

THE GREAT MING IN THE BOX

Chapter 2: The Eye of Providence

Year Seven of Tianqi, 1627, Ming Dynasty, Chengcheng County, Shaanxi, Gaojia Village.

Summer. Blistering heat. The outdoor temperature soared close to 40 degrees Celsius.

Shaanxi had endured years without rain. Vegetation withered under the scorching sun, leaving only endless yellow sand stretching across the land.

Gao Yiye hadn't eaten her fill in a very long time.

She was a child born into hardship. Having lost her father at a young age, she relied on her mother for survival. Poverty forced Gao Yiye to grow up quickly,

helping her mother with every kind of farm chore. United in their struggles, mother and daughter managed to scrape by.

But over the past two years, their lives had become increasingly desperate.

As the drought worsened day by day, the small river near the village dried up completely. The water in the well was barely enough to drink, let alone irrigate the fields. Not a single grain could be sown in the parched earth.

Gao Yiye had no choice but to leave the village every day to dig for wild vegetables.

Later, even the wild vegetables died. Mother and daughter were reduced to peeling tree bark and scavenging grass roots just to cling to life. Hope seemed a distant, fading thing.

Yet, just as fate had slammed a door shut in their faces, it had also welded their windows closed.

Life was already this unbearable—only for bandits to descend and plunder.

Gao Yiye collapsed onto the body of her mother, who had just been cut down before her eyes. Sobs wracked her small frame.

The bandit wore a cruel smirk. The middle-aged woman he'd just butchered would feed the gang for two or three days. And this little girl? Chopped up, she'd be another two or three days of rations. Heh heh heh.

He raised a rusted blade and swung it down at the back of the young girl's neck.

At that moment—

Clouds churned violently overhead!

A giant hand thrust down swiftly from the roiling mass. It swept past the bandit and Gao Yiye with a whisper of wind.

Gao Yiye felt a sudden shadow blot out the sun and looked up, stunned.

Then, she witnessed a sight that would be seared into her memory forever.

The giant hand descending from the clouds curled its index finger above her head. With a swift, effortless flick—snap!—the swinging blade halted mid-air. The bandit was hurled violently backward.

He flew. Fast. Very far. Launched from beside Gao Yiye, his body arced across the sky, soaring over the entire village. He flew like a red dragonfly against a blue sky until he plummeted onto the yellow sand beyond the village. Thud! He hit the ground, every bone in his body shattered, his neck twisted at an unnatural angle. Stone dead.

A rumble of thunder echoed through the sky. A voice, deep and filled with cold fury, boomed: “Wretched bandit.”

Then, the hand drew back into the clouds as swiftly as it had appeared. Vanished.

Gao Yiye froze even in her grief, gaping dully at the empty sky.

“What in blazes just happened?!” shouted another bandit nearby, his eyes wide. “Why’d he just fly away? That far!”

A third bandit yelled, “Don’t know! Just saw him... fly!”

“Dammit, what hit him? Sent him flying that far?”

“Did the little wretch do it?”

The remaining bandits circled closer toward Gao Yiye.

Gao Yiye sat slumped on the ground, clutching her mother’s lifeless body. Stunned eyes wandered over the dozens of armed men closing in. She thought neither of escape nor defiance. Only confusion raged within her. That enormous hand appeared, flicked a man away like dust... they couldn’t see it? Why blame her? How could she possibly do such a thing?

The head bandit stepped forward, his voice a menacing growl. “Little wench, what did you just do?”

Gao Yiye shook her head in utter confusion.

“Won’t tell?” The bandit leader bellowed in fury. “This lord has plenty of ways to make you talk!”

He took one big stride forward, raising his rusted sword.

Gao Yiye closed her eyes, resigned to her fate...

But at that very moment, a giant hand shot down from the clouds once more, repeating the exact same motion. With a flick of its finger, the bandit leader let out a blood-curdling scream as he was hurled thirty meters backward. He crashed hard onto the ground, every bone in his body shattered, dead and never to rise again.

The mountain bandits stared in shock. “What happened?”

“Why did the leader suddenly fly backward and die?”

“It’s that little wench again!”

“Sorcery! It must be sorcery!”

“What... what kind of dark magic did you cast?”

Bellowing in a collective storm of fury, panic, and terror, they screamed their accusations at Gao Yiye.

This time, Gao Yiye understood. They couldn’t see the giant hand. Only she could see it.

She lifted her gaze toward the clouds. Where the clouds parted, she glimpsed the faint outline of a man’s face suspended mid-air, like a deity gazing down upon the mortal world.

Gently laying down her mother's corpse, she knelt toward the sky and bowed deeply. "Great Deity, please save us."

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Li Daoxuan's brows furrowed deeply.

He had carelessly intervened again for that little plastic figure girl, flicking two mountain bandit figurines to pieces. He was silently berating himself — a grown man engaged in a petty conflict with toys. Suddenly, he saw the plastic girl figurine look directly toward the sky. For one astonishing moment, he felt her gaze meet his own.

Her eyes held a complex swirl of emotions!

She knelt gracefully, kowtowing towards him in supplication. "Great Deity, please save us!"

Li Daoxuan felt a pang strike deep within the softest part of his heart.

“Life is already so cruel,” his displeasure surged as he directed his fury towards the remaining bandit figures in the scenic box. “Are you still not satisfied? You don’t deserve to be human. You don’t even deserve to be plastic people. All of you, just die!”

He swung his palm down, intending to smash the bandit figures in the scenic box!

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The mountain bandits stood bewildered, utterly clueless about what was transpiring.

They had just witnessed their leader inexplicably hurl through the air, landing shattered and dead. Then, they saw the girl kneel on the ground, seemingly praying to the heavens for salvation.

The next instant, a deafening boom, louder than wind or thunder, erupted overhead. Something enormous seemed plummeting from the sky with terrifying speed, whipping up a ferocious gale that spun the yellow sand beneath them into wild, miniature tornadoes. They frantically scanned the sky but saw nothing at all.

“Smack!”

A mountain bandit was abruptly flattened.

An invisible crushing weight slammed down from above, smashing his entire body into a human pancake flat against the earth – a mushy mass of flesh and bone, blood pooling wide around him.

The nearby bandits screamed, almost crazed with terror, their souls seemingly fleeing their bodies. “What?!?”

“How did he die?”

“What is happening?”

“Smack!”

Another bandit became a meat patty, firmly plastered onto the ground.

“Smack!”

Then another bandit...

“Smack!”

“Smack!”

The unseen pressure descended relentlessly, flattening bandit after bandit into meaty slaps against the earth.

The remaining bandits fled in frantic, chaotic panic, scattering in all directions. But it was useless. Smack! Smack! Smack! One after another, in quick succession, each bandit met the same grisly fate. Soon, all remaining bandits were reduced to pulpy streaks on the sandy village ground, their blood staining the earth crimson.

Gao Yiye gathered her mother's body into her arms again, weeping. "Mother, Heaven has opened its eyes. It has avenged you."

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(The skin on human palms and soles is the thickest on the body, averaging 3-4 mm thick. Entering the late Ming period through the box would thicken it 200-fold, meaning the skin on the palm would become 60-80 cm thick. Additionally, some people have calluses on their palms, adding further considerable thickness. Friends worried about the protagonist's hand being cut by the mountain bandits' knives can rest assured.)