

## Rise 239

### Chapter 239: Just Like That

Madam Chen hurried home, afraid that if she moved too slowly, someone else might snatch away the daughter-in-law she had her eyes on. Just as she was nearing her doorstep, she saw a familiar figure swaying towards her from the opposite side of the street.

Seeing who it was, Madam Chen broke out in a cold sweat.

She was very familiar with this person—it was the town's most renowned matchmaker, officially recognized by the government and paid a stipend, with her records kept in the yamen. Everyone called her Granny Xue. There wasn't a household in the entire Kaoshan Town that didn't know her, and she knew every family intimately. Whether it was marrying off a daughter or seeking a daughter-in-law, she knew every detail. She never failed in her matchmaking endeavors.

It was precisely because Granny Xue had never failed at matchmaking that Madam Chen grew anxious. Now, just seeing a matchmaker made her worry they might be heading to propose marriage to Li Shu. If Granny Xue was also heading to the Li household with a proposal, that would be terrible—after all, her proposals always succeeded.

"Auntie, where are you headed? Come over to my place for a drink of water," Madam Chen called out to Granny Xue, trying to sound casual, while internally fretting that the matchmaker might indeed be going to the Li residence.

"Mrs. Zhu, I just came back from arranging a match for Big Mouth Zhao's family. I'm heading home now. I've already had some water, so I'll pass. Your Ping'an is the youngest scholar in our town—Mrs. Zhu, you're going to enjoy a blessed life," Granny Xue responded with a smile, waving her floral handkerchief as she politely declined.

So, she had just come from Zhao's house—Madam Chen's face lit up with joy. As long as it wasn't the Li family, that was good.

"Oh come now, Auntie, don't be so polite. Come on, just have another sip at my place," Madam Chen said as she reached out to grab Granny Xue's hand, pulling her towards her home.

Madam Chen felt incredibly lucky today. First, she found out that several people were eyeing her future daughter-in-law, and now a matchmaker had practically delivered herself to her door. Her luck was unstoppable.

"How can one cut wood without an axe?

How can one marry a wife without a matchmaker?"

In the Great Ming Dynasty, getting married absolutely required a matchmaker. Without one, people would look down on you. Such a marriage wouldn't be acknowledged, and you'd never be able to hold your head up.

Just moments ago, Madam Chen had been worrying about where to find a matchmaker, afraid she wouldn't make it in time. Now, with Granny Xue seemingly falling from the sky, Madam Chen couldn't be happier, and she wasn't about to let go.

"Husband! Hurry and pour some tea! And bring out a plate of our fruits and snacks for Auntie to try!"

Without waiting for a reply, Madam Chen pulled Granny Xue into the house, barking out instructions to Father Zhu to serve tea and snacks. He was kept running back and forth, and Madam Chen took the chance to scold him for not letting her arrange a match for Zhu Ping'an earlier.

Meanwhile, the other matchmakers in Xiahe Village, who had been chattering nonstop, saw Madam Chen dragging Granny Xue into the Zhu household. As if completing a mission, they let out a collective sigh of relief and then headed toward the river. A while later, a few matchmakers left, grinning ear to ear, patting their money pouches as they went their separate ways.

The clear stream had already frozen over. On the icy surface, fallen leaves fluttered in the wind. At that moment, someone stood by the riverside. If Zhu Ping'an had been there, he might have noticed that this person's back looked a lot like Wang Xiao'er—the man who had saved him.

Granny Xue stayed at the Zhu household for about the time it takes to drink a cup of tea. After being sweet-talked and requested repeatedly by Madam Chen and Father Zhu, she headed toward the Li household in Shanghe Village, carrying a bundle of carefully chosen gifts that Madam Chen had dug up from her home.

"It's all your fault! If I hadn't happened to overhear it, our daughter-in-law would've ended up in someone else's home!" Madam Chen scolded her husband after seeing Granny Xue off.

Father Zhu knew he was in the wrong. And even if he weren't, he still wouldn't dare say a word while Madam Chen was fuming.

After walking for about ten minutes, Granny Xue arrived at the Li household in Shanghe Village and knocked on the door. Upon explaining her purpose, the gatekeeper, Uncle Zhao, looked puzzled. But when he heard she was there to propose a marriage on behalf of Zhu Ping'an from Xiahe Village, he quickly hurried into the courtyard to report.

This is the first time the eldest young lady of the Li family is being proposed to. It's been over ten years, and this is the first matchmaker to come to the Li family to propose to the young lady. In the past, no matchmaker had ever come. Originally, Uncle Zhao, the gatekeeper, when he heard about the proposal, his first reaction was to drive the matchmaker away. What a joke! What status does the young lady have? Surely, no one from this little town could be worthy of her. However, when he heard that the proposal was on behalf of Zhu Ping'an from Xiahe Village, Uncle Zhao didn't dare be careless anymore. This was the youngest scholar in the town, and some people even said he was one of the few scholars in all of the Ming Dynasty. Moreover, Zhu Ping'an was someone the master had once highly regarded.

So, when Uncle Zhao, the doorman, heard the matchmaker say she was there to arrange a marriage for Zhu Ping'an, he hurriedly went to report it to the backyard.

"Master, master, someone has come to propose to the young lady!"

Uncle Zhao, the doorman, rushed into the backyard, and upon seeing the wealthy Mr. Li, he quickly delivered the news.

Mr. Li, who had been showing off the expensive gifts he had bought, nearly dropped the top-quality South Sea pearls he had spent a fortune on when he heard that someone was proposing for his daughter.

Li Shu, his daughter, was the apple of Mr. Li's eye, so precious that he was afraid to even hold her too tightly. As for her marriage, Mr. Li had only a preliminary plan in mind: to find a son-in-law who would come to the house. This son-in-law should come from a good family, and he should treat his daughter well.

Now, hearing that someone had come to propose, Mr. Li's first reaction was to send the matchmaker away with some gifts.

"Uncle Li, which family is proposing?" the curious bun faced maid, Hua'er, asked.

"It's the Zhu family from Xiahe Village, the one with the young Master Zhu who just passed the imperial examination and became a juren," Uncle Zhao panted, still catching his breath from running so quickly.

Meanwhile, Li Shu, who was casually playing with the gifts her father had brought back, heard this and flashed a brief smile before her expression turned cold.

"Please serve them some tea, then..." Before Mr. Li could finish his sentence, Li Shu spoke up.

"Everyone, leave."

Before Mr. Li could finish his words, Li Shu had already ordered everyone in the room to leave.

Mr. Li's words were unfinished—he had meant to say, after the tea, send them away. Generally, people would avoid offending a matchmaker, even if they were dissatisfied, because they were afraid the matchmaker might spread rumors about their children, potentially damaging their reputation.

The bun faced maid, Hua'er, along with the old nursemaid and Uncle Zhao, all lowered their heads and quietly left the room.

The young lady was angry. They were all scared.

They knew Li Shu's temper—if she got angry, she could turn the whole Li family upside down.

Then, from a distance, the bun faced maid, Hua'er, and the others heard the sounds of Mr. Li and his daughter arguing. It seemed like both were very angry, especially the young lady, who appeared furious, as though she had thrown many things in the room.

Afterward, Mr. Li, his face darkened, had the matchmaker brought in, and the marriage was settled.

The young lady was so pitiful. It was clear that her father wanted her to marry that bad person from Xiahe Village, but she refused, so she got angry and broke things.

The young lady was so pitiful. Even though she got angry and broke things, she couldn't change her father's mind.

Mr. Li really was something. Normally, when his daughter got angry, he would agree to anything she wanted, but why didn't he agree this time?

The young lady was so pitiful. Did that mean she had to marry that bad person from Xiahe Village...?

Thinking about it, the bun-faced maid, Hua'er, blushed deeply, her small hand gripping the corner of her clothes. She was both shy and embarrassed, and her round face was burning hot.