

Rise 52

Chapter 52: The Wild Boar

Waiting is just waiting. If it happens again next time, Zhu Ping'an is not worried at all about the threats from the cunning little girl.

He returned to the ditch, picked up the local specialties, and then found a secluded place to bury them, worried that Zhu Shouyi or Chen would see them and feel heartbroken or disappointed. He had enough of this kind of anger all by himself, and besides, he had already taught a lesson to the cunning little girl and the bun little maid, so he didn't want to let this incident affect others' moods.

When Zhu Ping'an returned home, Zhu Shouyi and his elder brother Zhu Pingchuan had also just come back from the mountain, and it seemed there had been some unexpected events during their trip. Both of them had some injuries; Zhu Shouyi had scratches on his back, with three shallow bloodstains on the coarse cloth of his shirt. Although they were light, they looked frightening. Compared to Zhu Shouyi, Zhu Pingchuan was doing much better, with just a small cut on his hand.

Despite this, both of them were quite happy, as they had brought back a wild boar that weighed at least over 200 pounds, its hooves tied with grass ropes. It was hard to tell how they managed to bring it back, given its weight. This wild boar was black and gray, quite different from domestic pigs—first of all, it was large, with long and hard bristles on its back. Additionally, this wild boar had two tusk-like big teeth that were exposed and turned upward, making it look quite intimidating.

Chen was crying on the side, first pulling Zhu Pingchuan over to check his body. Seeing that he only had a small cut on his hand, her expression softened a bit. However, when she saw Zhu Shouyi, tears started falling again. She pulled Zhu Shouyi to check his body, worried that he might have been hurt elsewhere and was just pretending to be fine. After discovering he only had a scrape on his back, her worried expression finally eased a little.

"What are you trying to prove? Didn't I tell you before you left? If my son loses even a hair, I'll hold you accountable. Now my son has a cut on his hand, just wait and see how I deal with you!" After her worries dissipated, Chen felt a wave of regret and began to lecture Zhu Shouyi.

Zhu Shouyi only smiled foolishly, which irritated Chen even more.

In contrast to Chen's reaction, the others were different. Grandma only worried for a short moment at first; when she saw that her son and grandson were both fine, she turned her attention to the wild boar. As for Fourth Aunt, she had been completely absorbed in the wild boar from the very beginning, exclaiming repeatedly about how big the wild boar was.

Grandpa quickly returned from outside as well. Upon seeing the wild boar brought back by Zhu Shouyi, he was equally astonished. He briefly asked about the injuries to Zhu Shouyi and Zhu Pingchuan before he began to inquire in detail about the catch.

Before Zhu Shouyi answered, he sighed repeatedly, saying, "Fortunately, this time Zhi'er didn't come along. I have to thank that little girl from the Li family. If she hadn't come to play with Zhi'er, Zhi'er would have had to go into the mountains with us, and that would have been bad."

"You don't know! This time, when Dachuan and I went into the mountains to check the traps we set last time, we didn't expect to run into this guy," Zhu Shouyi said, glancing at the black-gray wild boar, still a bit fearful.

"The outer area of the mountain is also unsafe now?". Chen was quite frightened. "Then how about we stop going into the mountains from now on?"

As soon as Chen said that, it was obvious that the Fourth Aunt and Grandmother looked displeased. Grandmother was really something— Zhu Shouyi is also your son, so how could it feel like you don't care much about him? This might be the sadness of being the second child. The first child is the apple of their parents' eye, with all the surprise and love of parenthood going to them. But the second child is different; after the first, the parents' surprise is greatly reduced. The first child has already occupied a big space in their hearts, leaving less room for the second. And then, of course, the youngest is treated differently, like Fourth Uncle—born when his parents were older and the youngest—so they naturally pampered him more.

Zhu Shouyi, however, didn't seem to care at all. He grinned foolishly and said, "No need to be so tense, this time was just an accident. The wild boar might have been greedy for honey, gnawed on a hornet's nest, and got stung badly. The bee venom probably made it lose its mind, and it ran straight into my trap, caught right on the spot. We happened to come across it and didn't notice such a big one in the trap. When it suddenly charged at us, we weren't prepared and got a little hurt."

Actually, the scene at that time was far more dangerous than Zhu Shouyi made it sound. The trap set by Zhu Shouyi was hidden in the bushes. When Zhu Shouyi and his first son, Zhu Pingchuan, approached, the wild boar suddenly rushed out with a howl. If Zhu Shouyi hadn't reacted quickly and tackled Zhu Pingchuan to the ground, the consequences would have been unimaginable. The trap in the bushes wasn't meant to catch such a big animal like a wild boar. If it hadn't been for the boar's greed for honey and being poisoned by the bee stings, the trap wouldn't have held it. With several factors working together, this greedy wild boar became the prey of Zhu Shouyi and his son, Zhu Pingchuan.

Because the wild boar was large and heavy, Zhu Shouyi and Zhu Pingchuan spent a great deal of effort to slowly drag it down the mountain and carry it back home.

Although they got slightly injured, having caught such a big beast still made everyone feel quite happy.

"Second son, take this big guy to town tomorrow and sell it. It's definitely worth a lot," Grandmother said, quite pleased with the fat, gluttonous wild boar. The family was short on money, so she urged Zhu to sell the boar in town the next day.

"Alright, Mother," Zhu Shouyi nodded in agreement.

Wild boar is different from domesticated pigs. Wild boars roam freely in the wilderness, while domestic pigs roll in the mud inside pens. This difference results in a significant contrast between the meat of wild boars and that of domestic pigs. Wild boar meat is leaner, has a better texture, and contains various amino acids and fibers. It has the tenderness of pork along with the unique flavor of game. It is highly nutritious and sells for several times the price of domestic pig meat.

Tomorrow, when going to town, they could also sell the honeysuckle that the older brother had harvested. Unfortunately, the honeysuckle's flowering season was coming to an end. According to the older brother, they could only harvest once or twice more before the season was over.

During dinner, Grandmother asked Zhu Ping'an to take food to Uncle in the ancestral hall. It was obvious that Grandmother favored the eldest son—what was sent to him was a special meal cooked separately, much better than the family dinner. It was a balanced meal with meat and vegetables, flavorful soup, and thick porridge. Zhu Ping'an almost felt like misbehaving to get punished and sent to the ancestral hall, but he knew Grandmother would never treat him the same way, so he gave up the idea.

In the ancestral hall, Uncle showed no sign of reflecting on his actions. Before Zhu Ping'an had even brought the food, he was already eating—a meal with four dishes and a soup, quite fancy, clearly from a restaurant.

Uncle casually held a book in one hand and picked up food with the other, completely at ease.

Where did Uncle get the money?

And wasn't Grandfather supposed to have him kneeling in reflection?

Carrying the food box, Zhu Ping'an walked into the ancestral hall, startling his uncle. Instinctively, Uncle tried to cover up the large table of food and wine, but how could he hide such a big meal? However, after seeing it was Zhu Ping'an, Uncle sighed in relief and stopped trying to hide.

"Zhi'er, this food is for offering to the ancestors," Uncle said solemnly, wiping his mouth and giving a serious explanation.

"Oh." Zhu Ping'an nodded, feeling dismissive inside—he really thought Uncle was trying to fool him like a child.

"Ah, don't mention this to your Grandfather or Grandmother when you go back," Uncle coughed and instructed Zhu Ping'an in a self-righteous manner.

"Zhi'er, leave the food here. And take this—go buy some candy." Uncle handed Zhu Ping'an a single copper coin. Yes, one coin.

The reason Uncle wanted Zhu Ping'an to leave the food was to cover up that he had already eaten. If the food was left and Zhu Ping'an didn't mention it, no one would know.

Despite his disdain, Zhu Ping'an still accepted the copper coin.

Not telling Grandfather or Grandmother? That's fine—I can always tell Fourth Aunt. She would definitely enjoy hearing it.