss Zhang, now you're being stingy, aren't you? Just five, with such a large quantity, the backups surely cover more than five bowls, right?"

With such large batches of fragile items, backups are always prepared, usually at a ratio of three to five percent of the total.

Chapter 1682: Lamenting Spring and Mourning Autumn

Jin Luoyin stood here and looked at the shipment; there must be at least a few hundred bowls, with a few dozen spares. This Boss Zhang is really stingy, scaring the young worker to tears.

Being exposed by someone, Boss Zhang's face was a bit unpleasant, and he awkwardly said, "You, young man, are meddling a bit too much. Does a boss need you to discipline his employees?"

Jin Luoyin quickly said, "No, no, I was just speaking casually, just speaking casually."

However, the worker moving the boxes, hearing Jin Luoyin's words, clung to them like a lifeline. He immediately went up and grabbed Boss Zhang's leg, saying, "Boss, please help me. I can't afford the damages. Even if I were sold, it wouldn't cover it. Please take the spare items mentioned by this young man to make up for it. Deduct the money from my wages."

Boss Zhang's expression was very unpleasant. It was getting noisy, attracting people on the street to watch the spectacle.

Boss Zhang said with a dark face, "Let go!"

“No, no, unless you save me, I’ll keep holding onto your leg!”

Jin Luoyin couldn’t help but chuckle. It seemed this young worker was quite sharp.

Let’s see how Boss Zhang gets out of this.

Seeing the crowd grow larger, causing more loss of face, Boss Zhang couldn’t bother disciplining the worker anymore, and said angrily, “Move, move, hurry up and carry the boxes!”

The worker was startled and asked, “What about these broken bowls?”

“I’ll pay!” Boss Zhang replied in exasperation.

Only then did the worker breathe a sigh of relief, quickly saying, “Thank you, Boss. I’ll get back to work now!” He even gratefully winked at Jin Luoyin.

You can tell this young worker is clever, Jin Luoyin said with a smile, “That’s the way it should be, Boss Zhang. The bowls are already broken, whether the worker begs you or not, you must take out the spares. Why make things difficult for this young man?”

Boss Zhang gritted his teeth in anger and coldly snorted, “Getting the benefit and still acting the fool, huh? Quickly leave!”

Today, he must have left the house without checking the almanac, only to encounter this meddlesome strange young man.

…

Jin Luoyin left town carrying a bundle, planning to buy a horse at the station outside to go north and find her brother, when unexpectedly, she again saw the young worker from before.

She chased up to him and asked, “Are you guys responsible for home delivery too?”

Seeing it was her, the worker felt a bit more favorable and quickly said, “Yes, this batch of dishware for Tianhai Mountain Villa is a big order. Look, all these carts are loaded with their custom bowls and plates. I heard the owner of Tianhai Mountain Villa has only one son, who is naturally very cherished. His coming-of-age ceremony is exceptionally festive!”

“The son of the owner of Tianhai Mountain Villa’s coming-of-age ceremony, huh?” Jin Luoyin slowly repeated the phrase, realizing with surprise that her brother was also of coming-of-age this year.

If her brother hadn’t gone missing, his ceremony would definitely have been more lively than that of the son of the owner of Tianhai Mountain Villa. Her family had everything, both wealth and power.

But her brother has been missing for many years.

Thinking of this, she felt a bit sad.

The young worker was startled and quickly said, “Hey, young man, what are you thinking about that makes you almost cry?”

Jin Luoyin wiped her eyes and said, “It’s nothing, just thinking about others’ coming-of-age ceremonies being so grand and wondering if anyone remembers ours.”

The young worker looked at her ordinary attire, awkwardly saying nothing.

Coming-of-age ceremonies, hairpin ceremonies, those are things wealthy people like to fuss over. For poor folks like us, we don’t even celebrate birthdays, so who cares about your coming-of-age ceremony!

Chapter 1683: Shitou

The young servant asked, “Where are you planning to go?”

“Me…?” Jin Luoyin glanced around and said, “I’m just wandering around, anywhere will do.”

The young servant looked at her sympathetically and asked, “Are you running away from home?”

“Running away from home?” Jin Luoyin’s mouth twitched.

“Oh no, are you venturing out alone?”

“Uh, ah? Oh, I suppose so!” Jin Luoyin scratched the hat on her head.

The young servant chuckled, “I also planned to venture out on my own, but when I arrived in Yangguan City, I found out that making a career for oneself is hard, as hard as climbing the sky. Look, I’m just a delivery servant now. If it doesn’t work out, I plan to farm at home after two more years, luckily there’s still some land at home.”

Jin Luoyin smiled, “Farming isn’t bad, my family has land too, but not much!”

The young servant sighed and said, “Anyway, if you don’t know where to go, why not come with us! Visit Tianhai Mountain Villa; I’ve heard the wages for servants there are good!”

He thought happily, if he found a place that paid more than Boss Zhang, he wouldn’t return to Yangguan City.

Jin Luoyin thought it might take a while to find her brother, so she agreed with the young servant.

“Alright, I’ll go with you to Tianhai Mountain Villa and try my luck!”

Thinking about the young master coming of age, she was curious about what the coming-of-age ceremony for men looked like, wondering if her brother was like the young master of Tianhai Mountain Villa.

…

Tianhai Mountain Villa wasn't far from Yangguan City, about half a day's journey.

Like the Prince Residence in Plum Blossom Valley, Tianhai Mountain Villa was actually nestled in a valley surrounded by large mountains. Though there were big mountains, transportation was still very convenient, and there were countless fertile fields at the foot of the mountains. This Villa was indeed a rich land.

"There it is ahead, little lad, after walking this way, I still don't know your name!"

"Me…?" Jin Luoyin thought for a bit and said, "I'm called Mingzhu!"

"Mingzhu?" The young servant looked at her strangely and said, "Why have you chosen a girl's name?"

Jin Luoyin sighed lightly, "Ah! Before I was born, there was already a brother at home, and my parents hoped to have a daughter to complete the character for 'good.' Unfortunately, they had another son, but they had already chosen the name and didn't plan to change it, so I'm called Mingzhu!"

Young servant: "…"

Thinking: These days, there are indeed some who hope for daughters, quite surprising.

Isn't everyone saying having a daughter is like a money pit? Good? My foot!

"And you, what's your name?" Jin Luoyin asked.

"Me? I'm called Shitou!"

"Shitou?" Jin Luoyin's mouth twitched, "Are you fooling me with a nickname?"

Shitou said, “No, I’m really not lying, I’m truly called Shitou.”

Jin Luoyin: “…”

“My family name is Shi. My parents chose convenience and named me Shitou!”

Ha, really is a fittingly convenient name.

“Hey, stop chatting at the back, take care of your carriage, we’re entering the valley!” The lead delivery master yelled, and Jin Luoyin and Shitou quickly secured their cart of Tri-colored Glazed Bowls and followed the team ahead.

Jin Luoyin followed along with Shitou and successfully entered Tianhai Mountain Villa.

“Be careful over here!”

The carriage team followed the steward into the back kitchen of Tianhai Mountain Villa, then unloaded the boxes of glazed bowls one by one from the carts.

Chapter 1684: Can’t Sleep

Three days later is the Young Master’s weak crown ceremony, but starting now, some guests from afar have already begun entering the mountain villa.

Because when the time comes, there will be many guests, the personnel inside the villa seemed insufficient, and there was a concern that these crystal-clear bowls might have some mishap. Those of us responsible for transporting the Tri-colored Glazed Bowls have been temporarily borrowed by the villa and are only allowed to leave after assisting with the Young Master’s weak crown ceremony.

The head escort, who hadn’t seen Jin Luoyin before, looked puzzled and said, "Why is there an extra person? Where are you from?"

Shitou was extremely nervous, fearing that Jin Luoyin would be recognized and then kicked out.

But Jin Luoyin calmly smiled and said, "I’m new, Boss Zhang arranged for me to help, my name is Mingzhu!"

"Mingzhu?" The head escort looked disdainful, "Why does a perfectly good man have a woman’s name?"

Jin Luoyin: "..."

Recently, there were many people in Tianhai Mountain Villa, and the servants’ rooms were very cramped, with original two-person rooms turned into five-person rooms, and five-person rooms turned into ten-person open dormitories.

People like Shitou were obviously destined to live in open dormitories, so Jin Luoyin had to follow and stay in those ten-person open dormitories.

Upon entering the room made with wooden boards, a variety of sweaty and foot odors made her reluctant to breathe, and she hesitated to enter.

Shitou behind her said, "That’s how it is for us doing hard labor, now it’s cold, and we can’t bathe, just bear with it!"

How was a delicate woman supposed to endure that?

Jin Luoyin awkwardly laughed and asked, "Where is the toilet?"

Shitou pointed behind the house and said, "There’s a row of separate houses over there, with a toilet inside!"

"Oh, you go ahead and sleep, don’t wait for me!"

Shitou thought to himself: Mingzhu is venturing into the world for the first time, probably not accustomed to this kind of room, and didn't think much. Having traveled and worked all day, he was exhausted.

Initially planning to wait and sleep with Mingzhu, his head hit the pillow, and he couldn't help falling asleep.

Jin Luoyin didn't dare go back to that ten-person open dorm to sleep, just standing outside listening to the men's snoring was stimulating enough.

She couldn't help but feel a bit frustrated; maybe traveling disguised as a man was a wrong choice? Maybe being a maid would be more convenient.

But immediately thought, her brother's whereabouts were still unknown, and traveling the jianghu is more convenient in a man's guise.

Early spring weather was still very cold, fortunately, this wasn't the north, where it's rumored that if one still walks outside in early spring weather like this time, they're mostly frozen to death.

She wrapped her collar tighter around her neck to block the wind.

Looking up, she saw a pretty big tree; with no place to sleep, perhaps she could make do and sleep there for the night?

A servant who got up at midnight to use the toilet saw her and asked, "Hey, why are you staring at a tree in the middle of the night? Go to sleep quickly. You'll have to work early in the morning."

"Huh?" Jin Luoyin looked embarrassed and said, "It's too hot inside, I came out to get some air!"

A dormitory that was supposed to fit five people now squeezed in ten; how could it not be hot? The servant didn't think much and rushed to the toilet.

Thinking about squeezing in with ten sweaty men gives her goosebumps. Jin Luoyin vowed she would never go back to sleep there.

To avoid encountering anyone else getting up, she had to find another place.

The mountain villa was large, yet still smaller than the Prince Residence in Plum Blossom Valley.

Chapter 1685: Captured

She ascended the steps, and as she reached halfway up the hill, she arrived at the place where the masters resided.

The lights from the houses ahead became beautiful, and there was a hint of sandalwood scent in the air.

Compared to the sweat-stained smell in the servants' quarters below, it was like she had entered a different world here.

Just as she was feeling at ease, suddenly, a dark shadow lunged at her.

She instinctively reached for the dagger at her waist, but the shadow grabbed her by the neck.

"Don't move!"

Jin Luoyin held her breath, and her hand, which was at her waist, slowly moved back.

"Who are you?" The person sniffed lightly at her neck, immediately casting a deep look.

"A young woman, why are you dressed like this? What is your purpose at Tianhai Mountain Villa?"

Jin Luoyin said nothing, swallowing a gulp of saliva.

Thinking to herself: Who is this person? I pride myself on having some skills, yet I was caught before I even pulled out my dagger.

This dog-like nose even detected that I am a woman.

“Not speaking?” The person’s voice carried a hint of contempt and coldness.

“If you don’t speak, I’ll treat you as an assassin!”

Jin Luoyin panicked inside, that wouldn’t do! If she was deemed an assassin, she’d most certainly be doomed. She hadn’t even seen her brother’s shadow, and if she were to die here, wouldn’t that be dying before achieving her goal, leaving her parents in immense grief?

“No, sir, please don’t kill me!”

She immediately surrendered; faced with such a person, since he had already seen through her disguise, there was no need to deny it, or it might backfire.

It was just her bad luck to encounter such a formidable character on her first venture out of the mountains.

Jin Luoyin quickly explained, “I’m just a delivery boy from the foothills, a servant from Xiguang Residence, here to help at the villa!”

The person coldly replied, “Why didn’t you say so earlier?”

“I… You asked so many questions at once, I was just thinking which one to answer first!”

“Fine, then tell me, why are you dressed like this?”

Jin Luoyin explained with a bitter face, “It’s not like I want to. Born as a woman, who wouldn’t want to be a dainty beauty? But my family is poor, and my parents forced me to find work in the city. As a woman, employers looked down on me, so I had no choice but to disguise myself as a man to get hired!”

The grip on her neck loosened a bit, and the person behind seemed to let out a slight laugh.

Jin Luoyin didn’t know how much he believed, so she quickly continued, “I have to say, the living conditions for the servants here at the villa are really poor. Ten people to a room? Think of our Xiguang Residence, at least it’s two people to a room, and each has their own bed. You know I’m disguised as a man, so naturally, I can’t squeeze onto a bed with nine other men. I slipped out at night because of that.”

The man behind her snorted, unknown whether he believed her or not.

Jin Luoyin smiled ingratiatingly and said, “Now that you know my secret, dear sir, could you perhaps provide me with a woodshed to stay for the night?”

“A woodshed?” The person behind her was slightly surprised, then snorted, “Do you think I believe any of your words?”

Jin Luoyin bit her lip, stealthily placing her hand back at the dagger’s location on her waist.

Yet in the next moment, she felt light as the person behind scooped her up and leaped behind a large tree.

A patrol of guards emerged from where they had been standing and proceeded up the hill.

Chapter 1686: Ten Taels of Silver, Come With Me

Jin Luoyin held her breath until they had gone far enough away that she dared to relax.

Although the person behind her had captured her, he had hidden her away, indicating he didn’t want the patrolling guards to find her.

So, there’s still hope?

She quickly said, "What I said is true, sir. What do you need to believe me?"

"What do you think?" the person behind her asked back.

Jin Luoyin blinked and suddenly said, "Ah, I have a friend from Xiguang Residence, staying in the big communal sleeping quarters at the foot of the mountain. If you don’t believe me, you can ask him, a person named Mingzhu. Of course, he doesn’t know I’m actually a girl, so make sure you don’t slip up when you ask!"

Her convincing tone and mention of a witness seemed to make him believe her a bit, and he removed the hand from her neck.

Jin Luoyin turned her head and finally saw what the person who had been throttling her for so long looked like.

A young man, probably about twenty years old. His hair was meticulously combed and tied back with a thin ribbon.

He was wearing a set of black... sleepwear?

If he could prance around the villa in sleepwear, then he was either an esteemed guest or the villa’s owner.

If he was the owner, at around twenty years old...

Jin Luoyin exclaimed, "Are you the son of the owner of Tianhai Mountain Villa?"

The young man neither confirmed nor denied, but seeing a patrol team approaching again, he picked her up and within moments, Jin Luoyin found herself thrown into a discreet yet luxurious room.

Then came the young man’s meaningful voice: "There are too many people these days, and the woodshed is full; there’s no place for you. I’m short of a night watch maid here, so that’s you!"

"Ah...?" Jin Luoyin was momentarily dazed.

"What about the pay?" She asked instinctively.

The young man was stunned for a moment, and then asked, "How much do you earn as a porter?"

Jin Luoyin estimated an amount and said, "Three taels of silver a month!" She paused and added, "Xiguang Residence has great benefits: four days off a month, gifts for birthdays, bonuses for holidays, three months’ salary for New Year, and if you get sick, medicine costs are reimbursed at Jisheng Hall..."

She rattled off all the tempting perks of Xiguang Residence, and the young man finally believed this girl dressed as a man truly came from Xiguang Residence—or if not, she was definitely very familiar with it.

"I’ll give you ten taels a month, including food and lodging, and medical care when you’re sick!"

Ten taels of silver meant little to Jin Luoyin, yet compared to Xiguang Residence’s benefits, it was extremely attractive.

Even without other perks, just the increase from three taels to ten taels would entice countless people to vie for the position.

But Jin Luoyin was only here for the excitement; if she couldn’t find her brother here, she planned to search elsewhere and couldn’t afford to stay as the man’s night watch maid.

However, seeing the man’s increasingly dangerous eyes, she nodded stiffly.

If she didn’t agree, she might have truly ended up as an assassin.

"Fine, I'll do it!"

The young man gradually smiled and said indifferently, "That's more like it!"

He pointed to the small couch outside the room and said, "You can sleep there. Remember to take off those dirty clothes!"

He looked at Jin Luoyin's clothes with disdain.

Jin Luoyin quickly clutched her dirty clothes tightly, intending not to take them off at all costs.

The young man snorted in contempt and left the room. After a while, he returned with a set of maid's clothes and threw them onto her head.

Chapter 1687: Young Master Jian

He said, "I don't want night watch maids dressed all weird here."

Jin Luoyin: "..."

She changed into a refreshing women's outfit and got a good night's sleep; she felt much better when she woke up the next day.

For a moment, she didn't react and was waiting for the maid to attend to her, but then she heard a man's voice coming from the inner room.

"Since you're awake, hurry and come in to help me change clothes!"

"Oh, is it that guy from last night?" she murmured quietly to herself, patting her face.

The man in the room took a deep breath and with a hint of anger said, "I have a name; my surname is Jian, called Jian Shiqing."

"Oh, Jian, Young Master Jian?" Jin Luoyin had never served anyone before, especially a man.

She recalled the maids in the Prince Residence who served others, keeping their heads down, and meekly walked past the screen to see neatly hanging clothes on the clothes rack. She picked them up and walked toward the man sitting on the bedside waiting for service.

"Call me Young Master, Young Master Jian!" Jian Shiqing said coolly as he took the clothes.

"Oh, Young Master Jian!" Jin Luoyin repeated the words, still obediently keeping her head down.

Jian Shiqing looked at her with some displeasure and said, "Lift your head up!"

Based on the principle of doing a job with diligence for every day at work, she thought to herself that today she must act like a maid.

Since the Young Master asked her to look up, she obediently lifted her head.

Her gaze was bold and fearless; as the Young Master examined her, she also examined him.

Jian Shiqing was tall and handsome, with particularly prominent features like his nose and brow bones, making his facial features very well-defined, with a hint of Qiuci ancestry.

Jian Shiqing also examined her; unlike the dirty tomboy from last night, her change into women’s clothes made her appear somewhat charming, though he felt she looked somewhat peculiar!

Jian Shiqing stepped forward two steps closer to her, leaning down.

Jin Luoyin instinctively retreated two steps, saying, "What are you trying to do?"

She was wearing a mask, fearing it would be discovered, so she quickly covered her face with her hand.

Jian Shiqing made a sound and said, "The plum blossom scent on you is quite special!"

He straightened his body and spread his arms wide, saying, "Come on, help me put on clothes."

"Ah...?" Jin Luoyin looked at the man standing there with open arms, changing clothes? Changing clothes?

Darn it, after almost squeezing onto a big bed with ten men last night, this morning she had to dress a man?

Suppressing her temper as the young lady, she endured it for the sake of finding her brother.

Jin Luoyin picked up the clothes nearby, shaking them open to begin dressing him from the inside out.

The man was tall, requiring her to tiptoe with difficulty.

This made her increasingly upset, her lips pouting throughout the entire process.

Jian Shiqing observed everything and commented faintly, "Want my ten silver taels, but can’t even do this simple task well?"

Like hell I care about your ten silver taels.

"Ha, it seems you really haven’t served anyone before!" Jian Shiqing sneered at her clumsy movements.

Seeing that it was already getting late, Jian Shiqing hastily grabbed the clothes from her hands and put them on himself with two or three movements, then strode out!

Jin Luoyin breathed a sigh of relief, picked up a piece of cake from the table to eat as breakfast.

She suddenly remembered something; she abruptly left last night, Shitou must be worried and hopefully there was no trouble.

Oh no, she forgot; she should've asked Jian Shiqing to send someone down the mountain to inform Shitou.

Just as she was about to go out, a maid suddenly came in, holding two sets of clothes.

Chapter 1688: Encountering a Psycho

She saw Jin Luoyin hesitate slightly and said, "So, you're the new night maid for Master Jian?"

"Ah? Yes, I am!"

"Oh, Master Jian asked me to bring you these spare clothes."

Jin Luoyin didn't plan on staying here long, so these clothes naturally didn't mean much to her.

She casually put them aside and said thank you to the visitor.

The maid hesitated to speak, thinking that since no one was around, she might as well lower her voice and carefully say to Jin Luoyin, "Be cautious, you look quite young; it'd be a pity if something happens to you!"

"Hmm?" Jin Luoyin felt a chill in her heart and asked, "What could happen?"

The maid said, "Being Master Jian's night maid isn't easy. Although the pay is higher, it's also dangerous. Just three days ago, Master Jian's night maid died!"

“What?” A threat to life?

“Dear sister, I’m new here and don’t understand the rules. Could you please tell me what’s going on?”

Seeing the young Jin Luoyin, the maid’s heart ached slightly, and she murmured, “Your predecessor was Yingchun, who was also exceptionally pretty, gentle by nature, and kind-hearted. Such a wonderful girl, but still didn’t suit Master Jian, sigh! Being a night maid, you’re failing your duty if you can’t serve even the master. She was then killed by Master Jian with a single slap!”

Jin Luoyin broke into a cold sweat as she listened, hardly able to imagine that the man from last night would really kill someone.

And kill his own maid.

She felt she might have encountered a psychopath, her tongue tied, and asked, “Could you explain more, what exactly went wrong in serving the master?”

Originally, she was thinking that since the Young Master of Tianhai Mountain Villa was hosting such a grand coming-of-age ceremony, there should be plenty of people around. Perhaps she could take the opportunity to try her luck and find clues about her brother.

But if her new master was someone who could kill at any moment, given his extraordinary combat skills, she thought it wise to escape first, as the saying goes, ‘live to fight another day.’

Finding her brother was certainly important, but there was no need to risk her own life.

“Could it be that you’re entirely clueless?” The maid looked at Jin Luoyin in surprise.

Jin Luoyin nodded and said, “I was caught by Master Jian last night, I really don’t know anything!”

A flash of understanding appeared in the maid’s eyes, and she said, “Do you know what a night maid is?”

“Yes, it’s a maid who guards at night, who the master can call on anytime if needed in the middle of the night!”

The Ningwang Residence didn’t have night maids, her parents didn’t need them, though she had a wet nurse and a personal maid guarding her in her childhood, but as she grew up, the night maid was no more.

Still, she knew the basic role of a night maid.

But she didn’t expect the maid to look at her with sympathy, clicking her tongue twice, saying, “If it’s a lady’s night maid, there’s no problem. But for the young masters, it’s just like being a bedmaid; whatever the master asks, you have to do it.

Being Master Jian’s night maid is dangerous because you have to satisfy his special preferences, and those who don’t do well are killed by him. The owner is anxious about it because seven or eight have already died, none of them defiled!”

Jin Luoyin looked in surprise at this maid, who seemed in her twenties. To be a maid at her age she must be a head maid, right?

Piecing together her explanation, Jin Luoyin finally understood the peculiar nature of her job.

Chapter 1689: Mingzhu

The night maid didn’t quite understand, but she understood the personal maidservants of the young masters and masters.

Immediately, she thought to herself, she just wanted to pack her bags and leave quickly.

She could endure being a little maid, but she absolutely couldn’t endure being a maidservant who also had to satisfy the master’s ‘sexual’ needs.

Especially when he had special preferences.

“Hey, girl, what are you doing?”

Seeing Jin Luoyin packing her bags, the maid looked nervous.

If she talked too much and the person ran away because of her, she’d be finished too.

Jin Luoyin chuckled and said, “It’s nothing, I’m just tidying up my things. I just arrived yesterday, so everything’s quite messy.”

“Oh!” The maid breathed a sigh of relief and said, “Don’t be too nervous, what I told you, you’ll find out sooner or later. These days, the manor is quite busy, maybe the owner won’t have time for you, but once things quiet down, the owner should summon you!”

“Huh? Why would the owner summon me?”

The maid lowered her voice and said, “Didn’t I just tell you? Several night maids in Young Master Jian’s room died, all untouched, but Young Master Jian is already twenty. The owner has always thought he was… interested in men, so that’s why he kept sending young and beautiful women to Young Master Jian’s room.”

Then looking at Jin Luoyin, she added, “Hey, you’re different, aren’t you? Your looks don’t compare with the previous ones, and you… have a somewhat peculiar appearance. Did the young master choose you himself?”

Me…?

Jin Luoyin was full of anxiety and nodded, “Well… sort of!”

Hearing Jin Luoyin say that, the maid’s eyes shone with envy.

“Are you someone Young Master Jian brought back? Oh my, it’s always been the owner sending people into Young Master Jian’s room. For so many years, this is the first time I’ve seen Young Master Jian bring someone back himself!”

She carefully examined Jin Luoyin again and said, “With your… unique look, it seems that Young Master Jian doesn’t like stunningly beautiful women, but rather someone unique like you.

Oh, you really have a good fate. Today you’re a personal maid; tomorrow, you could bring your virginity token to the owner to claim credit, and you could immediately be promoted to a Concubine. So, what’s your name, dear girl?”

“Mingzhu!” Jin Luoyin just felt that she couldn’t stay in this place, not for even one more day; she had to escape.

“Ah, Mingzhu, what a great name! I’m called Xia He. I’m a few years older than you, so you can call me Sister Xia.”

Uh…

“Sister Xia!”

Xia He became very attentive to Jin Luoyin. They were both servants in Jian Shiqing’s courtyard, but Jin Luoyin was the most likely to become the master’s woman, so naturally, Xia He had to ingratiate herself a bit.

She hastily said, “Mingzhu, you haven’t had breakfast yet, right? Wait here for a while, I’ll be back shortly!”

“Oh, okay, you go ahead!”

Jin Luoyin sighed with relief, finally managing to get Xia He sent away.

Once Xia He left, she immediately changed into a set of men’s clothes, packed up her things, and prepared to leave.

Unfortunately, she hadn’t walked far before being caught and brought back.

Jian Shiqing’s face was icy, cold enough to freeze someone to death.

“What are you doing? Trying to run away?”

“I… I changed my mind. I think I’m better suited to being a porter.”

Jian Shiqing just snorted coldly and said, “Once you’re here, don’t even think about running. I’ve already informed our leader about you, and when they return, they will make your situation clear.

I told the workers at Dexiguang Restaurant that if they don’t want to work anymore, they can leave directly or resign face-to-face with the owner, right?”

Chapter 1690: Encountering Jie Yi

"Ah...?"

Before Jin Luoyin could answer, he added, "If you resign in person, the boss will pay you your full month’s salary. But if you leave without notice, you won’t get any pay, and this Young Master will compensate you for a whole month of lost wages!"

With that, a ten-tael silver ingot was tossed into her lap.

Jin Luoyin: "..."

"Change your clothes. This Young Master will take you out for a stroll!"

Jin Luoyin gritted her teeth. Her first escape attempt had failed. She could only look for another opportunity.

...

Jin Luoyin, having changed clothes, followed behind Jian Shiqing and arrived at an elegant courtyard, entering a study rich with the scent of books.

There sat a middle-aged man, wielding a thick brush as he wrote with great vigor.

The palm-sized characters flowed smoothly, one after another.

The middle-aged man looked up and casually asked, "Is this the maidservant you chose?"

Jian Shiqing replied slowly, "Yes, I chose her myself!"

"Hmm, not exactly ugly!" Although he said this, he barely noticeably frowned as if saying your taste in women isn't as good as mine; the women I choose are more beautiful.

Jin Luoyin touched her nose, saying nothing.

After all, this wasn't her true face.

"Remember, just a maidservant, at most a concubine!"

These words left Jin Luoyin feeling frustrated, as no one in this world had dared to look down on her.

She was a Commandery Princess worth more than the daughters of the Emperor's younger uncle and yet wasn't resented here, which really angered her.

"Yes, I know!" Jian Shiqing replied indifferently.

The middle-aged man seemed to have finished writing, placed down the brush, and said, "Alright, take her back!"

Jian Shiqing acknowledged with a nod and then led Jin Luoyin back along the path they came.

However, halfway back, Jin Luoyin encountered an acquaintance.

Jie Yi?

The son of Madam Du, her mother's good friend, and born the same year, month, and day as her brother.

Jin Luoyin hadn't seen Jie Yi for two or three years. Seeing him now suddenly reminded her of her brother.

If only her brother were still around. He would've been as old as Jie Yi.

He would surely be a stalwart man like their father; she remembered her mother saying her brother was very much like her father.

Jie Yi had come to deliver silks. Tianhai Mountain Villa often had business dealings with Manxiu Workshop in Jinxiu City, and the owner of Tianhai Mountain Villa was also somewhat of a friend in her mother's business. Since his coming-of-age ceremony was held so grandly, naturally, he had to represent his mother and bring congratulations along the way.

"Brother Jian, long time no see!" Jie Yi looked at the young girl behind Jian Shiqing with a sense of familiarity but couldn't recall where he had seen her before.

Jian Shiqing followed Jie Yi's gaze, glanced back at Jin Luoyin, and said with a faint, ambiguous smile, "Master Jie, you seem quite interested in my maid?"

Jin Luoyin quickly lowered her head, fearing recognition.

Jie Yi paused and laughed, "I just find this girl somewhat... special!"

Jin Luoyin touched her own face; was her disguise so poor? Why did everyone find her special?

"Heh, I also thought she looked special, that’s why I brought her back!"

The two had met in business circles. Ever since Jian Shiqing took over the northern business of Tianhai Mountain Villa, most dealings with Manxiu Building were handled by Jian Shiqing.

However, the host of this coming-of-age ceremony was not Jian Shiqing. After a few polite words, Jie Yi then smiled and asked, "Is Uncle Zhu and Brother Yiping here?"

"My godfather is in the study; the Young Master is likely in his own room!"