

Rise 144

Chapter 144: The Dispute

"What's this, are you feeling guilty?" The girl with rabbit-like red eyes asked excitedly, showing her little tiger teeth, her expression like she had caught Zhu Ping'an's little tail.

The older girl looked at Zhu Ping'an with even more mockery in her eyes.

What kind of logic is this? Who's feeling guilty? It's just that I don't want to cause any misunderstandings.

Zhu Ping'an felt somewhat speechless towards these two girls.

"Then I will say it right here, I..." The girl with rabbit-like red eyes puffed out her cheeks and looked at Zhu Ping'an.

The older girl subtly pinched the shoulder of the girl with red eyes, then giggled as she looked at Zhu Ping'an, "The scholar has spoken, how dare I not show respect? Don't even mention the shade; even if we have to go to our room, that's fine. If the scholar isn't feeling well, we can play the flute for him to listen to."

One was sharp, the other gentle. The two spoke differently, but the meaning was the same—they were both determined to tease the girl with red eyes.

But Zhu Ping'an didn't want to argue with them. He understood that people from the dust-laden world often have a short life, and it was hard for him to bear.

Zhu Ping'an shook his head slightly and turned to look at the girl with rabbit-like red eyes and the horsetail knot. He gently asked, "Miss, where does this come from? What exactly happened? Why do you say I look down on you? Have I done anything to insult you?"

The girl with the horsetail knot puffed out her cheeks. "You just look down on me."

This is unreasonable.

Zhu Ping'an was speechless.

"How do I look down on you?" Zhu Ping'an asked indifferently.

"You went to Qinhuai River this morning. I was kind-hearted and tried to talk to you, but you ignored me, as if I were too ugly to be seen," the girl with rabbit-like red eyes said as she walked up to Zhu Ping'an, her voice tinged with resentment.

"I was in a hurry to buy student robes and didn't have time to chat with you," Zhu Ping'an replied.

"Also, your clothes were too big. I kindly offered to help you make them smaller, but you refused. You just look down on me," the girl said, her eyes turning red again, feeling wronged. She had tried to talk to him kindly, but he had ignored her. She had wanted to help him with his clothes, but he had refused, which clearly meant he disliked her... disliked her because she was dirty. But she wasn't dirty...

"That's right, my sister is just being kind," the older girl blinked and asked.

Is this the reason? Zhu Ping'an couldn't help but smile helplessly. He had simply not wanted to associate with the brothel world, yet somehow it turned into a matter of looking down on them. This was a bit too far.

Looking down on them?

Maybe, but it wasn't directed at them personally—it was more about the grand schemes of the world of fleeting pleasures.

Actually, "looking down" isn't quite the right term; it would be more accurate to say that he simply didn't appreciate them.

"Men and women should not be intimate; it's proper," Zhu Ping'an said, not wanting to continue entangling himself in this.

Upon hearing this, the older girl burst out laughing, as though hearing a funny joke, her face rippling with waves like water.

"Hee hee hee... Why does this sound so sour? With your young age, your words sound like an old man who's halfway into the grave," the older girl covered her mouth and giggled.

"Sister, you're still laughing. I've been upset all morning," the girl with rabbit-like red eyes pouted.

"Foolish girl, your self-righteous concerns are just a joke in the eyes of a gentleman..." The older girl stretched out her delicate finger and tapped the forehead of the girl with red eyes, still laughing.

"Sister..." The girl with red eyes pouted, then looked at Zhu Ping'an, "You wouldn't let me alter your clothes, do you look down on me, afraid I'll dirty your clothes?"

What logic is this? Does this girl have a persecution complex?

"I already said, men and women should not be intimate," Zhu Ping'an said with a calm expression.

"That's not it. You just look down on me. I can tell from your eyes," the girl with rabbit-like red eyes pouted, insisting that Zhu Ping'an looked down on her. "We don't steal or rob, we live by our own efforts."

"Does not letting you alter my clothes mean I look down on you?" Zhu Ping'an smiled slightly.

The girl with rabbit-like red eyes nodded.

"Why should I let you alter my clothes?" Zhu Ping'an asked in return.

"Because..." The seventeen- or eighteen-year-old girl was taken aback by the question, then puffed out her cheeks again, "Anyway, you just look down on us!"

Then it seemed to loop back to the beginning.

Zhu Ping'an was speechless.

"Why would I look down on you?" Zhu Ping'an asked.

"Because I am a woman of the wind and dust," the young girl said, her eyes red.

"What's wrong with being a woman of the wind and dust?" Zhu Ping'an said indifferently, "I don't look down on you all."

"Then why didn't you go to the other side of the Qinhuai River? Why did you rush away after seeing me? Clearly, you look down on us," the girl with red eyes puffed up her cheeks.

"I don't look down on you. I just don't like places of the wind and dust. At most, it's just that our paths are different," Zhu Ping'an shook his head, denying it.

"You say it's because you don't like such places and our paths are different, but in reality, you still look down on us," the girl with red eyes clung to this issue and wouldn't let go.

"I've said it, I just seem to dislike places of the wind and dust! Our paths are different," Zhu Ping'an repeated.

"On the surface, you say you don't like such places and our paths are different, but in reality, you still look down on us," the girl with red eyes said with a deep sigh.

"Every profession has its experts, and no profession is superior to another. It's just that the paths are different. Everyone has their own way, and I won't rashly judge someone else's way," Zhu Ping'an shook his head.

"Then what is your path when it comes to men and women?" the girl with red eyes asked.

"The body is everyone's temple. No matter what is worshipped inside, it should be well-maintained, strong, beautiful, and clean," Zhu Ping'an said calmly.

Upon hearing this, the girl with red eyes was stunned for a long time.

The older girl beside them laughed softly and, covering her cherry lips, asked, "So are you going to become a monk?!"

"Cleanliness doesn't mean abstinence. It just means not being reckless. In the future, I'll have wives and concubines. Besides, I am still young, I don't understand romance, I don't understand love, so what's wrong with not liking places of romance?" Zhu Ping'an replied lightly.

"You put it so nicely, but what about us? We are in such places. How do we maintain cleanliness? Without joy, without laughter, eating and drinking, our mothers won't let us off. Have you thought about that?" the girl with red eyes looked at Zhu Ping'an with eyes full of resentment.

"I have thought about it, so I've never looked down on you all," Zhu Ping'an nodded sincerely.

"Have you considered that? Then according to your path, what should we do?" the girl about seventeen or eighteen asked.

"I have no good solution," Zhu Ping'an shook his head slightly.

The girl with red eyes wanted to say something, but was stopped by the older girl, "Alright, Su Su, don't forget our purpose."

Purpose?

Zhu Ping'an couldn't help but laugh when he heard this. So it was really just trying to provoke him from the start.

"We only need to delay the young master for a short while. Hmm, it's really hot here; let's go over there and talk," the older girl smiled gently at Zhu Ping'an, giving a small bow with a hint of pleading in her eyes. Then, she subtly pinched the hand of the girl with red eyes.

The girl with red eyes, somewhat unwilling, gave a slight curtsy to Zhu Ping'an and pouted, saying, "I misunderstood the young master, I'm sorry."

Seeing them like this, if he didn't listen to what they wanted, they would definitely continue to pester him here at the entrance of the academy. The instructor had just advised him not to pick up bad habits. Now, as soon as he left, he was entangled with two women of the wind and dust. If this reached the instructor's ears, it wouldn't be good.

So, Zhu Ping'an nodded.

"Thank you, young master," the older girl said, delighted, and bowed again.

Then, Zhu Ping'an followed the two girls to a spot under a few trees not far from the academy. Though not far, it was out of sight of the people at the academy.

"Young master, are you a new student this year?"

After reaching the trees, the older girl smiled brightly and asked Zhu Ping'an, full of anticipation.

Zhu Ping'an nodded. There was no need to lie about it.

"That's great," the older girl said, though she already knew the answer. Hearing Zhu Ping'an confirm it, she was still overjoyed.

Is this girl sick?

We're not related, I'm just a new student, why are you so happy?

"I didn't expect you to be so young and already a student. How admirable! I want to offer myself to you," the older girl said to Zhu Ping'an with a smile, her large, sparkling eyes full of flirtation.

"Miss, if you have something to say, just say it," Zhu Ping'an gently shook his head.

"You have good insight, young master, to see that we have something to ask of you. We really have no choice but to seek your help. I hope the young master won't mind and will extend a helping hand to these two weak women," the older girl said, winking at the same time, her delicate hands clasped in a pleading gesture.

"Tell me what it is first," Zhu Ping'an said indifferently. He was not some saint, and he wouldn't agree to everything.

"It's like this, after a while, it will be the day of the selection of the most beautiful courtesan at the Qinhuai River. We, sisters, have no choice but to seek the young master's help. You are so young and already a

student. How about showing some kindness and giving us a poem to increase our popularity?" The seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl's eyes shimmered, staring eagerly at Zhu Ping'an.

Perhaps this is the real purpose behind their actions, Zhu Ping'an thought as he listened to the girl's words. A selection of courtesans, how cliché. It seemed like every historical novel had this plot, and now he was encountering it. It's absurd that even though he had never been to such places, something like this would still land on him. It was truly speechless.

"What, you don't like it?" The girl with red eyes raised an eyebrow, her mood turning slightly agitated.

"I'm not good at writing poetry," Zhu Ping'an shook his head, refusing. He had no desire to get involved. "My heart is willing, but my skills are lacking. Please understand."

"Young master, have you ever heard this line of poetry?" The older girl smiled with her eyes.

How would I know if I haven't heard it yet?

Zhu Ping'an was speechless.

"There's a line of poetry, I heard it somewhere else: 'The spring comes with three parts rain, and I sleep with a cloud from Mount Wu,' hehe... If the young master shows some kindness and helps us, my sister and I may not be able to do much, but we can certainly recite this poem for you."

The older girl's face flushed slightly, looking as ripe and sweet as a peach dripping with honey.

The girl with red eyes also looked shy.

She's using emotions and benefits—this girl has good tactics.

Too bad she met me.

"I'm afraid I'll disappoint you, Miss. It was a stroke of luck that I was admitted as a student. As for writing poetry, my skills are truly lacking," Zhu Ping'an said.

The two girls' hopeful gazes were shattered by Zhu Ping'an's words.