

# THE MIRROR LEGACY

## Chapter 10: Marriage Proposal

Li Mutian, with his hands clasped behind his back, approached the entrance of the Tian Family's courtyard.

Tian Yun, humming softly while crouching to pick vegetables, looked up and recognized him.

"Uncle Li!" she called out, setting aside her vegetables and hurrying to her feet.

"Father! Uncle Mutian is here," she shouted toward the house.

"Good girl," Li Mutian replied, smiling warmly as he observed Tian Yun.

The girl had blossomed beautifully over the past three years. Her figure was well-formed and graceful. Though not strikingly beautiful, her features were pleasant, and her smile added a unique charm.

"Not bad at all," Li Mutian murmured to himself, revealing a fat swan goose he had been carrying behind his back.

"Oh, Uncle Li! You shouldn't have," Tian Yun exclaimed, momentarily stunned.

Upon identifying that the gift, she gasped in surprise. "Is that a swan goose?"

According to the "Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial - The Rites of Marriage", it was said that a marriage proposal should be made with a swan goose.

In Yue State, it was customary for a member of the groom's family to present a swan goose at the doorstep of the intended bride as a part of the marriage

proposal ritual. In Lijing Village where elaborate formalities were less practical, it was common for marriage proposals to be made without gifts.

For Tian Yun, witnessing such a traditional betrothal custom was a novel experience.

“Does my son, Xiangping, catch your fancy?” Li Mutian teased her.

Tian Yun’s cheeks were already flushed with a deep red that spread to her neck. Caught off guard and flustered, Tian Yun stammered, trying to mask her feelings.

Yet, fearing that Li Mutian might take her hesitation seriously, she finally let out a shy but earnest, “Yes!”

Just then, Tian Shoushui emerged from the house. His relief was evident upon hearing his daughter’s response.

He had long suspected his daughter’s affection for Li Xiangping!

Yet, the boy was always so reserved and had never made his feelings known. Fearing his daughter might end up embarrassed, Tian Shoushui had always remained silent on the matter.

“Big Brother!” Tian Shoushui greeted Li Mutian with a broad smile.

Tian Shoushui had followed Li Mutian like a shadow ever since he was five and enlisted in the army alongside Ren Ping’an at twelve. The three had formed a tight-knit bond in the military, as close as real brothers.

After returning to the village, Li Mutian exacted justice on the influential Yuan Family and then quit his former lifestyle to embrace farming. He took special care of Tian Shoushui, allocating fields to him and even arranging his marriage.

For Tian Shoushui, the Li Family was like his own family. He had even raised Li Changhu with his own hands, treating him like his own son.

He had no qualms about marrying his daughter into the Li Family.

Unaware of the thoughts running through her father's mind, Tian Yun retreated hastily as soon as she saw her father coming out, prompting a burst of laughter from Li Mutian.

"Big Brother, there's something else I would like to discuss with you aside from the marriage proposal," Tian Shoushui said, his expression turning serious.

"What is it about?" Li Mutian inquired with a hint of concern in his voice.

"A few days ago, I heard some noises while passing by the Yuan Family's ancestral tomb up in the mountains. But when I went back to check, there was nothing," Tian Shoushui said.

"Are there still any members left in the Yuan Family?" Li Mutian knitted his eyebrows together, his tone grave.

"Maybe some relatives are secretly paying homage?" Tian Shoushui suggested anxiously as if trying to reassure himself.

"That could be possible." Li Mutian nodded in agreement, looking slightly more relaxed. "I did ensure that the five members of the Yuan Family were dealt with back then."

"I shouldn't have brought up such a heavy topic on such a joyful day!" Tian Shoushui slapped his own mouth as he chastised himself, eliciting a soft chuckle from Li Mutian.

Leaving the Tian Family's courtyard, Li Mutian strolled along the dirt path, his face serene yet contemplative as he gazed toward Mount Dali.

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After settling the marriage proposal, Li Mutian returned to the courtyard, pretending as if nothing had happened.

Passing through the front yard, he saw three of his sons engaged in a lively chat around the wooden table.

The youngest son, Li Chejing, was absorbed in his cultivation inside the house. Despite the slow progress due to the faint moonlight, he dedicated himself to practice day and night, not wasting even a moment.

In the courtyard, Li Xiangping was poring over the "Reception Method". The cloth was already creased and the ink was smudged from constant handling.

"Brother Xiangping, try to be a bit gentler with it," Li Tongya chided with a smile, while his own hands were busy, silently carving symbols onto wooden slips.

Li Changhu, the eldest, was meticulously going through the field deeds and working on the accounts. He raised an eyebrow in amusement and remarked, "He's been at it since this morning."

Li Mutian strode across the stone steps, picked up a cup of clear tea from the table, and seated himself.

"I've just been to the Tian Family to arrange a marriage," he announced casually.

Upon hearing this, Li Xiangping sprang up from his chair and stared at his father anxiously.

"What did they say?"

"Tian Yun says she fancies you," Li Mutian replied, slowly sipping his tea with a contented sigh.

"Good, good... That's great," Li Xiangping responded, visibly elated.

The two brothers erupted into hearty laughter at his reaction.

Li Mutian, however, had more somber thoughts. Setting down his teacup, his expression turned serious as he began, "Listen up now. Although the path of immortality is wondrous, it's also filled with unknown dangers and crises. Our Li Family line is not robust. If anything were to happen to any of you, who would carry on the Li Family's legacy?"

Li Mutian gazed at the earnest expressions of the young men before him and waved his hand, speaking gravely, "This mirror represents both an opportunity and a potential misfortune for our family."

"I quickly arranged a marriage for Changhu, hoping he would soon father an heir. My hope is that if something goes awry, the legacy of our Li Family will still carry on," he continued.

"The same goes for you." He pointed at Li Xiangping and let out an exasperated sigh, then averted his gaze to Li Tongya. "As for you, Tongya, I'm too old to dictate your choices. You may not be interested in the women in our village, but you must consider leaving heirs as well..."

Li Tongya nodded silently, reflecting for a moment before responding, "Don't worry, Father. I know my responsibilities."

"Glad to hear that," Li Mutian replied, brushing his graying hair. His mind was clouded with concern.

He was already in his fifties. Despite being physically robust and well-provided for, Li Mutian was aware of life's uncertainties. It seemed prudent to him to settle family matters sooner rather than later!

"Father!"

The tension in the courtyard was broken by a clear, enthusiastic shout. Li Chejing emerged from the house, stopping before his elder brothers.

“I’m close to refining eighty-one wisps of moonlight qi and condensing the Profound Scenery Chakra!” he declared, his face beaming.

“I’m very proud of you, my son,” Li Mutian said with pride, having often heard his youngest son speak of this Profound Scenery Chakra of the Embryonic Breathing. He enveloped him in a joyful embrace, laughing as he looked at his son.

The brothers, too, were swept up in this cheerful mood, their faces lighting up with smiles. Li Changhu even playfully pinched Li Chejing’s cheeks, only releasing the boy when he protested in pain.

“We’ll have to wait for the summer solstice to receive the next Talisman Seed.” Li Tongya observed, his gaze sweeping over the happy scene in the courtyard.

He then mused to himself, “We weren’t able to finish the preparations during the last day of last month and the first day of this month, so summer solstice will be our next chance. It’s not that far off anyway.”

Li Tongya was silently etching the Reception Method onto wooden slips, but internally, he felt a surge of excitement as he thought, *The path of immortal cultivation beckons me.*