

THE GREAT MING IN THE BOX

Chapter 5: Let's Raise Them Up

In no time, all forty-two villagers gathered around the enormous boiled egg.

Forty-two pairs of bewildered eyes stared at this colossal boiled egg.

Thirty feet long, over ten feet tall—a giant among eggs.

Standing before it, people felt as if facing a small house.

If not for the hole torn in its side revealing the yolk inside, they'd never have believed it was a shelled boiled egg.

The Village Chief of Gaojia Village stood at the forefront, his wrinkled face etched with confusion: “Yiye, you said this giant boiled egg was bestowed by the Great deity?”

Gao Yiye nodded and pointed skyward: “By the same Great deity who helped us slaughter the bandits yesterday.”

The villagers exchanged uneasy glances.

Yesterday’s events still haunted them—those vile bandits crushed by invisible force into pulpy messes, blood splattering wildly. The imagery had been too visceral.

Afterward, only Gao Yiye claimed to have seen a deity reach through the clouds to smite the bandits.

No one else witnessed it, leaving villagers uncertain whether to trust her.

Yet here they were, barely a day later, with Gao Yiye presenting this monstrous egg—again attributing it to the Great deity.

The Village Chief sighed: “Truth be told, yesterday’s miracle could only be the Great deity’s work. And today? Who but the Great deity could produce such an egg? Even if such an egg existed, no pot could boil it.”

Murmurs of agreement rippled through the crowd.

The Village Chief continued: “Yiye, the Great deity seems to favor you—appearing only to your eyes. Others lack the fortune to behold his presence.”

Gao Yiye looked startled: “The Great deity favors me?”

The Chief tilted his head: “Did he impart other commands?”

Gao Yiye pondered: “He only told me to eat it... Ah! He also said: let the villagers share it.”

Nearby, Gao Chuwu smacked his lips. A big fist-sized chunk of yolk earlier had left traces on his mouth; now his tongue scavenged every stray crumb: “Already tasted it. Unbelievably good.”

Seeing both youths unharmed after eating, the Chief shed his hesitation. He gestured at the egg: “Since the Great deity grants us this meal, we feast. But no disorderly grabbing—lest we waste it on the ground. Gao Chuwu! Fetch knives to divide it!”

He added gloomily: “This egg’s too immense. Forty-two mouths won’t finish it. Each takes a large share home. I’ve no inkling what to do with the surplus...”

After the Chief’s initial distribution, Gao Chuwu returned with blades. Each villager received massive hunks of yolk and white, cramming them into bowls and basins. Ravenously, they devoured their portions.

The leftover mound remained—too heavy to haul, too perplexing to manage. Anxiety twisted their hearts.

Outside the scenic box, Li Daoxuan fretted: If that egg rots inside, the stench... He reached into the box, retrieved the remnant, and tossed it into his trash bin.

Villagers gaped as the egg-vanish into the sky. Petrified at first, they soon prostrated, chanting gratitude to the Great deity. They pleaded too: end the drought, bring gentle rains, grant bountiful harvests.

Peace settled once more over the scenic box. The little people resumed their singular toil: searching for food. Scouring hillslopes, dredging riverbeds, digging three feet into the earth—anything edible.

Though glutted today, boiled eggs wouldn't keep. Hunger for tomorrow already gnawed at them.

Gao Yiye hoisted her bamboo basket anew, scouring sand-scoured earth for grass roots. Fortified by the meal, her steps now held vigor—far from her earlier pitiful state.

Li Daoxuan sat watching outside the scenic box, sorrow knotting his chest.

One egg couldn't save them.

Perhaps... an egg each day?

Just eating eggs probably wouldn't provide enough nutrition, would it?

They still needed rice and vegetables; occasionally, there should be some meat.

Oh, right, they also had to have salt. Humans can't live without salt. These little people count as humans too, right?

The more he thought about it, the more complicated it seemed.

Li Daoxuan thought to himself: Do I feel like I'm raising a box of little hamsters?

Given the appetites of these forty-two small figures, raising them for a month would cost at least a few bucks. That amount wasn't unaffordable. Ah well, he'd just do it.

He opened Baidu and searched: “How to raise people from the Tiny Kingdom?”

Baidu provided no answers.

He then opened his favorite military history forum and posted anonymously: “If you had a group of little people from the tiny kingdom, how would you raise them?”

Reply 1: “Are there any girl figures? I’d grab her out daily and lift her skirt.”

Reply 2: “Peep at her while she showers every day.”

Li Daoxuan muttered, “God, what a bunch of idiots.”

There was no reasoning with such useless fellows.

It seemed he had to feel his way across the river by touching the stones and learn to raise the little people from scratch.

Li Daoxuan walked into the kitchen and checked his food supplies...

Alright, basically, he had no supplies at all!

Young urbanites like him mostly lived on takeout. Only rarely did he cook noodles or boil a couple of eggs. So his fridge was almost empty, holding just a few eggs, half a bundle of dried noodles, and some oil, salt, soy sauce, and vinegar – nothing else.

This definitely wouldn't work.

Li Daoxuan glanced at the scenic box, confirmed the little figures didn't need immediate attention, and rushed out the door. He dashed into the nearest supermarket, hauled a sack of rice, bought two pieces of pork, a bag of vegetables, and a large pack of salt, spending well over a hundred yuan.

After getting home, Li Daoxuan moved close to the scenic box. He counted: all forty-two little figures were still there, diligently hunting for food.

A playful urge suddenly rose within him. He cut open the rice sack and grabbed a handful.

The snowy-white grains of Northeast rice carried a rich, fragrant aroma.

He found the girl figure's home in the cluster of houses. Looking inside with the magnifying glass, he saw the place was truly bare-bones, utterly empty, having almost no furniture.

Such an empty house – it'd be shameful not to put something in it.

Li Daoxuan cupped his hands together like a funnel. Aiming at the girl figure's window, he slowly, very slowly, poured the handful of rice into her home until it filled half the room.

Then he dusted his hands off, happily waiting. She'll be so overjoyed when she comes home and sees all this rice.

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The walls of the box blocked every single operation attempted by the protagonist. Whether it was remote-control cars, remote-control planes, or placing a camera flat—none could penetrate the box's walls to interfere outside the visible area.

However, the little figures were not bound by this limitation. They were natives from the late Ming Dynasty, able to move freely within their own world and carry items given to them by the protagonist to move freely.