

Rise 34

Chapter 34: Chew your food.

By the stones at the riverbank below the hillside, Zhu Ping'an and the cunning little girl stared at each other, creating a somewhat strange atmosphere.

"Why did you call me over?" Zhu Ping'an spread his chubby little hands and asked helplessly.

"Haha, you spoke first, so you lost!" The cunning little girl, full of excitement, jumped up from the rock, clapping her hands.

Lose? What are you talking about? When did I agree to play a game about who speaks first? Zhu Ping'an felt speechless. By the way, this girl had changed into a new outfit again. Even if she was rich, she didn't need to be so willful, changing clothes every day. She clearly looked like a little fox—why dress like a butterfly? Although she looked beautiful, it was too wasteful. Was she just going to wear a new outfit each day and toss it aside?

"Hey, what does your eye-rolling mean?" The cunning little girl, Li Shu, put her hands on her hips and approached Zhu Ping'an, angrily questioning him. "I'll tell Master Sun that you didn't pay for class and were eavesdropping..."

I'm scared of you!

"Alright, young lady, just speak your mind," Zhu Ping'an finally succumbed to the cunning little girl's threat, letting out a sigh.

Sure enough, he had that annoying look again!

"Hey, what's with your attitude? Do you want me to tell the teacher?"

The cunning little girl, Li Shu, pouted and poked Zhu Ping'an's forehead with her chubby little finger, her expression unfriendly.

"I believe you, of course, I believe you."

When it's time to bow your head, you do so. He was not the kind of person who would suffer for the sake of pride. What was wrong with bowing his head or bending his back? A strong wind reveals the strength of grass; grass bends in the strong wind but still stands tall to accept the sunlight and rain after the storm. A pine tree can stand upright under heavy snow, but during a blizzard, even the toughest pine might break. As long as you are rooted in the ground and do not betray your beliefs, what harm is there in bending your back and lowering your head?

"Did you eavesdrop on the lesson? Was it interesting? Tell me what you heard," the cunning little girl asked with her big, round eyes filled with curiosity. Of course, her haughty and spoiled nature was unchangeable. "Hmph! I'm only giving you this chance because I pity you."

"I heard the Three Character Classic: 'Human nature is good at the beginning. Nature is similar, but habits are far apart...'" Zhu Ping'an recited it word for word.

"Are you wasting this opportunity?" The cunning little girl, Li Shu, expressed her dissatisfaction.

"I also heard the Thousand Character Classic: 'The universe is dark and vast. The sun and moon wax and wane...'" Zhu Ping'an continued.

"Forget it; I'll just go tell the teacher," she declared.

The cunning little girl stood up from the rock, strutting her little legs, looking ready to report him.

"There's also a story about a little red dress," Zhu Ping'an said, seeing that the cunning little girl was putting on a show again, and he had to bring out a story from when he had entertained children at the orphanage.

"Ah, then I'll reluctantly listen for a bit."

The cunning little girl withdrew her short legs that had just stepped out and sat back down on the stone.

Sure enough, telling children a story is best done with fairy tales.

"Once upon a time, there was a lovable little girl..." Zhu Ping'an began to speak slowly.

"Lovable? Am I not cute?" the cunning little girl interrupted Zhu Ping'an and asked.

The wolves in the stories are cuter than you! Of course, he couldn't say that out loud.

"Not cuter than you..." Zhu Ping'an tugged at the corners of his mouth and said reluctantly.

The cunning little girl was satisfied, proudly demanding Zhu Ping'an to continue.

"Once upon a time, there was a lovable little girl who liked to wear a very beautiful red dress that her grandmother gave her, so people called her Little Red Skirt."

The cunning little girl pouted and said quietly, "I wouldn't wear the same outfit every day."

"One day, Little Red Skirt's mother said to her: 'Grandmother is sick; please take some snacks to visit her.' The mother also specifically instructed, 'Your grandmother lives in the forest, and it's a long way; be careful on the road and don't play around!'"

Well, Zhu Ping'an had just changed the story of Little Red Riding Hood to that of Little Red Skirt. In the Ming Dynasty, girls didn't wear hats, so he changed it to a dress instead.

"In the forest, Little Red Skirt met a wolf. She had never seen a wolf before and didn't know that wolves were fierce, so she told the wolf why she was in the forest. The wolf, knowing this, deceived Little Red Skirt into picking mushrooms... The big bad wolf rushed to the little cottage in the woods, disguised his voice as Little Red Skirt to knock on grandmother's door... 'Gulp!' The big bad wolf swallowed Little Red Skirt's grandmother whole... The big bad wolf disguised himself as grandmother... The big bad wolf opened his big mouth, 'Gulp!' Without even chewing, he swallowed Little Red Skirt whole."

"Did he eat them all?"

"Later, a woodcutter came along. The woodcutter took out a big pair of scissors and, while the big bad wolf was still asleep, quickly and carefully snipped open the wolf's belly. Grandmother and Little Red Skirt were rescued from the wolf's belly."

Watching the cunning little girl listen seriously to the story, Zhu Ping'an sighed. Children are more open to accepting new things; if this story were told to the adults of this era, they definitely wouldn't accept it. They would ask how the wolf could speak, whether a wolf's belly could hold an adult and a child, and why those who were eaten could still come out unharmed...

After finishing the adapted version of the Little Red Riding Hood story, Zhu Ping'an asked, "What did you learn from this story?"

"You should chew your food thoroughly..."

Upon hearing this, the cunning little girl blinked her eyes and tilted her head as she said.

Chew your food thoroughly!!!

That's not the point at all!

The story of Little Red Riding Hood teaches little girls not to chat with strangers casually, not to play around, and to go home early!

Zhu Ping'an had hoped that this story would make the cunning little girl stay away from him, a stranger, and stop playing outside. He wanted her to hurry back home and be the proper young lady who stays indoors.

However, he didn't expect the cunning little girl to completely disregard common sense. Just one sentence about chewing food thoroughly left Zhu Ping'an completely bewildered.

The cunning little girl was listening to the story with great interest. This little poor kid's storytelling was different from others; it seemed quite engaging.

"Well, seeing how hard you're trying, I'll give you another chance. You tell another story," the cunning little girl said proudly.

"Uh..." Zhu Ping'an paused, glancing at the sun in the sky; it must be time for the teacher's break. "Alright, let me tell you the story of the Frog Prince."

"Once upon a time, there was a king. All his daughters were very beautiful, especially the youngest. Even the sun, which had seen everything, would be amazed by her beauty every time it shone on her face. Near the king's palace, there was a dark, dense forest. In the forest, under an old banyan tree, there was a well..."

The cunning little girl listened intently, finding this little kid's story quite interesting and the way he told it enjoyable.

The line about how even the sun was amazed by her beauty seemed to be saying that I'm pretty... Ah, it makes me a little shy...

"The little princess really disliked the ugly frog..."

At this point, Zhu Ping'an was interrupted by the cunning little girl's muttering, "If it were me, I'd dislike that ugly frog even more. A toad dreaming of swan meat! Hmph! I like the best man in the world; he has to be a top scholar. I want to be a government wife..."

This little brat was so shameless, always talking about dowries and being a government wife. At her age, she didn't even have a concept of shyness.

"From then on, the handsome prince and the beautiful little princess lived a happy and joyful life..." Zhu Ping'an finally finished telling the story of the Frog Prince, despite being interrupted several times by the cunning little loli.

"What? A toad is still a toad and will never turn into a prince... Stewed toad or braised toad is fine, but it can't turn into a prince..."