

Rise 32

Chapter 32: Peeping at the Widow

After dinner, the sun had set in the west, and the night gently enveloped the earth. The croaking of frogs filled the air, creating a lively yet lonely atmosphere in the night.

"Little Zhiyi, little Zhiyi, come here quickly, there's something fun!" A child's voice echoed from outside the Zhu family's gate, and then two kids pushed open the door, shouting and running in.

"You go play, Erniu and Heigou are here to see you."

Chen, from the east wing of the house, listened closely and immediately knew who had arrived.

Erniu was the little rascal who had yelled that he would be called a "dog's child" if he stole his sister's snacks again after being scolded by his mother; Heigou, true to his name, was skinny and dark, with a nose as sensitive as a dog's. He could smell delicious food from any house, and he would wait outside, staring hungrily at anyone eating until they either got annoyed or felt guilty enough to let him have a taste.

These two were once good friends of Zhu Ping'an, and the three often hung out together.

Although Zhu Ping'an was very reluctant to play with these two snot-nosed brats, he still put on a cheerful face to play the role of a child and ran out joyfully.

"Come back early!" Chen reminded anxiously from behind.

"Yeah, I know."

"We're leaving, Auntie!"

The three kids held hands and scampered away, with Zhu Ping'an being dragged along by his two friends, running in a tumble. He had no idea where these two mysterious, excited buddies were taking him.

After running for a while, the two boys stopped in front of a somewhat secluded courtyard at the south end of the village. They put their small hands to their lips, signaling for silence, and pulled Zhu Ping'an into a corner to crouch down.

The two little rascals whispered to Zhu Ping'an, "Don't make a sound, we're going to show you something really cool!"

Then, like thieves, the two led Zhu Ping'an around to the other side of the wall. They skillfully lifted some wooden stakes from outside the wall to the corner, and Zhu Ping'an felt a bit speechless.

They had run all this way just to move wooden stakes? These little brats sure knew how to have fun, but what could possibly be so interesting?

The two friends didn't notice Zhu Ping'an's lack of enthusiasm; they eagerly urged him to step onto the wooden stakes they had carried over and peek over the wall. Their little eyes sparkled with excitement.

What's so exciting?

Zhu Ping'an, feeling unenthusiastic, followed his friends' gaze and looked inside. "Wow, what the..."

In the courtyard, beneath a jujube tree, a completely naked young woman was washing herself. It was probably because the courtyard was quite secluded that she dared to be so bold. Although her figure was decent, it still paled in comparison to those images stored on his computer hard drive. However, the accidental yet intentional allure of the moment was simply breathtaking.

The sky was dim, and the moonlight added a touch of brightness to the scene.

However, wasn't it a bit too early for five or six-year-old kids? Even modern children wouldn't be this mature!

"Don't look, don't look! I'm still a kid; I can't watch these scenes," Zhu Ping'an decisively shut his eyes. It wasn't that he was overly principled—after all, he had hundreds of gigabytes of such material on his hard drive—but at this age, this was not something he should be seeing. Maybe in about ten years, he could consider it. Concepts like having multiple wives or romantic affairs were not foreign to him; he just felt the timing wasn't right.

"Quick, look! She's amazing; she's not wearing any clothes, but she can hide the little rabbit!"

Erniu and Heigou were in awe of the young woman.

What little rabbit?

"We searched for so long last time and couldn't find where she hid her little rabbit!"

"Yeah, look! Can you see the rabbit? We couldn't find it. Isn't that cool? It's like magic!"

What? Zhu Ping'an took another peek and was utterly bewildered. He never expected ancient women to be this bold.

This reminded Zhu Ping'an of a modern joke: "So scary! There's a woman on the balcony across from me trying to commit suicide... I'm so scared. Should I call 120 or 110, or maybe 10086?"

"Look... we still can't find the rabbit. Isn't this magic cool?"

The two excited little rascals bragged to Zhu Ping'an.

Uh, it seemed he had wronged these two kids. They only thought the woman in the courtyard was practicing a magic trick to make a rabbit disappear.

Well, what did these little kids know, anyway?

The two kids were so mesmerized that they forgot they were standing on wooden stakes. One moment of inattention, and Erniu stepped wrong, falling to the ground with a thud.

The noise startled the young woman performing her "disappearing act." She let out a shriek, quickly put on some clothes, and began shouting about catching thieves.

Although the courtyard was relatively secluded, there were still a few houses nearby; after all, it was a village, not a complete wilderness. The young woman's screams about catching thieves alerted the entire mountain village.

"Run! If the wind gets too tight, we'll be silenced for peeking at someone's magic trick!" The two kids dragged Zhu Ping'an and sprinted away, fearing they would be caught and silenced by the woman.

The village was already in an uproar, with people rushing out in their clothes, armed with sticks and forks, ready to help catch the thief. The woman shouted about catching a thief, but the villagers didn't suspect that the so-called thief was actually three short-legged rascals slipping away through the crowd, allowing the three to successfully sneak back home.

When Zhu Ping'an huffed and puffed his way back home, Chen had already heard about the attempted theft at Widow Zhao's house in the village. Seeing Zhu Ping'an rush back anxiously, she quickly checked him over, worried that some desperate thief might have harmed her child in the chaos.

So, it was a widow; no wonder she dared to "perform magic" in her courtyard.

"No, I was playing war with Erniu and Heigou; I didn't see any thief," Zhu Ping'an shook his head, assuring Chen that there was no need to worry.

Upon hearing Zhu Ping'an's words, Chen felt relieved and warned him not to go out to play for the next few nights. She suggested waiting until the village caught the thief before letting him play outside again.

Zhu Ping'an couldn't help but scoff inwardly at this. It would be a miracle if the villagers actually caught the thief; no one would believe that he, Erniu, and Heigou—such small kids—would sneak a peek at Widow Zhao bathing.

However, he decided he wouldn't join them to watch any more "magic tricks" in the future.