

Rise 212

Chapter 212: Your Second Son Has Passed the Imperial Examination

A happy event?

Zhu Father and Chen had just been wondering which family was celebrating a joyous event when they suddenly heard people excitedly saying that their own family had a happy occasion. For a moment, they didn't react.

"Your second son has passed the imperial exam!"

"Ping'an Lang has passed the provincial examination! The messenger is setting off firecrackers at the village entrance right now."

Before Zhu Father and Chen could remain puzzled for another second, the gathered villagers in the Zhu family courtyard excitedly announced this great news. A scholar emerging from Xiahe Village was a momentous event for the entire village, and everyone standing in the Zhu family courtyard was thrilled.

The Second Son Passed the Exam?!

The news struck Zhu Father and Chen like a shooting star crashing down, leaving them overwhelmed with emotion.

Zhu Father was so ecstatic that he dropped the pancake he was holding. He had never had the chance to attend school in his life. As a child, he envied his older brother's ability to read, but his parents soon told him that he wasn't suited for studying. Accepting this, he spent his days diligently working in the fields and mountains, never expecting that his own son would achieve such great success. He felt like he had hit the jackpot in this lifetime!

As for Chen, she was even more emotional, crying uncontrollably, unable to say a single word.

"Second Aunt, why are you crying? Hurry up and get ready; the messenger is almost at the door."

"Let's all lend a hand and tidy up the courtyard properly."

The villagers enthusiastically took action. After consoling Chen for a few moments, they rolled up their sleeves—some grabbing brooms, others holding shovels. Many even ran home to fetch tables, chairs, food, and drinks, bustling around in excitement.

Zhu Father snapped out of his daze and began helping clean up the courtyard, his hands still trembling from excitement.

"Yes, yes..." Chen finally regained her senses after a long while.

Amid her joy, she suddenly recalled the conversation from the previous day in town. Li Shu from Shanghe Village, with her bright eyes and charming smile, had told her:

"Maybe brother Ping'an will really pass the exam and bring the title home for Auntie."

That girl had just said it yesterday, and today, Ping'an really passed the exam!

Could this be fate?

The more Chen thought about it, the more she felt there was something to it. Somehow, she couldn't help but recall the phrase "prosperous wife".

Li Shu had casually mentioned that Ping'an might pass, and he actually did! If that wasn't a sign of bringing prosperity, then what was?

A particular thought took root in Chen's mind like a towering tree. Now that Ping'an had passed the examination, he could even marry a princess. Marrying a girl from the Li family was surely no problem at all!

As the villagers congratulated them, this idea grew stronger and stronger in Chen's mind.

Xiahe Village wasn't big, so such a joyous event spread quickly and continued to stir excitement beyond the village.

Before long, Zhu Ping'an's elder brother, Zhu Pingchuan, returned from his future father-in-law's house, beaming with excitement and carrying a broom over his shoulder.

As soon as he entered, the villagers playfully teased him.

Zhu Pingchuan didn't mind and laughed as he joined in, sweeping the yard and moving things around.

Normally, when a daughter is betrothed, parents might feel as if the precious cabbage they raised was about to be taken by a pig.

But Chen didn't feel that way at all.

Watching Zhu Pingchuan return home with a broom from his future in-laws' house, Chen felt a pang of sourness in her heart.

This foolish boy had been running off to his future in-laws' place ever since the engagement was settled!

"So, you still remember to come home, huh?" Chen said with a sour look, teasing her eldest son, Zhu Pingchuan.

"Mother, I'm your son. How could I not know to come home?" Zhu Pingchuan said somewhat sheepishly.

"Hahaha. Second aunt, why are you still acting sour? If you ask me, it's Juanner's family that should be sour. After all that effort growing their precious cabbage, now they have to watch your eldest son come and snatch it away." A woman busy in the courtyard teased.

Chen tilted her head back at a forty-five-degree angle, gazing at the sky with a sigh. "I don't know if the cabbage has been taken, but the pig we've raised for eighteen years is definitely lost."

Hearing this, the people working in the courtyard burst into laughter. Zhu Pingchuan's face turned red with embarrassment, and he threw himself even more into his work.

Outside, the sound of firecrackers grew louder and closer. The Zhu family's courtyard had been tidied up, and the tables, chairs, snacks, and red envelopes were all prepared.

While the firecrackers in Xiahe Village were exploding in a lively celebration, a different scene played out in the neighboring Shanghe Village at the residence of the wealthy Master Li.

In the boudoir of Miss Li, several braziers burned, filling the room with warmth in stark contrast to the wind and snow outside.

The room exuded an antique elegance and a rich atmosphere of life.

On a luxurious embroidered bed made of cloud brocade and silk, a stunning young woman reclined. Her jet-black, delicately arched eyebrows were as if painted, framing a pair of dazzling, lively eyes. Those captivating pupils, distinct in their black and white contrast, sparkled with an enchanting spirit.

Her long, flowing black hair was tied up with a wide, furry fox-fur ribbon, giving her a beauty that was both human and otherworldly.

Her slender hands, pale as jade, seemed almost translucent against the reflected green light. She held a book, though upon closer inspection, a sheet of paper was tucked inside. On it, written in bold, flowing script, was a poem titled Jiang Mo Cheng Zi:

Youth has its own wild arrogance,

Scorning Kunlun, laughing at Lüliang.

Sharpening the sword for years,

Today, its sharp edge is revealed.

"Tch, acting all high and mighty..." Even after so many days, the girl reclining on the bed couldn't help but recall the figure striding forward under the colorful glow of the sunset, pouting her lips slightly.

As she continued reading Jiang Mo Cheng Zi with pursed lips, a flurry of hurried footsteps came from outside. Then, the shrill voice of her maid, Hua'er, rang out:

"Miss! Miss! This is unbelievable! That scoundrel has passed the imperial exam! The firecrackers in Xiahe Village are booming like crazy, and the heralds have already arrived at his house!"

Panting and flushed from running, the little maid Hua'er rushed into the room as if the sky were falling.

The girl on the bed closed her book and beckoned Hua'er with her little finger. Hua'er immediately trotted over, her face still red from excitement.

"What are you screaming about? He passed, so he passed." The girl casually swung her rolled-up book and knocked it against Hua'er's forehead, showing no reaction to the news.

Hua'er clutched her forehead, looking pitifully at her mistress.

Why wasn't the young lady surprised at all? When she first heard the news, she had nearly bitten her tongue in shock! That little brat, only thirteen years old, had actually passed the exam! Hearing this out of nowhere, she had been as stunned as if the sky had collapsed!

"Miss, that scoundrel didn't just pass as a Xiucai, he passed as a Juren! A Juren!" Hua'er emphasized again.

"Why are you yelling? I'm not deaf." The girl rolled her eyes and swung her book again, knocking Hua'er on the forehead once more.

"Ouch!" Hua'er covered her forehead, pouting in grievance.