

## Rise 257

Chapter 257: My Name is Ren Di

"Can I come in now?"

The clumsy smile of Zhu Ping'an at the door was extremely glaring in the eyes of the shop assistant, who had a face as constipated as could be.

He never expected that this poor, rural boy would know Du Fu's poem "The Guest Arrives" and would come up with such a simple couplet. He regretted it deeply. No matter how he looked at it, this country bumpkin's level was probably just that nonsensical, low-level stuff like "sleep, you damn fool, get up and party." He had been tricked by a gap in his reasoning—such a blunder!

As for the people in the main hall of the guest station, they were not the least bit surprised when Zhu Ping'an matched the couplet. The shop assistant's couplet wasn't so much a couplet as it was a recitation of an ancient poem. There was absolutely no difficulty to it.

It was perfectly normal for a shop assistant, who knew nothing, to give a couplet and for a poor country boy to come up with one in return. Both of them were weaklings with combat power barely reaching five.

So, the people in the hall, who were focused on their own matters, merely smiled and let it go.

"Come in, come in, if it's not too much trouble, just come in. You'll have to come out again later anyway."

The shop assistant looked at Zhu Ping'an with disdain, thinking that the fact that Zhu Ping'an could come up with a couplet was nothing but pure luck. Perhaps he had heard this poem from some rural scholar. Gold will eventually shine, but a lump of earth will always be a lump of earth. This time, the country boy was just lucky. When he goes into the hall, he'll definitely come out again, embarrassed. The big scholars and talented people waiting inside wouldn't be able to come up with one, so it was strange that this country bumpkin could. The sun won't rise from the west!

"Please help me take the horse to the backyard," Zhu Ping'an said with a slight smile, handing the reins of the Shamat black horse to the shop assistant.

"Just tie it outside. After all, you'll be leaving later anyway. No need to trouble yourself," the shop assistant rolled his eyes and stood still, unmoving.

Zhu Ping'an squinted at the shop assistant and gave a faint smile before turning around to tie the horse to a conspicuous flagpole outside the inn.

"Hey, why'd you tie it there?" the shop assistant grumbled in dissatisfaction when he saw this.

"Anyway, I'll untie it later," Zhu Ping'an said with a faint smile before walking straight into the inn.

True, he would untie it later; at least he had some self-awareness. Though tying it there was inconvenient, it would only be for a short time, so the shop assistant decided to ignore the Shamat black horse tied to the flagpole.

Zhu Ping'an walked into the inn. The outside was decorated extravagantly, while the interior had a poetic, picturesque quality. The main hall was exceptionally spacious, filled with durable, year-round greenery, lush trees with small, fresh flowers blooming, and in the center stood a miniature artificial mountain. A stream of clear water twisted and flowed through the crevices of the rocks, resembling a waterfall. The layout of the hall, with tables and chairs arranged in harmony with the greenery and fake mountain, was orderly and naturally beautiful. The staircase leading upstairs was bordered with white stone, curving like a stone bridge with beasts' faces at the ends.

It was both poetic and elegant.

This kind of inn would certainly be at least five-star in ancient times, and located in the imperial capital beneath the emperor's feet. Staying here for a day would probably cost at least one tael of silver, not including meals. By the end of the day, it might cost a small two taels of silver. Zhu Ping'an clicked his tongue in mild surprise.

There were about fifty or sixty people in the main hall, all dressed in fine clothes, either gentle and refined or impressively regal. They were clearly well-read, scholars full of talent.

Zhu Ping'an, however, wore clothes that were already faded and had two holes in them. When he walked into the hall, it felt quite out of place.

"Hey, what's your name? I need to register you," the shop assistant said as he followed Zhu Ping'an into the hall.

In truth, he didn't want to register this person who was clearly just passing through. However, the innkeeper had a rule: everyone who came to match a couplet had to be registered. The shop assistant didn't dare disobey, so he had no choice but to call out to Zhu Ping'an from behind.

"My name is Ren Di, Ren as in benevolence, Di as in the barbarians of the Rong tribe."

Zhu Ping'an stopped in his tracks, exchanged a glance with the impatient shop assistant behind him, and slightly curved his lips into a goofy smile.

"Ren Di, such a rustic name," the shop assistant muttered, turning to register the name at the counter.

Most of the people in the hall probably had the same impression of the name Zhu Ping'an just mentioned. However, a few people seemed to have caught something in his voice. As they watched the shop assistant registering the name, they let out a series of soft laughs.

"Hehe, Wensheng, I bet this kid's name isn't really Ren Di," a well-dressed young man nudged his companion, Wen Sheng, and couldn't help but laugh.

"Why?"

Wensheng casually asked, still thinking about the couplet he couldn't figure out, not paying much attention to the earlier scene.

"This kid looks goofy, but he's actually a bit sly," the well-dressed youth replied, unable to stop laughing.

Wensheng, still lost in thought over the couplet, looked at his companion with some confusion.

"Ren Di, hehe, it's close enough to 'lowly person,' but it's actually a jab at the shop assistant for looking down on him. That shop assistant stupidly went ahead and registered it, hahaha, it's hilarious..." The well-dressed youth clutched his stomach, laughing non-stop.

"Looking down on others with dog eyes," the shop assistant's dog eyes looking at Ren Di, hehe, this boy seems interesting, not simple at all.

The youth named Wensheng turned his gaze toward the simple-looking, goofy boy in the hall, pursing his lips slightly, intrigued.

Many others in the hall also picked up on the subtle tone of Zhu Ping'an's words and couldn't help but laugh.

The shop assistant, who was registering, heard the laughter coming from the hall and looked up in confusion. He thought people were laughing at Zhu Ping'an's name, "Ren Di," such a rustic name, before lowering his head and continuing to register earnestly.

However, despite the laughter, most people in the hall still held the same view of Zhu Ping'an as before. He was just a poor country boy with a bit of cleverness, nothing more. Country kids can be clever, some can pull weeds at three years old, herd sheep at five, smart enough and quick-witted, but that's all. There's no significant future for them.

As for Zhu Ping'an's attempt at matching the couplets hanging in the hall, they thought it was all for show. "We couldn't even match them, what can he match? Don't joke around. He's just putting on a show, so he won't feel embarrassed walking out later."

No matter what the people in the inn thought, after leaving the hall, Zhu Ping'an lifted his head and looked at the couplets hanging in the hall.

The couplets were written in cinnabar ink on silk nearly two feet wide, hanging down from the third floor to the first. They were arranged vertically in running script, with the strokes broken yet connected, like flowing clouds and running water.

The first couplet had only seven characters, seemingly simple, but upon closer reading, it contained hidden meaning:

"Still spring on the mountain, mountain spring is still."

Today, the workday was leisurely, so I'm writing another chapter, especially grateful to my book review section moderator, "Heaven's Inferno," like my Xiao He, who allows me to write with peace of mind, worry-free. Very much appreciated.