

## Rise 300

### Chapter 300: Saving the Beauty

A young girl of graceful beauty knelt before the crowd, her face streaked with tears, her eyes red and pitifully sorrowful.

There were many people gathered around her. They looked at the pitiful girl kneeling on the ground with eyes that were clearly filled with lustful desire. Yet, as if worried about something, though clearly tempted, not a single one of them reached out to help.

The young girl remained kneeling there, tearful and delicate. Her swollen red eyes looked around at the crowd, her heart filled with anger and resentment. These filthy men—all of them wanted to take her, but none were willing to spend a single coin. Her father could no longer wait—he was seriously ill! The girl grew more anxious by the second.

A bunch of disgusting men!

If not for the need to treat her father's illness, she would never stoop so low as to sell herself into slavery! She had dreamed of marrying into a noble family, into a prestigious household, not becoming a slave to a bunch of filthy men with a few lousy coins. But her father was gravely ill and needed twenty taels of silver to save his life. Her brother refused to care for their father, but she couldn't bear to watch her father die in pain.

What a pity! The scholar Zhao she had once been engaged to not only refused to help, but even took the chance to cancel the engagement while she was down! What a useless man—he couldn't even pass the

imperial exams, was dirt poor, and had a despicable character! Even if he hadn't broken it off, she would have found a way to cancel the engagement herself. He was just a poor scholar after all—she only intended to squeeze a little money from him!

How hateful it was—not being born into a wealthy family, and even more hateful that her father was now gravely ill!

She should be marrying into nobility and becoming the wife of an official! How could she resign herself to a life of servitude? She should harden her heart like her older brothers and leave their father behind—but she simply couldn't do it. He had given her life and raised her—how could she abandon him?

The girl cast a cold gaze at the men around her, her heart full of resentment. But then, thinking of her father still critically ill in the clinic nearby, she sighed, lifted her head, brushed her hair behind her ear, and spoke mournfully:

“Sirs, my father is gravely ill and urgently needs twenty taels of silver for treatment. But our family is poor and we have nothing left. I have no choice but to sell myself into slavery to save my father's life. I only beg that I be allowed to wait until after I have nursed my father back to health before I come to serve in your house as a slave, to repay your kindness with my labor.”

Her pale face was sorrowful, and her demeanor pitiful.

However, upon hearing that she wanted twenty taels of silver—and that she would only serve after nursing her father back to health—the crowd deflated like punctured balloons. Their earlier excitement suppressed, they fell silent.

Zhu Ping'an, upon hearing the girl's words, now understood why so many people gathered around a girl of moderate beauty but none stepped forward to buy her as a maid. In feudal society, maids had no rights or freedom; they were entirely at their master's disposal. For example, in *Dream of the Red Chamber*, Jia Baoyu first "experienced the clouds and rain" with his personal maid, Xi Ren.

The reason no one acted was simple: the money was too much, and the risk too high.

Twenty taels of silver could easily buy two decent maids in the Ming Dynasty. For example, in *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, Chen Jingji bought a maid named Jin Qian'er for 35 taels, and Ximen Qing spent only 5 taels to buy a young maid named Xiao Yu to serve his wife Yue Niang.

The risk was exactly what the girl mentioned—she wouldn't serve until after her father recovered. Who knew how long that would take? One year? Two? And that was assuming she honored her word. After such a long time, who could say she wouldn't just disappear?

So, despite their desire, no one was willing to take action.

"What illness does your father have?" a well-dressed man in the crowd asked.

"My father is in the clinic next door. He suffers from headaches, body aches, chills, thirst, and frequent coughing with blood, and sometimes falls unconscious. The doctor said it is a severe case of typhoid with collapse," the girl answered sorrowfully.

Typhoid with collapse—a serious, multi-symptom illness that was very hard to treat.

Upon hearing this, the crowd became even more discouraged. Who knew how long it would take for her father to recover—if he even survived? And if she became a mourning daughter after his death, how unlucky would that be? What if she caught the illness herself?

Their interest waned even further, and no one wanted her anymore.

Zhang Siwei remained observing, showing no intention of acting.

Wang Shizhen, on the other hand, did want to help the girl by buying her and treating her father, but when he checked his pockets, he only had ten taels of silver.

“Which clinic is your father at?”

Just then, a voice asked a question.

The girl looked up and saw a young man dressed as a scholar, refined yet carrying the air of nobility, gazing at her while asking.

From his clothing alone, she could tell he was from a noble family. Just that fur-trimmed coat must have cost over a hundred taels. And since he wore a scholar's robe, he must have already passed the imperial exams.

The girl's eyes lit up with hope and excitement. It's said that good deeds are rewarded—how true! While trying to save her father, she had met a benefactor. If such a noble gentleman were to buy her as a servant, that would be the best outcome.

This young man, from a prestigious family, scholarly and honest-looking, was likely kind-hearted if he still wanted to buy her under such conditions.

If she became his servant and was accepted by him, becoming his concubine would be easy. With a few tricks, even becoming a wife or favored consort wouldn't be hard. As the concubine of such a man, she would live a life of luxury. From his appearance alone, she could tell he came from a top-tier family. Being a concubine in such a household, with a husband of scholarly rank, would be an incredible honor. When she returned home, her brothers and neighbors would be awestruck—envying her life of wealth and status.

“Honored young master, my father is in the He Nian Hall just ahead.”

As she thought this, she reached out her delicate hand, tucked her hair behind her ear once more, and tried to make her face look even more alluring. Her voice was soft and gentle, evoking strong protective instincts.

Upon hearing this, Zhu Ping'an nodded and turned to walk toward the He Nian Hall.

The girl was stunned. Why did the noble gentleman walk away after asking that question? Everything she said was true!

She bit her lip, feeling disheartened.

But in the next moment, her eyes brightened again. The nobleman was heading toward He Nian Hall! He was going to verify her words—that her father was indeed gravely ill. There would be no problem there.

A noble family. A scholarly husband. A life of luxury. Fame and fortune awaited. The girl's heart soared with expectation.

"Zi Hou, where are you going? Wait for me!"

Wang Shizhen hurried after Zhu Ping'an, thinking that if Zhu Ping'an didn't pay, he would borrow silver from him to help the girl.

Zhang Siwei also followed them closely.

Inside He Nian Hall, Zhu Ping'an saw an old man curled up on the ground, pitiful and weak, with a pool of blood nearby. An assistant was cursing while cleaning the floor.

Zhu Ping'an approached the seated doctor and pointed to the old man, asking about his condition.

The doctor was quite skilled—after all, he worked under Yan Song, so he must be competent.

Indeed, the old man had exactly the illness the girl described: severe typhoid with collapse. Though his condition was serious, it was not yet fatal. There was still hope, but good medicine was necessary. A rough estimate put the cost at no less than twenty taels of silver.

Zhu Ping'an also checked the clinic's register for the old man's name, age, and address.

After thanking the doctor, Zhu Ping'an left He Nian Hall with Wang Shizhen and Zhang Siwei.

When the girl saw the noble gentleman return, she was overjoyed. Her eyes practically sparkled.

"What is your father's name, age, and where does he live?" Zhu Ping'an asked her upon returning.

She answered each question clearly. It matched exactly with what Zhu Ping'an had learned at the clinic.

It was true.

Seeing the poor old man vomiting blood on the ground, Zhu Ping'an had already made up his mind to help. Twenty taels was a lot, but it was within his means. His family wasn't poor, and he had barely touched the money he brought from home—it was enough.

Twenty taels of silver to save a life—how could he not?

So, Zhu Ping'an pulled a money pouch from his sleeve, opened it, and counted out two notes, each worth ten taels.

The girl saw the pouch casually taken out, filled with several 50-tael notes, and grew even more excited. This really was a noble family—his pocket money alone could sustain an ordinary person for several lifetimes.

Zhu Ping'an walked up to her and handed her the twenty taels.

“Thank you, benefactor.”

Her eyes were practically dripping with affection as she looked at him.

“No need to thank me. Just take good care of your father.”

“Ziwei, Wensheng, let’s go.”

Zhu Ping’an waved his hand, ignoring the girl’s affectionate gaze, called to Zhang Siwei and Wang Shizhen, and turned to leave the crowd.

“Young master, young master! May I ask your honorable name and where you live? Once my father recovers, I will serve you loyally as your maid!”

Seeing the nobleman leaving, the girl stood up and hurried after him.

“I gave you the money. Don’t get any ideas about me.”

Zhu Ping’an stopped, smiled faintly, shook his head, and then strode away with Zhang Siwei and Wang Shizhen.

What a melodramatic plot. The bystanders around muttered in their hearts: “What a fool. Paid the money and didn’t even claim the girl—must have studied so hard it scrambled his brain!”