

Rise 50

Chapter 50: The Cuckoo Occupies the Magpie's Nest

Eldest Uncle spent quite a bit on this matter, and Grandmother urged Father to go back up the mountain to earn some income for the family again. Zhu Ping'an was also clamoring to go along because he had been there once before, so this time when negotiating with Chen, he faced fewer obstacles than expected. After some coaxing, Chen nodded in agreement.

Chen readily agreed, considering that last time, Zhou Souyi had brought back a significant amount of personal belongings from the mountain.

I grabbed my small basket, changed into a pair of thick-soled shoes, and put on patched linen clothes, which I wouldn't mind damaging in the mountains. Everything was ready, and we were just about to head out.

"Zhu Ping'an..."

A crisp, sweet child's voice rang out from outside the Zhu family gate, like a lark fluttering into the courtyard, the voice so sweet it could make someone sick.

However, upon hearing this voice, Zhu Ping'an's chubby face darkened. Why did this girl come?

Aside from the eldest uncle, who was kneeling in the ancestral hall reflecting on his actions, the other family members all came out upon hearing the sweet, crisp child's voice, filled with curiosity. They were not disappointed when the gate was pushed open by a little maid with a bun hairstyle, leading in a cute little girl riding a small red horse. Her chubby hands, gripping the reins, were clean and fair, and she wore a gold bracelet on her wrist.

She was clearly a child from a wealthy family.

Zhu Ping'an felt a bit overwhelmed. Why was this scheming little girl here? And she seemed to have changed into a completely different person, so it couldn't be good news.

Today, the scheming little girl had changed into a new outfit and styled her hair into an adorable drooping bun, adorned with butterfly-shaped hairpins. The baby fat on her face added to her cuteness, and her ink-black eyes sparkled with a mischievous glint. She smiled sweetly, showing two small dimples on her chubby cheeks, completely shedding her previous arrogance, looking just like a lovely and sensible little neighbor girl.

"Hello, grandfather, grandmother and uncles and aunts, I am Li Shu from the old Li family in Shanghe Village. You can call me Shu'er. I'm here to play with Zhu Ping'an," the scheming little girl Li Shu greeted cheerfully, her sweet voice as honeyed as could be, making her seem very obedient and sensible.

The little maid with the bun hairstyle, Hua'er, who followed closely behind, had the insight to present the pastries and other gifts she was carrying to Grandmother.

"Grandmother, these are treats my father asked me to bring for you to try. Please accept them, or else my father will scold me for being thoughtless when I go back," Li Shu said sweetly, even providing a reason for the Zhu family to accept the gifts.

"You child, if you're coming to play, just come to play! Why bring anything?" Grandmother happily accepted the gifts, complaining in a satisfied tone.

"Oh my, this little girl is so pretty! She will definitely be a fairy-like beauty when she grows up," Fourth Aunt exclaimed, her eyes sparkling, not knowing if she was admiring the gifts or the little girl.

"Exactly, she really is beautiful," First Aunt looked at the little girl as if she were a future daughter-in-law, smiling as she asked, "Did the little girl come to find Jun'er?"

"I came to play with Zhu Ping'an," the scheming little girl was already quite annoyed inside, but her face still wore a sweet smile.

Chen was completely satisfied with this little girl, who was not only good-looking but also obedient and sensible.

"You, put down the backpack. You're not allowed to go up the mountain; go play with Shu'er instead."

As soon as Chen was satisfied, she sold out her youngest son, turning around and commanding Zhu Ping'an that he was stripped of the right to go up the mountain.

Zhu Ping'an wore a face full of grievances.

Seeing this, the scheming little girl pouted her lips, looking like she was about to cry, and timidly pointed at Zhu Ping'an, saying, "Aunt is so nice, but Zhu Ping'an doesn't seem willing to play with me."

Just look at that tone; it was utterly wronged, tears threatening to fall but held back, making one feel heartbroken.

Zhu Ping'an pursed his lips. This annoying girl, if she were born in modern times, would definitely be a top-tier little actress. What a pity to waste such acting talent.

Chen, however, was unaware of this. She turned around and saw Zhu Ping'an pouting. "Oh, you little brat, if you're not happy, fine, but you shouldn't make faces at her."

So, Chen approached and pinched Zhu Ping'an's chubby face, stretching it into a smile, comforting the scheming little girl by saying, "No, look, Zhu'er is also very willing to play."

To stretch out that smile, Chen didn't hold back on the strength in her hands, and Zhu Ping'an felt like his little chubby face was about to be pulled off.

The scheming little girl had achieved her goal and led the little maid into Zhu Ping'an's small room, her face adorned with a smug smile. No matter how unwilling Zhu Ping'an was, he was given a slap on the backside by Chen and pushed into the room.

Father Zhu Shouyi and older brother Zhu Pingchuan had gone up the mountain, while First Aunt and several other sisters-in-law chatted cheerfully in the courtyard.

"Old Li's family? Isn't that the wealthy Li family from Shanghe Village? Oh, I've heard that the wealthy Li family dotes on their little girl. Now it seems to be true; did you see that little girl's clothes? They must cost at least a few taels of silver."

"If you ask me, it's better to dote on a son than a daughter."

"Look at what you're saying, sister-in-law. If I had such a lovely daughter, I'd spoil her to the heavens."

While the atmosphere in the courtyard was lively, it was quite the opposite in the room. Zhu Ping'an glared with displeasure at the scheming little girl, who was practically wagging her tail with delight. He was very unhappy; if it weren't for this annoying girl, he could have gone up the mountain again today.

"Your room is so shabby," the scheming little girl pinched her nose, looking disdainfully at Zhu Ping'an's bedroom. "My doghouse is better than your room."

"Is that so?" Zhu Ping'an asked skeptically.

The scheming little girl's self-esteem was greatly satisfied as she nodded vigorously. "Of course it's true. If you don't believe me, ask Hua'er."

The little maid, Hua'er, nodded repeatedly.

Zhu Ping'an looked at the spoiled little girl and said flatly, "Then go back to your doghouse."

The scheming little girl was momentarily stunned.

"What are you standing there for? Hurry up and bring it out," she said, venting her frustrations on the little maid standing beside her.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Miss." Hua'er quickly pulled out a pack of exquisite pastries from her pocket and placed it on the table in front of Zhu Ping'an.

"Here, some treats for you. Now hurry up and continue telling the story about the Condor Heroes," the scheming little girl urged.

"I won't tell it," Zhu Ping'an shook his head in refusal.

"Will you tell it or not?" the scheming little girl threatened.

"I won't tell it," Zhu Ping'an maintained his stance.

"Not telling, huh?" The scheming little girl pouted, then turned and shouted loudly towards the door, "Aunt, Aunt..."

Upon hearing this, Chen rushed in immediately. As soon as she entered, she shot a glare at Zhu Ping'an and then gently asked the scheming little girl, "Did Zhu Ping'an bully you? You tell me, and I'll definitely teach him a good lesson."

Oh my, mother, am I still your biological child? Zhu Ping'an felt deeply hurt.

Under Chen's tender care, the scheming little girl shook her head, pinching a pastry and offering it to Chen with a sweet smile. "Zhu Ping'an didn't bully me, Aunt. I just wanted you to try this pastry."

"Shu'er is so well-behaved."

Chen was immediately melted by the scheming little girl's actions. What a clever and understanding little girl! Shouldn't she also have a daughter? Chen even thought this.

Seeing that Li Shu was fine, Chen felt relieved. Before leaving, she grabbed Zhu Ping'an's ear and commanded, "Make sure to play well with Shu'er. You mustn't bully her just because she's obedient, or you'll be in trouble."

Zhu Ping'an remained stunned, unable to react until Chen left.

Damn, this is like a cuckoo occupying a magpie's nest!