

Folly 15

Chapter 15: Turn the Tables (2)

Old Mrs. Mu clutched her head, wailing, and at that moment, the water on her body carried a sour stench. Instantly, Old Mrs. Mu remembered the filth Mu Shuangshuang had vomited into her mouth last time and couldn't hold back; she started retching again.

Mu Shuangshuang, pretending to sleep on the bed, grinned with a muffled laugh, eagerly waiting to see how Old Mrs. Mu would explode with anger. Just then, Mu the Third walked into the room with Mu Shuangshuang's medication. Upon entering, he saw Old Mrs. Mu dry heaving on the floor, the floor wet and messy, and the entire room in chaos.

"Mom, what's wrong with you? Why are you sitting on the floor? It's cold; quickly get up."

Mu the Third assumed Old Mrs. Mu was cooling herself off by sitting on the ground. Forgetting the medicine in his hand, he hurried over to help her, but she swatted him away.

Now that she'd suffered, it was natural to make someone else uncomfortable.

"You useless thing! I told you not to marry Yu Si Niang, but you wouldn't listen. Look what happened, giving birth to such a disgusting thing! If your brother were here, it'd be great. He always listens to me, unlike you, ungrateful, ungrateful..."

Mu the Third's face alternated between red and white. He'd been married for several years and had three children, yet over these years, his mother wouldn't let go of this issue. Meanwhile, his brother—the eldest—was in town preparing for next year's provincial exam. If he passed, he'd become a scholar,

stepping closer to politics, unlike Mu the Third, who worked the fields and couldn't compete with his brother.

Mu the Third lowered his head, letting Old Mrs. Mu curse and rant alone, not daring to utter a single word.

Mu Shuangshuang's face, originally smiling because of Old Mrs. Mu's suffering, suddenly turned dark.

Beneath the thin quilt, her right hand unconsciously clenched into a fist.

This damn old woman is truly vile!

After exhausting herself with insults, Old Mrs. Mu unexpectedly didn't bother with Mu Shuangshuang on the bed, or even hold Mu the Third accountable for using the kitchen privately to concoct medicine. She sulkily returned to her own room, annoyed by the vile smell on her body, to change clothes.

Mu the Third remained standing, as if still dazed by the curses, until he saw the medicine bowl on the table, causing him to pull a smile even uglier than crying.

After tidying the wooden basin and small table on the ground, Mu the Third repositioned the table carefully, attentively setting the medicine bowl before approaching the bed and gently nudging his daughter's arm.

"Shuangshuang, wake up. The medicine's ready; quickly drink it..."

Mu Shuangshuang slowly opened her eyes, pretending to have just woken. She flashed Mu the Third a sweet smile and called out, "Dad!"

She then pointed to her throat, informing Mu the Third to speak less.

Mu the Third's eyes immediately reddened. Unlike Yu Si Niang's somewhat confrontational nature, Mu the Third was the most honest among the Old Mu Family. No matter how harsh the words from Old Mrs. Mu were, he never retorted, just standing by, silently enduring.

He also took on the most chores at home, working tirelessly every day, but never received good treatment at home. Yet, he never slacked on those chores; he rose early and returned late, regardless.

"Good girl, Shuangshuang, drink the medicine up!"

Mu the Third repeated as he handed the medicine bowl to Mu Shuangshuang's mouth, the thick, fishy smell suddenly overwhelming her, mixing with the sour stench on her person, making Mu Shuangshuang dizzy.

In this household, only Mu the Third and his wife didn't resent her, along with the original owner's younger sister, Mu Xiaozhi. Thinking about the little one trotting out with her bottom protruding softened Mu Shuangshuang's heart.

The medicine went down her throat at that moment, not just fishy but bitter. Some say good medicine tastes bitter, apparently true. Once finished with a bowl, Mu the Third's smile became noticeably genuine.

"Shuangshuang, Dad will help your mom wash clothes. You rest well. If anything happens, just shout."

The man glanced at his daughter, then remembered his wife washing clothes in the yard, and he spoke.

Recently, because of rice harvest and hot weather, the clothes at home were dirtier and plenty. If only Yu Si Niang were to wash them alone, it would probably take an hour. Mu the Third, caring for his wife, thought: How could he let his wife wash those mud-soaked clothes alone?

He'd rather skip nap time at noon than have his wife exhausted.

Once Mu the Third left, Mu Shuangshuang's eyes reopened. Right now, the kitchen ought to be empty. She should go do some mischief.

Just as she was about to get up, the door opened again, and a small body sneaked in, climbing onto the kang bed where Mu Shuangshuang lay, her big round eyes fixated on the person with tightly closed eyes.

Suddenly, Mu Xiaozhi stretched out her little hand, gently touching Mu Shuangshuang's long eyelashes. When the lashes fluttered with her touch, Mu Xiaozhi spoke in her sweet, sticky voice.

"Sister, you're pretending to sleep!"

Only then did Mu Shuangshuang open her eyes again. "Smart..."

Upon receiving the compliment, Mu Xiaozhi's small face broke into a broad smile.

"Sister, please get better soon, then you can play with me. Brother prefers playing with Gou Dan and them instead of me."

Gou Dan is Mu the Second's youngest son, full name Mu Jingui, the most indulged one at home, always with snot and boogers smeared across his face, rivaling Mu Shuangshuang's current look.

The disappointment in the young one's eyes struck a chord with Mu Shuangshuang, prompting a pang of sadness. Her own brother would rather play with the son of the sister-in-law who bullied her mom than with his sister.

This second brother Mu Xiaohan is really a dimwit, Mu Shuangshuang didn't think highly of him!

"Want... to see... a good show?" Mu Shuangshuang's eyes, as bright as stars, fixed on Mu Xiaozhi.

Mu Xiaozhi nodded vigorously. Since this sister spoke up, and after she swallowed that corn bun to protect mom, Mu Xiaozhi started liking this sister.

There's something about her that I really like.

"Sister, whatever you say goes, Little Zhi listens to you."

Using the shortest words, Mu Shuangshuang instructed Mu Xiaozhi on what she needed her to do and repeatedly told her to be careful before departure.

Mu Xiaozhi squinted her eyes and sneaked out the room. When she returned, she was carrying a small cloth bag wrapped around a jar of salt.

"Sister, I stole some salt, now what?"

"Shh!" Mu Shuangshuang gestured for silence and pointed to the rat hole in the north corner of the room, to have Mu Xiaozhi place the salt bag inside.

"Alright, Little Zhi understands!"

Mu Shuangshuang's plan was to have Mu Xiaozhi steal the salt jar from the kitchen because Mu Family's second daughter-in-law, Mrs. Lin, claimed the salt jar she hid, only she knew about it and only brought it out for cooking.

This time, she wanted to see how losing the salt would make Old Mrs. Mu handle the trouble-making Mrs. Lin.