

## Mountain Man 41

### Chapter 41: Eat wild apples

“Wife, here you go.”

Su Qingyue didn't expect second brother to give her something, so she took the bulging cloth pocket he handed over. Just as she was about to ask him what it was for, he strode back to the kitchen before she could speak.

When she opened the cloth pocket, she found a bag of green apples inside. The apples were shiny and smooth, and they looked quite good. Did second brother specifically buy them for her?

She rummaged around and noticed that some of the apples still had tree branches attached, with fresh breaks at the ends. Now she understood – he had gone hunting in the mountains and had picked these wild apples for her, not bought them.

She felt slightly relieved. The family was so poor; if he had really spent money on her, she would feel very embarrassed.

It was surprising that second brother, who looked so big and strong and rough, could be so attentive.

She didn't know his real name, but he looked much older than her. She guessed he must be around twenty-five years old. Since Petty Cat called him second brother, it would also be polite for her to address him as second brother even though she wasn't part of this family.

She took the cloth bag into the kitchen, scooped up a ladle of water, and washed one of the apples. Biting into it, she had thought wild apples would be very sour, but the taste was actually mildly sour with a hint of sweetness. It was delicious, so she quickly finished the apple in a few bites.

Xiao Yishan saw her first frown in appraisal and thought she didn't like it. But he had tasted the wild apple first and found it not too sour, which is why he picked it for her. He had intended for her to eat it as a snack and thought he wouldn't have picked it if he knew she wouldn't like it.

But after she took a bite, her eyebrows relaxed, and her expression clearly showed that she liked it. In the blink of an eye, she finished a whole apple like a rat.

Seeing her pour another basin of water and dump all the apples from the cloth bag into it, he noticed she first tried to wash the apples with her unwounded left hand. But she quickly withdrew it before it touched the water, went outside the courtyard to rinse her hand, and then returned to the kitchen to quickly wash each apple.

Apparently, she thought her hands were dirty, so she washed them first before washing the apples.

The corner of his mouth curved upward unconsciously, happy that she liked the apples. He would make sure to pick more for her in the future.

Su Qingyue squatted in front of the water basin, picked up another apple, and quickly finished it with a few bites. She threw the core back into the water and immediately grabbed another apple to eat, one after another...

By the time she snapped out of it, the entire basin was filled with floating apple cores...

She had eaten all the apples in the large cloth pocket.

She looked up and saw second brother staring at her in astonishment. She touched her slightly bloated belly, feeling embarrassed that she hadn't shared any apples with second brother. Even though they were a gift from him, she still naa eaten tnem all DY nerselt.

Her dark face turned red in an instant.

But it wasn't her fault – she was so hungry that she could have eaten an entire cow. Now she had only eaten a few dozen apples...

Fortunately, second brother stopped staring at her and returned his gaze to the stove fire.

Xiao Yuchuan stood in the kitchen doorway, his jaw almost dropping off. "Wife, I didn't expect you, with your small body and stomach, to be able to eat so much. It must cost a lot of rice to feed you..." It seemed he had to work hard to make money now.

He glanced at the apple cores floating up and down in the basin, sounding a little sour, "They're just some wild apples. There are plenty of wild fruits in the mountains. Eating so many isn't good, or else they'll make you choke.."

Chapter 42: Not as fast as second brother

In fact, he was worried that his wife would eat too fast and end up overeating, and no one would compete with her. Eating slowly seems pretty great, right?

He glanced at his second brother again, and he didn't usually see his second brother picking these wild fruits from the mountain to bring home. Why did he think of picking them for his wife today? Just a few broken fruits could make his wife so happy.

If he had known that his wife would be so happy, he would also go into the mountains to pick wild fruits for her.

Su Qingyue raised her head and saw Xiao Yuchuan's sour expression, thinking that he was unhappy with her eating too much. She snorted. It was given to her by her second brother; besides feeling embarrassed not to share with him, she didn't share with the petty cat and felt no guilt at all for finishing the fruits.

Yuchuan was not pleased, "Wife, why are you snorting at me again? I didn't steal your apples. I wouldn't even eat that broken thing if you offered it to me. Are you upset just because I'm standing at the doorway?"

Su Qingyue stood up. She had been squatting in front of the water basin eating wild fruits. Her legs were numb from squatting too long, so she half stood up and became unsteady, falling forward.

She thought she would fall onto the basin and splash water all over herself, as well as fall face-first. However, she unexpectedly landed in a wide and sturdy embrace.

“Wife, are you alright?” Xiao Yishan’s deep voice rang out.

Although Su Qingyue couldn’t hear the voice, she looked up and saw the second brother’s concerned eyes. Her heart warmed slightly, and she shook her head to indicate that she was fine.

The second brother’s shoulder was so broad and his arm, supporting her, was so strong. She could feel the hard and powerful muscles on his arm.

Xiao Yuchuan also rushed over to hold his wife, but he was in the kitchen doorway, and his second brother was inside. His second brother was closer, and they rushed over at the same time, but the second brother was faster.

Now it was his second brother holding his wife, and he was not happy. He walked over, pulled his wife away and complained, ‘What’s going on? You can’t even stand steady. People who don’t know might think our Xiao Family is mistreating you.’”

Su Qingyue saw the petty cat’s angry face and could tell that he didn’t like her being close to his second brother. Was he afraid that she would stay at this home and become his sister-in-law, and he wouldn’t like it?

He could put his mind at ease for sure. Even if the second brother saved her,

she would not do so much as to meagerly sell to him.

“Is Dashan at home?” A middle-aged woman’s voice came from outside, and several villagers entered the yard.

Xiao Yuchuan saw so many people and thought they must be here about the wife-selling matter again. He couldn’t help but ask with a straight face, “What are you here for?”

“Oh? Chuan, what happened? Why is your face swollen like a pig’s head?” One villager covered his mouth laughing as if he hadn’t seen his unhappy expression. You really can’t blame people; Chuan’s eyes

were swollen into thin lines. Who could understand his facial expression? Everyone only saw a swollen pig head.

Aunt Wang laughed, "I saw Chuan this morning, and he slapped himself in the face, causing it to swell. But it's far from as swollen as it is now. He has become a fat pig head. If it weren't for the clothes he wore this morning, and his loud voice, plus being at home, I wouldn't recognize him."

Another villager, Liu Laoshi, asked with concern, "Chuan, who did this to you?"

Xiao Yuchuan didn't say it was his second brother who beat him. He snorted at the guys before turning to go into the house to sleep. His second brother was helping his wife cook lunch, so there was nothing for him to do, just his wife..

Chapter 43: Person hitting will have to pay compensation.

With all those wild fruits they've eaten, I'm afraid they might not have room for lunch. No worries, if she doesn't eat the cooked food, she can just eat it later in the evening.

"Hey, this Chuan, how could he be so rude?" Liu Laoshi's facial expression showed some dissatisfaction, "Even by way of seniority, he should at least call me Uncle Liu, he doesn't even acknowledge me."

Xiao Yishan's tall and sturdy body stepped out, his voice was calm, "I apologize to all of you, Chuan is upset because he was beaten up. He's still young, don't take it to heart." He didn't mention who beat him.

"He had a fight with Zhao Shugen this morning, and Chuan wasn't hurt much, so I guess he must have had another fight with Shi Cai which made his condition worse." Aunt Wang glanced at the room where Chuan was sleeping, "I don't know what's wrong with Chuan, he never used to fight before, he wasn't a troublemaker. But today he somehow got into two fights. Now everyone in the village is talking about him. Yishan, you need to control your third brother, otherwise he will become more rebellious, beyond control, and may cause trouble."

Xiao Yishan raised his eyebrows. He didn't explain that his third brother wasn't injured by Shi Cai, but he himself.

Aunt Zhang who came along disagreed, "Yishan, don't listen to your Aunt Wang, you can't just blame Chuan. It was Zhao Shugen who was speaking ill of your wife, that's why Chuan lost his temper with him. And that Shi Cai was also unkind, he humiliated your wife right in front of you. I was there when Zhao Shugen was fighting with Chuan. Shugen's other brother, Shuhai, joined the fight, the two of them ganged up on your one brother, they're really bullies. They both deserved to be beaten. I don't know who smashed Shuhai's head, now he has a hole in his head. It's quite serious. He went to Doctor Sun to get it bandaged, and now he is lying in bed crying. As for Shi Cai, I don't know how badly he was hurt. Yishan, you need to be prepared. The Shi Family won't take this lying down, even if Shi Cai isn't seriously injured. As for the Zhao Family..."

Others who came along glanced at the Xiao family's residences, and shook their heads. Someone said, "The way your place is run-down... you probably can't afford to pay for the medical expenses of the Zhao family..."

Xiao Yishan's face became grave, "I already know about the situation, if there is nothing else, you all can..."

"Ah, we got busy talking and I forgot about the real reason we came here." Aunt Wang looked at the wild game in the corner of the yard, "Yishan, everyone saw that you hunted and brought back some game. My old man wanted some, so he sent me here to buy a wild pheasant..."

Su Qingyue couldn't hear or tell what the villagers were saying. When she saw them picking up the game on the ground, weighing it in their hands and pinching the meat here and there, she knew these people were here to buy game.

Second brother had caught two rabbits, five pheasants, and a roe deer this time. Judging by the size, the deer should weigh about eighty jin, which is pretty large.

The pheasants each weigh two or three jin, and the rabbits about five or six jin each.

"This rabbit is really fat, just right for me to have with wine, let me weigh it I'll take one." Uncle Liu picked up a wild rabbit, "Yishan, will you give me it for cheaper as we're living in the same village?"

“Oh please,” Aunt Zhang said, “You’re still trying to take advantage here when this family is having a hard time.. When buying game from Yishan, the prices are the same as in town, sometimes even one cent cheaper, saving a trip to

#### Chapter 44: Xiao Family’s Situation

You should be content with what you have since the town is so far away. I only hunted two rabbits, and I promised sister-in-law Hua from next door that I would get her a fat wild rabbit. The other one has been caught by you; if you don’t want to buy it, I’ll buy it.”

“Hehe... No, I look forward to feasting on rabbit meat with wine, so I’ll buy it!”

Uncle Liu felt embarrassed, “Alright, Dashan, just weigh it as usual for me.”

“Alright, wait a moment.” Xiao Yishan walked into the kitchen and took out the burning firewood from the stove, extinguishing it with ashes. Then, he gathered the glowing embers with an iron clamp and piled them up, allowing the residual heat to continue cooking the rice in the pot without burning it while he was busy outside in the yard.

Aunt Zhang, who was outside, asked with curiosity, “Yo, Dashan, are you still cooking lunch at home?”

Aunt Wang also said, “Please don’t listen to me, but in these tough times, most people don’t eat lunch. I think your family shouldn’t cook lunch too often. Save some money, and after accumulating a little by little, you can buy some fields to cultivate in the future...”

Another villager, Wang Adou, said, “Don’t you know? The Xiao Family’s fourth son’s medical expenses are quite substantial. How can the Xiao Family afford to buy fields? They barely saved up sixteen taels of silver over many years, and all of it was spent on buying a mute wife. They have no extra money left.”

“Didn’t the Xiao Family save up eight taels of silver in the first month?” Someone who didn’t understand asked.

“Hey! You can’t calculate it like that.” Uncle Liu was clear about this, “After the Xiao Family bought a wife in the first month, they were completely broke.

Dashan is quite a fighter though, going into the mountains for a whole month and spending half a month in the deep mountains. He managed to hunt a deer and some other game with beautiful fur, which he sold for eight taels of silver. That was pure luck. For a hunter's family, it's normal to not catch any prey for several days in a row. Dashan might be good, but don't forget that there are three sons in the Xiao Family. Look at their sizes; they consume more food than an ordinary family, and now with a wife, their food expenses have increased. On normal days, Dashan works hard at hunting, and with his skills, he can barely cover the medical expenses of the Xiao Family's fourth son. But in winter, things get tough, as cold weather often prevents hunting for long periods. If you average this out over a year, it's just enough to make ends meet."

"We know about Dashan's situation." Wang Adou nodded, "It's not easy, indeed."

On days when they can't hunt, the fourth son's medicine must be stopped. Chuan's health isn't good; even when he frequently carries low-value goods from village to village, he can barely earn anything. Besides, Chuan often faints, and I'm afraid his medical expenses are also considerable. I don't know when the Xiao Family will ever be able to afford buying fields..."

Xiao Yishan took a balance rod out of the low storage room next to the main house, "The third brother has also been working hard to make money. Without his help, we wouldn't have been able to save any silver." The third brother did his best, and the credit for keeping the family going shouldn't be entirely on him.

"Chuan faints so often, and a lot has been spent on his doctor's visits. Your family originally couldn't save much money, and now you have an extra wife and maybe even children... This burden will become even heavier." Someone sighed with regret..

Chapter 45: 45 Buy Prey

Some also sighed, "Everyone knows that if the conditions were better, no one would buy Su Qingyue, such an ugly and unattractive mute. No man can stand her. "

"That's not their fault..."

Hearing the guys talk like this, Xiao Yishan glanced at Su Qingyue, who had moved a chair and was sitting under the eaves.



She looked calm, seemingly unaffected by what others said.

She actually didn't care, being deaf and unable to hear. If she really knew what people thought of her, she would be furious, making these people with no taste unable to eat and walk away.

Yishan looked at her dark, unattractive face but felt quite comfortable with her presence.

In the past, he never paid attention to what the villagers said. After all, it is a fact that they said, and their mouths are on their own bodies, so they can say whatever they want.

Now he couldn't help but explain, "My wife is...nice."

After saying that, he sneaked another glance at his wife, and his resolute face turned suspiciously red.

However, his skin was dark, and the villagers couldn't see his blushing. They only thought he had no choice, and spoke intentionally to give Su Qingyue face.

That mute was deaf, not dumb.

Everyone thought Dashan was trying to appease her, fearing she might come up with wicked ideas again.

No one knew that Su Qingyue's situation was exactly the opposite: not mute but deaf.

Seeing her without any reaction, they thought she was pretending. Someone was unhappy and said, "Dashan, women need to be disciplined with force to behave. Your wife looks sly. There's no need to compliment her, just beat her when she does something wrong, and she'll behave."

"You're defending her, and she doesn't even appreciate it. Look how dark and tanned she is. She might not even be able to give birth to a son, only knowing how to eat for free." Wang Adou kindly advised, "After some time, if she can't give birth to a son, don't support her any longer. Just sell her."

“There has to be a man from the Xiao Family willing to touch her for that to happen. Look at how Chuan tried to sell her to old lady Liu yesterday. It seems like they didn’t want her. Dashan...” A male villager looked at Xiao Yishan and winked, “She’s so smelly, can you even stand it?”

“Nonsense!” Xiao Yishan’s face darkened, “I’ve already told you my wife is nice. We don’t need your help with our family’s business!”

He was born with a strong physique, and his face was stern and masculine. On his left face, there was a scar left by bear blind, and the villagers were usually a bit afraid of him.

With his roar, none of the guys dared to say anything.

They were all secretly wondering why Dashan was defending the mute girl. Many people looked at Su Qingyue with contempt. Was an ugly mute worth making the Xiao Family’s men angry with them?

Su Qingyue didn’t know what was going on, but seeing the villagers mocking gazes, she felt baffled. Was it right to be discriminated against just because of her looks? How superficial.

“Buy the prey if you want to, if not, get out!” Xiao Yishan yelled again.

“If we don’t buy it, don’t buy it. Later, I’ll go to town to buy something. What do you think we are afraid of, not having places to spend our money?”

“That’s right, we won’t buy it, we won’t buy it...”

In the end, several people left.

However, as a few left, many more came gradually, “Is Dashan selling his prey?

I heard you hunted a roe deer, I came to buy a couple of jin of roe deer meat...”

After Xiao Yishan nodded to the guys, he went into the kitchen, scooped the cooked rice into a clay bowl, and called out to Su Qingyue sitting under the eaves, 'Wife, your lunch is cooked, you can eat now!'

Chapter 46: 46 The wife's lunch is ready.

Aunt Zhang followed in and saw the amount of rice in the bowl, "Yo, Dashan, Aunt Wang just said you wouldn't know how to live frugally, so she told you not to cook too much rice. Turns out you're spoiling your wife by only cooking rice for her?"

Aunt Wang also looked into the kitchen, "Hey, it's unexpected that Su Qingyue, that mute girl, is actually quite blessed. Look at that rice, it's not even mixed with sweet potatoes. Dashan, you really do treat your wife to pure grains. Your wife ain't a delicate person, as long as she has food to eat, she won't starve.

Adding more sweet potatoes wouldn't hurt."

Xiao Yishan saw that his wife didn't respond, thinking she didn't want to eat. He thought that since she had eaten so many wild apples, she might not be hungry. So he just took a bowl and covered the rice, planning to eat it later in the evening.

Qingyue's ears were very quiet. She had indeed heard everything and was so full from eating all those apples that her stomach couldn't fit any more food for now.

Uncle Liu also said, "The Xiao family's daughter-in-law is so thin, if she doesn't eat better, I'm afraid she won't get pregnant."

Xiao Yishan was embarrassed by the comments from the others but didn't want to lose his temper. Small game like rabbits and pheasants were sold by whole weight, while larger prey were sold by meat weight after being killed, gutted and skinned.

He weighed the two rabbits and said to Aunt Zhang and Uncle Liu, who were going to buy wild rabbits, "One weighs 5 jin, the other weighs 5 jin 6 taels. It's still the old price, 12 cents per jin."

Aunt Zhang looked at Uncle Liu, “Old Liu, give me the one that weighs 5 jin. Auntie Hua asked me to buy them, and she said one around 5 jin would be best.”

“Alright,” Uncle Liu was very straightforward, “Having more meat, even just an additional 6 taels, is a good thing.”

Aunt Zhang asked Xiao Yishan again, “Dashan, is the roe deer meat you hunted still 13 cents per jin? I heard from people who just returned to the village from the town that a hunter sold roe deer meat for 14 cents per jin yesterday.”

The villager Granny Sun, who came to buy meat, was unhappy to hear this, “Zhang’s family, aren’t you trying to get Dashan to raise the price? You must think you have too much money in your pocket, huh?”

Aunt Zhang was not pleased, “What’s wrong? Dashan is an honest person, we farmers are straightforward, and we say what we think. It’s not a big deal if the market price is higher. Do you guys just want to take advantage of Dashan’s family? You’re only buying a jin or two, and it’s just a couple of copper coins more. Is it gonna kill you?”

“Yes, it’s gonna kill us!” Granny Sun said angrily, “Your family has a better life, so you can occasionally buy some meat to compensate. My family doesn’t have it as good as yours. It’s so hard to earn a single copper coin, which could buy a big bun.”

The other villagers didn’t chime in, as everyone’s life was not easy. Wealthier families didn’t care about one or two copper coins, but some families had to be very thrifty to afford a meal of meat. Although the Xiao family was very poor, they lived as hunters and didn’t lack meat, only money and food. Otherwise, how could Xiao Yishan be so strong?

Take Chuan, for example. Although he wasn’t as strong, he was sturdy and relatively tall. It just didn’t make sense why Chuan would faint now and then, and the doctor couldn’t figure out the reason.

Some people wanted to say they should sell at the old price, but then Aunt

Zhang mentioned the market price again. The roe deer Xiao Yishan hunted was not small, and selling one jin for one cent less would result in tens of cents less in total..

## Chapter 47: 47 Scraping Fur

The fear of being blamed for taking advantage of others led to a quarrel between Aunt Zhang and Granny Sun.

“It’s still thirteen cents per jin, no price increase,” Xiao Yishan stated. This stopped the argument between the two old women, which had been growing more heated.

A villager said happily, “Dashan, you’re always so fair.”

Aunt Zhang also weighed in, “Dashan, you’re such a good-hearted person.”

Xiao Yishan did not respond. He was well aware that even if he lost a cent for each jin, it amounted to only a few tens of cents in total. And he was not the only hunter in the village. The other hunters, while not as diligent as he was in hunting in the mountains, rarely came home empty-handed.

If there was frequent game for sale in the village, and his was a cent cheaper, more people would come to him. Also, do not underestimate the power of a single cent, if a product was more expensive, villagers would hesitate to spend more money. However, if it’s cheaper by a cent, he could sell more, even if someone buys more, they would only get one or two jin, people would buy and

eat just enough. They are usually unwilling to buy much.

The calculation was quite similar. This is why he occasionally sells his game slightly cheaper by a cent or two per jin.

Upon hearing this, Granny Sun was satisfied, “Dashan, I’ll buy ... half a jin then. ”

Villager Wang Adou laughed, “Granny Sun, you were so fierce just now, why are you only buying half a jin? Before I came here, I heard Grandpa Sun telling you to buy a jin. Are you skimping on the household food again?”

Aunt Zhang revealed the truth, "This is her clever tactic. Adou, if it weren't for the fact that you heard old Sun say to buy a jin, Granny Sun could bring back half a jin of meat, claim to have bought a jin, and once it is cooked in the pot with plenty of vegetables, spread over a few meals, who could tell whether she bought half a jin or a jin? In doing so, she saved six or seven copper coins."

Feeling embarrassed and angry, Granny Sun retorted, "Aunt Zhang, are you picking a fight with me? So what if I skimp on household food? I'm not skimping on your household, am I? If my husband has no objections, why are you making a fuss?"

"Oh-ho!" Aunt Zhang slapped her thigh, "So, you're angry now, old granny? When did I mind your family's business? I'm just saying your skill in saving money is brilliant, but it's not right to skimp on your own family." She turned to the people around, "All you little wives and daughters-in-law, don't learn from Granny Sun! Everyone else wants their family to eat well, but she's always looking for ways to skimp on her family..."

"Ha-ha-ha..." The villagers all laughed. Someone asked, "Granny Sun, you said you're buying half a jin, it's six and a half cents. Or do you expect Dashan to round down the half cent for you? If we split a copper coin in half, no one will accept it."

Granny Sun did indeed have such a thought, and her face turned red with embarrassment, but she denied it, "I'm not that stingy. Dashan, weigh me a jin later."

While everyone chatted and laughed, Xiao Yishan collected the money for the wild pheasant and rabbit, and then dragged the eighty jin roe deer to a corner of the yard. The place was slightly lower than the rest of the yard, with a simple waist-high platform set up. On the platform was the cleaver and a scaling knife that Xiao Yishan had fetched from the kitchen cupboard.

He skillfully removed the roe deer's fur and placed it to one side. After gutting it, he tossed the roe deer onto the platform and used the cleaver to chop off its head and limbs.

"Dashan's skill in peeling skin is really impressive...didn't cause any damage at all..." Wang Adou said admiringly as he watched..

Chapter 48: 48 Want to give less copper coins

Aunt Wang also said, "That's true, Dashan is a skilled hunter. He's been hunting for many years, and his fur-cleaning skills are pretty good."

"Dashan actually does it better, not that we haven't seen other hunters skin their prey..."

"That's true."

Wang Adou looked at the three holes in the roe deer's fur, made by the tip of a bamboo, "This is a good quality pelt, but it's unfortunate that it was damaged.

It won't fetch much money now."

"It's quite a feat to have hunted a roe deer..." the villagers started chattering again.

Aunt Wang, gazing at the roe deer meat, said, "Give me two jin.

I'll buy more to take home. Preserving it with salt for slow consumption is not a bad idea."

Another person said, "I originally only wanted one jin, but let's get an extra half jin..

"I'll also take an extra half jin..."

On the ground next to the platform, there was a bunch of grass, slightly longer than chopsticks. Xiao Yishan cut and weighed out the meat according to each villager's request. A hole was made in each piece of meat and strung together with the grass. Knotting the ends of the grass together, the meat pieces could now be carried without getting the hands dirty.

When it was Granny Sun's turn, he cut about one jin of roe deer meat, weighed it, and handed it to her, saying, "One jin of meat."

Granny Sun counted the copper coins and handed them over. She wanted to ask Dashan to add a bit more minced meat from the cutting board, but seeing so many people, especially the self-righteous member of the Zhang family, she left without saying anything.

“Wait a minute...” Xiao Yishan called out to her.

“What’s the matter? I still have to rush home to work!” Granny Sun pretended to be impatient, but was actually a bit nervous.

“You’re one copper coin short.” Xiao Yishan spread out the copper coins she had given him on the table, and sure enough, there were only twelve. One less than what should have been given for one jin of meat.

Upon seeing this, the villagers all shook their heads. Aunt Zhang, in particular, glared at Granny Sun and said, “Granny Sun, you’re really penny-pinching! Did you think Dashan wouldn’t count?”

Granny Sun had hoped that Dashan was too busy to notice the missing coin and tried to feign ignorance, but she underestimated his sharpness. After all, if a hunter’s eyes weren’t sharp, how could he catch his prey?

And even when she was exposed, she denied it, took out a copper coin and placed it on the table, “I miscounted earlier. It’s just one copper coin, right? Dashan, as a man, and a fellow villager at that, shouldn’t you be less petty? It’s embarrassing...”

“You wicked old woman...” Aunt Zhang pointed at her and scolded her, “Not only do you take advantage of people, you even have the gall to criticize them. If Dashan were as stingy as you, he would have lost tens of cents from selling just one roe deer. And you dare to accuse him of being stingy...”

Everyone was shaking their heads at Granny Sun, acknowledging she was in the wrong.

Seeing the villagers speaking against her, Granny Sun hastily left with a disgruntled expression.



When it was Aunt Zhang's turn to buy meat, Xiao Yishan secretly slipped her three copper coins, as a token of appreciation for her support.

Aunt Zhang was startled but accepted it nonetheless, picking up her meat and the wild rabbit and left. She was smart enough not to let the other villagers know, lest they also expected Xiao Yishan to undercharge them.

Su Qingyue, who had eaten dozens of apples, had initially planned to digest them for about twelve minutes before going to the river to bathe. Given her dirty and smelly condition, the distance of the river, and her injury slowing her down, her expected bathing time was several hours before she could return..

Chapter 49: 49 Fragrant Lotus Sisters

To avoid worrying her second brother, she wanted to give him a heads up, but there were many villagers coming to the yard to buy wild game.

Her second brother was busy selling wild rabbits and wild pheasants, as well as roe deer meat. She didn't have an opportunity to talk to him.

Maybe by the time she came back, her second brother would have finished his job too.

So, she simply went to the riverbank alone.

There were quite a few onlookers, but there were only about twenty people actually buying meat. Some people bought just a few taels, many bought one or two jin, and the most anyone bought was four jin.

After skinning and removing the internal organs, head, and feet of the eighty-jin roe deer, there were only fifty-two jin of meat left. They sold a total of forty-five jin, with seven jin left over.

When the last buyer paid, Xiao Yishan looked under the eaves and saw that Su

Qingyue had disappeared. He quickly asked, "Where's my wife?"

A villager replied, "She left the yard a while ago."

Xiao Yishan's face changed, fearing that she had run away again. He hurriedly went to the entrance of the courtyard and asked people, "Has anyone seen where my wife went?"

Wang Adou, who was not far ahead, said, "Just now, someone saw your wife go that way." He pointed in the southern direction.

That was not the way out of the village. Xiao Yishan felt a little relieved. He didn't even bother to clean up the leftover meat on the counter and went to look for his wife.

He didn't mind that a few villagers hadn't left, knowing that third brother and fourth brother were at home.

In the daytime, Fourth Brother hardly sleeps, and the room's window faces the yard, so he can see everything in the yard from his room.

Most of the villagers were quite decent, and generally, no one would steal from other people's homes.

Walking slowly step by step towards the fields in the south, Su Qingyue tried to walk as gently as possible to avoid shaking her injured internal organs.

When she arrived at the riverbank by the fields, she saw a few women washing clothes. She continued walking along the riverbank.

"Hey! The Xiao Family's daughter-in-law!" Zhang Shun's wife called out while beating wet clothes with a wooden stick and shouted.

Su Qingyue didn't hear and naturally didn't respond.

"Look, she's ignoring people," Zhang Shun's wife was unhappy.

Liu Laoshi's daughter, Liu Xianglian, also said, "Yeah, she's so ugly and disgusting, I heard Brother Chuan wouldn't sell her even for seventeen taels. Look at her attitude, so arrogant, thinking she's a young Miss. She won't even respond when we greet her. In my opinion, Brother Chuan is confused. This ugly monster is worse than a beggar. Let alone seventeen taels, she should be sold cheaply for three to five taels. It's a waste of food to keep her!"

Wang Cuihua, who was also washing clothes, defended, "Xianglian, you shouldn't be so harsh. She's already so pitiful, and we shouldn't talk about her like that. It's not right..."

Liu Xianglian got angry, "Wang Cuihua, are you defending her? Su Qingyue is an ugly mute, why shouldn't we talk about her? I know your husband is close with Brother Chuan. But you should understand, Brother Chuan doesn't like Su Qingyue at all. If you really want to help Brother Chuan, go and tell your husband to persuade Brother Chuan to sell that ugly woman!"

Wang Cuihua knew that Liu Xianglian was no good, unlike her honest father, Liu Laoshi. She was as mean as her mother, "Oh, Xianglian, you act like you care so much about the Xiao Family.. Do you want Brother Chuan to sell Su Qingyue so you can marry him? Even if Brother Chuan would agree,

Chapter 50: 50 Su Qjngyue commits suicide by jumping into the river

Even your money-grubbing mother wouldn't agree to it. Everyone knows that if someone wants to marry you, your mother demands a betrothal gift of sixty taels. That's enough to buy two normal wives! Are you really worth that much?" Thinking about it, Su Qingyue is feeling sorry too. Others could have sold for thirty taels, but the Zhu family got her for just fifteen taels. When she ended up in the Xiao family, it was only one tael more. It's said that old lady Liu raised the price by one tael again, but it's still only worth half of what an ordinary person would cost.

"You..." Liu Xianglian's eyes widened.

"What 'you'?"

"You're from another village, what do you know? So much idle talk, aren't you afraid your tongue will snap?" Liu Xianglian, seeing the other girls laughing at her, said angrily, "I don't like Chuan at all. Don't listen to her nonsense." Even if she did like Brother Chuan, who made his family so poor? She wouldn't

want to marry and suffer there. With her looks, it wouldn't be difficult to marry someone with a little bit of wealth, so she couldn't afford to tarnish her reputation.

Wang Cuihua sneered, "My husband is from this village. Now that I'm married here, I'm part of this village too. I want to say something, so what? Whether you like Chuan or not, you know it in your heart."

"You damn Wang Cuihua, I'm done talking to you. Don't gossip anymore!" Liu Xianglian put the washed clothes into the basin, stood up and walked away, glaring at Su Qingyue's retreating back, "Anybody who speaks up for her is useless. She's just a disgusting, cheap good-for-nothing! Shameless and ugly as hell, yet she won't let go of Brother Chuan. If it were me, I wouldn't have the face to live in this world, I would have thrown myself into the river to die long ago!"

When she left, the other girls sighed, "Liu Xianglian is really something, always flirting with Chuan and acting like she's so great because she's a bit pretty. Even if someone really bothers her, she shouldn't curse them like that..."

"Yeah, no matter how ugly someone is, how does it affect her? She relies on her looks and thinks she's amazing. Even if it's true, there's no need to curse people like that..."

Xiao Yishan walked over from afar and saw several girls and women washing clothes by the river. He asked, "Has anyone seen my wife?"

Wang Cuihua pointed ahead, "She went that way just now." As if thinking of something, her face turned pale, "Second Brother Xiao, just now Liu Xianglian cursed your wife, even wishing her to die by jumping into the river. I'm worried your wife might really try to kill herself!"

Xiao Yishan's face changed drastically and he ran quickly to the front.

Seeing that something big was about to happen, those working in the field near the river and those washing clothes by the riverbank all put down the work in their hands and followed in twos and threes to watch the excitement.

Su Qingyue walked along the riverbank for a while, turned several bends, and saw that there were mountains all around with no one in sight. She looked up at the sun and guessed it was around four or five in the afternoon.

She'd come out a bit late, but there was still time to take a shower before nightfall.

After stepping down the bank, she looked around once again, and after making sure no one was around, she lifted her foot to test the temperature of the river water. It was really cold. In early May, the sun couldn't warm the water even in the afternoon. It was definitely not suitable for taking a bath in the river, especially with her injury.

But if she didn't bathe, she would be suffocated by the filth. She grabbed her hair, which was as greasy and smelly as dried vegetables, and the wind by the river carried the stench far away, making her nauseous.

Her clothes were also filthy, caked with grime, which was worse than any beggar she'd seen in her two lifetimes. She was too lazy to take them off first. Anxious to take a shower, she couldn't wait any longer. She'd take off her clothes after she was in the water.

She stepped deeper into the river one foot at a time, with the water reaching her knees. The cold water made her shiver....