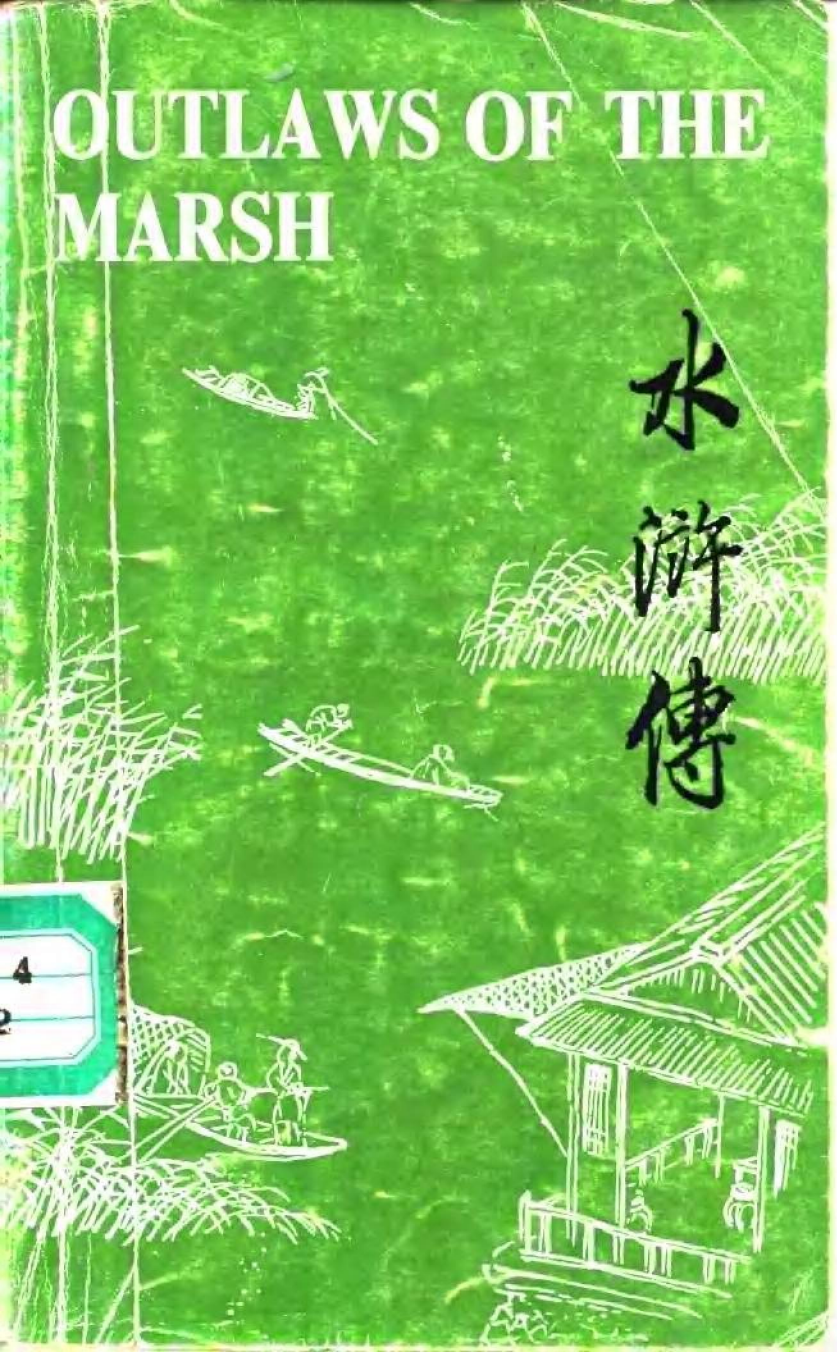


# OUTLAWS OF THE MARSH

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水 浒 传

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## EDITOR' S NOTE

One of the best known and best loved of the ancient Chinese novels to have come down through the ages, Shi Nai'an's *Outlaws of the Marsh* is based on a peasant uprising which took place in the reign of Hui Zong, a Song Dynasty emperor who ruled from 1101 to 1125. The story tells how and why one hundred and eight men and women banded together on a marsh-girt mountain at the junction of present-day Shandong, Henan and Hebei provinces.

The little outlaw band gradually grew into a formidable army of thousands, gaining fame far beyond the borders of the region. It fought brave and resourceful battles against the oppression and cruelty of despots and tyrants. The troops sent against the forces of Liangshan Marsh suffered one defeat after another.

The present adapted version of *Outlaws of the Marsh* is based on the excellent English translation of the novel by Sidney Shapiro, published by Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, in 1980.

The adapted version set forth in three books, each high-lighting three chieftain of the Liangshan Marsh stronghold.

In order to retain the suspense of the original

novel, the editor has taken the liberty of cutting some of the details, where doing so would not resulted in factual inaccuracy.

Editor

December 1984

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# **BOOK ONE**

## **CHAPTER ONE — LU DA**

### **1**

Our narrative of the gallant deeds of the outlaws of Liangshan Marsh opens with the appearance on the scene of Lu Da, known later as Lu Zhishen.

Lu Da was a major in the border garrison of Weizhou. He was a stalwart fellow, six feet tall, with a girth of more than two meters. A full beard framed his face. He had an irascible temper, and easily flew into a rage.

One day, as he was strolling about the town, he made the acquaintance of a young man called Shi Jin along with Shi Jin's former arms instructor, Li Zhong.

Lu Da invited them to have a few drinks with him. They went to an inn down the street and took their places at a table. The waiter, who knew Lu Da, greeted them respectfully. He soon brought wine and covered the table with platters of meat and vegetables.

Each of the three downed several cups. They talked of this and that, and compared methods in feats of arms. But when their conversation was at its liveliest, they heard the sound of sobbing in the adjoining room. Lu Da immediately became incensed. He snatched plates and dishes off the table and

smashed them on the floor.

"You have the brass to allow people to wail in the next room and disturb us while we are dining," he bawled at the waiter. Shi Jin and Li Zhong tried to pacify the fuming Lu Da. "Don't be angry, sir," said the waiter. "I would never permit anyone to disturb you. The people weeping are an old man and his daughter, who make their living by singing in taverns. They didn't know you and your friends were drinking here. They can't help lamenting their bitter fate."

"There's something peculiar going on here," said Lu Da. "Bring them here to me."

In a moment the waiter returned with a girl of about eighteen, followed by a man in his late fifties. Wiping her eyes, the girl made three curtsies. The old man also greeted Lu Da and his friends respectfully.

The girl told the diners their story. She and her father were from the Eastern Capital. Their family name was Jin, and the daughter was called Jade Lotus. They had come to Weizhou to visit a relative. On the way her mother fell ill and died. The old man and his daughter were having a hard time. Butcher Zheng, nicknamed Lord of the West, saw Jade Lotus and wanted her for a concubine. He sent his men to wheedle and threaten. Finally he signed a contract promising the old man three thousand strings of coppers for Jade Lotus.

However, in less than three months his wife drove Jade Lotus out of the house. On top of that, Butcher



Zheng demanded that they 'return' his money, although they had not in fact received a single coin from him. They didn't know what to do.

The old man had taught Jade Lotus many ballads when she was a child, and they then began to make rounds of the inns, singing. They gave Zheng most of what they earned each day, keeping back a little for travelling expenses so that they could go home.

"Ours is a hard lot, and we have no place to seek redress," said the girl. "That's why we were weeping just then. We didn't mean to offend you, sir. Please forgive us."

"Where does Zheng live?" asked Lu Da.

"He has a butchery at the foot of Zhuangyuan Bridge."

"Bah!" said Lu Da contemptuously. "So he is only Zheng the pig-sticker, the dirty rogue who runs a butcher shop under the patronage of our garrison commander. And he cheats and bullies, too, does he?"

He turned to Shi Jin and Li Zhong. "You two wait for me here while I take care of the scoundrel. I'll be right back."

They grabbed him, pleading him to calm himself. They finally managed to restrain him.

"Come here, old man," said Lu Da to the father. "I'll give you some money. Tomorrow you can go back to the Eastern Capital. How about it?"

"If you can help us return home, you'll be giving us a new lease on life," said the old man and his daugh-

ter.

Lu Da pulled out five ounces of silver and placed them on the table. To Shi Jin he said, "If you have any silver, lend it to me. I'll give it back to you tomorrow."

Shi Jin extracted a silver bar weighing ten ounces from his bundle and put it down beside Lu Da's money. The major looked at Li Zhong. "You lend me some too."

Li Zhong produced two ounces of silver. The smallness of the offering annoyed Lu Da. "Big-hearted, aren't you?" he snorted. He handed all the silver to the old man. "This will cover the travelling expenses for you and your daughter. Go back to your inn and pack your things. Tomorrow at dawn I'll come to see you off."

Old Jin and his daughter thanked him and departed.

After the three men had finished their drinks they left the inn. Shi Jin and Li Zhong went their respective ways. Lu Da returned to his quarters in the garrison and went to bed still angry, without having any supper.

## 2

The night passed without incident. Father and daughter rose at dawn, lit a fire and cooked breakfast. When they finished eating, they collected their belong-

ings and paid their bill.

The sky was just turning light when Lu Da strode into the inn and asked for Old Jin and Jade Lotus.

"If you're going, go quickly," Lu Da ordered them. "What are you waiting for?"

Old Jin and Jade Lotus quickly left town and got the cart the old man had hired the day before.

Lu Da sat himself down on a stool at the door of the inn and remained there for several hours. Only when he felt sure that the old man and his daughter were far away did he leave the inn. He went directly to Zhuangyuan Bridge.

Zheng had a butchery there with two chopping blocks. The butcher was sitting behind a counter by the door, keeping an eye on his assistants as they cut and sold meat.

Lu Da came up to the counter. "Butcher Zheng," he shouted.

Recognizing him, Zheng came out rapidly from behind the counter and greeted him with respect. "Major, a pleasure. Please be seated, sir."

Lu Da sat down. "The garrison commander has ordered me to buy ten pounds of lean meat, chopped fine, to be used for filling. There mustn't be a speck of fat in it."

"Right," said Zheng. He turned to his assistants. "Pick out a good cut and chop up ten pounds."

"I don't want these dirty oafs touching it," said Lu Da. "You do it yourself."

"Certainly. Glad to." Zheng selected a cut of lean meat and started mincing. After chopping for an hour, Zheng wrapped the minced meat in lotus leaf.

"Now cut up ten pounds of fat. There mustn't be a speck of lean in it. This is also for filling."

Zheng selected ten pounds of fat and began mincing. When he had finished chopping the fat and wrapped it in a lotus leaf, it was time for lunch.

"Now I want ten pounds of gristle, chopped fine, also to be used for filling, and I don't want to see a speck of meat in it."

Zheng laughed awkwardly. "Are you making fun of me?"

Lu Da leaped up, one package of chopped meat in each hand, and scowled at the butcher. "That's exactly what I'm doing — making fun of you." He flung the contents of the packages right in Zheng's face.

The shower of meat stung the butcher into a rage. He grabbed a boning knife from the block and jumped down the shop steps. Lu Da was waiting for him in the middle of the street.

None of the assistants from Zheng's shop or passers-by dared interfere. The knife in his right hand, Zheng reached for Lu Da with his left. Lu Da seized the outstretched hand, closed in and sent the butcher sprawling with a swift kick in the groin. Another step forward, and he put his foot on Zheng's chest. Raising a huge fist, Lu Da thundered, "You lousy ani-

mal! Who gave you the right to coerce and cheat Jin's daughter, Jade Lotus?" He landed a punch on Zheng's nose and another on his eyebrow, sending the blood streaming down his face.

Worsted, Zheng pleaded for mercy.

"You rotten bastard," the major exclaimed scornfully. "If you had shown any guts I might have let you off. But since you're so lily-livered, I won't." He struck the butcher a heavy blow on the temple. The butcher lay stretched out on the ground. He didn't move.

Lu Da pretended to be enraged. "Playing dead, eh? I'll bang you a few more!" He had observed that Zheng's face was changing colour. "I only wanted to give the bastard a beating," he said to himself. "Who would have thought that three blows would kill him? They're sure to hold me for trial. I'd better get out of here."

He rose and strode away, pausing briefly to look back and shout, "Go on playing dead. I'll settle with you later."

Lu Da returned to his quarters and hastily packed. Carrying a staff as a weapon, he sped out the town gate.

### 3

Having failed to bring Zheng back to life, his wife and neighbours meanwhile went to the judge's official

residence and filed a charge of murder. Court was called into session, and the document of accusation read out.

"That Lu Da is a major in the garrison," thought the judge. "I must mind my step." Instead of issuing an order for Lu Da's arrest, he went to the headquarters of the garrison commander. The two men exchanged greetings.

"What brings you here?" asked the commander. "I've come to inform Your Excellency that Major Lu Da has, without cause, beaten a butcher named Zheng to death. I wouldn't dare arrest him without reporting to Your Excellency first."

The garrison commander was startled. "That Lu Da is a skilled military man," he thought, "but he's rough and rude. Today he's committed a murder. How can I cover up for him? I must let him be taken and questioned." To the judge he said: "Since he has committed a capital offence you may arrest and question him according to law."

The judge bid farewell to the commander and returned to his office to resume court. He issued an order to the police inspector for Lu Da's arrest.

The inspector had Lu Da's room searched, but nothing was found except for some old clothes and bedding. He returned to the judge's office and reported.

"Major Lu Da has fled to escape punishment. No one knows where."

The judge ordered the police to have Lu Da arrested within a specified time, on pain of being beaten. An urgent proclamation offering a monetary reward for Lu Da's capture was posted everywhere, giving his age, birthplace and a description of his appearance.

4

After leaving Weizhou, Lu Da dashed about in panic, not knowing where to go. After many days of wandering he arrived in a bustling county town in Daizhou, with many people and thriving markets. On a street corner he saw a crowd gathered in front of a proclamation. Someone was reading it out loud. Illiterate himself, Lu Da pushed forward to listen. What he heard was the offer of a reward for the capture of Lu Da, former major in the Weizhou garrison, now wanted for the murder of Butcher Zheng.

As Lu Da stood there listening, a man threw his arms around him from behind and cried, "What are you doing here, brother Zhang?" Whoever it was drew Lu Da away from the street corner.

The man was none other than Old Jin from the Weizhou inn, the old man Lu Da had rescued. The old fellow didn't stop pulling Lu Da away till they reached an isolated spot. Then he said, "You are too rash, benefactor. That proclamation offers a reward for your capture. How could you stand there looking at it? If I hadn't spotted you, you might have been

nabbed by the police."

Lu Da told the old man what had happened in Weizhou after Old Jin and his daughter had left the town. "I thought you were returning to the Eastern Capital. What're you doing here?" asked Lu Da.

"Originally I intended to go back to the Eastern Capital," answered the old man. "But I was afraid that son-of-a-bitch would catch up with us, and you wouldn't be around to rescue us. So I changed my mind and headed north. On the way I met an old neighbour from the capital who was coming here on business. He took me and my daughter along. He was good enough to find her a husband, and she's now the mistress of a wealthy man, Squire Zhao. The squire has provided her with a house. Thanks to you, benefactor, we now have plenty to eat and wear. My daughter has often spoken of your kindness to the squire. He's said many times he'd like to meet you. You must come and stay with us a few days. We can talk about what you should do next."

Lu Da and Old Jin had walked less than half a *li* when they came to the door of the house. Pushing aside the bamboo portiere, the old man called, "Daughter, our benefactor is here!"

Jade Lotus emerged at once, attractively attired and made up. She begged Lu Da to be seated in the centre of the room. Then she curtsied before him six times. "If you hadn't rescued us, benefactor," she said, "we'd never possess what we have today." She invited



him upstairs to the parlour.

The old man took Lu Da's staff and bundles. To his daughter he said, "Keep our benefactor company. I'll arrange dinner."

When wine, food and fruit were served, father and daughter in turn filled Lu Da's cup. Then Old Jin dropped to his knees and bowed low.

"Please, dear elder, don't do that," said Lu Da. "You embarrass me terribly."

The three drank till almost nightfall. Suddenly they heard a commotion outside. Lu Da opened the window and looked out. Some twenty to thirty men, all armed with staffs, were gathered in front of the house. A gentleman on a horse cried, "Don't let the rascal get away!" "Bring him down!" the men with staffs were shouting.

Lu Da realized that he was in danger. He snatched up a stool and started down the stairs. Old Jin rushed down ahead of him, yelling. "Nobody move!" He ran over to the gentleman on horseback and said a few words. The mounted gentleman laughed and ordered the band to disperse.

## 5

When his men had gone, the gentleman got off his horse and entered the house. Old Jin asked Lu Da