

Chapter 14 - Bursting Through the Door

Li Qingshan asked many questions, and the child answered all of them as if he did not know how to lie. He either nodded or shook his head, but he could only answer simple questions. Complicated questions would only leave him dazed.

When Li Qingshan asked for his name and where he came from, he shook his head for both of them. When he asked whether the witch was still hiding any tricks, the child stood there blankly.

Despite that, Li Qingshan managed to understand many things. The witch really was behind the child's death after all, refining him into a little ghost to serve her. Originally, he could speak as well, but the witch had fed him a bowl of medicinal soup that turned him into a mute.

Li Qingshan guessed that the witch had abducted this child and was afraid he would blabber along the way, so she had turned him into a mute. However, whenever he mentioned the witch, the child's face would become filled with fear.

Li Qingshan said gently, "Don't worry, I won't harm you. I will kill that old hag and set you free."

Unknowingly, the child had approached Li Qingshan, and there was now attachment on his little raised head.

Li Qingshan revealed a comforting smile and wanted to touch his head, but Li Qingshan's hand passed through his body, and he immediately froze.

The child became depressed, lowering his head and silently crying.

Li Qingshan suddenly felt sorrow well up inside. He roared at the sky. Why were there so many injustices in the world? When humans harmed each other, they were no less brutal than demons and monsters.

On the other hand, the child was stunned, looking at Li Qingshan in surprise.

Under the moonlight, the young man with unswerving determination actually had something sparkle at the corner of his eyes.

Li Qingshan mocked himself. "Looks like men really shed no tears unless they're grief-stricken. I've embarrassed myself."

The child stood on his toes and extended his hand to touch Li Qingshan's face. He removed a tear droplet and cradled it in both hands. It seemed rather heavy to him.

"Don't take that!" Li Qingshan turned red and suddenly understood the black ox's difficulties slightly. How could the tears of a man be handed to someone else so casually?

He thought of what the ox had said again. Weak ghosts were incorporeal. Only when they had cultivated to a certain degree could they gradually become tangible and lift real objects. With how weak this child was, he must have only been able to carry extremely light things.

The child only lowered his head and gazed at the transparent liquid in his hands.

Li Qingshan was helpless. He looked around and felt rather strange. Why had darkness descended at such a late time tonight? The landscape around the house was somewhat gloomy, but things were still clearly visible.

However, when he raised his head to look at the moon, he suddenly realised that the night had not been delayed; rather, it was because his eyes could see better in the dark. Not only did he have night vision, but his eyes also felt like windows that had recently been wiped of dust. Everything was extremely clear.

Li Qingshan muttered to himself, "Brother ox really is a monster. His tears even have such miraculous usage."

"It's late. I need to go to sleep. Because of you, I wasn't able to rest up properly last night. I still have things to do tomorrow. I need to recover my strength."

Li Qingshan returned to his house to sleep, while the child crouched down at the entrance. Under the moonlight, he was half-transparent, just like the tear droplet in his hands.

Li Qingshan slept extremely heavily that night, only waking up when the sun was well and truly up. The child had already left, probably unwilling to move about during the day.

He washed his face and rinsed his mouth before practising the Ox Demon's Fist of Great Strength a little. Then he picked up the thick steel blade he had received from Li Fugui, went through his thoughts, picked up a few pieces of gazelle meat, and left through the door.

The three scoundrels were currently sitting together with worried looks. With patch-haired Liu's death, their group had lost its backbone. Their time in the village became tougher and tougher, and they were basically detested by everyone as lowlives.

They wanted to copy patch-haired Liu's brutality or Li Qingshan's viciousness, but how could they manage? Even filling their bellies became an immediate problem, let alone drinking alcohol and eating meat. They could only work for caretaker Liu and barely earn a meal to eat. They were nowhere close to having it as easy as before.

At this moment, Li Qingshan suddenly visited them. The three scoundrels went up to welcome him in a hurry. He had come with a frosty look, a blade in one hand and meat in the other, naturally giving off an aura of might. No one would look down on him just because of his age.

The voices of the three scoundrels eased up slightly as well, highly praising Li Qingshan's actions during the day before yesterday.

Li Qingshan ignored these attempts to flatter him and put down the meat. "There is something I must trouble you all with. The meat is the compensation, including for what you did last time."

"That'll be rude of us to accept it. Erlang, just say a word, and we'll do anything to carry it out." That was what the scoundrels said, but they accepted the meat in a hurry.

Just like last time, Li Qingshan said, "Come with me!" He turned around and left, but this time, there was no bravado. It was an absolute order.

The three scoundrels did not dare hesitate, following right behind his steps.

Li Qingshan borrowed some hoes and shovels from a nearby farmer's home first before going to Li Fugui's house.

It just happened to be noon, around the time when the villagers had just finished their morning farmwork and were tidying up. They were all about to go home to eat. They saw Li Erlang, who just happened to be at the height of his fame in the village, leading three scoundrels to borrow tools. Who knows what he planned on doing, so they all followed behind him curiously. With that, basically the entire village had been alarmed.

They watched him arrive in front of Li Fugui's home and wondered whether he was going to punish that drunkard. How had the drunkard offended him? They all found this to be rather shameless. He was using his advantage in numbers to harass a pitiful man who had descended into depravity. This was a complete opposite to when he faced the village head and caretaker Liu in caretaker Liu's home. One was defying oppression, while the other was harassing the weak.

However, the three scoundrels were very happy. "I could tell a long time ago that this old drunkard is utterly worthless." They even slapped their chests and volunteered. "I'll drag him out right now." It had been a long time since they could hold their heads up high. They were going to be making an example out of Li Fugui this time, beating him up in front of the crowd.

Li Qingshan glared at them and called out, "Are you coming or not?"

Just as everyone felt confused, Li Fugui rushed out of the house and gritted his teeth, "I am!"

His face was surprisingly sober, which astounded all the villagers. In the past, Li Fugui had always remained in a drunken stupor. Unbeknownst to them, after Li Qingshan left Li Fugui's house, the man had not taken a single sip of alcohol. He thought about and longed for what Li Qingshan had promised, but he never thought that Li Qingshan would come on the very next day.

With that, the villagers felt even more confused, and their interest was piqued as well.

Li Qingshan nodded. He walked at the front with his head held high, leading the group of people to the witch's brick house. He saw that the main entrance was tightly shut. Clearly, he had alarmed her already. Seeing this, he ordered the three rascals, "Smash it open!"

The three scoundrels immediately became timid. There was not a single person in the village who did not fear the witch. Even when patch-haired Liu was around, they were never bold enough to offend her, and the house of brick and tiles that also served as a shrine had a mysterious, holy air around it. They had already lost count of just how many times they had heard of strange things happening there.

The other villagers saw how he was actually making trouble for the witch, and all of them erupted in an uproar as well.

Someone tried to persuade him, "Erlang, don't mess around!"

There was also someone absolutely terrified. "Your disrespect to the gods will lead to retribution." He was a devout believer of the witch. If it were not for his fear of the blade in Li Qingshan's hand, he might have come up and tried to reason with him.

Li Qingshan said nothing. With a bang, he kicked open the wooden door. The door panels that were as thick as an arm snapped into pieces, producing quite a loud sound and startling the villagers into silence.

Li Qingshan looked back and ordered the three scoundrels, "Keep guard outside. Don't let anyone in."

The three scoundrels obliged reluctantly. At least they did not have to go in.

Li Qingshan stepped over the door sill and strode into the courtyard. He arrived before the entrance to the hall and was about to kick through the door.

The doors opened by themselves. It was clearly noon when the sun was dazzling, but it was a black mess inside. A cold, gloomy breeze blew over.

The witch wore brightly-coloured robes and sat on the altar, speaking with a different voice, "Li Erlang, do you know your crimes?"

Schwing! Li Qingshan drew the steel blade and yelled out, "Hand over your life!"