

Rise 237

Chapter 237: Son-in-law

At a critical moment, Zhu Ping'an responded with calm composure. One hand shielded his chest while the other swiftly stabbed the dagger upward.

"You're a wild wolf, huh?"

"You're ruthless, huh?"

"Then I'll be even more ruthless than you!" Zhu Ping'an braved having one arm bitten by the wolf just to stab the dagger into the wild wolf's heart, causing blood to splatter on the spot and dye the snow beneath him crimson.

But Zhu Ping'an had underestimated this bloodthirsty wild wolf. With rich hunting experience, the wolf twisted its body mid-air and landed on Zhu Ping'an's right side in the snow, rendering Zhu Ping'an's counterattack completely useless.

The moment it landed, the wild wolf lunged at the open side of Zhu Ping'an's neck. Its fangs aimed precisely at Zhu Ping'an's carotid artery...

Fast, precise, ruthless — the wild wolf embodied all three to the fullest in this moment. On top of that, it was cunning. The right side was Zhu Ping'an's blind spot. Holding the dagger in his right hand, it was easy to stab left, but stabbing to the right was difficult.

Zhu Ping'an only had time to jab the dagger into the ground on his right side with an awkward posture, while using his left hand to desperately shield his neck.

A bloody wind rushed toward his face. The horse blood still in the wolf's mouth sprayed onto Zhu Ping'an's face.

In this deadly contest, the victor was about to be decided.

The wild wolf was naturally faster and had the upper hand with its preemptive strike. A bloody feast was about to begin. Its amber eyes gleamed with bloodlust.

The wolf's fangs were only an inch away from Zhu Ping'an's carotid artery, while Zhu Ping'an's dagger was still seven or eight inches from the wolf's body.

At this life-or-death moment, a sharp sound pierced the air — then a long spear came flying through the wind. With a loud "clang," it pierced through the wolf's neck, nailing it straight into the snow. The spear's tail still vibrated with a low hum.

The cold wind howled, snow danced in the sky — hot wolf blood sprayed across Zhu Ping'an's face, blurring his vision.

The wild wolf didn't even get the chance to howl before it was impaled on the snowy ground. Its amber eyes still held a bloodthirsty glint as its blood dyed the white snow red.

With his vision obscured by blood, Zhu Ping'an could only make out a blurry figure slowly approaching, footsteps crunching across the snow. The figure appeared tall and broad — like a hero straight out of a Jin Yong novel.

As the figure came closer, Zhu Ping'an was wondering whether he should say "Thank you, brave warrior," or "Thank you, hero," or perhaps "Thank you, benefactor." He had just settled on what to say, but before he could speak, the figure beat him to it.

"Son-in-law again, are you alright...?"

Son-in-law again?

That one phrase caught Zhu Ping'an off guard, and he swallowed the words he had been about to say, breaking into a series of coughs.

Wait... what's going on? "Son-in-law again"? Did he mistake me for someone else? Is this some sort of local term of respect? Or did I mishear it?

"Son-in-law again, are you okay?" The man quickly stepped forward and helped Zhu Ping'an up, concern on his face.

This time, Zhu Ping'an heard it clearly. The words "Son-in-law again" were spoken with crystal-clear pronunciation — couldn't be more standard.

After being helped up, Zhu Ping'an wiped the wolf blood off his face with his sleeve. Clearing the blood from his eyes, the brightness of the world returned — and he finally saw clearly who had saved him. Then his whole mood took a nosedive.

He knew this person.

It was none other than Wang Xiao'er, the servant from Li Shu's household in Shanghe Village — the very man who had twice brought him silver.

Why was he here?

Why is he calling me "son-in-law"?

Can someone please tell me what exactly is going on here?

"Many thanks for saving me, Brother Wang. I, Ping'an, will never forget this for the rest of my life." Zhu Ping'an gave a deep bow, full of gratitude. But even as he thanked him, Zhu Ping'an's mind was filled with confusion—why was he being called "son-in-law"? What on earth was happening?

While Zhu Ping'an was still bowing deeply in thanks, Wang Xiao'er sidestepped to avoid it and quickly helped him back up.

"Son-in-law, you mustn't! You really mustn't." Wang Xiao'er helped Zhu Ping'an up while repeatedly saying those words.

Son-in-law again?!

"Brother Wang, you..." Zhu Ping'an was full of confusion.

"Oh, I almost forgot. I should be the one thanking you, son-in-law," Wang Xiao'er said with a big smile, clasping his hands together and congratulating Zhu Ping'an.

"Yesterday, after son-in-law left home, Madam Chen sent a matchmaker to propose marriage to our young lady. As it happened, our master had just returned home. Upon learning it was you, young master, he was

extremely pleased. Master Zhu and Madam Chen came over with betrothal gifts, and that very day, your marriage to our young lady was settled. Congratulations, son-in-law—this is the written marriage contract."

As he spoke, Wang Xiao'er pulled out an exceptionally exquisite marriage contract from his clothes and handed it to Zhu Ping'an.

Zhu Ping'an hadn't yet recovered from Wang Xiao'er's words. His mind was blank as he instinctively accepted the marriage contract being handed to him.

The contract was crafted with extraordinary care. In the center were the names of himself and the black-hearted girl, Li Shu. There were also the names of the matchmaker, the guarantors, and the parents of both himself and Li Shu.

The body of the contract clearly listed his birth date and time, the betrothal gifts, and other relevant details. It even described his appearance in detail, leaving no room for impersonation.

What the hell is going on?

That black-hearted, spoiled, arrogant, rude, venomous girl Li Shu is going to be my little wife?!

Just a few days ago, this girl was mocking me, calling me all sorts of names like "toad this" and "toad that." She clearly had zero interest in me. She must be throwing a fit at home right now. With the way Li the Wealthy dotes on her, I'll probably be getting a breakup notice any day now.

Well then, let her throw a fit. That saves me the trouble of breaking off the engagement myself.

After all, her servant did save my life. How could I bring myself to speak up about calling it off? Besides, in ancient times, going against your parents' will and breaking off an engagement would be considered utterly unfilial. Especially for someone like me who wants to enter officialdom—this kind of behavior would be a huge black mark.

If I broke off the engagement, I might end up being seen as a modern-day Chen Shimei and get myself "dealt with." Just imagine: one day I get engaged, then go take the imperial exams, and if I actually rank highly, then break off the engagement—people would definitely say I dumped my poor fiancée after making it big...

So go ahead and make a scene, Lady Li.

However, while Zhu Ping'an imagined Miss Li turning the Li household upside down, she was in fact quietly sitting on her embroidered bed, calmly reading a book. From the handwriting, it even seemed to be Zhu Ping'an's own.

"Miss, miss, are you really, really going to marry that bad man from Xiahe Village?" a blushing, shy little maid asked timidly.

"What else can I do? It's my parents' will and the matchmaker's arrangement. What choice do I have?" Lady Li replied without even lifting her head, her watery eyes never leaving the book.

"But... but..."

"But what? You think I want this? But my father already agreed—what can I do?"

Upon hearing this, the little maid's cheeks grew even redder, her head nearly drooping to the floor. So embarrassing—if her lady was marrying that bad man, then wouldn't that mean... since she was the maidservant accompanying the bride...