

Divine 2661

Chapter 2661: Mission 47

“Indeed, this is a contractual agreement. The Lin Family commits to purchasing your herbs, while you, in turn, undertake to supply us with the required herbs. This mutual commitment serves as a solid guarantee for both parties. Assuming smooth proceedings, our collaboration will continue seamlessly. Regarding the pricing, it remains unchanged from our previous arrangement,” Manager Lin conveyed earnestly.

The offered price exceeded Gu Chaoyan’s expectations, especially for the ginseng, making it a remarkably generous deal.

However, it also hinted at something significant.

It indicated that the proprietor of Lin Family’s Pharmacy was astute and magnanimous, qualities not commonly found in ordinary individuals.

Gu Chaoyan acknowledged her decision to be fitting. “Certainly,” she replied. “Manager Lin, your generosity has not gone unnoticed. I appreciate it and will remember this.”

The favorable terms of the contract left a lasting impression, and if circumstances allowed, Gu Chaoyan intended to reciprocate their kindness.

With the contract negotiations concluded, lunchtime approached. Ms. Wang warmly invited Manager Lin to join them for lunch, considering the Lin Family’s Pharmacy as an integral part of their extended family. Manager Lin accepted, as if attempting to bridge the gap between business and a sense of belonging.

Satisfied with the atmosphere, Gu Chaoyan didn’t object, finding the connection to be just right.

The lunch gathering became animated. Ms. Wang had prepared an abundance of dishes, and even Auntie Lianhua lent a hand. Unable to assist with the culinary preparations, Gu Chaoyan engaged in conversation with them. Manager Lin, now less reserved, contributed to the lively atmosphere.

After an enjoyable lunch, Manager Lin took his leave.

After Manager Lin's departure, some villagers from the old house approached, seeking a connection with Gu Chaoyan. However, Danxia promptly shooed them away.

Recollections of past mistreatment lingered in the minds of these villagers, stemming from the bullying they endured after their father's departure. The notion of being a family now seemed utterly implausible to Danxia, and she vehemently rejected any such affiliations.

With the support of Tian Qi and others, no one dared to challenge the stability of the Yan Family.

Following this, Gu Chaoyan proceeded to purchase the fields. The Land Officer, despite his reluctance, dared not refuse the sale to Gu Chaoyan. His aspirations for maintaining his position compelled him to acquiesce, knowing that his future success hinged on Yan Danqiu's favor. Fortunately, Yan Danqiu refrained from disputes, at least sparing the Land Officer that ordeal.

Having acquired five acres of land, Gu Chaoyan turned her attention to planning the yard's wall. The internal space required irrigation with spring water to cultivate valuable ginseng and dragon roots in the future.

Days passed busily for the Yan family, engrossed in their tasks. Gu Chaoyan, absorbed in her responsibilities, had not ventured out for quite some time.

On a particular day...

Auntie Lianhua returned with excitement.

"Guess what happened?" she exclaimed.

Curious, Gu Chaoyan asked, "What is it?"

"The imperial examination has concluded! The sole Elementary Scholar in our village not only failed the provincial examination but also missed the imperial examination in the capital. The Jiang family, once envisioning a bright future, now faces the prospect of remaining mere Elementary Scholars. After all these years, there's been no improvement in their situation."

“...”

“It’s fortunate that he didn’t make it through. If he had, he would have caused chaos. His Jiang family already wreaked havoc in the village, and sending Jiang Caixiu out would have only escalated the trouble.”

Chapter 2662: Mission 48

Auntie Lianhua spoke candidly, unafraid of offending others, as their family’s background as hunters left little room for such concerns.

Her words held truth.

The Jiang Caixiu family, while still Elementary Scholars, had been overbearing in the village. It wasn’t just Jiang Caixiu; the entire Jiang family exhibited domineering behavior. Even those with the Jiang surname were prone to bullying others.

The prospect of such a person advancing to a higher level stirred concerns among the citizens of North Village, anticipating a less pleasant life.

Understandably, everyone, except the Jiang family, likely rejoiced in the news. Auntie Lianhua shared in this sentiment, expressing her happiness.

Gu Chaoyan, though indifferent to such matters, acknowledged the positive turn of events. While she didn’t care personally, she recognized the potential impact such individuals could have on their family in the future.

“Auntie Lianhua, you make a valid point. Let’s discuss this at home. We can act as if we’re unaware to avoid any potential grudges. It’s best not to get involved with such people,” Gu Chaoyan advised in a hushed tone.

Auntie Lianhua, appreciating the reminder, nodded with a bright smile. “I understand.”

The two engaged in cheerful conversation until their mood took a downturn at the sight of Yan Tieniu approaching.

In recent times, individuals from the Yan Family Mansion had frequently visited, adopting a pitiful demeanor to gain sympathy from Gu Chaoyan. It irked her to witness this behavior.

Yesterday it was the eldest son, and now it was Yan Tieniu.

Approaching with a pitiful expression, Yan Tieniu said, “Danqiu, look at the length of the wall. With so many people, it’s not enough. I can come over to help. You don’t have to pay me; just offer a meal in return.”

“...”

“You’re an orphan and a widow. I also want to help you.”

“Humbly, I offer to help,” Yan Tieniu said, aiming for an opportunity.

In North Village, the norm was to seek assistance from siblings first, resorting to outsiders only if necessary. However, Gu Chaoyan hesitated to involve anyone from the Yan Family in the old house.

Yan Tieniu framed his offer as a gesture of assistance today.

Yet, Gu Chaoyan, wary of potential entanglements, couldn’t afford to accept. Yielding might complicate her life further, intertwining their affairs gradually until her family was ensnared once again. Gu Chaoyan, no fool, stood firm against such propositions.

“We’ve already arranged for Land Officer to handle our affairs, and our families are unrelated. We appreciate your offer, but we don’t require assistance. Moreover, we’re not orphaned or widowed. Since Tian Jiuguo’s arrival, we are now connected to the Tian Family, so we don’t need additional help. Thank you for your kindness,” Gu Chaoyan asserted resolutely.

Yan Tieniu, unwilling to be dismissed easily, contemplated the implications. With Third Brother’s family thriving, they surpassed their previous status. To sever ties completely would result in a substantial loss, especially considering the generous wages Third Brother’s family offered when hiring for various tasks.

Chapter 2663: Mission 49

Not extending an invitation to the Yan family left their family with no potential benefits, causing a sense of dissatisfaction in Yan Tieniu's heart. He yearned to reclaim a position superior to the Tian Family.

Eager to press the matter, Yan Tieniu prepared to voice his arguments.

However, Gu Chaoyan decisively turned away, leaving Yan Tieniu to grapple with his discontent. Auntie Lianhua, observing the scene, couldn't help expressing her thoughts, "He's truly shameless."

Reflecting on the past and present attitudes of the Yan family from the old residence, Gu Chaoyan sighed, finding the situation troublesome.

The Yan Family's fields and mansion were in close proximity, leading to frequent visits from individuals of the Yan Family's old residence. Gu Chaoyan, wishing for peace, found the constant disturbances unbearable.

Despite initially considering distancing themselves, Gu Chaoyan couldn't ignore the potential of the original five acres of Yan family's medicinal field. The quality was exceptional, prompting her to purchase additional land to expand the estate.

Daily harassment from the Yan family's old residence had become unsustainable.

After careful thought, Gu Chaoyan proposed a solution, "It's not a significant issue. Once the wall is completed, I'll hire some guards from the city. Those from the Yan Family won't be able to cause trouble if they try to approach. We'll spend some money on security."

Auntie Lianhua instinctively wanted to reject the idea, deeming it extravagant. Hiring guards could be costly. However, she refrained from voicing her concerns aloud.

Danqiu was capable.

The Lin Family's Pharmacy had plans to cultivate valuable herbs in the area, prompting a substantial offer of silver taels. While Gu Chaoyan didn't necessarily require the extra income, her primary motivation was to ensure a comfortable life.

Auntie Lianhua, mindful of the financial aspect, chose to remain silent.

"It's alright. Tian Liu, Tian Qi, and the others have their own affairs to attend to, and they were concerned about not being able to manage everything themselves. Hence, they opted to hire guards. That should suffice," Auntie Lianhua explained.

Gu Chaoyan smiled, feeling a strong sense of camaraderie with the Tian family.

Things progressed busily for both Auntie Lianhua and Gu Chaoyan, while life continued for the rest of the villagers in North Village.

Jiang Caixiu returned to the village, surprising the members of the Jiang family. In the past, he would typically linger in the city for a while before returning to the village. This time, however, he came back promptly.

Upon seeing Jiang Caixiu, the expressions of the Jiang family members turned somewhat unpleasant. This year, expectations were high that Jiang Caixiu would advance to a higher level. Despite expressing their confidence, there was no tangible result, likely due to their pride preventing them from seeking external assistance.

Jiang Caixiu's return caught them off guard.

"Why are you back, Caixiu?" Jiang Caixiu's mother inquired, expressing concern. In the past, he would have stayed in the city, and she worried he might face criticism along the way. Her heart ached at the idea of talented individuals facing challenges.

Jiang Caixiu felt a tinge of annoyance, interpreting his mother's inquiry as embarrassment. Despite his initial irritation, he responded, "You haven't passed the exam. If I don't come back, are you planning to wait in the city for the red robe?" His words carried a hint of sarcasm.

"That's not what I meant, and you know it," Jiang Caixiu's mother clarified, and his expression softened in response. The previous tension stemmed from his frustration, and his mother had no intention of criticizing him for it.

When Jiang Caixiu thought of this, her tone became much better.

“If I don’t pass the exam, I’ll have to wait for another three years. I can’t wait anymore. Who knows if I’ll succeed or fail in three years?”

Chapter 2664: Mission 50

Jiang Caixiu’s emotions were very unstable.

He was originally very confident that he could get a scholarship, so he did not even take the county magistrate and the officials in the capital seriously. He felt that he could do it himself.

Unexpectedly...

Reality slapped him hard.

He was in a hurry to return, not for anything else, but for Yan Danqiu.

The exam would take three years.

Feeling the urgency of the situation, Jiang Caixiu couldn’t afford to wait any longer.

He believed that by establishing a connection with Yan Danqiu, who possessed influence with the lords in the capital, he could navigate a shortcut to success. His envisioned path involved obtaining an official position, potentially earning meritorious recognition. Alternatively, even without meritorious achievements, he believed that the right connections would provide opportunities to advance steadily and make significant strides.

Driven by these ambitions, he returned.

His mother, sharing his concern, was equally anxious and felt a sense of helplessness.

“What should we do?” she inquired, seeking guidance in the face of the challenges ahead.

“Find Yan Danqiu and ask her to help me. Mother, I’ve thought about it. When I come back this time, I’ll marry her seriously and be the first wife. I don’t want a second wife. As long as she helps me, I won’t think too much about it,” Jiang Caixiu said firmly.

Jiang Caixiu’s mother sighed.

She felt that it was a pity and helpless.

A person like her son deserved better. Now, he could only devote himself to Yan Danqiu.

However, there was nothing he could do. Just like what her son had said, he could not afford to wait any longer.

That was all he could do for now.

Jiang Caixiu’s mother couldn’t shake the feeling of unfairness for her son.

Knowing that he had made a firm decision, she reluctantly spoke, “Caixiu, since you’ve made your choice, I will support you.”

Jiang Caixiu nodded appreciatively.

Determined to present himself in the best light, he planned to rest and groom himself before visiting Yan Danqiu the next day.

In the Jiang family, everything seemed to revolve around Jiang Caixiu. His family members were acutely aware of the family’s dependence on him for a resurgence. Among the Jiangs, no one surpassed Jiang Caixiu’s outstanding capabilities.

Without bothering to read, Jiang Caixiu went to sleep.

The following morning, armed with items acquired from the city, he set out to find Yan Danqiu.

Upon reaching the Yan family's vicinity, he was taken aback.

In a short span, the Yan family had undergone significant changes.

Construction of a wall was underway, as if they intended to enclose their family's land. Additionally, Yan Danqiu appeared to have acquired more land, possibly driven by the partnership with the Lin Family's Pharmacy.

Jiang Caixiu formulated an idea.

Undeterred, Jiang Caixiu continued his approach toward the Yan residence.

Fortune favored him, as he spotted Yan Danqiu walking out just as he arrived. Seizing the opportunity, he hastened his steps. "Danqiu."

Gu Chaoyan frowned upon hearing the voice. She had encountered Jiang Caixiu only once, but his distinctive voice left an impression for all the wrong reasons. His lack of scholarly honors puzzled her – why would he dare to show his face again? Wasn't he concerned about being ridiculed by others?

Avoiding closeness, Gu Chaoyan coldly inquired, "What is it?" as Jiang Caixiu approached.

Unaware of her reluctance, Jiang Caixiu moved closer.

"I brought you a gift from the city. Take it," he offered, extending the item.

Gu Chaoyan made no move to accept it, maintaining distance. "No need, we are not close."

Undeterred, Jiang Caixiu persisted, "Danqiu, do you look down on me too? Just because I haven't achieved anything, do you want to keep your distance?"

Chapter 2665: Mission 51

Gu Chaoyan cast a disdainful look at him.

It seemed that this person saw no boundaries, assuming their relationship was amicable. His audacity surpassed even those in the old house and the thickness of city walls.

“Yes,” Gu Chaoyan responded bluntly.

Jiang Caixiu was taken aback.

Prepared to share his grievances and reveal his vulnerability, he stammered, “Danqiu, how could you do this?”

“If there’s nothing else, I’m leaving. I’m very busy,” Gu Chaoyan retorted, visibly annoyed.

Jiang Caixiu hurriedly stopped her, saying, “There is something, Danqiu. If you don’t mind, marry me. I’ll take you as my first wife. Regardless of any future scholarly honors I may attain, you will remain the first wife without any changes.”

“I don’t like it,” Gu Chaoyan impatiently replied. “Can you leave now?”

Undeterred, Jiang Caixiu persisted, “But we were engaged before. I don’t understand why you’re unwilling now.”

“If the engagement is canceled, it’s over. Stop harassing me. If it happens again, I’ll ask Tian Qi to deal with you,” Gu Chaoyan asserted without holding back.

Ignoring her warnings, Jiang Caixiu shouted and attempted to hug her. At that moment, Tian Qi intervened, pushing him away. Jiang Caixiu staggered and fell.

Jiang Caixiu looked at Yan Danqiu with an aggrieved expression.

Gu Chaoyan addressed Tian Qi directly, “Beat him up; he’s touching me.”

Without hesitation, Tian Qi proceeded to carry out the order. He delivered punches and kicks to Jiang Caixiu until his face was swollen, only ceasing when Gu Chaoyan signaled.

Disregarding him, Gu Chaoyan left with Tian Qi, not sparing him another glance.

Jiang Caixiu, a scholar, felt uneasy after the beating. He struggled for a while, cursing Tian Qi vehemently, while onlookers chuckled at his misfortune.

In a sorry state, Jiang Caixiu returned to the Jiang family.

His mother, witnessing his condition, was shocked. “What happened? Who attacked you? How heartless!”

“Tian Qi,” Jiang Caixiu replied.

“I’ll settle the score with the Tian family!”

“Settle the score? Tian Qi acted under Yan Danqiu’s orders in the Yan family. How do you plan to settle the score?” Jiang Caixiu retorted angrily, avoiding mention of his inappropriate actions. Aware that many had witnessed the incident, he couldn’t deny the reality of the situation.

Jiang Caixiu’s mother lamented, “Why is Yan Danqiu so heartless? How could he bear to hit you? How can we marry such a woman?”

“She doesn’t want to marry him. I don’t know what’s wrong with her brain, but she actually doesn’t want to marry him,” Jiang Caixiu expressed his disbelief. He found it perplexing that someone wouldn’t want to marry him, considering he was regarded as the most outstanding person in North Village, with a limitless future.

“She doesn’t want to?” Jiang Caixiu’s mother struggled to comprehend.

“Why wouldn’t I be willing?” Jiang Caixiu sighed. “How about this? You stay at home for the next two days. I’ll go and talk to her mother. If her mother is willing, it’s the same.”

Chapter 2666: Mission 52

Jiang Caixiu's mother held straightforward views. She believed Yan Danqiu's reluctance to the engagement was likely due to her being alone when it was broken off, and perhaps she held her breath during that time. Furthermore, the improved status of the Yan family led her to think that Yan Danqiu believed she could secure a better match. She attributed these considerations to the impulsive nature of young people who lacked practicality in their thinking.

She considered it more sensible to discuss the matter with Yan Danqiu's mother, Ms. Wang. She felt there was no need for her son to face the ridicule by personally confronting the situation. Unwilling to endure such circumstances herself, she decided to handle the matter independently.

Jiang Caixiu's mother had already formulated a plan of action. "The Jiang family is forgiving and does not hold grudges against the Yan family for your son's injury. However, when it comes to her future marriage, we must address this matter properly. Yan Danqiu's behavior has been excessively difficult," she declared, revealing her lingering dissatisfaction with the situation. Despite her frustration, she acknowledged her current inability to settle the score and resigned herself to voicing her complaints while vowing to address the matter in the future.

Feeling indignant when thinking about Yan Danqiu, she contemplated that perhaps her son should still marry her.

Jiang Caixiu nodded in agreement, finding his mother's perspective reasonable. He decided that if he were to approach Yan Danqiu, he would do so through their families, ensuring that she had no reason for discontent.

Reflecting on the role of parental matchmakers, Jiang Caixiu's mother believed that women typically adhered to decisions made for them. She thought that with proper guidance, any dissatisfaction could be addressed in the future.

As a scholar, Jiang Caixiu had never experienced such physical adversity. The pain from the beating was intense, requiring a brief period of recuperation. He couldn't help but feel unlucky in the face of these unexpected challenges.

Once fearless in his outings, Jiang Caixiu now found himself confined indoors. His mother, contemplating their situation, resolved to seek out Ms. Wang the following day.

Knowing Ms. Wang's routine of washing clothes by the river, Jiang Caixiu's mother saw an opportunity to approach her then. With determination, she even prepared the clothes she intended to wash—something she seldom did in the past.

The next day arrived, and in the early morning, Jiang Caixiu's mother ventured out to wash her clothes. Along the way, she greeted everyone she encountered with a bright smile, as if nothing had happened to her son. The villagers couldn't help but wonder.

Someone with a mix of curiosity and mockery asked, "Caixiu's mother, hasn't your son failed? Why are you still smiling so happily? Do you not know about this news?"

The question carried a hint of derision. Besides those who were close to the Jiang family, there were others with the surname Jiang in the North Village. None of them expected Jiang Caixiu to succeed in the county-level examination.

No one wished for it.

If it were true, they feared they would be subject to Jiang Caixiu's mother's taunts in the northern village. Moreover, the prospect of someone leading a prosperous life was unsettling to many.

Despite any inner turmoil, Jiang Caixiu's mother maintained her composure. Still wearing a smile, she replied, "It's just a setback. Caixiu is still young, unmarried. It's normal for him to face failure. Look at those who have achieved scholarly honors—they are already quite old. Scholarly success is just a matter of time. There's no need to be impatient; it will happen eventually."

Her words were an attempt to stabilize the Jiang family's standing in the northern village and uphold her son's reputation. The onlookers felt a tinge of awkwardness and refrained from further comments.

Chapter 2667: Mission 53

Jiang Caixiu's mother's reasoning resonated with those who overheard. The observation that individuals on the intermediate rankings were typically older was acknowledged—there were indeed few young achievers. Though Jiang Caixiu had faced failure, the uncertainty of the future remained. If he were to make it to the intermediate rankings eventually, the Jiang family's prestige would endure. Sensing the potential consequences of mocking them during their low point, some opted to keep their opinions to themselves, albeit begrudgingly.

Despite an undercurrent of dissatisfaction, those harboring ill intentions refrained from teasing him. The disapproval of the Jiang family's actions lingered, but they chose not to exacerbate the situation.

Jiang Caixiu's mother, feeling a sense of vindication, resumed her somewhat arrogant demeanor. As she proceeded to the river to wash her clothes, she encountered Ms. Wang, confirming her decision to seek her out.

Upon reaching the river, she found Ms. Wang among the crowd. In the past, when trouble befell the Third Yan's family, people avoided Ms. Wang. However, within a short span, everyone had flocked to her, leaving no vacant seats. Unperturbed, Jiang Caixiu's mother approached with her basin.

Although a farmer's wife washing clothes beside Ms. Wang expressed discontent, she reluctantly moved away with her basin. No one wished to incur the displeasure of Jiang Caixiu's mother, considering the potential for her to become the mother of an official. Once the dissenter departed, Jiang Caixiu's mother squatted down.

Ms. Wang, not particularly fond of her, furrowed her brows and expedited her washing. She was neither inclined to leave abruptly nor linger longer than necessary in the presence of Jiang Caixiu's mother.

"I'm also washing clothes. I noticed that your family has hired some people to work. Why are you still toiling away?" remarked Jiang Caixiu's mother, her words carrying a certain loftiness. She implied that, given her current status, she had no need to engage in manual labor for the benefit of farmers. She envisioned a lifestyle reminiscent of city women, free from such laborious tasks.

Ms. Wang, not appreciating the tone, responded, "Our family differs from your Jiang family. Ultimately, we are just an ordinary farming family. While we've sought assistance for certain tasks, we still need to manage our own responsibilities at home." Her tone was teasing yet firm, revealing a sense of pride.

Aware of the previous rejection of the marriage proposal by the Jiang family, Ms. Wang acknowledged the condescension they had displayed towards farming families. She maintained her independence, content with her life choices and uninterested in further interaction with the Jiang family.

Attempting a softer approach, Jiang Caixiu's mother leaned in and said, "Sister, don't you think life in North Village is tiresome and meaningless? Living by tending to fields, one must strive for more.

Imagine coming to the city, becoming the wife of a capital's official—now that would be an interesting life.”

“...”

Undeterred, Jiang Caixiu's mother continued, “The past misunderstanding that led to the broken engagement has now been rectified. The families are closer than ever, having overcome the discord.”

“...”

“Danqiu is young and inexperienced, but you're different. You must weigh your options carefully. Working with the Lin Family's Pharmacy is commendable, but how long will this arrangement last? If unforeseen events occur, who will safeguard your family? Reflect on what happened when Third Yan departed,” she urged.

Chapter 2668: Mission 54

“If we seek a suitable match in the North Village, most would be like that. How could they be deemed worthy of Danqiu? My son is different. If he attains scholarly honors in the future, Danqiu will become the wife of an official. His father and I are accustomed to life in the North Village. Even if they aspire to go to the capital or the monastery after achieving scholarly honors, we won't interfere. We won't make Danqiu's life challenging,” argued Jiang Caixiu's mother, presenting her case logically.

Confident in her persuasive skills, she believed that someone like Ms. Wang, who had limited exposure to the world, would be swayed by her reasoning.

Ms. Wang, however, responded with a cold snort upon hearing the proposal. “When your son gains a good reputation, the first inclination will likely be to break off the engagement. It's not like your family hasn't done this before.”

“...”

“What's wrong with the other men in the North Village? Even if they aren't Elementary Scholars, they are honest farmers. They wouldn't terminate an engagement when faced with challenges. They possess a sense of responsibility,” Ms. Wang continued, her words laden with criticism.

“...”

“Jiang Caixiu, regardless of the future you envision, our family doesn’t dare to accept you. Danqiu isn’t deserving of you. You should seek a noble lady to match him. Our Danqiu can find someone who lives an honest life. Madam Guan doesn’t dare to do it, fearing a shortened lifespan,” she added sarcastically.

Ms. Wang felt the Jiang family treated the Yan family with disdain. Despite Third Yan’s past assistance and financial support during their engagement, the outcome was far from positive. In her eyes, Jiang Caixiu was an ungrateful person, poorly raised.

Frustrated and angered, Ms. Wang abandoned her laundry, stashing it away, and prepared to leave, unwilling to endure further confrontation.

No matter how hard Jiang Caixiu’s mother tried to restrain her, Ms. Wang remained adamant about leaving. Growing frustrated with the persistent hold, Ms. Wang declared loudly, “I’m saying this today. In the future, whether we seek suitors from North Village or elsewhere, even if we can’t find a match, we won’t consider Jiang Caixiu from the Jiang family.”

“...”

“I wouldn’t dare,” Ms. Wang reiterated defiantly before storming off in anger.

Jiang Caixiu’s mother hadn’t anticipated such a fierce response from Ms. Wang. Humiliated and enraged, she initially intended to confront Ms. Wang and set things straight. However, she was promptly restrained. If Jiang Caixiu didn’t succeed, their family wouldn’t have a married son. Considering his suitability for Danqiu, it was imperative to prevent Ms. Wang from leaving. Stopping her became the top priority.

In frustration, Jiang Caixiu’s mother stomped her feet.

Ultimately, she returned home with the clothes, insulted. Despite her fury, she had no choice but to accept the situation.

Meanwhile, the others, witnessing Ms. Wang's declaration, felt a glimmer of hope for their own chances. Eager to discuss the turn of events, they hurried back to their homes.

Jiang Caixiu's mother, still seething, reached home and angrily smashed the basin. "What on earth is this? You're truly shameless! Caixiu reluctantly married her, and she still refuses!"

"..."

"What the hell is going on?"

"Mother, is it still not working?" Jiang Caixiu, dragging her injured body, asked. Her gaze reflected a sense of defeat.

Chapter 2669: Mission 55

"Ms. Wang isn't willing either, and she continues to belittle our family. I really don't understand what goes on in their heads. They lack intelligence and don't know how to distinguish right from wrong," scolded Jiang Caixiu's mother angrily, as if venting her frustration could somehow diminish her sense of failure.

However, she couldn't change the fact that Ms. Wang looked down on her. After all, she was the one who sought her out first, weakening her position.

Jiang Caixiu sighed, her expression reflecting displeasure. If Ms. Wang wasn't willing to help, what could he do? His confidence in the upcoming examination had dwindled, and the prospect of failure loomed large. Desperate for a shortcut, he contemplated the consequences of becoming an aged Elementary Scholar who might end up teaching in the village—a fate he found undesirable.

The more Jiang Caixiu pondered, the more aggrieved she felt.

"Mother, if Yan Danqiu is unwilling, it's okay. I'll return to the city in two days. I also know the county magistrate's daughter. If she's willing to acknowledge me, I'd be much better off than with Yan Danqiu," declared Jiang Caixiu, not succumbing to dejection but allowing his fighting spirit to rise.

He harbored a determination to make Yan Danqiu pay the price if he succeeded.

Almost fully recovered from her injuries, Jiang Caixiu set off for the city.

In the city, he went unnoticed, with most people occupied with their own affairs. The Yan family, focused on completing their wall, paid little attention to him.

As the Yan family's wall approached completion, plans were underway to turn over the medicinal fields and initiate planting. Gu Chaoyan diligently irrigated the soil with holy water during the dark hours, a routine she had followed in recent days.

Before commencing with the planting, Gu Chaoyan invited two tall guards to oversee the process. Auntie Lianhua took charge of planting the herbs, accompanied by a few other honest aunts. However, Gu Chaoyan refrained from actively participating.

As the plants found their places in the soil, Gu Chaoyan organized the necessary arrangements, signaling that her mission was nearly complete. Toward the end, the atmosphere carried a sense of simplicity.

On the day when all the herbs were planted, an auntie returned from outside with gossip in tow. "Do you know what happened to the Jiang family?"

Auntie Lianhua, intrigued, inquired further, "What happened?"

"He apparently harassed the maidservant of the county magistrate's miss and got beaten up. The county magistrate locked him up, and he won't be out for at least three months. It's said that Jiang Caixiu tried to deceive the county magistrate's lady but mistook her for someone else. Despite her resistance, he forcibly engaged in inappropriate behavior, leading to his current predicament."

"..."

"You're telling me he couldn't even identify the main character when attempting deception. Truly amusing," commented Auntie Lianhua.

"Heaven will punish those who are foolish," added the gossiping auntie, expressing her disdain for Jiang Caixiu.

Auntie Lianhua couldn't help but chuckle. "Back then, he met someone as good as Third Yan, and he assumed everyone was as honest. He got what he deserved. If he hadn't overreached himself, things would be much better now."

It was a blessing to be able to marry Danqiu. She didn't even dare to dream of having such a daughter-in-law. She was good, but the Jiang family didn't cherish her at all. That was really unlucky for them.

While they were talking enthusiastically.

There was a violent banging on the door outside.

Chapter 2670: Mission 56

Gu Chaoyan exchanged a glance with Auntie Lianhua, and the others followed suit. Everyone present in the yard was busy with their work, leaving no one behind to knock on the door so rudely. Even if it were a member of the family, such behavior seemed unusual.

Auntie Lianhua was concerned that something might be amiss and decided to open the door herself. She hesitated to send Danqiu, considering her vulnerability as a girl. Gu Chaoyan appreciated Auntie Lianhua's protective instincts and felt a warmth in her heart. Despite being taken care of by her family, Gu Chaoyan hadn't used her spiritual energy, which proved highly effective in keeping her safe.

Unaware of Gu Chaoyan's abilities, Auntie Lianhua and the others were protective of her.

Gu Chaoyan nodded, indicating for Auntie Lianhua to open the door.

Auntie Lianhua cautiously opened the door, and a figure rushed towards Gu Chaoyan, grabbing her and bursting into tears. "Danqiu, please save Caixiu! Life has been difficult for him, and now he's been caught by the county magistrate!"

"..."

“When your family was adopting, the county magistrate showed great respect, coming personally to your house. With such a relationship, just ask, and the county magistrate will surely release my son,” she continued, crying.

“...”

“It’s all a misunderstanding. He only admired the county magistrate’s daughter, which led to this foolish act. There are no ulterior motives; it’s truly a misunderstanding,” they pleaded.

“...”

“Danqiu, you were once engaged to Caixiu. You can be considered half a family. How can you bear to see him like this? Surely, you can’t bear to see him in such a plight,” they added with emotional appeal.

“...”

“As long as you can save my son, no matter what request you have, our Jiang family will satisfy you. Really, as long as you ask,” pleaded Jiang Caixiu’s mother, her tone filled with desperation.

Before Gu Chaoyan could respond, Auntie Lianhua swiftly slapped Jiang Caixiu’s mother across the face, causing her to tumble to the ground. Although Auntie Lianhua wasn’t a hunter, her tall and robust physique made her a formidable force. The beating left Jiang Caixiu’s mother dazed as she lay on the ground, witnessing the unfolding scene.

Auntie Lianhua scolded sternly, “What nonsense are you spouting? How can you speak like that? If you don’t know how to speak, shut your mouth and get lost.”

“...”

“What do you mean she is half family after the engagement?”

“...”

“You’re shameless, but the Yan family needs to keep the reputation.”

“...”

“I’ve lived for so long, but I’ve never seen a woman as vicious as you. You actually harmed an unmarried woman like this. Aren’t you a woman yourself?” Auntie Lianhua berated Jiang Caixiu’s mother with genuine anger.

Danqiu knew the county magistrate. The county magistrate had given Danqiu face. As a mother, she could come and beg.

But she could not beg and ask in this way.

You could come over with silver if you wanted to beg someone. You could ask Danqiu for help on account that they were from the same village. Even if Auntie Lianhua was unhappy, she could accept it.

But how did this woman from the Jiang family beg?