

Mythical 79

Chapter 79: When the Young Fazheng Meets a Drunkard...

"You say you're Fazheng, Fa Xiaozhi?" Chen Xi roared, pointing at the teenager half a head shorter than himself.

"Is my name already known in the Central Plains?" Fazheng, dressed in ragged clothes, arrogantly tilted his head back, almost sticking his nose in the air.

"Isn't your family in Fufeng? Why are you here in Taishan? Did your family know about this? Did you sneak out? Weren't you supposed to be serving as a county magistrate in Fufeng?" Chen Xi grabbed a strip of Fazheng's clothing.

"I'm already of age! I'm an adult!" Fazheng yelled, pulling back, only for a strip of silk to tear away from his already scant clothing.

"Just as I thought, you didn't inform your parents... Don't you know the saying 'When your parents are alive, do not travel far'?" Chen Xi's eyelid twitched wildly.

"My father told me that a man should aspire to see the world, read ten thousand books, and travel ten thousand miles!" Fazheng retorted.

"Have you read ten thousand books?" Chen Xi shouted back.

"I haven't traveled ten thousand miles yet!" Fazheng responded loudly.

At this point, Fazheng still hadn't figured out who this person was who started berating him as soon as he introduced himself. In his rebellious phase, Fazheng directly categorized Chen Xi as some random passerby who recognized him from somewhere. Who knows when they might have met?

"We're recruiting talented individuals here, not children. Children need a letter of consent from their guardians!" Chen Xi said, exasperated with the childlike Fazheng. "Did you sneak out without telling your

family? Your father is a great scholar. Do you know what kind of trouble he'll bring us when he finds out you ran away?"

"Ganyu became prime minister at twelve. I'm sixteen. Why can't I be considered talented?" Fazheng replied proudly.

Chen Xi was at his wit's end. This kid knew nothing of tact. His arrogance was overwhelming.

"Just for that statement, you lack the wisdom of a sage!" Chen Xi roared, barely containing his headache from reasoning with a child.

"Hmph, my talent is beyond your comprehension!" Fazheng haughtily turned his head away, exuding an aura of arrogance. Chen Xi wondered how this brash youngster could ever mature into the wise Fazheng known to history.

Chen Xi considered several ways to handle Fazheng: first, tying him up and sending him back home, to bring him back when his temperament improved; second, giving him a severe psychological blow here to show him his place; third, accepting him and giving him thorough re-education; fourth, finding someone with an even worse temperament and more skill to put him in his place.

He discarded the first idea, fearing Fazheng might run away again. The second idea was risky; it could backfire. The third was good, but how to educate him? The fourth seemed best, but where to find such a person?

After much thought, Chen Xi decided to handle it himself, making a lasting impression on Fazheng and then taking him back for deep re-education. Any trouble from Fazheng's father would be worth it if it meant grooming a top strategist. Plus, he needed someone to intimidate others in his newly established school, and Fazheng could be perfect for that role.

Just as Chen Xi prepared to use his skills to crush Fazheng, a hand landed on Fazheng's shoulder. "Step aside, kid. I need to clear the North for Liu Xuande..." a drunken voice slurred.

Chen Xi's eyelid twitched again. What kind of day was this? First, a teenage Fazheng to deal with, and now a drunken loudmouth claiming to conquer the North.

Without speaking, Chen Xi anticipated Fazheng would not let this pass without a fight. Fazheng would certainly lash out at the drunkard. And indeed, despite being a kid, Fazheng had surprising combat effectiveness—probably rated AA if quantified.

The drunken man reeked of alcohol, with disheveled hair, a budding beard, and red eyes. Wearing a wide-sleeved Confucian robe that exposed much of his chest, he looked every bit a drunken scholar, oblivious to his situation.

True to expectations, Fazheng ignored the man's drunken state and saw only his affront. He divided people into categories: himself as a proud scholar, and this man as a mere drunk. Labeling done, he launched his verbal attack...

Fifteen minutes later, Fazheng was defeated...

Fazheng stood there, shattered. He had been verbally dismantled, his arguments in classics and philosophy countered and defeated. Switching to his prized strategies and statecraft, he was crushed even faster.

Though from a scholarly family, Fazheng prided himself on his self-taught military strategy. But his opponent demolished him, leaving Fazheng feeling both humiliated and enlightened. He was now in awe of the man who had bested him so thoroughly.

The drunk patted Fazheng on the shoulder. Fazheng, seeing it as sympathy, was humiliated even more. When had he, Fazheng, ever needed anyone's pity?

Chen Xi covered his face. Fazheng, despite his inexperience, was soundly beaten by this man in strategy and debate. Even Chen Xi had to admit the drunk had a remarkable intellect beneath his disheveled exterior.

As he observed the drunk more closely, Chen Xi saw beyond the outward appearance. The wide sleeves fluttering in the wind, the gleam of intelligence in his eyes, the casual elegance of his attire—it all spoke of the unrestrained and transcendent spirit of the Wei-Jin style. The man's drunken state represented a detachment from worldly concerns, embodying a true intellectual's disdain for societal norms.

"This can't be the same person I mistook for a drunk earlier. I must have been too angry with Fazheng," Chen Xi thought, shifting the blame entirely onto the young boy.