

Rise 308

Chapter 308: Chaos in the Inner Courtyard

Early the next morning, a mist had fallen.

The newborn morning sun was not afraid of the mist and bravely scattered golden light across the earth. The tender leaves of early spring thrived under the nourishment of the sunlight. The morning mist, too, gradually dissipated under the sun's rays, condensing into water droplets that fell into the soil, nourishing the land.

After breakfast, Zhu Ping'an began his morning reading and review in his room.

The marquis' residence seemed a bit noisy today. While Zhu Ping'an was studying, he vaguely heard a commotion, as if something had happened.

Not long after, the second young lady of the marquis' residence sent someone to deliver a set of books-the very set that had been thrown into the latrine by the bratty kid yesterday. Zhu Ping'an clasped his hands in thanks to the messenger and casually rewarded him with a small piece of silver.

The man accepted the reward with joy written all over his face and, as expected, became more talkative.

That's how Zhu Ping'an learned what had happened that morning. It turned out that last night, Li Yanzhou-also known as Fatty Zhou-did something utterly outrageous. For reasons unknown, he pulled a little maid who served the Marquis of Linhuai onto his bed and... rubbed and rubbed her all night long.

Then, early this morning, when the Marquis of Linhuai found out, he went completely berserk. It was even more explosive than when the brat had once mockingly asked Fatty Zhou, "Who are you?"

It was said that when the Marquis heard the news, he stormed out with a horsewhip without even getting properly dressed. With his fat body jiggling all over, he charged into Fatty Zhou's room, pinned him to a chair, and swung the horsewhip, ready to beat his unfilial son to a pulp.

However, before the Marquis could land blow, the old madam and the first madam arrived just in time to stop him. The old madam, weeping and sniffing, managed to rescue her beloved grandson, Fatty Zhou, from the wrath of the horsewhip. "I'm going to beat him!"

"You're not allowed to beat him!"

The old madam and the first madam blocked him, refusing to let him hit the boy. The Marquis, whip in hand, wouldn't back down. The situation was a complete mess, and soon the entire residence descended into chaos.

While Zhu Ping'an was listening to the servants recount the story, Li Shu was also in her courtyard, spearing fruit with a toothpick and listening to her bun-faced maid tell her the gossip with puffed cheeks.

"Hehe, after all these years, it's still the same. My aunt has her tricks, but she still can't keep her cool," Li Shu smirked after her bun-faced maid finished.

"Huh?" The bun-faced maid widened her eyes in confusion and looked at her lady. "Miss, it wasn't the first madam's fault. It was Young Master Li Yanzhou who bullied Sister Honger. He's so mean. Ugly face, ugly heart. Sister Hong'er didn't want to at all, but he forced her. I heard she cried a lot."

"The first madam even scolded the young master," bun-faced maid added.

Li Shu looked amused as she glanced at the silly girl. Good thing this little fool followed her-if she were thrown into the inner courtyard of this residence, she'd be eaten to the bone.

The schemes in the inner residence were no less brutal than those on a battlefield. One didn't need blades to kill, nor poison to harm. Smiles hid conspiracies, tears veiled tricks. The methods were countless and devastating...

Yet this silly girl perked her ears but noticed nothing.

"Miss, did I say something wrong?" bun-faced maid looked innocently at her lady, her round face full of confusion.

Li Shu rolled her eyes.

"Miss, it was Young Master Li Yanzhou, not the first madam," bun-faced maid said, pouting and looking aggrieved.

"That idiot cousin was just being used..." Li Shu's lips curled into a sneer, her watery eyes full of disdain.

"Huh?" bun-faced maid opened her mouth wide in surprise.

"What do you mean 'huh,' dummy? Didn't you just say that last night, the first madam sent Sister Hong'er to deliver ginseng soup to that idiot cousin?" Li Shu lightly tapped bun-faced maid's forehead with her delicate hand.

"Yes, I heard from Liusu in the neighboring courtyard. She said was the first madam who sent Sister Hong'er to bring the ginseng soup, saying the young master had just finished his exams and needed to recover. But... but he's still a bad person."

The bun-faced maid held her forehead, nodding, then shaking her head in confusion.

"Hehe. Of all times to send it, why right before bedtime? You think that's a coincidence?"

Li Shu rolled her eyes again and gave a cold laugh.

"But it's still the young master who did something bad," the bun-faced maid said, her cheeks puffed out in doubt.

"You think the first madam is some kind of saint? Sister Hong'er is a maid under the Marquis himself. The first madam has her own maids, so why send one of the Marquis' maids to deliver the soup? That idiot cousin is dumb and nasty, but despite his big, fat face, he's timid like a mouse. Even if he has lustful thoughts, he wouldn't dare touch a maid from the Marquis' side."

Li Shu sneered.

"But he still bullied Sister Hong'er," the bun-faced maid mumbled, still unsure.

"The problem lies in that bowl of ginseng soup. Hehe. Who drinks ginseng soup at night? And who knows what the first madam added to it? No wonder he got so worked up."

Li Shu glanced out the window, her voice cold and mocking.

The bun-faced maid thought for a long while, then shivered and said with a pout, "The first madam is so evil... Isn't she afraid the Marquis will find out?"

"Find out? With all her scheming, do you really think the first madam would leave any traces? Everything would have been cleaned up. Even if he did find out, so what? Would the Marquis fall out with her over a maid? The first madam's family isn't one to mess with either. It's just that she was too impatient. Even if nothing can be proven, it still leaves room for suspicion."

Li Shu glanced at the bun-faced maid again and continued, "The first madam is wicked, but the Marquis is no better. So what if that fool cousin bullied a maid? Just give her a title and it's settled. Why get so furious?"

"Ah? Miss, are you saying the Marquis and Sister Hong'er also..." bun-faced maid opened her mouth wide in disbelief, her whole face scrunched up in disgust.

The Marquis had a thing with the maid, and then his son got involved too...

Under the reign of Emperor Hongwu, Ming society highly valued hierarchy and ethics. To the bun-faced maid, this kind of thing in the Marquis' household was too shocking.

"This house may look peaceful on the surface, but it's filthy inside," Li Shu said with contempt.

"The Marquis' residence is scary. Miss, let's go home," the bun-faced maid was frightened.

"Finally scared, huh? You think everyone here is as simple as you? Everyone's like a cunning fox. Better wise up, or you'll be sold off without even knowing it."

Li Shu glanced at her amusingly.

"But... how do I get wiser?" bun-faced maid puffed her cheeks, troubled. Suddenly, her eyes lit up. "Miss is smart! I'll just stick with Miss!"

Saying that, the bun-faced maid quickly lifted the fruit plate and handed it to Li Shu with a flattering smile.

"You silly girl. At least you know how to make life easier," Li Shu chuckled, picked up a toothpick, and popped a piece of fruit into her mouth.