

It was a hot afternoon. Something happened in a town...

The sunlight paints the town of Ping'an red,
and the afternoon air is sultry like a coming storm.

* Ping'an (平安) means "peaceful."

The red-faced sword-lion, guardian of the Liu family, is drowsy.
The sword in his mouth wobbles.

He begins to fall asleep.
The sword falls to the ground with a loud clang.

The sun is even stronger now,
and the chirp of the cicadas becomes louder in the quiet town.
Three small ants clamber off the sword slowly.

Two pigeons perch at the foot of the wall to drink.
A black cat suddenly pounces at the pigeons,
but they dodge the attack quickly and fly away.

The black cat is startled by the sound of oncoming footsteps and
scurries off.

A gust of warm air funnels through the red brick alley,
waking up the red-faced sword-lion.
He opens his mouth and has a big yawn.

Eh, where is my sword?
Where is it exactly?
He looks around nervously.
The sword has disappeared.

So,
he jumps off the base
and sets off hastily in search of the sword.

He passes the yellow-faced sword-lion, guardian of the Wu family.
“Why have you come here?” the yellow asks in surprise.

“I’ve lost my sword!” the
red replies.

“Oh no! You must find it.
I’ll help you.”
offers the yellow.

They pass the black-faced sword-lion,
guardian of the Li family.
“Why have you come here?” the black
asks in surprise.

“I’ve lost my sword!”
the red replies.
The black joins them in
search of the sword.

Granddaddy Liu wakes from his afternoon nap
to find his sword-lion missing.

“Without the sword-lions, Ping’an Town is no longer safe!”
people begin to chatter.

Granddaddy Liu suggests seeking the advice of Goddess Mazu.

The red met three small ants in Moli alley.

* Moli(茉莉) means Jasmine.

“Have you seen my sword?” He asked.

“Yes. It’s too big. So we couldn’t move it.

You can try to ask pigeons.” Small ants reply.

“Have you seen a sword?” The yellow asked the two pigeons on the roof.

“Yes. It’s too heavy. So we couldn’t carry it. You can try to ask the black cat.” Pigeons suggest.

“Have you seen a sword?”

The black asked a black cat on stone bench.

“Yes. It’s too hard. So I couldn’t bite it.”

The black cat says.

* Mazu(媽祖) is one of the most popular goddess in Taiwan.

They couldn’t find the sword after all. They have no choice but to seek the advice of Goddess Mazu.

“I saw a little boy waving a sword. He walked into the house with the red wooden door at the far corner,”

Goddess Mazu says.

They arrive in front of the red wooden door, and find the red’s sword hanging on the door.

The original sword-lion at the little boy’s house has been badly damaged.

The red cannot bear to take the sword.

He decides to leave his sword there to protect the little boy’s home.

Everyone comforts the red.

At the moment, the black has an idea,
“Let’s help you draw a new sword!”

Granddaddy Liu and the townspeople return to the Mazu Temple for worship.

They pray to Goddess Mazu to protect the town, and ask for a lottery poem.

* The translation is for page 32.

* Translation is presented on page 31.

After reading the poem,
they feel safe
and return home.

Arriving at home, Granddaddy Liu is happy to see that the sword-lion is already home.

The guardian sword-lion returns to his base, and peace returns to Ping’an Town.

The Sword-Lion Who Lost His Sword

Description: In Chinese folk-culture it is customary to hang a sculpture of a glaring lion with a sword clenched between its teeth over the entrances of homes in the belief that this will ward off evil. This picture book tells the story of a sword-lion who loses his sword on a hot summer day and much venture forth to find it.

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