

## Rise 302

### Chapter 302: He's Quite Generous

To suck the marrow from the bones of the world and scatter the sons and daughters of the world, all for the enjoyment of one man alone.

This creed of Yan Shifan's—he had no idea that one ordinary action today would provoke an opponent unlike any other.

In any case, on this bright and sunny afternoon, on a small temple path, three high-spirited youths walked together and clapped hands to swear an oath.

While Zhu Ping'an and the other two, blocked outside the gates due to Yan Shifan sealing off the mountain for his pleasures, brimmed with grand ambition, a different scene was unfolding in the backyard of the Marquis of Linhuai's residence.

In the courtyard where Li Shu resided, the maids were bustling to and fro, busy with tasks. One maid carried a fine porcelain basin filled with steaming hot milk. Under the direction of a few elderly women, salt and fragrance were carefully added, and the maids moved in and out of the room in an orderly manner.

The second, third, and sixth young ladies of the marquis's household were visiting the fourth young lady's courtyard, which happened to be right next to Li Shu's. At that moment, they were sunbathing there, listening to the activity from Li Shu's side, their expressions varied and full of meaning.

“Ah, so Fifth Sister uses milk to bathe?” The sixth young lady of the marquis house looked up with her innocent round face in slight surprise, her little tiger teeth showing—she looked truly sweet and naive.

“Oh, so that’s why Fifth Younger Sister bought several cows yesterday—turns out it was for a milk bath. She certainly knows how to enjoy life.” The second young lady of the marquis’s house gently covered the corner of her mouth with her delicate handkerchief and spoke softly.

“Really? I’ve heard that palace beauties like to add milk to their baths, but none go as far as buying cows just to bathe in fresh milk like Fifth Sister,” the fourth young lady added.

“Just a vulgar upstart,” the third young lady sneered, her eyes red with jealousy as she glared toward the neighboring courtyard and flicked her handkerchief with disdain.

“Hehe~~ I think Fifth Sister’s skin is fair and delicate like snow—could it be from bathing in milk? Should we try it too?” the sixth young lady blinked, clearly intrigued.

“Ahem, my monthly allowance isn’t even enough for a few milk baths, so I’ll pass,” the fourth young lady said with a slight shake of her head.

The fourth young lady’s mother was originally just a maid serving the wife of the Marquis of Linhuai, not particularly attractive. One day, the marquis, drunk, mistook her for his wife and had his way with her. Unexpectedly, she became pregnant and gave birth to the fourth young lady. Since her maid had climbed into bed with the marquis, the marquis’s wife was furious and often gave her a hard time. The marquis, not finding her pretty, paid little attention to her—only because she was pregnant did he acknowledge her as a concubine. With a father who didn’t care, a mother without status, and no favor from the old madam, the fourth young lady had no income aside from her monthly allowance—and even that was often withheld. So, she hardly had any money at all.

“I would never! It’s an animal product—it reeks! Only that bumpkin Fifth Sister’s husband, who’s used to herding cows and feeding horses, would like it. Those northern barbarians like this kind of thing, but I—” the third young lady shook her head firmly, seizing the chance to insult both Li Shu and Zhu Ping’an.

“Rose petals are here. Eh? They’re fresh!”

Just as the third young lady was mocking them, a maid’s surprised voice came from the neighboring courtyard.

Fresh rose petals?

The third young lady’s ridicule was abruptly cut off. Milk wasn’t too special—they were daughters of a noble house after all. If they wanted to bathe in milk, they could afford it. But rose petals? That was different.

Roses generally bloomed in May and June, and once picked, the petals could only be preserved for about ten days. Unlike modern times, ancient methods couldn’t control light, temperature, or water to make them bloom year-round. In the Ming Dynasty, to have fresh rose petals in early spring meant that the roses had been harvested in May or June and preserved in expensive ice storage.

Such extravagance did not come cheap.

Back in the fourth young lady's courtyard, all the young ladies were now staring at the courtyard wall next door, as if trying to peer through it.

A beauty bathing always stirs the imagination.

Especially if that beauty is Li Shu. But only the little bun-faced maid and a few servants had the fortune to enjoy such a scene.

An elegantly crafted, antique-style wooden tub. A delicate beauty with skin white as snow. A layer of rose petals drifting in the water. A tub full of meticulously prepared, fragrant milk bath.

A milk bath wasn't just raw milk—it needed to be blended with warm water, fine salt, essence oils, and carefully treated to remove any gaminess. There were many steps involved.

One little maid was in charge of adding the prepared milk, another added hot water to maintain the temperature, and the bun-faced maid gently massaged Li Shu's back while chatting.

"Master went to the Wen Yuan Pavilion first. He ordered nine dishes, one soup, and a jar of wine—a small jar. He only had two cups, and he paid for it himself."

“After that, they went to the Crane Year Hall to look at plaques. Master seemed really interested in plaques and studied them for a while.”

Li Shu lay languidly in the bath, enjoying the care of the maids, listening to the bun-faced maid’s chatter, occasionally nodding. When the maid saw her nod, she grew even more energetic and talked on with more vigor.

“But then Master and the others suddenly left. Brother Wang said that the Crane Year Hall was supposedly run by the Grand Chancellor himself, and Master seemed very unimpressed.”

Li Shu listened with interest to the maid’s straightforward and mundane recounting.

“Then, as they walked ahead, they came across a woman trying to sell herself to save her father. Master and the others stopped to watch too.”

Upon hearing this, Li Shu, who had been resting with her eyes closed, suddenly opened them.

“Master walked up and asked a couple of questions. Then he returned to the Crane Year Hall. After a while, he came back and gave the woman twenty taels of silver,” the bun-faced maid continued, pouting a bit at the thought—twenty taels! That hurt.

Li Shu felt a little tense at that, but didn't show it. She casually asked, "And then?"

"Then Master just turned and left," the maid replied.

Oh, he left right after? That toad knew his place. Li Shu relaxed.

"But that woman was so shameless! She followed him, asked for his name and address, and even said she wanted to serve him as a slave!" the bun-faced maid puffed up indignantly.

"Miss, do you know what Master said?" the little maid asked with a smile playing at her lips.

Li Shu heard the mirth in her tone. The worry she had just felt melted away. If this silly girl was laughing, that meant the shameless hussy hadn't succeeded.

"What did he say?" Li Shu smiled faintly.

"Giggle... Master said, 'I gave the money, don't keep thinking about the man.'" As she said it, the little maid burst into laughter, as if imagining the other woman's awkward expression.

“He sure is generous, wasting twenty taels of silver like that...” Li Shu curled her lips, but a smile still tugged at her mouth.