

## **The Spirited Daughter-in-law and the Mountain Man - Chapter 4 - Chapter 4: 04 The Xiao Family's Dear Wife**

After gossiping for a while, the crowd gradually dispersed.

Xiao Yishan, holding Su Qingyue, walked on the road. There were always people pointing at his scarred left face, which made him seldom come to town.

Now, as he was carrying a woman in his arms, there were even more curious, fearful, and disdainful gazes from passersby.

Feeling down, his steps became larger and faster. Leaving the town and walking along the country lane, it took him two hours to finally enter the village just before nightfall.

“Yo, Dashan, did you find your runaway wife?” Li Wangcai, a fellow villager who was hoeing in the field, had seen them and clicked his tongue a few times. “In any case, she’s not one to live a normal life, so why did you bring her back? I think it would be better to sell her to the kiln in the town.”

Ding Er, who was also working in the field, straightened his back and rested his hand on the hoe handle, saying with a laugh, “But the kilns would have to be willing to take her, right? Even the people in our village feel nauseous looking at her. I’ve seen ugly before, but never a deaf and ugly one like her. Who would want her? If the kiln really had such a presence, it would have to close down eventually...”

With his mud-covered hand, Li Wangcai wiped the sweat bead on his forehead, “True. I’m telling you, Dashan, buying this woman for your family is really a loss. She’s worth, at most, several taels of silver...”

As he was speaking, he saw Xiao Yishan had already carried her far away.

Unable to save face, he spat, “Such a disgusting and useless ugly woman. The Xiao Family is the only one who would want her. If it were me, I’d beat her to death!”

Ding Er carried his hoe to the edge of the ridge, “Why bother with him? It’s not like you don’t know that the Xiao Family is so poor they can’t even look after themselves. If they kill her, they won’t be able to get another wife for the rest of their lives. They can’t bear to do it.”

“Don’t say anymore...” Li Wangcai signaled to him. Ding Er turned his head and saw the Xiao Family’s third son, Xiao Yuchuan, standing on the crossroads ahead, his face gloomy.

But Ding Er didn’t think it was a big deal and even advised, “Chuan, you must have heard what we were saying earlier. Your older brother found your family’s wife and brought her back. We’re all from the same village, and we’re saying this for your own good. Your wife is ugly and mute, but you can put up with her and just get by with life. But given your family’s situation...”

Your brother hunted a deer, and saved up for a month to sell the animal skin and fur, earning eight taels of silver, right? That eight taels of silver was stolen by your wife when she ran away. It's been three days, and she's only just returned, which means she didn't want to come back to your house at all. Who knows what she might steal next time? Though there isn't much to steal, you still need to be cautious."

Li Wangcai chimed in, "That's right. Chuan, go back and persuade your brother to sell that mute woman. I estimate she could be sold for at least two or three taels of silver. Even with a terrible appearance, she is still a person. If you're lucky, someone may be willing to buy her as a lowly maidservant..."

With a dark expression, Xiao Yuchuan headed in the direction of his home.

"Hey... we're trying to help him, and he doesn't even say a word..." Ding Er was annoyed.

Li Wangcai patted his shoulder, "Never mind him, the Xiao Family must have done something wrong to have nobody with good fortune in this generation. It's better not to get involved in their bad luck. Come on, let's go have some wine at my place tonight."

"I'm not going. Your wife wouldn't even spare food for hospitality..." Ding Er laughed.

"I won't skin her alive if she doesn't..."

"I think it's your skin that'll be peeled off by your wife..."

"She wouldn't dare peel my skin, but she is good at stripping off my pants..." The two walked back to the village, chatting and telling the story about how Xiao Yishan had brought the mute wife back to anyone they came across in the village. The news spread quickly that the thief from the Xiao Family was back.

Xiao Yishan had just put Su Qingyue on the kang (a traditional Chinese bed) in their home and hadn't had time to cover her with a quilt when he heard footsteps in the yard. Xiao Yuchuan, angry, walked into the room and grabbed Su Qingyue's wrist, pulling her up with a forceful tug and attempting to drag her outside.

