

## Act 4 Subduing the beast

(*Shui Hong Hua*)(*Enter hunters Jing and Mo*) <33 The local authorities have placed a bounty on the head of the Lord of the Mountain. This is an urgent affair, and we hunters are hard up. We have suffered to no avail, hesitating how to go about this difficult task. If we turn back, we are in danger of violating the strict deadline. If we press forward, we are in danger of loosing our lives. We are surely risking our lives here. 33> (*Mo*) <33 We are hunters from Yanggu District. Since a tiger with slanting eyes and white forehead has turned up on Jingyang Ridge<33>, killing a lot of people, the local magistrate has given us hunters a deadline and ordered us to catch it. But this tiger is ferocious, <33 how can we capture it? 33> (*Jing*) Brother, we should put on tiger's furs and <33hide at the foot of the hill, and set up crossbows with poisoned arrows all around. Then we just have to wait until it succumbs to its death. 33> (*Mo*) <33 That makes sense. On a narrow path there is no way back. 33> (*Jing*) <33 Since we are on official charge, we have no choice. 33> (*They hide and exit. Enter Sheng*) <33 In daytime the road used to be full of horses and carriages. I have traveled a long way, that goes without saying. Still I do not know for whom I shall devote my life. This moment reminds me of Ping Yuan Jun.<sup>1</sup> I, Wu Song, have stayed long at the residence of Lord Chai, a relative of the Emperor. 33> I wanted to join Song Gongming. I expected him to arrive and waited for some more days. After I took leave with the

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<sup>1</sup> A nobleman of great hospitality during the Zhou dynasty. 平原君: 赵惠文王之弟, 即赵胜, 封于东武城(今山东武城西北), 号平原君。任赵相, 有食客数千人。

Emperor's relative, I had some news of Brother Song, and now I must <33 travel to Yanggu District to visit my elder brother. 33> <page 2> (*Bei Shuang Diao* and *Xin Shui Ling*) <34, 33 What a hard lot Heaven had in store for this hero! 34, 33> <33 My first twenty years passed like a dream.33> <34, 33 Unable to <sup>2</sup> raise in the world, riding the clouds and roaming through the nine myriads of space, ending up<sup>3</sup> floating about on thousands of waves and ripples of the stormy sea, 34, 33> <34, 33 wandering about, here today gone tomorrow. 34, 33> <33 Sun and moon <sup>4</sup> handle my life in vain. 33> While talking, I already arrive at Jingyang Ridge. After the long journey, I am now thirsty and hungry. Here is a tavern, <33 advertised by a wine-banner with the words “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”. What does that mean? Let me go in and sit for a little while. 33> “Waiter?” (*Enter Chou*, answering) <34, 33 Wine! Wine! Wine! Here! Here! Here! Want to buy on credit? Leave! Leave! Leave! 34, 33> <33 Please come inside and sit33>, good guest! (*Sheng*) I wonder what you mean by “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”. (*Chou*) Good guest, we brew really good wine here. Any guest who drinks three bowls of it gets drunk and cannot cross this Jingyang Ridge. Therefore, we call it “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”. (*Sheng*, *pose* of laughing) <33 See if I can cross the ridge or not after drinking33> ten bowls! (*Chou*, *pose* of pouring wine) We only have cooked beef here, but I am afraid it is not very

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<sup>2</sup>不能勾: “勾”可能是“够”的别字。

<sup>3</sup>则落得: “则”可能是“只”的别字。I think this expression means “it only ended like..”, f.ex. “只落得这样的下场”。

<sup>4</sup>烏兔: a term for the sun and moon, respectively.

tasty... would you like some? (*Sheng*) (*Zhe Gui Ling*) <34, 33 No need to roast phoenix or cook dragons. 34, 33> (Then he drinks up one bowl of wine after each sentence) <34, 33 Wine is bubbling in the parrot cup, with a rich shine of amber.34, 33> <33 I didn't realize that five gallons<sup>5</sup> of wine will sober you up, and three cups after another will work wonders! 33> (*Chou*) You already had twelve or thirteen bowls of wine, better stay here for the night. (*Sheng* drunken singing) <34, 33 Why do you need to worry? 34, 33> <33 I am going no matter what. 33> (*Pose* of leaving, *pose* of *Chou* grabbing) Pay me first, and I have something to tell you. (*Sheng* speaks with his back towards the waiter) <33 After the long journey, there is not much left of the silver that Mr. Chai gave me the other day. 33> Waiter, you can have all the silver as well as my bundle. <33 I feel ashamed to have so little money. 33> So, what else do you want to say? (*Chou*) Look at the government notice ahead! On this ridge, there has recently arrived a tiger with slanting eyes and white forehead, killing people. Single travelers are not allowed to cross the ridge for their own safety. (*Sheng*, *pose* of becoming sober, speaking angrily) <34, 33 Had you not brought the wild tiger into the conversation, I might not have wanted to leave.34, 33> <33 But since you have mentioned this tiger killing people, I suddenly feel myself full of energy, even my hairs stand up. 33> I must go and capture it! (*Chou*) I don't think you <page 3> are a tiger eater. Listen to me. Life is precious. Don't you go there and throw it away! (*Sheng*, *pose* of leaving) No, <33 I cannot hold my towering rage. 33> (*Chou*, *pose* of grabbing; *Sheng*, *pose* of

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<sup>5</sup>斗: (1 dou=10 liters)

pushing *Chou* into a somersault; *Sheng*) Well, <33 I am in a great hurry to leave.  
<33> (*Chou*) If he absolutely wants to throw away his life, that is none of my business.  
'Everyone must sweep the snow from his own door and not worry about the frost on  
other people's roof'.<sup>6</sup> (*Exit Chou; Sheng, pose of walking in a drunken state*) <33  
While sunset is fading, with drunken, drowsy eyes, I arrive at the ridge. Why  
is that big beast nowhere to be seen? Those guys are just trying to fool me, even the  
government notice is rubbish. Now, I start to feel the effect of the wine, and must take  
a nap. <33> (*Pose of resting; the sound of a tiger's roar from backstage; sheng, pose of  
waking up*) <33 Yah! There really comes a big beast! <33> (*Pose of a tiger jumping up,  
Sheng*) (*Yan Er Luo*) <34, 33 Watching from here,<sup>7</sup> its hairy body looks strong  
and fierce. <34, 33> (*Pose of cracking his cudgel in two on a tree*) Yah! <34, 33 Now  
this wolf-teeth cudgel of mine got broken first! <34, 33> (*Sound of gongs from  
backstage, Sheng stops talking; pose of the tiger springing and sheng dodging, to be  
repeated three times*) <34, 33 Here am I, dodging back and forth for ever. That  
damned monster is flaunting its claws and baring its teeth. <34, 33> (*Again the  
sound of gongs from backstage, Sheng stops talking; pose of the tiger jumping and  
sheng dodging, to be repeated three times*) (*De Sheng Ling*) <33 Yah! When I  
dodged, <33> <34, 33 it turned round and jumped into the air, in the twinkling  
of an eye it lost the track. <34, 33> (*Pose of holding the tiger and beating it*). <34,  
<33 This is surely<sup>8</sup> a man-slaughtering tiger <34, 33>, so enemies will we become!

<sup>6</sup> 各人自扫门前雪，休管他家瓦上霜：谚语。

<sup>7</sup> 覷：to spy, to watch for.

<sup>8</sup> 这的是：真的是？

(Again the sound of gongs from *backstage*, *sheng* again stops talking; the tiger jumps once more and fails, *pose* of tiger slinking away). <34, 33> If you want to display your prowess, then your blows must come down with a weight of a thousand pounds. 34, 33> (*Pose* of holding the tiger and beating it to death) <33> Tiger, today you have come to the end of the road. How much it resembles the flowers that cannot bloom for more than a hundred days, the flowers cannot bloom for more than a hundred days. 33> Now the tiger is killed. I had better keep going while the wine still has its effect. (*Jing* and *mo*, clothed in tiger's fur, jump up to the stage, *Sheng*) <33> Yah! There are two more tigers coming! I'm dead this time! 33> <page 4> (*Gu Mei Jiu* and *Tai Ping Ling*) <33> I can only<sup>9</sup> fight the evening wind with my last energy. Fight the evening wind with my last energy. 33> (*Jing* and *Mo*, *pose* of walking, *Sheng*) <33> Yah! Those are moving with two legs! 33> (*Jing* and *Mo*) Why! Are you a man or a ghost? How could you dare to travel alone here! (*Sheng*) <33> I'm the world's greatest hero, called Wu Song. 33> (*Jing* and *Mo*) <33> Did you meet a tiger? 33> (*Sheng*) <33> Allow me to say it was indeed ferocious. 33> (*Jing* and *Mo*) <33> Please, tell us about it? 33> (*Sheng*) <33> While prowling in the thicket, it was already awe-inspiring. 33> (*Jing* and *Mo*) Wow! (*Sheng*) <33> When it sprang, it was like a mountain falling down. 33> (*Jing* and *Mo*) Wow! (*Sheng*) <33> When it swung its tail, it was like a sharp steel knife upright in the air. 33> (*Jing* and *Mo*) Wow! (*Sheng*) <33> Its mighty roar could scare a thousand people away. 33>

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<sup>9</sup> 则索: 只好, 只得。

(*Jing and Mo*) Wow! (*Sheng*) <33 Even from a distance ordinary people would feel like being hurt already. 33> (*Jing and Mo*) Wow! <33 Then why weren't you killed by it? 33> (*Sheng*) <33 Me?! With my guts and great strength, I managed to finish off that big beast with my bare fists. 33> (*Jing and Mo*) Wow! Then we must thank you sincerely, strong fellow! (*Sheng*) <33 Yah! Let everyone praise me then! 33> (*Jing and Mo*) We are pleased to let you strong fellow know, <33 we are hunters from Yanggu District. The local authorities have set up a deadline for us to capture this big beast. 33> Since nobody could get close to it, all we could do was to place poisoned arrows around here and wait. Now since you big fellow killed it, where is the dead body? (*Sheng*) You guys, follow me! (*Pose of going back, Jing and Mo* staring from afar, *pose of looking frightened*). (*Yuan Yang Sha*) (*Sheng*) <33 Just here by the cliff, wasn't this the place where the tiger succumbed and I displayed my great courage? 33> (*Jing and Mo*) <33 Such a big beast was beaten to death by your powerful fists, even Bian Zhuang and Cun Xiao<sup>10</sup> are no comparison to you. 33> (*Sheng*) I laugh at all those precautions of yours, spending days on end for nothing!<sup>11</sup> (*Jing and Mo*) <33 Well, since you came here, we can't let you go! 33> (*Sheng*) Why is that? (*Jing and Mo*) <33 We must send you to the Magistrate to ask for the reward. 33> (*Sheng*) <33 I was just trading at the inn.<sup>12</sup> Who would have imagined that I would get credit for my merits here? 33> (*Jing and Mo*) <33 You have to go with us! 33> (*Sheng, pose of turning his back to them*) I have to

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<sup>10</sup>卞莊存孝：卞莊，春秋時魯國人，力勇一次能殺兩虎；存孝，見元·陳以仁《存孝打虎》。

<sup>11</sup>鎮日無用：整日無用？

<sup>12</sup>逆旅：an inn

go to Yanggu District to look for my brother anyway. I will just go with them then.

(*Pose of turning around*) I will go with you. But <33 I am afraid of those six <page

5> alleys and three streets with crowds of people milling around in a

hubbub. 33> It will be the talk of the town that nobody in Yanggu District could

fight the tiger, but a man from Qinghe District killed it. (*Jing and Mo, pose of facing*

each other) What a shame! (*Sheng*) <33 How humiliating for the Yanggu

people! 33> (*Jing and Mo*) Strong fellow, you are a real hero of this world, and the

Yanggu people will recognize you as such! (*Sheng*) Alright then. (*Pose of walking*)

<33 I have to follow 33>, <33 how can I accept all these flattering words.

33> (*He exits; Jing*) Strong fellow, you go first. Let me go and give the tiger a few

punches. (*Mo*) Why do you beat a dead tiger? (*Jing*) People like us can just beat dead

tigers! (*Carrying the tiger, exeunt*)      Translated by Feng Yining and Vibeke Børdahl