Farmhouse 1721

Chapter 1721: Their Relationship

"Deceive you?" Jin Luoyin raised an eyebrow and said, "What am I deceiving you about?"

"Wearing a mask, hiding your identity. You approached me at Tianhai Mountain Villa, deceiving me, was it just for fun?"

Jin Luoyin glanced at him casually and chuckled, "You're overthinking. I wasn't approaching you. Don't forget, I was minding my own business as a porter, and it was you who took me back and forced me to be a maid!"

Jian Shiqing was at a loss for words.

Jin Luoyin continued, "Just think of it as me doing it for fun. Anyway, I'm not bored enough to go to Tianhai Mountain Villa to deceive you!"

Jian Shiqing couldn't speak for a moment, but he was very unwilling and asked, "Then why didn't you tell me, but you told Zhu Yiping instead?"

"Tell him what? It was he who took off the mask himself, and he didn't report me either. As for my true identity, it was only when he decided to let me leave that I told him. I felt he treated me well at Tianhai Mountain Villa, so I told him to make a friend." Jin Luoyin coldly snorted at Jian Shiqing and said, "As for you, think carefully about how you treated me? I'm truly uneasy with you and didn't intend to make friends with you."

Jian Shiqing was stunned for a long while, not knowing what to do.

The matter that kept him up at night, the issue he thought was very important, was merely explained away with a few understated words from her.

She simply didn't care at all.

He smiled wryly, never expecting that picking up a maid by chance over a month ago would bring him so much trouble.

"Mingzhu, excuse me!" he cupped his hands and said.

Jin Luoyin faintly said, "You can call me Princess Mingyue!"

She suddenly recalled the first day she arrived at Tianhai Mountain Villa when Jian Shiqing arrogantly made her call him Young Master. Good for you, Young Master Jian!

Jian Shiqing's face darkened a shade and cupped his hands, "Princess Mingyue!"

"Hmm, you may leave!"

She indeed didn't need to put on airs, yet in his eyes, it seemed she was deliberately doing so.

It seemed the days she spent as a maid in Tianhai Mountain Villa were quite unforgettable for her.

Jian Shiqing wanted to leave but ended up coming back.

He approached her, lowered his voice, and whispered in her ear, "The Princess finds her days at Tianhai Mountain Villa unforgettable, and I find the taste of the Princess unforgettable as well."

As he spoke, he deliberately licked his lips in front of her, infuriating Jin Luoyin, making her wish she could call someone to tear him to pieces right then and there.

Jin Luoyin's good mood turned a bit dull due to the unexpected guest, and although Jie Yi and Yue Qiulin wanted to ignore the evident tension between Jin Luoyin and Jian Shiqing, they couldn't.

Yue Qiulin, feeling puzzled, found a private opportunity to ask, "Yinyin sister, do you know Brother Jian?"

"I don’t know him!" Jin Luoyin coldly snorted.

"Then why do you seem to treat him like an enemy?"

"I don’t like strangers coming to the Valley!" Jin Luoyin said.

Yue Qiulin: "..."

On the other side, Jian Shiqing watched the two speaking in whispers in the distance and couldn’t resist asking Jie Yi, "The Princess and the Princely Heir seem quite familiar?"

Jie Yi laughed and said, "Of course, not only familiar but well-matched, don’t you think?"

"Well-matched?" The words hit Jian Shiqing like a huge wave crashing down on his heart, this sentence seemed very grating to him.

Jie Yi didn’t notice Jian Shiqing’s abnormality, continuing to smile and say, "Yes, well-matched. For a Princess of her status, what kind of man would be worthy? I fear only Yue Qiulin of Lingnan Marquis Residence, equally noble, can match her. It just so happens they’re the same age, and they get along well. The Prince is very happy with the marriage proposal to Lingnan Marquis Residence, but the Princess Consort... She thinks Lingnan is too far from Plum Blossom Valley, and she can’t bear to have her only daughter marry so far away. She is keen on recruiting a son-in-law to live with them and inherit the family business."

Chapter 1722: Speaking

Jian Shiqing raised an eyebrow, yet found a glimmer of light amidst his disappointment, and said: "The Marquis Residence in Lingnan only has one son. I’m afraid he won’t become a son-in-law at Ningwang Residence."

"Right? That’s why this matter has never been settled. But if the Commandery Princess is willing, the Princess Consort doesn’t oppose it either. The Princess Consort is very open-minded when it comes to the Commandery Princess’s marriage, chiefly considering her own preferences, regardless of the other party’s status!"

"Indeed?" Jian Shiqing couldn’t suppress a smile and said: "The Princess Consort is truly unlike ordinary people!"

Jie Yi laughed and said: "The Princess Consort is indeed different from ordinary people!"

...

Jian Shiqing hurriedly left in the middle of the night, and it wasn’t until the third day that Zhu Haisheng received a letter delivered by a servant, saying that Jian Shiqing urgently went to Qingshui Town to handle the tea business.

He indeed didn’t know what business could capture his attention so much, making him leave in the middle of the night.

A maid came rushing over to say to Zhu Haisheng: "Owner, I found out that after Young Master Jian saw the Young Master, his expression changed drastically and was gone by nightfall."

"At Yiping’s place?" Zhu Haisheng frowned, a hint of menace fleeting through his eyes, and he walked towards Zhu Yiping’s place.

Zhu Yiping, after his daily martial arts practice, sat in the tree reading a letter.

This was a letter he had just received, written by Jin Luoyin.

She mentioned how Jian Shiqing was humiliated at Ningwang Residence, making him amused, thinking he deserved it, yet also feeling quite jealous.

Why could Jian Shiqing go, while he could only hide in the tree reading letters?

Just as he stored away the letter, he heard his father’s voice: "Yiping, why climb so high?"

Zhu Haisheng gazed at Zhu Yiping with kind eyebrows, a smile of indulgence mixed with a trace of worry.

Zhu Yiping hurriedly jumped down from the tree, calling out: "Dad, what brings you here?"

Zhu Haisheng brushed off leaves from his shoulder, smiling faintly: "Look at you, being so old and still climbing trees? What if you fell from the tree and got hurt?"

"Dad, with my skills there's no way I would fall!"

Zhu Haisheng laughed heartily, saying: "That's true, indeed my son's skills are rare in the world. Luckily, I had you practice martial arts from a young age, otherwise, with your rambunctious nature, you'd be falling from the walls and trees every other day, wouldn't you?"

What he said made Zhu Yiping both ashamed and annoyed, not knowing how to respond for a moment.

He was already twenty, yet his father kept treating him like a child.

He remembered his father saying he was weak as a child, and his grandfather raised him cautiously, or he would've already died.

But he was different, his health was excellent, no need for such caution.

Yet there's no choice, he got used to it, and had to pretend to be a child in front of his father.

"Dad, what brings you to see Yiping?"

Zhu Haisheng sighed and said: "Isn't it still about Shiqing? Heard from the servant that after leaving your place two days ago, he seemed off, then disappeared in the middle of the night. But today I received a letter from Qingshui Town that says he went to the tea estate to oversee the business.

You see, although his actions usually aren't too flawed, he's not the proactive type either. Rushing to the tea estate in the middle of the night, could it be something happened again?"

Zhu Yiping understood, nodded lightly, and said: "Dad, his leaving the manor in the middle of the night could indeed be related to what I said to him."

"Oh, what did you say to him?" Zhu Haisheng sighed: "That person is difficult to deal with at times, but Dad still hopes you can tolerate him. He's the son of Dad's old friend, who entrusted his only son to Dad on his deathbed for upbringing. Dad doesn't want to fail his friend, do you understand?"

Chapter 1723: Giving Chase

Zhu Yiping spoke unhappily, "Father, I didn't bully him, it's his own stubborn nature. This time, it was indeed because of my words that he left, but it wasn't because of me. Father, do you remember the maid I took away from Shiqing?"

"The maid named Mingzhu?" Zhu Haisheng raised an eyebrow and asked.

"Yes, Mingzhu. Father, she is not an ordinary maid; she's the Commandery Princess of Ningwang Residence, looking for her brother!"

There was a loud roar in Zhu Haisheng's mind, and his complexion turned extremely unpleasant.

Zhu Yiping continued talking to himself, "Father, Shiqing went to find the Commandery Princess, probably to verify whether Mingzhu is really the Commandery Princess. Father, Father, what's wrong with you?"

Zhu Haisheng's face turned pale. He hurriedly put his hand on his forehead and said, "It's nothing, just that I've been unwell since childhood, a bit dizzy, probably the old ailment acting up again."

"Ah? Father, you're dizzy, then quickly call for a doctor! Shi Shu, Shi Shu, go quickly and summon a doctor."

"Father, please hold on, I'll first take you to your room to rest!"

In the midst of chaos, Zhu Haisheng finally calmed down. Once he felt slightly better, he insisted on having a servant help him back to his courtyard.

Zhu Yiping, sweating with anxiety, said, "Father, don't try to be brave, quickly lie down and rest. Tonight, don't go anywhere; just stay here in the courtyard. Didn't the doctor say so? You can't move around easily in your condition."

"I'm not moving; just call a few people to carry me back!"

"Father, why are you so stubborn? Do I have rats in this room?"

Zhu Haisheng hurriedly said, "Silly child, what nonsense are you talking? I've been used to the smell of medicine for years; I can't sleep without it. I'd better return to my room; I like the smell."

Zhu Yiping: "..."

With no other choice, Zhu Yiping had to call a few people to carry Zhu Haisheng back.

Once everyone had left, Zhu Yiping stood up.

In his eyes, there was a bloody aura of killing.

This aura was not something a typical merchant could possess but was owned by someone who had lived in slaughter, experienced the battlefield of life and death.

"It's her, indeed, it's her! Hmph, is it truly a case of a blind cat catching a dead rat, or have they really found her?"

Zhu Haisheng looked up at the bright moon outside and murmured, "It's full again?"

Who knows how many times the moon had been full? He was already twenty years old, and it seemed everything was ready; it was time to take action.

...

Jie Yi left Ningwang Residence, heading back to Beijing, Yue Qiulin also returned to Lingnan, and Jian Shiqing had no reason to stay, so he left as well.

By then, he had already stayed at Ningwang Residence for three days.

During these three days, he hadn't encountered the Prince or Princess, and whether this was fortunate or unfortunate was unclear.

On the way back to the villa, he was leisurely riding his horse when the sound of a woman's cheerful calls as she rode her horse startled him!

"Hyah! Hyah..."

He rode his horse to the side and saw a majestic white horse galloping by, with none other than Commandery Princess Jin Luoyin, whom he had parted with less than a day ago, riding on its back.

His gaze hardened as he watched her ride past without even acknowledging him—did she really not see him, or was it deliberate?

There was no one else on the road, and he was such a large figure on a huge black horse; if she couldn't see him, he wouldn't believe it even if he died—so it must be intentional?

Intentional?

His expression darkened as he snapped the whip across the horse's rump, filled with anger, and urgently spurred his horse to chase after her.

Chapter 1724: Returning to Tianhai Mountain Villa

"Giddy up... Commandery Princess, Princess Mingyue, Jin Luoyin?"

The person ahead didn’t acknowledge him, only focused on riding the horse!

"Jin Luoyin, why are you riding so fast? Are you afraid of me?"

Jin Luoyin hesitated slightly, slowed down the horse, and looked at him calmly, saying: "Who are you? Why would this Commandery Princess be afraid of you?"

"Then why are you riding so fast?"

"Ha, this Commandery Princess speeds up when she wants to, and slows down when she wishes, can you manage that?" Jin Luoyin cast him a proud glance.

Once she returned to her true self, she became more lively.

Jian Shiqing asked with a smile, "May I ask, Commandery Princess, in such a hurry, where are you headed?"

"To Tianhai Mountain Villa!" Jin Luoyin replied lightly.

"Tianhai Mountain Villa?" Jian Shiqing laughed and said, "Could it be that the Commandery Princess cannot bear to part with Shiqing, and therefore you are hastening to see me off? Commandery Princess, you are too kind."

Jin Luoyin snorted coldly and said, "Don’t flatter yourself, who wants to see you off? I’m going to Tianhai Mountain Villa because I’ve received an invitation from your Young Master to meet friends!"

Jian Shiqing’s good mood along the way was shattered by the mention of meeting Zhu Yiping.

Zhu Yiping, oh Zhu Yiping, it’s that bothersome Zhu Yiping again.

Everything is given to him, isn’t that enough? Does he have to take whatever good thing he sees?

Jian Shiqing’s face darkened, and he said, "Commandery Princess, since it’s along the way, let’s travel together!"

"Hmph, who wants to travel alongside you? Giddy up..."

The white horse galloped away again, and Jian Shiqing, with a suddenly sullen face, rode the black horse to catch up.

The two of them, one in front and one behind, entered Tianhai Mountain Villa; those unaware would think Jian Shiqing had invited the Commandery Princess.

The last time Jin Luoyin came, and when she left, she was wearing a mask, so no one knew that the current Princess Mingyue was once the maid of the young master Jian.

Those who had seen her face were just the few servants in Zhu Yiping’s courtyard.

"This Commandery Princess is here for your Young Master, who wants to see your old owner?"

Jin Luoyin displayed an imposing manner that left no room for hesitation, absolutely commanding presence.

It was just tough for the servants, because they knew the rule: anyone seeking the Young Master must get the owner’s permission. Gradually, the Young Master no longer had friends, and no one would come to see him, yet they dared not forget this rule.

But the person before them was the Commandery Princess, a member of the Jin Royal Family; she was royalty, whereas the owner was but a commoner. Would they dare to stop her?

Jian Shiqing caught up, handed the black horse to the servant to take away, and said to the firm-postured Jin Luoyin, "You should still go see the owner, don’t trouble these servants, it’s not easy for them either."

Jian Shiqing selfishly felt jealous, hoping that Jin Luoyin would not go to see Zhu Yiping, but he could not stop her.

Since he couldn’t stop it, causing some trouble was still possible.

Jin Luoyin glanced at Jian Shiqing indifferently and said, "Hmph, do I need your persuasion? I, the Commandery Princess, will see whomever I want, even the current emperor wouldn’t interfere, what do you amount to?"

Jin Luoyin had no good impression of Jian Shiqing, her words to him were always sharp, seeing him frustrated made her comfortable.

Initially, Jian Shiqing might have felt uncomfortable or hurt by her words, but now, being pricked so often, he had grown accustomed to it.

Jian Shiqing touched his nose and said, "Yes, I don’t amount to anything, Commandery Princess, please!"

The servants were very conflicted, but Jian Shiqing gently shook his head at them, so they could only let Jin Luoyin enter.

Chapter 1725: Where Is the Young Master?

Jin Luoyin knew where Zhu Yiping’s courtyard was. After shaking off those annoying servants, she headed straight to Zhu Yiping’s courtyard.

Seeing that familiar courtyard, she took a deep breath before entering.

"Eh, why have you come back?" Shi Shu recognized Jin Luoyin’s face but did not know her true identity as Princess Mingyue, only thinking she was still the maid Mingzhu.

But didn’t the Young Master say it? Mingzhu has gone home and won’t be returning, so why has she come back now?

How much time has passed!

"Yes, I’ve returned!" Jin Luoyin said with a faint smile and went straight into the courtyard.

"Where is the Young Master?" she asked.

She did not see Zhu Yiping’s shadow.

Shi Shu quickly said, "Today is the fifteenth; the Young Master has gone to the owner’s courtyard to have a meal with him."

Jin Luoyin nodded lightly; she remembered there was such a rule.

On the first and fifteenth of each month, Zhu Yiping would accompany his father for a meal.

"Then I’ll wait for him here!" Jin Luoyin said.

In the days when Jin Luoyin acted as a flower-raising maid in Zhu Yiping’s courtyard, although she bore the title of a servant, Zhu Yiping never made her do work that servants usually did, and Shi Shu naturally treated her as the master.

After all, the servants of the manor privately gossiped that Mingzhu had received favor from both Young Master Jian and the Young Master, to the point where the two masters had even fought over her.

How could such a woman be compared to ordinary servants like them? So when Jin Luoyin said she’d wait, Shi Shu promptly went to the kitchen to prepare the dishes she liked.

Halfway through the meal, while Zhu Yiping hadn’t arrived, it was instead Jian Shiqing, the haunting figure, who appeared.

Jin Luoyin calmly continued eating the dishes, drinking the soup, and only after she had wiped her mouth and hands did she cast a light glance at Jian Shiqing sitting beside her.

"Are you sneaking in again this time? The Young Master doesn’t like you entering his courtyard."

Jian Shiqing didn’t respond to Jin Luoyin’s words but instead asked, "Are you full?"

Jin Luoyin: "..."

"If you’re not full, I’ll have Shi Shu prepare another table for you."

From this, it seemed he had entered openly, even able to command Shi Shu.

But Shi Shu was Zhu Yiping’s main maid!

"Where is the Young Master then?" Jin Luoyin was somewhat displeased, coldly glaring at this haunting figure.

Jian Shiqing was no longer upset by her frequent thoughts of Zhu Yiping, accustomed to it. He merely said playfully, "Why do you keep an eye on Zhu Yiping? He is destined to inherit the manor and cannot become a son-in-law at your house!"

Jin Luoyin’s face instantly darkened, and she angrily said, "What nonsense are you talking about? Are you out of your mind?"

Indeed, she had not thought of having Zhu Yiping as a son-in-law in their family.

She said, "I just came to see him, that’s all. He has no friends, and in his loneliness, he can only count leaves and watch ants!"

Whenever she read the letters Zhu Yiping sent her and wrote back to him, she would think of Zhu Yiping’s lonely figure.

He might be crouching in some corner with ants, dazedly watching them move their homes.

Or perhaps sitting on some tree, counting leaves that are impossible to count!

Whenever she thought about these heart-wrenching scenes, she felt sad as well.

She wondered whether a brother without his parents and sister would also feel this lonely.

Whenever she thought of it, she felt even sadder.

"Do you pity him?" Jian Shiqing thought for a long time before coming up with such a term, amazed.

Jin Luoyin’s appearance clearly showed she pitied him!

Jin Luoyin did not speak; instead, she stood up and went to the courtyard.

Chapter 1726: Pathological

Jian Shiqing followed and whispered, "There should be some matters at the owner’s side. He might return very late. He doesn’t know you’ve come. If he did, he would definitely be quite happy!"

Jian Shiqing sighed deeply. Pity him, perhaps? Many times, he indeed pitied him.

Yet this pity is a secret, one that cannot be shared with anyone.

Jin Luoyin turned her head, and asked, "And you, what are you doing here? How did they let you in?"

"Because you came!" Jian Shiqing said.

Jin Luoyin said nothing, until the twilight sunset; she saw the familiar figure walking in from outside.

Zhu Yiping stared at Jin Luoyin standing at the door in disbelief, thinking he was seeing things, even rubbed his eyes purposefully.

Jin Luoyin laughed and said loudly, "Stop rubbing, you're right, I just came to see you!"

Zhu Yiping opened his mouth, suddenly overjoyed.

"You came?" He circled her once and exclaimed again, "Is it really you who came?"

Jin Luoyin: "...Who else if not me?"

Zhu Yiping was indeed happy, but he would be happier if he had not seen Jian Shiqing standing behind Jin Luoyin.

Upon seeing that detestable face, he said coldly, "Why are you here, entering my courtyard, don't you know the rules here?"

Jian Shiqing replied, "The Commandery Princess has arrived; do you want me to keep watch, or tell my foster father?"

"Ha..." Zhu Yiping chuckled coldly, saying, "Can you really hide it from father? As soon as I came out, I saw the servant running inside mysteriously; he probably already knows, doesn't he? The Commandery Princess openly came to find me, even if father has opinions, he wouldn't dare say anything. No need for a busybody like you to worry about this matter."

Jian Shiqing suddenly felt a bit stifled, snorted coldly, "Farewell!"

As he left, he took a deep look at Jin Luoyin.

The annoying ghost finally disappeared, their moods improved greatly.

Jin Luoyin happily said to him, "Shi Shu told me you've been practicing calligraphy recently?"

Zhu Yiping invited her into the house, talking as they walked, "Yes, originally I thought it didn't matter how the handwriting looked, as long as it was legible. But after exchanging letters with you, I kept feeling your handwriting was beautiful while mine was too ugly to look at, so I decided to practice properly!"

"That's good, practicing calligraphy can calm the mind and cultivate oneself. When you're tired from martial arts, writing is much better than climbing trees out of boredom!"

Zhu Yiping felt a bit embarrassed by her words, his face slightly red, saying, "Someday, when father is in a good mood, I'll talk to him; I want to go out and take a walk too. He's just worried about me, always thinking home is the safest place; actually, I've practiced my skills well over these years, nothing would happen!"

Jin Luoyin always felt the owner had an unhealthy control over Zhu Yiping, not only over him, also over Jian Shiqing.

Jian Shiqing being forced to have children was tragic, Zhu Yiping being treated like a toddler was also quite miserable.

This Zhu Haisheng, heard he was not in good health when young, but in Jin Luoyin's view, his body is well now, just not his mind.

...

Zhu Haisheng knew about the Commandery Princess coming to the manor, and early the next morning, he changed into clean and neat clothes, burned incense and prayed before hastily going to Zhu Yiping's courtyard to pay his respects.

"Commoner Zhu Haisheng pays respects to the Commandery Princess. The Commandery Princess graces this humble abode, truly making it shine."

In fact, Jin Luoyin understood, as did Zhu Haisheng, that she is the Mingzhu who once wore a mask, but neither spoke of it.

Chapter 1727: Meeting the Commandery Princess

Jin Luoyin changed her angle to look at Zhu Haisheng, and seeing his respectful demeanor towards her, it seemed perfectly reasonable, which suddenly made her attitude towards him a bit better.

She said, "Owner, you are the host, you might as well treat me as an ordinary guest, there's no need for such grand gestures, please dispense with the formalities!"

"Yes, Commandery Princess!" Zhu Haisheng, like an ordinary civilian, saw Jin Luoyin as a guest of utmost prestige!

He quickly ordered the servants, "Everyone, prepare the best guest room in the villa for the Commandery Princess!"

Shi Shu had already learned Jin Luoyin's true identity and was secretly glad that during Jin Luoyin's time as a maid, she wisely saw her unique traits and never used her rank as the head maid to suppress her, always serving her well.

Now that the owner had spoken, she dared not slack off, and quickly bowed and replied, "Owner, the best guest room in the villa is in the Young Master's courtyard, and it's currently occupied by the Commandery Princess."

"Oh, is that so?" He looked at Jin Luoyin, then at Zhu Yiping, who had a smile on his face, and said, "Then call more people to clean it thoroughly, making sure the Commandery Princess stays comfortably."

Shi Shu answered, "Yes, sir!"

Shi Shu left, and Zhu Haisheng, with a smile on his face, said to Jin Luoyin, "Commandery Princess, I've heard that you came to this humble abode for my son?"

Jin Luoyin did not deny it, she gently nodded, "The Young Master is skilled in martial arts, I greatly admire him, so I told my parents I want to apprentice under him!"

Jin Luoyin had long prepared this excuse for herself.

Of course, she made up her mind but hadn't agreed on it with Zhu Yiping, who was utterly surprised upon hearing it.

Zhu Haisheng was overjoyed upon hearing this and said, "Thank you, Commandery Princess, for your esteem, it is my son's good fortune. Since you wish to learn martial arts from Yiping, Yiping, you must teach the Commandery Princess well!"

Zhu Haisheng's attitude greatly surprised both Jin Luoyin and Zhu Yiping.

Especially Zhu Yiping, who knew his father too well, even if he couldn't refuse due to her status, he certainly wouldn't gladly accept, but he did accept gladly.

He was momentarily at a loss.

"Yiping, did you hear me, why are you dazed?"

Zhu Yiping snapped back to reality and quickly said, "I heard, father, I heard, thank you, father, I will certainly teach the Commandery Princess well!"

Zhu Yiping was extremely delighted, with an uncontrollable smile on his face.

It made him feel as if he had been released after serving his sentence.

...

Zhu Haisheng hummed a tune as he returned to his main courtyard.

This time he was truly happy, a heartfelt joy; it had been years since he felt so happy.

What's it called? An unexpected twist given by heaven, full of surprises, simply more satisfying tenfold than his original plan.

No, a hundredfold!

Someday, he would make them all pay the price.

Not only did Zhu Yiping find Zhu Haisheng's decision strange, but Jian Shiqing also found it extremely odd.

He couldn't stand seeing Jin Luoyin getting close to Zhu Yiping, even if she had no such thought, just out of pity, he wouldn't allow it.

So he went to Zhu Haisheng's main courtyard.

On this day, Zhu Haisheng was exceptionally excited, he dismissed the servants and even opened the secret compartment in the room.

The secret compartment did not contain any valuable items, but rows of plaques, plaques of rebels.

Upon closer inspection, they turned out to be memorial tablets of rebels from the former Ducal Residence.

Who in the world would dare to venerate the tablets of rebels? That would be a crime worthy of annihilation.

Jian Shiqing’s gaze deepened further upon seeing them.

Chapter 1728:

His expression darkened, and he said, "The Commandery Princess is still here; it’s not good for you to take these things out!"

Zhu Haisheng wasn’t surprised that Jian Shiqing came, nor did he mind being seen by him.

He said, "It’s precisely because their daughter came that I want to inform them!"

The former ’them’ referred to Gu Youyou and Jin Zijin, while the latter ’them’ naturally referred to the people commemorated on the memorial tablets.

Jian Shiqing furrowed his brow and said, "It’s been so many years, the deceased have already returned to dust and earth. You’ve raised their children, which is enough to repay them; why continue to struggle over this?"

Zhu Haisheng ignored Jian Shiqing’s words and happily cleaned the dust off the memorial tablets.

Jian Shiqing was somewhat annoyed but sighed helplessly, "You’re no longer young. You’ve finally managed to start afresh, why go against yourself? Both Zhu Yiping and I will manage the villa well, and you can enjoy your later years!"

Zhu Haisheng stopped his cleaning and looked at him in surprise, saying, "What qualifications do I have to enjoy my later years? I’ve even lost my own son; do you think I’m planning to enjoy my later years?"

Jian Shiqing pressed his lips together and took a while before saying, "I accept! You let me be your adoptive son, made Zhu Yiping the Young Master of Tianhai Mountain Villa; I accept all these."

Zhu Haisheng was momentarily taken aback and gently continued wiping another tablet.

"Shiqing!" After a long pause, Zhu Haisheng slowly said, "Shiqing, I owe you an apology; you are the person your father has wronged the most in this lifetime. But you don't understand why your father has to do this. If you knew, you would agree with your father's actions. As for the reason, I don't wish to tell you now, and don't ask. If you truly want to help your father with something, then find a way to help Zhu Yiping marry Jin Luoyin!"

Jian Shiqing's mind instantly buzzed and went blank. He felt as if his father had gone crazy, wondering what thoughts filled his father's head.

Raising his voice, he incredulously said, "Father, what are you saying? Didn't you say that Zhu Yiping is Jin Tianyuan's son? You've been mindful of Jin Tianyuan's kindness towards you back then, raising his son as if he were your own to thereby repay your former master. But now, you want his son to marry the enemy's child; what sense does this make?"

He truly couldn't understand Zhu Haisheng; he was completely at a loss as to what Zhu Haisheng intended to do.

In his youth, Zhu Haisheng brought back Zhu Yiping, letting Zhu Yiping replace his own role in the villa, while he, the sole Young Master of Tianhai Mountain Villa, became an adoptive son.

The despised adoptive son.

Initially, he couldn't accept it, couldn't understand, but eventually he accepted it, merely thinking his father was a man of deep emotions and understanding him.

But now, what is he planning? Jin Luoyin is the daughter of Zhu Yiping's enemy, yet you plan such a scheme; would General Jin in the afterlife be so infuriated that he'd come back to strangle him?

Zhu Haisheng's face was indifferent, yet a crazy idea inside him surged like tides. He suppressed everyone's emotions, saying faintly, "You don't need to understand; just do as I say."

"Why?" Jian Shiqing's face was deathly pale; he truly couldn't understand or accept it, yet the less he understood, the more he needed clarity.

"There is no 'why'," Zhu Haisheng said calmly.

"Father, if you don't tell me, I won't be able to do this..." Jian Shiqing demanded loudly.

Chapter 1729: A Vicious Scheme

"Get out!" Zhu Haisheng was already somewhat angry; he wouldn't allow anyone to ruin his plan.

To conceal his inner turmoil, he didn't look at Jian Shiqing but instead carefully wiped a plaque.

Jian Shiqing watched him for a while, tightly clenched his fist, and coldly turned and left.

...

"Brother Zhu, why did you choose a soft whip for me? I actually think the halberd you're holding seems quite good!"

Zhu Yiping explained with a smile, "The halberd is too heavy, you won't be able to wield it for long periods, and it consumes too much stamina, which isn't suitable for you. The soft whip is more suitable for women with less strength; it's lightweight and agile. When used well, the force of that soft whip is no less than some strong weapons."

Jin Luoyin nodded lightly and said, "Alright, whatever Brother Zhu says, I'll use that."

Zhu Haisheng watched from afar as the woman in the courtyard smiled charmingly, and the man, who was obviously happier than usual, was overjoyed.

Their relationship was really good, developing just as he hoped.

"Ah!" Shi Shu, who was bringing over fruit, nearly bumped into Zhu Haisheng, who was secretly watching from under the eaves, which startled her nearly to the point of dropping the tray.

"Owner... Boss? What brings you here?"

Hearing Shi Shu's voice, Zhu Yiping paused his actions and turned to look over.

Is Dad here? He wasn't that far away, and yet he hadn't noticed at all.

This surprised him greatly; was he too focused on watching Jin Luoyin practice martial arts, or could his father also do martial arts?

"Shh, don't disturb them, the Commandery Princess is practicing," Zhu Haisheng said with a smile, cautiously pushing Shi Shu out the door.

Zhu Yiping shook his head, thinking perhaps he was overthinking after all.

Jin Luoyin noticed his odd behavior and stopped to ask him, "What's wrong?"

Zhu Yiping said, "My father came, saw you practicing, didn't disturb you, and left again!"

"Oh!" Jin Luoyin stuck out her tongue; finding a reason to stay openly was indeed exhausting.

For her, having some martial arts skills was enough. Zhu Yiping was a top master, but reaching his level wasn't easy, and she wasn't particularly interested.

She came this time just to stay a few days and then bid farewell to Zhu Yiping.

She wanted to go to the northern Barbarian Lands because she heard from Lun Yu that they suspected her brother was no longer in Zhuzhao Country and might have been taken by Fu Jian to the Barbarian Lands.

Zhu Haisheng was delighted, even humming a tune.

The servants of Tianhai Mountain Villa all looked at the owner in surprise.

Although the owner was usually considered amicable and didn't always wear a stern face, such a good mood like a breath of spring warmth was very rare.

When the masters are in a good mood, isn't it good days ahead for the servants as well?

One bold lackey stepped forward and asked, "Owner, have you encountered some joyous event? You seem so happy!"

Zhu Haisheng laughed heartily, "Indeed, I have encountered a happy event. You there, take a few people to Yangguan City, find Boss Zhang and ask about Prince Ning and Princess Ning's preferences, and ask him to help choose a few things that the Prince and Princess would like. In these next couple of days, I plan to visit Plum Blossom Valley to meet Prince Ning and Princess Ning!"

The servant, being quite shrewd, thought about how the Commandery Princess was still at the villa, living in the Young Master's quarters without distinction between genders. A quick brain turn and he knew exactly what was happening.

Upon hearing this, the servants were overjoyed. If Tianhai Mountain Villa could indeed marry the Commandery Princess and make her the Young Madam, it would be a great honor for them as well.

Chapter 1730: Going Far Away

The most important thing is, how wealthy is the Princess Consort of Ningwang Residence? Even the national treasury can't compare to her private stash, and she and the Prince only have one daughter, the Commandery Princess. All these things will eventually belong to her.

So much dowry, such a large family legacy, when the time comes, who knows how many times their monthly allowance and rewards will increase.

Instead of finding an average family girl to be the Young Master’s wife, they naturally hope to find someone with a status like Jin Luoyin’s.

"That’s great, owner, you visited the Prince and Princess Consort of Ningwang Residence because of the Commandery Princess, right? If she could become our Young Madam, then... then..."

"Haha, you’re a clever one. You understand, then hurry up, don’t delay the owner’s big business!"

"Alright, alright, don’t worry, owner, I’m on it!" After running errands for years, he felt this trip was the happiest.

...

Jin Luoyin stayed a few days, but she still had to go.

Three days were already enough; she still needed to find her brother.

But Zhu Yiping was feeling so happy that she really didn’t know how to bring it up.

Being observant, Zhu Yiping noticed something was off with her and asked, "Is the Commandery Princess leaving?"

Jin Luoyin widened her eyes, somewhat at a loss, "How... how do you know?"

Zhu Yiping felt a dull ache in his heart and sighed, "You said you were just coming to see me, but you’ve been here for three days!"

"Ah...? It’s been three days?" Jin Luoyin replied awkwardly, "Three days, so I indeed have to leave."

"Oh, are you going back to the Ningwang Residence in Plum Blossom Valley?" That sense of loss and forced smile made it heartbreaking to watch.

Jin Luoyin couldn’t understand why someone could be like Zhu Yiping, so much so that just looking at his desolate figure brought an overwhelming urge to cry.

Seeing Jin Luoyin staring at him in a daze, looking all sad, Zhu Yiping quickly turned around and walked towards the door, sitting on the steps outside.

He seemed like a child abandoned by family and friends, sitting there alone, as if the whole world had left him.

And Jin Luoyin was one of those people.

Her nose stung; she breathed in deeply and said hurriedly, "I’m not going back to Plum Blossom Valley, I’m going to the north to find my brother. I told you last time that my parents are old, and they can’t keep searching, I’ll have to take on the task of finding my brother."

Zhu Yiping’s spine stiffened, he slightly turned his head and asked, "You’re a girl, where are you going to look? Traveling outside is very inconvenient for you!"

Jin Luoyin lowered her head and didn’t look at his solitary figure again.

She said, "Maybe it’s the north, very north. Lun Yu said, my brother might have been taken to the Barbarian Lands in the north. It’s a long journey, it doesn’t belong to Zhuzhao Country, I think I might be gone for a long time, maybe a year, maybe two, or... even longer..."

"You’re going to such a far place, for such a long time?" Zhu Yiping was so excited that he turned around, only to see the girl already tear-stained.

Jin Luoyin, seeing Zhu Yiping turn his face, quickly wiped the tears from her face with her hand, squeezing out a smile.

"As long as I can accomplish this big task, no distance matters. I’m just taking this chance to go on a journey and see the world, otherwise I wouldn’t have this opportunity."

At that moment, Zhu Yiping was heartache-ridden and sighed, "What if your brother is no longer in this world? You've been searching for so many years, and with Ningwang's ability, still haven't found him, maybe..."