

Rise 194

Chapter 194: Reversal

"Oh, may I ask how long Young Master Zhao has been in Yingtian? Oh, you must have come with Lord Zhao, right?"

Just as the arrogant young master was in the midst of his lewd teasing, an untimely voice interrupted.

The young master turned his head and saw a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old boy grinning foolishly while cupping his hands in greeting—it was Zhu Ping'an.

"Who the hell are you?" The young master raised his nose to the sky, looking down on Zhu Ping'an with utter disdain.

"Young Master Zhao, this is where you're at fault. You arrived without notifying us brothers, so we couldn't even give you a welcome feast." Zhu Ping'an stood up from his table and took a few steps forward.

What a disgrace to scholars!

The scholars in the hall held nothing but contempt for Zhu Ping'an, secretly spitting in disgust! Birds of a feather! Truly a disgrace to the literati.

Hearing Zhu Ping'an's flattery, the arrogant young master couldn't help but change his demeanor, treating Zhu Ping'an and the fat man as kindred spirits. "Brother, what are you saying? Once I'm done here, I'll definitely give you that honor."

"Then I must thank Young Master Zhao for his generosity. However, if I may say so, a girl of this level of beauty is unworthy of someone of your status. If you were to have children with her, they wouldn't look good either, and Lord Zhao would lose face. Girls of her appearance are only fit to sing in taverns. If Young Master Zhao trusts me, I can find you one who will surely give birth to a fair and plump son." Zhu Ping'an smirked as he tried to persuade him.

The singing girl immediately classified Zhu Ping'an as the young master's lackey, grinding her teeth in hatred toward him.

The young master hesitated.

"What are you still standing here for? With your looks, even if you threw yourself at Young Master Zhao, you wouldn't be worthy. Get lost!" Zhu Ping'an disdainfully shoved the singing girl aside.

Just as the young master was about to make a move, Zhu Ping'an grabbed him.

"A girl like this, tsk tsk, why bother? I'll find you someone who will surely give you good offspring." Zhu Ping'an stopped him.

The singing girl spat at both the young master and Zhu Ping'an before quickly helping her father toward the door. However, just as they were about to slip away, one of the young master's lackeys blocked their path.

"Hey, hey, hey..." The young master only realized they were escaping when they reached the door. Then, looking at Zhu Ping'an with some newfound awareness, he asked, "The person you said you'd find for me—who is it? Where?"

"The one I found for you..." Zhu Ping'an said as he walked toward the fat man. "It's him." Zhu Ping'an smirked and pointed at the fat man. "He's fair and plump."

"Him?"

The young master turned to look at the innocent fat man and burst into laughter in disbelief. "Are you kidding me? He's a grown man! How could he give birth to my child?"

"Simple. Just lend him your wife and seven concubines." Zhu Ping'an said nonchalantly.

You son of a—! I'll beat the crap out of you! The young master signaled his men to teach Zhu Ping'an a lesson.

"Everyone, listen to me! This man is an impostor! He claims to be Lord Zhao's nephew, but Lord Zhao is from Cixi County in Zhejiang. We've all heard Lord Zhao speak—he has a Cixi accent. Yet this man, claiming to be

his nephew, speaks with a perfectly native Yingtian accent. Lord Zhao has only been in Yingtian for a short time—how could this man already have such a fluent Yingtian accent? Clearly, he's a fraud! And not only that, but his actions today have completely disgraced Lord Zhao. If we turn a blind eye to this, wouldn't that be..."

Zhu Ping'an quickly and clearly laid out his argument for everyone, guiding them step by step.

That made sense! The scholars in the hall, having had a few drinks and harboring suppressed feelings of righteousness, finally erupted.

One after another, they stepped forward to denounce and condemn him... The young master had no choice but to resort to violence, but the scholars, though weak in combat, had the advantage of numbers. The hall descended into chaos as the young master and his lackeys were overwhelmed by a sea of fists.

"What are you standing around for? Run!" Zhu Ping'an pressed down on the fat man's head and was the first to slip toward the door.

The fat man, realizing belatedly, hurriedly followed. As he left, he didn't forget to stretch out his foot and kick one of the lackeys.

"Why are you still here? Hurry up and go!" Zhu Ping'an finally squeezed to the doorway, only to find that the singing father and daughter were still standing there dumbly. He couldn't help but complain, "Go now! If you don't leave now, you won't be able to!"

"Oh, oh, thank you, young master. We misunderstood you earlier..." The singer girl hadn't finished her sentence before she saw that Zhu Ping'an had already disappeared into the street. She didn't even know if he had heard her apology.

Then, another plump figure squeezed out of the doorway and agilely chased after Zhu Ping'an like a dog being chased, tongue out, running wildly.

"Let's hurry and go too. We've already apologized..." The girl's father pulled her towards the other side of the street.

The singing girl was pulled along by her father, but she still turned back, staring at Zhu Ping'an's disappearing figure, unable to recover for a long time.

The fat man used all his strength, running desperately, and only caught up to Zhu Ping'an—who was squatting by the roadside panting—just as they were nearing the inn.

"Brother Zhu, why were you running so fast? I still wanted to go back and kick that imposter a couple of times." The fat man panted, asking in confusion.

Zhu Ping'an squatted on the ground, catching his breath. He simply waved his hand without speaking.

"But really, your hearing is amazing. I couldn't even tell the difference in Lord Zhao's accent compared to that imposter." The fat man, still catching his breath, looked at Zhu Ping'an with admiration.

"I couldn't tell either." Zhu Ping'an, having recovered, said indifferently.

"What?" The fat man was stunned. "Then why did you sound so confident?"

"If I didn't say it like that, how would they believe me?" Zhu Ping'an stood up and spoke calmly.

"You... you're not afraid...?" The fat man's face was full of shock, his chubby hand trembling as he pointed at Zhu Ping'an.

"Why should I be afraid? As the saying goes, 'Fear not a god-like opponent, but a pig-like teammate.' Even if that man really is Lord Zhao's nephew, he's nothing more than a pig-like teammate. Think about it—openly harassing a young woman in broad daylight, and knowing that we are scholars yet still behaving so recklessly. We scholars are not commoners. Lord Zhao, as the education officer, knows how to weigh matters. There's no way he would shield his nephew. Even if he's upset about it, at most, he'd offer empty praise—he wouldn't dare to reprimand us."

"Besides, that guy doesn't even know who we are, and when everyone acts together, the law doesn't punish the crowd."

Zhu Ping'an shook his head slightly, then turned and walked toward the inn.

In truth, there was something else he hadn't said—he simply couldn't stand by and watch a tragedy unfold.

"You really are... Wait for me!" The fat man shook his head and hurried to catch up.

Back at the inn, Zhu Ping'an and the fat man each returned to their rooms. After entering his room, Zhu Ping'an took a hot bath, rested briefly, and then sat at his desk to continue reading, not showing any intention of relaxing despite having finished his exams.

If he wanted to shine in the special provincial examination, he had to keep working hard.

That night, the lamp in Zhu Ping'an's room remained lit until late into the night.