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Chapter 58

Family Banquet?

Shang Jun had already drunk five cups of tea when the sun finally began to set into the clouds causing a red color to descend on the horizon, signaling that night was about to come. How long had it been since he drank tea in a quiet moment like this? It seemed to have been about one year! As it turned out, it indeed had been a year since he became Shang Jun; it had truly been one year. Shang Jun mocked himself; he was used to being busy, he was used to constantly being on the move and he was used to not stopping. It was because of this that he was actually not used to this kind of brilliant afternoon sunshine while savoring fragrant tea and having some leisure time.

Putting down the teacup, Shang Jun stretched his waist. In Hai Yu, was a man really not valued at all? Meng Yi Ru said that she wanted to entertain him, but in the end, he still had to wait for four hours in the reception hall. He should choose a woman to come to Hai Yu in the future and even more so to conform to the social customs here.

While Shang Jun was still considering this, a woman's voice had come over from the door, "I made Shang Jun wait for a long time."

As Shang Jun turned around, he saw Meng Yi Ru's well-rounded figure slowly come into the reception hall. Shang Jun then cupped his hands and faintly answered, "Official Meng is too polite."

Maybe she also thought that she had made Shang Jun wait for a long time, because Meng Yi Ru said with a smiling and pleasant countenance, "Only a family banquet, Shang Jun does not need to be reserved, quickly sit down."

As Shang Jun courteously sat down in front of her, Meng Yi Ru did not say anything, but the family servant by their side spoke up and said, "Serve the food."

Only the two of them? This could be called a family banquet?! Shang Jun was somewhat embarrassed as he proclaimed, "Oh, we can still wait for your family!"

Meng Yi Ru waved her big hand, pretended to be annoyed and said, "How can they casually sit down while I entertain a noble guest? They will make you feel disappointed!" Picking up the wine cup that had been poured by the family servant, Meng Yi Ru smiled and then said, "For your welcoming dinner, let's drink this cup first." Once she finished speaking, she completely and straightforwardly drank it to salute first.

"Alright." Shang Jun could not evade either, so he drank a cup. The wine was actually incomparably spicy; it felt like an unbearable burn in his throat. However, Meng Yi Ru's face remained tranquil as if she were only drinking water! Was her drinking capability really this astonishing or did all Hai Yu women not want to be embarrassed?!

Shang Jun had just put down the wine cup when Meng Yi Ru immediately helped fill up his cup again as she took advantage to sit next to him. Shang Jun was afraid that she would urge him to drink again, so he promptly asked, "Oh right, this was the first time Shang Jun has come here so I do not know the customs and dare to ask the Official how long will it take to complete the customs clearance?"

Meng Yi Ru looked like she was not willing to speak too much, but still answered, "The goods that we check are not only the goods that you transported to sell here, but also includes all of the goods shipped here. We have to report to the Imperial court and wait for the Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Revenue to inspect them. After the goods are checked by the government minister, then the Department of Commerce head office can put on a seal to pass the goods. It would take at least one month. You do not need to be anxious; you can stay longer in Hai Yu before you leave again." It was difficult to have an attractive and intelligent gentleman come here, so she would naturally make him stay a few days longer.

One month? Did Lao You not say that it would take 10 days to half a month? Or had she already determined these days in her mind? If this was the case, then he actually did not have any other way so Shang Jun deliberately and tightly knitted his eyebrows as he awkwardly mumbled, "If it is troublesome like this, then this will be difficult to handle."

Meng Yi Ru somewhat suspiciously asked, "What is wrong? Shang Jun has to return urgently?"

Shang Jun shook his head and with a regretful face, he answered, "It is not like that. I feel that going to Hai Yu only once a year is too little and so I asked the old sailor if there was any chance to go to Hai Yu four times a year. I had planned to go back and forth four times a year, but now it seems that it cannot be done."

Upon hearing that he had planned to come four times a year in the future, Meng Yi Ru immediately had bright eyes as she urgently asked, "Why can it not be done?"

Seeing that she was in high spirits, Shang Jun deliberately sighed and answered, "It takes one and a half months out on the sea, plus another two places to unload that will take another 10 days to half a month. If the customs paperwork is troublesome like this, there will not be enough time to go back and forth. Moreover, when Shang Jun comes four times a year, I also want to exchange seasonal products from Hai Yu, so if the time is dragged on for so long like this, I am afraid that it is not feasible. It is really hard to do business like this."

Meng Yi Ru secretly calculated; four times a year, she would be able to deduct a lot of expenses. Moreover, the more goods that were exchanged at the harbor, the more she would indeed be able to show her abilities and her achievements would naturally be a lot better. This would indeed be a good thing for her own self-interest; however, the tariff was a huge cost and if the frequency were concentrated like this, the goods had to be stocked before they could be sold. During this two-way exchange, she did not know how much money would be needed and did not know whether or not this young man was that capable?! Meng Yi Ru hid the enthusiasm in her eyes as she deliberately advised with good intentions, "But Shang Jun's cost will be considerably high ah! So, you should think this over prudently."

Shang Jun suddenly and heartily laughed before he calmly answered, "This Official does not need to worry about this, with regards to money, it is only a trivial matter." In fact, Shang Jun could not help but boast; it would be strenuous to come here four times a year, but while he was passing through the stores at the harbor today, he found there were indeed many rare

treasures. If he could have dealings all year around, he could only imagine the profits in this. However, what really made Shang Jun have confidence was the fact that Hai Yu had an extreme shortage of tea and clothing and this was exactly what the Murong family had. Plus, it was much easier and cheaper to prepare these goods than Bi Xian's goods.

What boastful talk! She originally thought that he was just a nobody who replaced Bi Xian with only a handsome appearance, and she looked down on him. Meng Yi Ru secretly re-examined this man in front of her; he was absolutely handsome with a quiet temperament and firm expression with a scholarly attitude. Maybe he was really a very wealthy man!

Putting away her originally careless attitude, Meng Yi Ru seriously smiled and said, "Shang Jun is indeed a courageous man! If it really is true just as you have said, then I can help you deal with the Imperial court and we may be able to clear customs within ten days."

"It will still take ten days?!" Shang Jun shook his head and said, "It will be better if this Official helps introduce Shang Jun so I can personally visit the Official from the Ministry of Revenue." Shang Jun especially stressed the two words 'personally visit' as he wanted to hint to Meng Yi Ru that money would not be a problem.

Meng Yi Ru immediately and urgently said, "This is not needed. The Official from the Ministry of Revenue inspects tens of thousands of goods every day, so I am afraid that he will not have time to pay any attention to you. The matter of shipping is originally the duty of the Department of Commerce head office, so it will be more appropriate for me to handle. Six days! What does Shang Jun think about that?!" It was possible to finish customs in ten days, but if she let Shang Jun meet the Official from the Ministry of Revenue, that would be terrible. Moreover, it would be better and more useful if she were the one who got the money!!

With his goal achieved, Shang Jun felt refreshed as he smiled and said, "Alright, six days." This way, they could return to Dong Yu quickly.

Meng Yi Ru secretly relaxed and then smiled and said, "In the future, will Shang Jun lead the fleets?" She would hate to part with this good-looking gentleman. That Bi Xian was actually demanding and had a lot of tricks, so he instead might be able to help her get what she wanted!

She had on that kind of expression again, so Shang Jun forced a smile. He would definitely not suffer anything, but he just felt uncomfortable all over. After thinking about it, Shang Jun did not speak the truth when he answered, "Yes, Shang Jun might need to disturb the Official often."

After hearing that Shang Jun would be coming often, Meng Yi Ru adjusted to the situation and immediately beamed with joy as she repeatedly toasted to say, "You will not disturb at all! Come, drink a cup."

Shang Jun did not dare to drink anymore. He put down the wine cup as he rose to his feet and answered, "The Official is a good drinker and Shang Jun is ashamed of being inferior. I have been rushing about for days and Shang Jun is rather tired so I will take my leave."

Meng Yi Ru followed to get up, but did not let him off easily, as she said, "I have not drunk enough wine, so you cannot leave ah!"

Shang Jun could not endure the sight of a petty woman who pretended to be bashful as she ordered him to stay, so he seamlessly retreated a few steps before Shang Jun awkwardly said, "The future is long and there will be ample time for that later. Shang Jun will take my leave first!"

After he had finished speaking, he did not care whether or not Meng Yi Ru still had something to say as Shang Jun hurriedly left.

That one sentence 'the future is long and there will be ample time for that later' made Meng Yi Ru feel relieved as she sat down again. She let Shang Jun leave. If she were too anxious, she would terrify Shang Jun. Moreover, there was countless money behind him, so she still had to remain calm and be more patient.

The customs clearance papers had already been negotiated, so this was a win-win situation and Meng Yi Ru should do her utmost to compete it. He vowed that he would not step foot on Hai Yu soil anymore, or at least at the minimum, he would not step foot here while he was a man!