

Folly 291

Chapter 291: She' Has a Man in Her Heart 2

Mu Shuangshuang also feared those egg-laying bugs.

Lu Yuanfeng swallowed, hesitated for a moment, then reached out and placed his hand on Mu Shuangshuang's back.

It was a completely different feeling; her slender back had little flesh, making Lu Yuanfeng's hand seem particularly large and strong as it rested in the center.

Yet, at that moment, Lu Yuanfeng felt he was closest to the girl in front of him.

They lightly touched, without a gap, and as his hand moved down her shoulder, Lu Yuanfeng accidentally grazed Mu Shuangshuang's lower back.

Mu Shuangshuang trembled, instantly feeling an unusual sensation rising in her heart.

She took several deep breaths, forcing herself to calm down, but the hand on her back made it impossible.

Her heart raced, her head dizzy, she felt sick, and hoarsely asked, "Fengzi, how's it going, is the spider silk coming down?"

Lu Yuanfeng froze as well, suddenly feeling incredibly despicable for lying just to get closer to Shuangshuang.

But his hand was rooted there, and he was unwilling to remove it. Like a child scared of getting caught stealing, he cautiously replied, "Almost... nearly done."

His hand remained on Shuangshuang's back, and after a while, Lu Yuanfeng reluctantly moved his hand away.

At the same time, Mu Shuangshuang breathed a sigh of relief when the contact was broken.

Yet deep down, she felt a trace of disappointment.

She seemed to be anticipating something, but what exactly?

To divert her attention, Mu Shuangshuang offered, "Fengzi, let me help you. Four hands are definitely faster than two."

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It was Mu Shuangshuang's first time watching someone do carpentry; she saw Lu Yuanfeng holding a piece of wood, measuring it.

After measuring the required size, he'd mark it with a black line using a chalk line, making a mark.

Then came sawing the wood. It was evident Lu Yuanfeng often did this kind of work; his skill was not only adept, but his serious attitude while working was particularly rare.

It's often said that men are most charming when they work hard, and Lu Yuanfeng was no exception—tall and well-formed, there was hardly any flaw in his appearance other than that slight darkness.

He focused intently on his work, his wrist flipping skillfully, and within moments, the wood was mostly sawed.

Even Mu Shuangshuang couldn't deny that this side of Lu Yuanfeng was mesmerizing, and she didn't want to blink.

"Fengzi, are you making a table? It looks quite nice."

Mu Shuangshuang glanced at the nearly finished wooden piece beside her, which was decorated with carvings. Clearly, those weren't carved today; they must have been done by another carpenter earlier.

Looking at the patterns on the table, Mu Shuangshuang genuinely admired the ancient carpenters who could craft such detailed items.

"Yes, but it's not for now; it's for Qiqu Festival!"

Speaking of Qiqu Festival, Lu Yuanfeng stole a glance at Shuangshuang, and seeing her puzzled expression, he suddenly wanted to laugh. Such an important day, and she didn't know about it?

"Qiqu Festival is when the cowherd and the weaver meet. On this day, unmarried girls in the village bring food to pray under the moon for a good husband." He paused, then hesitated before continuing.

"If Shuangshuang were to make a wish on Qiqu Festival, what... what kind of husband would she hope to find?"

This was probably Lu Yuanfeng's boldest question. His ears tinged red, he was both expectant and afraid of Shuangshuang's answer.

"Me?"

Mu Shuangshuang thought for a moment. She hadn't really considered marriage yet, but if she had to, she probably wouldn't wish for it. She felt it wasn't something a wish could determine.

"Yes!" Lu Yuanfeng replied, feigning nonchalance.

"Simple, as long as we're compatible."

Mu Shuangshuang's answer sparked Lu Yuanfeng's interest, and he said, "What does compatible mean? Isn't it about looks and money? If a girl finds a good-looking man, people will envy her. If she finds someone well-off, she'll never worry about food and clothing."

In a good mood, Mu Shuangshuang was happy to explain to Lu Yuanfeng: "Being compatible means having common interests, being able to talk to each other freely."

Chapter 292: The Man in Her Heart' 3

Marriage, after all, is about two people living together. I can't just live off a man's looks, right? When I'm hungry, I still need bread and steamed buns.

As for money, I've got hands and feet, so I don't need anyone else to support me."

Lu Yuanfeng listened to Mu Shuangshuang's words and nodded occasionally.

For some reason, hearing Shuangshuang's words lightened the burden in his heart a bit, but he increasingly felt that Shuangshuang was special, different from any other girl.

"Fengzi, you should also remember, when marrying a wife, don't just think about finding a pretty one. Just find someone with a good personality who treats you well."

Lu Yuanfeng said nothing, but he looked at Mu Shuangshuang with a thoughtful expression.

"Speaking of Qixi, Shuangshuang's birthday just happens to be on that day."

Yu Si Niang, who entered the room at some point, leaned against the door, eyes filled with laughter, and looked meaningfully at Lu Yuanfeng as she said this.

Lu Yuanfeng's hand holding the ink line paused slightly, a thought flashed quickly through his mind, the motion was so swift that even Yu Si Niang, who was watching him closely, didn't notice.

Yu Si Niang didn't say anything more, but she already had an idea in her heart. Once Qixi was over, Shuangshuang would be fourteen, and after waiting until the following year, she'd reach the age of fifteen. Thinking about it, the daughter wouldn't be able to stay at home for many more years.

If we don't spend good time with her now, I'm afraid we won't have this opportunity in the future.

Mu Shuangshuang showed little interest in the so-called birthday, as she really couldn't remember how long it had been since she last celebrated one. That sort of thing didn't hold much meaning for her; it was less practical than eating or getting dressed.

The three of them each pondered their own thoughts, while Yuanbao came over clutching a big, golden-yellow corn cob.

The corn, already gnawed unevenly by him, had half-chewed kernels on each part, looking quite unsightly.

Mu Shuangshuang originally intended to laugh, but Lu Yuanfeng kept a straight face and sternly approached, "Yuanbao, you haven't finished the corn properly. Go back and eat those leftovers, and don't waste food."

"Oh~" Yuanbao pouted and went back to gnaw on the kernels he had abandoned.

One must admit, Lu Yuanfeng's method of education was indeed effective. Yuanbao faced punishment for mistakes and received praise for good actions.

Even though Yuanbao's mother was no longer there, Mu Shuangshuang felt that Yuanbao's childhood wouldn't lack due to Lu Yuanfeng's presence.

"Fengzi, stop working and go eat something. It's getting late, and my mom and I are heading back now."

The intent of making a late-night meal was to prevent Lu Yuanfeng from starving. Now that the food was ready, Mu Shuangshuang was happy to head back.

Lu Yuanfeng felt a thousand reluctances, but since it was indeed late, he didn't feel comfortable keeping them any longer.

"Let me walk you and Aunt Four back. I also want to stretch my legs after working for so long."

"Alright, but eat first and let it digest a bit."

"Got it!" Lu Yuanfeng smiled contentedly.

With company, Lu Yuanfeng ate his late-night snack leisurely, enjoying a corn cob, a bowl of broth, and half a piece of stewed meat.

After he finished eating, Mu Shuangshuang was about done stretching her limbs.

The flat area outside Lu Yuanfeng's kitchen was large enough that Mu Shuangshuang practicing her martial moves didn't disrupt his meal; her grappling and combat techniques only piqued Lu Yuanfeng's interest.

He felt an itch in his heart, like a cat was scratching it. Even as he walked Mu Shuangshuang to the door, he couldn't resist asking.

"Shuangshuang, that thing you were practicing outside the kitchen, is it particularly powerful?"

Mu Shuangshuang raised an eyebrow, "Naturally. But since you've had a late-night meal today, it's not suitable for a trial. Next time, let's find a time, and I'll practice with you."

Mu Shuangshuang herself felt a bit eager. Even though she felt like a little sprout in front of Lu Yuanfeng, practicing more could only be beneficial.

"Anyway, we're here. You should head back early. That table, finish it if you can, but if you can't, put it off until tomorrow morning. Staying up late is really harmful to your health."

Mu Shuangshuang rambled on and on, but Lu Yuanfeng didn't feel annoyed. Instead, the more he listened, the more he wanted to hear.

Finally, it was Yu Si Niang who couldn't suppress her drowsiness, prompting the two to each return to their homes.

Chapter 293: Seeking Reconciliation

Entering the courtyard from the side door, Mu Shuangshuang was just about to enter the house when she noticed a shadow in front of Mu Dashan's room.

Mu Shuangshuang's first reaction was to grab Yu Si Niang by the hand and randomly picked up a wooden stick from underfoot.

As she slowly approached the shadow, ready to strike, the shadow spoke.

"Shuang, is that you back?"

This call of "Shuang" startled Yu Si Niang retreating a few steps back.

Inside the house, Mu Dashan, who had already turned off the light, reignited it, and the third branch suddenly became brightly lit.

"Dad, why haven't you gone back?" Mu Dashan, in a gray jacket, still stumbled a bit as he walked.

After dark, Mr. Mu had come to ask about Shuangshuang. At that time, Mu Dashan said that he went out with Yu Si Niang. As for where they went, Mu Dashan didn't say, knowing that such matters wouldn't sit well with the old man.

At the time, Mr. Mu's expression wasn't great, but he didn't say anything. As soon as he left, Mu Dashan went back to sleep.

Who would've thought, after such a long time, his dad was still waiting outside.

"I'm waiting for Shuang. You all should rest if you need to."

It seemed Mr. Mu had something to say to her. Mu Shuangshuang, with her clever mind, thought it over and came to a conclusion.

Being overly solicitous without reason, there's something fishy!

But staying up in the middle of the night waiting here didn't quite match the Old Mu Family's style. Could it be for reconciliation?

"Grandpa, if you have something to say, just say it. It's getting late today, you should rest early."

Mr. Mu stood there for a while before speaking.

"Shuang, thank you for what you did for your little aunt today."

Mr. Mu didn't expect, in such a significant family matter, that the one he would rely on wasn't the other kids, but the already separated third branch.

"Grandpa, don't say that. Our third branch did contribute to Auntie's matter, and I'm not entirely doing it for her. With so many unmarried daughters at home, if Aunt loses her reputation due to being framed, we would be affected too."

Mu Shuangshuang spoke to Mr. Mu with layered meaning.

On one hand, she wanted Mr. Mu to keep a tight rein on Mu Zhenzhen; she could tolerate some minor offenses.

But if it involves such significant matters of principle, it doesn't just affect Aunt alone.

On the other hand, Mu Shuangshuang wanted to make clear to Mr. Mu that her assistance wasn't about seeking glory from Uncle; she never thought of such things.

Mr. Mu felt uncomfortable inside, having lived more than half his life, to be reprimanded by a little girl like this, yet he couldn't say anything in return.

Mr. Mu stood there alone for a long time before speaking with an air of grand generosity.

"No matter what, you are a good child, a good child of the... Old Mu Family. Your second aunt owes you a favor, and I'll remember it for her. When your uncle passes the exam, I'll have him take the third branch along."

Mu Shuangshuang suddenly felt alarmed.

Taking the third branch along? What does that mean? Could it be forcing the third branch back into the Old Mu Family? No way, the third branch finally gained freedom after splitting off.

"Grandpa, no need for such talk, it really means nothing. Besides, we, the third branch, have separated, and there's no reason to enjoy Uncle's benefits. Moreover, there are quite a few people in the third branch, and I don't want to make Uncle embarrassed."

After being rejected repeatedly, Mr. Mu was infuriated. "Shuang, don't be ungrateful. Others wish for such benefits but aren't as fortunate. Don't be so petty."

At this moment, Mr. Mu's true nature was revealed.

Mu Shuangshuang rolled her eyes, couldn't help but retort directly.

"If Grandpa thinks I'm being petty, just tell Uncle directly that our third branch doesn't want to be a part of the official family. We just want to live peacefully in Er Gui Village, eat our fill, and not go hungry."

"You..."

The stubborn girl in front of him frustrated Mr. Mu, but he hadn't forgotten his purpose.

"Shuang, where's the money jar Zhenzhen brought back?"

This was the real reason Mr. Mu came. Today, Mu Zhenzhen narrowly escaped an ordeal in the village; no one would believe what Liu Wangcai and his wife said anymore.

However, that most important thing hadn't been produced.

From what his wife said, he knew the money jar was initially in Zhenzhen's room but later disappeared, especially after Shuang and the third branch had helped.

That money jar was very likely taken by them. The third branch wasn't one to hide things. If they had it, they would have handed it over when approached.

The only possibility was that the item was with Shuang.

"What money jar?" Mu Shuangshuang raised her eyebrows, deliberately asking in surprise.

Old fool, so he came around to ask for evidence. If she handed it over easily, would she still be Mu Shuangshuang?

"Don't give your grandpa those tricks, you know if the money jar is with you."

"Oh, I remembered, is it the pottery jar from Aunt's room? But, Grandpa, you know, my sixth uncle is here, and we've been eating through the food too quickly. I'm afraid we won't have enough to cook tomorrow, so I was thinking of selling that pottery jar in town to get money for grains."

"You... Shuang, you're forcing me to make a painful choice."

Mr. Mu thought he'd seen all kinds of people after eating salt for so many years and crossing so many bridges, but none was like this girl.

You take a single hair, and she demands a lock of hair in return.

Mr. Mu hated people who liked to penny-pinch, and gradually Shuang became increasingly disliked by him.

"Grandpa, don't get excited, just pretend there was never such a jar."

Anyway, if she was going to be shameless, she didn't mind being a little more so.

After all, most of the food at the Old Mu Family was earned by her dad. If she, as a daughter, didn't claim some, how could she even say she's Mu Dashan's daughter?

Mr. Mu felt a blockage in his chest, almost failing to recover, neither scolding nor hitting was appropriate.

If the jar that Zhenzhen had wasn't quickly dealt with, one day if it ended up in someone else's hands, Zhenzhen's reputation would be ruined, and Da De's name tarnished.

"Fine, I'll have your second uncle send some grain to your home tomorrow. I'll decide the amount; if you continue to argue, I'll go find your parents and show them how you're plotting against your own family."

Mr. Mu was probably driven mad, speaking as if he no longer regarded Shuang as a child.

Mu Shuangshuang, in a good mood, didn't insist on how much.

After all, since it was free, Mr. Mu wouldn't possibly give just a pound of rice, and if he did, she wouldn't mind collecting it.

"Grandpa, I threw the jar you wanted into the latrine. You can dig it out yourself later; I'm going to bed first!"

Chapter 294: The Aggrieved Mr. Mu

Mr. Mu is trembling with anger where he stands.

This Shuang, she's here to mess things up; to actually place the money jar in such a place! Doesn't she know how important that thing is to Zhenzhen?

But angry as he is, Mr. Mu still helplessly heads to the outhouse, under the chilly moonlight.

The outhouse reeks to high heavens at this hour, emitting a nauseating smell.

Perhaps because it's nighttime, mosquitoes are humming in swarms, and Mr. Mu almost faints from the stench in the outhouse.

Yet, to preserve Mu Dade's reputation, Mr. Mu grits his teeth against the nausea, picks up a wooden stick in the outhouse, and attempts to fish with it, only to grab a handful of filth.

He then remembers, the wooden sticks in the outhouse are for wiping bottoms, and after they're used, they need to be washed promptly and returned to their places.

Looks like someone used the outhouse without cleaning up.

Mr. Mu rushes out of the outhouse and vomits.

After a while, he gets back to normal. This time, he finds a clean wooden stick, starts poking around in the outhouse, and finally hits something hard—it's undoubtedly the money jar.

But how to get it out is the real problem.

Outhouse jars in rural households are particularly large and deep. Toss a jar in there, and it's as much trouble as tossing a person in, rescuing is tough.

It's late, and Mr. Mu wants to avoid complications, so he makes a revolting decision even to himself: he's going to fish it out with his hand, since no one will see.

In the pitch-dark outhouse, as Mr. Mu reaches his hand in, a shadow like a weasel sprints quickly and steps on Mr. Mu's head...

A screech instantly echoes from the outhouse, followed by the quick departure of the small black shadow, as if it was never there.

After washing up, Mu Shuangshuang is about to go to bed when Little Black suddenly rushes over with an ingratiating manner.

It stares straight at Mu Shuangshuang with its round eyes, seemingly trying to say something, but Mu Shuangshuang is too tired, and Little Black smells awful, she wrinkles her forehead and says:

"Did you fall into the outhouse? Why do you smell so bad?"

Little Black hasn't quite reacted before Mu Shuangshuang picks it up and carries it into her tree hollow.

It hissed a few times in protest, but this strong-willed owner would not let it make waves.

She covers the tree hollow's lid, and suddenly the whole world feels quiet.

Her hands also smell; Mu Shuangshuang leaves the room to wash her hands before coming back.

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When Mr. Mu emerges from the outhouse, he's covered in waste, scared half to death by the small black shadow, his face an ashen shade.

He stumbles back to the house, collapses onto the floor, trembling all over.

Old Mrs. Mu is awakened by the thud, lights the oil lamp, and sees Mr. Mu sitting there looking very pale.

"Old man, what's wrong with you? Sitting on the floor, and why do you stink?"

Old Mrs. Mu asks four questions in a row, not slowing down in her actions. She approaches Mr. Mu, helping him up, not minding that he stinks.

"I... I'm afraid I won't live long, a ghost just touched my head, I..."

Village families hold gods and ghosts in particular reverence, especially when incidents befall them personally; even a man like Mr. Mu can't withstand.

"What nonsense, why wouldn't you live long, I had someone predict your fortune, you're destined for wealth and good health."

Old Mrs. Mu quickly reassures Mr. Mu, but after a while, she speaks again. "Do you think the Mid-Autumn Festival is approaching, and your parents are asking for money, so they're reminding you?"

Only then does Mr. Mu relax a bit, if it is his parents, it's easier to handle.

"Well, after Qixi Festival, you should go to town and buy more incense paper and candles, burn more paper money for my parents, and get a jug of good aged wine; my father loves his wine, if there's no wine, he absolutely can't get by."

The old couple settle the matter like this, and Old Mrs. Mu gets up to prepare water for Mr. Mu's bath.

Halfway through, she remembers Mrs. Liu running out earlier this night and turns back to the fourth house, regardless of Mrs. Liu and Mu Dajiang being in the middle of unspeakable matters, and starts pounding on the door furiously.

"Lazy woman, get up and boil some water, how long do you plan on slacking off?"

The pounding frightened Mu Dajiang off Mrs. Liu immediately, Mrs. Liu hurriedly dresses herself, and rushes to open the door.

Once opened, under the moonlight, she sees Old Mrs. Mu glaring fiercely, her eyebrows furrowing together angrily.

"Mother, it's late, what's the matter?" Mrs. Liu asks timidly, clutching her clothes tightly.

Being interrupted while doing that sort of thing, Mrs. Liu is particularly afraid that Old Mrs. Mu heard sounds and came to shame her.

"What's the matter? Are you deaf? I told you to boil hot water, what are you standing there for? At night, only engaging in shameless activities."

Mrs. Liu's eyes hang with tears, unwilling to fall, appearing pitiful.

She rushes to the kitchen, boils a pot of water, then dilutes it with a wooden tub, and carries it to Old Mrs. Mu.

After completing all this, Mrs. Liu's tears have dried up.

Back in her room, her heart feels icy cold, she ignores Mu Dajiang, and goes straight to sleep. At this sight, Mu Dajiang lets out a low sigh.

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After bathing, Mr. Mu throws his clothes in the corner outside the house, they're too smelly, so he thinks about having the second daughter-in-law or the fourth daughter-in-law wash them tomorrow.

Upon entering, Old Mrs. Mu is still awake, lying on the bed, half-dressed, her eyes never leaving Mr. Mu who just finished bathing.

After a night of fussing, Mr. Mu has wants to talk but these matters don't relate.

"Wife, let's skip it tonight, the plow can't work the field today, let's chat instead, or I'll feel stifled inside."

Despite her unwillingness, Old Mrs. Mu thinks of following her husband after marriage and suppresses her fiery mood.

Listening to Mr. Mu recount the events, Old Mrs. Mu sits upright in anger.

"That girl, I never liked her since she was young. How could she be so vile? Had I known, when Yu Si Niang gave birth to that wretched girl, I should've killed her to prevent today's disaster."

"What's the point of saying this now? Look at the third branch, both the third son and his wife dance to her tune, lost all their manly dignity."

A man led around by a teenager, it's absurd.

"Don't even mention the third son, I overheard them saying the other day, the third son makes fans, selling for five coins each in town, he can make thirty fans a day..."

Chapter 295: Mu Danian's Malicious Intent

Old Mrs. Mu's tone was full of bitterness.

She calculated in her mind, the third one alone brings in a hundred and fifty coins a day.

Adding that brat, listening to what the eldest daughter said, they could earn nine hundred coins in three days, roughly three hundred a day, just the two of them, the third branch could earn more than ten taels in a month.

Old Mrs. Mu thought about it and felt that the third branch had tricked them when they divided the family property.

"Old man, I think the third branch divided the family on purpose back then, how could there be such a coincidence?"

"As soon as we divided, the third branch got rich, I think they never wanted to show us filial piety in the first place."

Mr. Mu had the same thought deep down, but what could he do, the family was already divided!

At that time, Shuang also got the agreement, the money she earned was her own.

"Forget it, no matter how much fortune the third branch makes, I'm not envious, when the eldest comes back, our days will have hope."

Mr. Mu comforted himself this way in his heart.

"Hope for what, are you muddleheaded? The third one came from my womb, he should be showing filial piety to me, the pain I endured to give birth and raise him!"

He has a good life now, and he wants to abandon me? No way!

I can't get my hands on Shuang's money, but I can't get a hundred coins the third one earns?

Anyway, we split among the three of us, he must give us a hundred coins a day, or I'll make him see my strength!"

Old Mrs. Mu vowed confidently, and for the first time, Mr. Mu did not feel like his wife was making an unreasonable scene.

All his grievances vanished, he supported Old Mrs. Mu with a grasp...

"Old lady, am I still strong for my age?"

Afterward, Mr. Mu patted his still muscular physique, laughing as he asked Old Mrs. Mu.

Old Mrs. Mu shyly pounded Mr. Mu's shoulder.

"You're so indecent, aren't you tired, let me give you a shoulder massage, hurry and sleep."

Soon, Mr. and Mrs. Mu fell into a deep sleep.

Mu Danian felt he was greatly tortured today, originally wanting to find something to eat and then sleep, but everywhere he went, people were with their wives, children, warm beds.

Walking through the village in rows, the commotion made him feel hot all over.

Thinking about his injury below causing so much restraint, Mu Danian hurried overnight to Tie Dao Village.

Arriving at the wall outside Chen Hong's house, Mu Danian easily climbed over, and skillfully made his way to Chen Hong's room.

Coincidentally, Ge Sandan, a neighbor of Chen Hong, saw Mu Dania's silhouette and was about to stop him, but was held back by Old Mrs. Ge.

"Sandan, don't meddle in such business, it looks like it's not his first time here. Gossip is heavy at a widow's door, don't get yourself involved, Xiuxiu is about to give birth."

Old people always understand many truths, Ge Sandan suppressed his righteous impulse, took a look at Chen Hong's home, and decided to follow his mother's advice.

"Mom, did Fengzi say anything when he came?"

Ge Sandan had been busy all day, just returned home, and happened to hear his mother mention Lu Yuanfeng.

"He didn't say much, just brought a girl over, I think the girl looks quite pretty, just a bit thin.

Some nourishment, and she'd make a good wife.

And I noticed, she's got wide hips, surely to give birth to sons."

Old Mrs. Ge chattered on a lot, her voice was the loudest when mentioning the good for bearing sons.

Listening to this, Ge Sandan couldn't help but frown.

"Mom, sons and daughters are the same, why do you keep talking about sons? Xiuxiu is pregnant, don't say such things in front of her, it's good she doesn't mind your son being a cripple."

"Sandan, what are you saying, I'm not talking about Xiuxiu, even if she gives birth to a girl, just have another, will eventually have a son.

Our old Ge family has passed down from generation to generation, your father died early, if there's no continuation, I couldn't die with peace."

Old Mrs. Ge said while wiping her tears, Ge Sandan was also helpless, everything about his mother was good, except she wouldn't stop when it came to having sons.

But being an elder, he could understand her desire for a grandson.

"Alright, I know, just talk to me about this, don't say it to Xiuxiu, and definitely not in front of Yuanfeng.

Since he is willing to bring the girl over, it means he is interested in her, if you scare away his future wife, who knows what he'll do."

After chatting with Old Mrs. Ge, Mu Daniao had also climbed into Chen Hong's room.

As soon as he entered, he saw Chen Hong seemed to be waiting for him, everything ready.

Without thinking, he went straight to Chen Hong, kissing her relentlessly.

"Little lady, you knew I would come, undressed deliberately, waiting for me!"

"You rascal, who knew you would come, my whole body hurts."

In front of Mu Daniao, Chen Hong was a bundle of nerves, yet didn't forget to start complaining.

"What's up? Which wild man did it? As he spoke Mu Daniao started groping Chen Hong.

"Easy, you want to squeeze me to death? Wasn't it that good niece of yours, that brat, back then I said I was bullied in town, almost got flattened upfront, all because of her and that Lu family's boy.

That brat came to Old Mrs. Ge's house to catch chicks, displeased seeing me, beat me up.

Even threw me into the bushes, almost got bitten to death by a snake."

As she spoke, Chen Hong covered her face pretending to cry.

"Honghong, stop crying, tomorrow I'll teach that brat a lesson, tonight let me have a good rest." Mu Danian spoke as he drew closer again.

"No way, you first tell me how to deal with her, or I won't agree with you..."

Chen Hong was stubborn, didn't bother with Mu Danian.

"You're really being troublesome, tomorrow I'll throw that brat to the mountain to feed the wolves, does that work?"

Mu Danian looking at the tempting sight before him, didn't think further, only wanted to relieve himself quickly.

"Pah, you think I'm stupid? I've inquired, the Lu family's boy, the forest is his domain, sending the brat in is serving him prey, no way, absolutely not."

"Then you say what to do!" Mu Danian became a little deflated.

"Here's what, tomorrow go to Zhang Huai Shu and get some Knockout Drug, feed it to that brat, and just bury her in the mountain."

The words from Chen Hong's mouth were venomous, yet she spoke them with ease.

"You're crazy, murder needs life repayment, throwing to the mountain, at worst bitten by wolves, burying her means murder, you want to drag me in?"

Or are you wanting me to miss the good days when my brother enjoys them?"

Mu Danian still had some sense, and he wasn't foolish enough to do it himself.

"I don't care, you have to get my revenge, or you can forget coming into my door ever again!"

Chapter 296: Little Black is in Trouble

"Alright, alright, whatever you say goes, but now the more important thing is..."

Mu Danian pounced on Chen Hong, doing as he pleased, spending over an hour teasing her before stopping.

Afterward, Chen Hong lay comfortably on the bed, humming contentedly. She glanced at the equally satisfied Mu Danian and asked, "I heard someone say you were impaired down there. I thought you were finished."

Mu Danian's hand tightened, and he grinned slyly, "Whether I work or not, aren't you quite aware? What's up, want to go again?"

"Stop messing around, you want to kill me, huh? Hurry up and tell me how to deal with your niece, or you can get out."

Chen Hong couldn't stop talking about dealing with Mu Shuangshuang, because Mu Shuangshuang had almost ruined the chest that Chen Hong was so proud of. If she let it go, she wouldn't be Chen Hong.

"You just wait and see then, I guarantee you'll be satisfied, alright!"

Mu Danian hadn't figured out how to deal with Shuangshuang; he wouldn't let the trouble fall on himself.

"That's more like it. Another thing, I've been beaten up by your niece like this, you have to compensate me by getting some good food and making up for it."

Chen Hong's life in Wang the blacksmith's house was getting harder by the day. The two old folks seemed to have heard something they shouldn't have, constantly mocking Chen Hong, not even willing to give her good food anymore.

It took over half a month to get a piece of meat; it was chili eggplant every day, and her mouth was nearly flavorless.

"That's simple, I'll steal a chicken from home again, they won't know anyway."

"I don't want chicken, I'm sick of it. You have to get me something fresh."

Despite her craving, chicken and meat were Chen Hong's favorites, but if Mu Danian fetched them, it would be too cheap for him.

Chen Hong was plotting her own schemes while Mu Danian was thinking about how to satisfy her.

After a moment, Mu Danian suddenly spoke, "I know something special, that brat is raising a black ferret. You haven't eaten that, have you?"

Ferrets are quite cunning; seeing one is very difficult, and a black-furred ferret is even rarer.

"Alright, then tomorrow catch the ferret and bring it to that rundown house. We'll roast it there."

"Tomorrow won't work; it has to be the day after tomorrow. The day after, that brat goes to town to deliver something and won't be here all day."

Mu Danian knew Mu Shuangshuang's schedule thoroughly; it's not just him but everyone in the Old Mu Family was aware.

"That works too! It's almost daylight, hurry up and get dressed and leave; don't let anyone see you. If someone sees you, I'm done for."

No matter how entangled they were, Chen Hong kept a shred of reason. She could find another man like Mu Dania, but if caught, she would lose even the place she lived.

Under the cool moonlight of the night, Mu Dania climbed over the Wang's courtyard wall, returning silently to the Old Mu Family.

The next day, all day, except for necessary work, his eyes were set on the third branch's Little Black.

Little Zhi held Little Black all morning but felt as if eyes were secretly watching her. She anxiously ran into the house.

"Sis, I feel like there's a pair of eyes staring at me," Little Zhi said fearfully.

Mu Shuangshuang couldn't help but frown. She patted Little Zhi's head and whispered, "Don't be afraid, Little Zhi. I'll check it out. You pretend you don't know anything and keep playing in the courtyard."

Mu Shuangshuang didn't think someone outside was watching them; the backyard was a private area. People wouldn't easily enter.

Moreover, stealing during broad daylight was unwise. The only explanation is that people from the Old Mu Family noticed something in the third branch and came to scout.

Mu Shuangshuang grabbed a stick, climbed out of the storeroom window, and circled to the pigpen behind the third branch, where she could find out who was up to no good.

Mu Dania, with his butt sticking out, was watching the courtyard, drawing lines on the ground for Little Zhi.

But when Little Zhi returned inside, she wasn't holding Little Black anymore. Mu Danian became anxious, fearing he might have been discovered.

Just as he had this thought, his butt suffered intense pain, causing him to scream.

"Ouch, ouch, my butt, who is it..."

Mu Shuangshuang held a stick as thick as her wrist, looking apologetically at Mu Danian. "Fifth Uncle, why are you here? Little Zhi said someone was staring at her; I thought the chicken thief from last time gave up on chicken and moved on to kids."

Mu Shuangshuang deliberately raised her voice, intending to remind Mu Danian of his dirty deeds.

Mu Danian felt guilty, but the pain in his butt reminded him of what Mu Shuangshuang had done.

"I think you're doing it on purpose, brat. You... you'll get what's coming to you one day."

Mu Danian, clutching his butt, ran off furiously.

Mu Shuangshuang shrugged helplessly.

The bad things she did were far less than the Old Mu Family. If retribution came, it would be on them.

Little Zhi heard the commotion and ran over to Mu Shuangshuang, hugging her leg tightly.

"Sis, was that Fifth Uncle just now? Why was he staring at me? I'm scared..."

Mu Shuangshuang was also pondering this question. Mu Danian had previously stolen green beans and lard from the third branch, which haven't been found yet. Coming to their house, he could be eyeing the corn and food brought by her uncle.

If not, then it's troubling.

Mu Shuangshuang couldn't help but think more seriously about the situation. Alarm bells rang in her mind, and she placed her hand on Little Zhi's head to remind her.

"Little Zhi, in the future, stay away from Fifth Uncle, and never be alone with him or venture out alone!

If you have anything to do, get Brother Xiao Han to accompany you. If that doesn't work, go find Yuanbao, or just play alone in Dad's room. You must have someone watching over you."

When Mu Shuangshuang is away every three days, there's no one to watch over Little Zhi, making it the most dangerous time.

Though Little Zhi didn't understand why her sister said this, she nodded seriously.

"Don't worry, Sis. I won't run around. I'm going to find Uncle now."

Mu Shuangshuang also had things to attend to, as she needed to go to town the next day to deliver cold noodles. She still had to soak some green beans and then check the mountains for firewood.

Ever since they started cooking, the firewood at home got used up quickly, and it had to be collected every few days. She was pondering whether to gather a lot at once to stack under the eaves of the pigpen.

When the pigpen was built, she had considered this; the eaves were wider than usual, enough to shelter someone from the rain or store bundles of firewood!

Chapter 297: More Considerate

Early the next morning, Lu Yuanfeng arrived at Mu Shuangshuang's house, pushing a wheelbarrow.

Mu Shuangshuang was just in the kitchen making breakfast, with sweet corn porridge paired with freshly cooked pancakes.

As Lu Yuanfeng got closer, a fragrant aroma greeted him.

"Fengzi, you're just in time. I'll be done with this pancake soon."

Mu Shuangshuang's pancakes were made with wheat flour. After kneading the dough and letting it ferment, she spread it into a large flat cake, placing pickled chives and chili sauce around the edges.

The cake would then be folded and tossed into the oil pan for frying.

Pancakes made this way were simple in method, but most importantly, they were incredibly tasty.

Standing at the kitchen door, Lu Yuanfeng watched the girl working busily by herself. She stood by the stove, smiling as she cooked the pancakes in the pan, moving swiftly and skillfully.

Lu Yuanfeng watched, unexpectedly mesmerized.

When Mu Shuangshuang finished the last pancake and set breakfast on the table, Lu Yuanfeng hadn't snapped out of it yet.

"You silly boy, what are you staring at? Come over and eat breakfast."

At the table, Mu Shuangshuang served Lu Yuanfeng a bowl of corn porridge in a Da Hai bowl, along with two large pancakes, while she had only a small bowl of porridge and half a pancake.

Lu Yuanfeng quickly waved his hand.

"Shuangshuang, I'm not hungry. You eat up. After breakfast, we'll head to the town together. I happen to have two pheasants to sell today."

"What silly talk is that? You used to skip breakfast because you had no kitchen and it was hot.

Now it's different. Not only is the weather cooler, but you also have a stove at home now. Why not make use of it?

From today on, we'll have breakfast before heading out. Bring Yuanbao out in the morning. If he's still asleep, just put him in my room, and when he wakes up, we'll eat breakfast together. Skipping breakfast can lead to kidney stones."

Mu Shuangshuang spoke like a mother, saying a lot and feeling thirsty, thinking of drinking water. Lu Yuanfeng went out of the house and came back in holding a bamboo tube.

"Here, drink it. I added sugar inside, it's sweet."

"Huh?" Mu Shuangshuang was puzzled at first, then burst into laughter. "Fengzi, you actually brought sweetened water. Could it be that you're influenced by me?"

Joking as she spoke, Mu Shuangshuang took the tea handed over by Lu Yuanfeng, opened the lid, and took a few sips. It was indeed sweet, probably made with boiled water mixed with sugar.

"Yeah!" Lu Yuanfeng suddenly nodded, indeed influenced by Shuangshuang.

Though he answered late, Mu Shuangshuang didn't notice, and she finished the pot of water in a few sips.

"What are you looking at? Hurry and eat breakfast. I'm going to add some tea boiled with gold and silver flower to the teapot. By the way, I just fried some cucumber skins. Do you want to try? They're really tasty."

Without waiting for Lu Yuanfeng to answer, Mu Shuangshuang magically produced a bowl of cucumber skins from the cabinet.

"Try it, see if they're extra crispy."

With her hand on the table, Mu Shuangshuang watched Lu Yuanfeng intently.

Under her gaze, Lu Yuanfeng couldn't help but blush. He picked up a piece of cucumber skin, putting it in his mouth, and, as expected, it was really tasty.

With the cucumber skins, Lu Yuanfeng finished a sea bowl of porridge and ate a pancake, while Mu Shuangshuang remained in the same position.

"Shuangshuang, when did you get the cabinet?"

Lu Yuanfeng tried to change the topic. He noticed a tall cabinet in the once-empty kitchen, not brand new but not used too long.

"Yesterday, while you were up the mountain, I wandered around the village to pick up firewood. I heard Uncle Wang's house was changing furniture, and this cabinet was being sold at a low price to villagers, so I thought it was nice and bought it."

Mu Shuangshuang spent eighty-eight coins to buy the cabinet.

It seemed a bit much, but buying a brand-new set would cost two to three hundred coins, not affordable. Although the cabinet was used by the Wang Family, it wasn't pots and pans, people wouldn't hug a cabinet to sleep.

Additionally, she had disinfected it, fumigated it with mugwort, washed it with saline. She did what needed to be done.

"Not bad, quite a bargain."

Lu Yuanfeng agreed that Shuangshuang was better than most at managing households and being frugal.

After breakfast, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng took their necessary items and went to town.

With a wheelbarrow full of things, Lu Yuanfeng pushed it alone, refusing Mu Shuangshuang's offer to help.

"Fengzi, what's wrong? Usually, we always push together."

In the past, even if Mu Shuangshuang offered a helping hand, Lu Yuanfeng would let her.

But today, he didn't even allow her to help, occasionally asking if she needed rest.

Lu Yuanfeng thought, being a man, he couldn't bear to let Shuangshuang, a girl, do such things.

"Fengzi, did you deliver the table yesterday?"

On the road, Mu Shuangshuang was still curious about the table, wondering which family it was for.

"Yeah!" Lu Yuanfeng smiled at the corners of his eyes, not as bashful and shy as before.

Mu Shuangshuang hadn't noticed, ever since that night she said not to care about looks and money when looking for a man, Lu Yuanfeng's worries had significantly reduced.

But he was also working hard to prepare what needed to be prepared.

No matter the time, one must always be ready, like when you love someone, you must work hard to earn money, so one day when she needs it, you won't need to rely on others, you can give it to her anytime.

"Well done, Fengzi, you're really amazing— great at hunting and carpentry."

Mu Shuangshuang gave Lu Yuanfeng a thumbs up, generously praising him.

"As long as Shuangshuang likes it." Lu Yuanfeng replied.

"Huh?" Mu Shuangshuang was surprised but quickly returned to normal.

This day's changes in Lu Yuanfeng weren't overly obvious, but Mu Shuangshuang felt them all.

More confident, more considerate, and more gentle.

Though unclear of the reason, Mu Shuangshuang was happy to see these changes, feeling more at ease.

Along the way, they chatted and laughed, reaching the town without any delay.

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The weather today was exceptionally good, not only lacking sunlight but filled with a chilling breeze, perfect for lying in bed.

Mu Danian, rarely giving up his favorite extra nap, got up early, grabbing a burlap sack, and when Little Black awoke and emerged from Mu Shuangshuang's room, he leaped with excitement, capturing Little Black.

"Hiss hiss..." From inside the burlap sack, Little Black hissed, even trying to bite through the sack, but it wasn't easy.

Mu Danian's palm slapped heavily on Little Black, threatening with his mouth.

"What arrogance for a mere weasel, don't think you can see tomorrow's sun. I'll stew you in a pot today!"

Chapter 298: Fat Chef Wants to Help

Just arrived in town, Mu Shuangshuang's eyelid suddenly twitched.

Her heart felt like something had stabbed it, causing a sharp pain.

She couldn't help but rub her chest, her face showing a hint of confusion.

What's going on, why does my chest suddenly hurt?

Could it be that the original owner had a heart disease?

Mu Shuangshuang immediately frowned, inwardly cursing: Time traveling was already unlucky enough, but surely she's not turning into a sickly person with issues just as she's about to enjoy her good fate?

Seeing Shuangshuang clutching her chest, Lu Yuanfeng quickly put down the wheelbarrow and anxiously approached her.

"Shuangshuang, what's wrong, are you feeling unwell somewhere?"

"I'm fine, just my eyelid twitches fiercely, and my chest feels a bit sore."

As soon as she finished speaking, Lu Yuanfeng crouched in front of her without hesitation.

"Hurry up, I'll take you to the clinic."

Lu Yuanfeng's face already showed signs of anxiety; if he wasn't worried about Shuangshuang getting angry, he would have carried her to the clinic directly.

"Fengzi, it's not that serious, my chest just feels stuffy, really not a big deal. Let's finish what we have at hand first."

Mu Shuangshuang appeared relaxed, thinking it wasn't a heart problem. Considering how lively she's been since arriving here, if it were a heart disease, she might be dead already.

But she's still fine, likely just feeling uncomfortable.

"No way, Uncle Zhang said minor ailments shouldn't be ignored; they can turn into major ailments if we're not careful. Earning money today isn't urgent, let's first go see the doctor."

Lu Yuanfeng was adamant, his eyes firmly on Mu Shuangshuang. As long as she dared to refuse, he'd carry her directly.

Mu Shuangshuang looked at Lu Yuanfeng's resolute gaze, her mind snapped, and she unexpectedly agreed.

However, she was reluctant to climb onto Lu Yuanfeng's back because it was too embarrassing.

But Lu Yuanfeng, being a man, was still very assertive when needed.

"Shuangshuang, how about I find a carriage for you? It must be quick after all."

"Forget it, let's walk!"

Lu Yuanfeng leaned on Lu Yuanfeng's back, one hand around her waist, the other holding the wheelbarrow. Even so, he didn't seem tired.

His back was straight, and the hand touching Shuangshuang's waist had beads of sweat dripping down layer by layer.

Finally at the clinic, Lu Yuanfeng's forehead was nearly dripping with sweat; he placed the wheelbarrow where he could see it and went inside to consult with the clinic's assistant.

Although it was early, the clinic was open, and shortly after, Lu Yuanfeng led Mu Shuangshuang to see the doctor.

In ancient times, medicine was usually based on observation, listening, questioning, and touching, or the four-step method.

The old doctor seemed experienced. Mu Shuangshuang said a few words, and he understood immediately.

"Actually, there's not much to worry about, it's mainly due to inner anxiety. However, after examining your body thoroughly, there's no major issue, although you've previously lacked vitality, you still need to eat more blood nourishing and energy-boosting foods.

Eat more red dates and donkey-hide gelatin. It's best to stew them with an old black hen alongside gastrodia or ginseng."

The old doctor looked at the two young people in front of him, not appearing rich, so he picked simpler remedies to share.

Ginseng could be dug up in the mountains, hens they had at home, but red dates and donkey-hide gelatin were not cheap.

This era wasn't like modern times where logistics were convenient; here many goods took several months, even half a year, to arrive, so naturally, the price for northern jujubes wasn't cheap, costing eighty or ninety cents per pound.

Unexpectedly, the young man in front of him didn't blink before replying, "Do you have red dates here? I want to buy five pounds, and prepare two pounds of donkey-hide gelatin."

Lu Yuanfeng could dig up ginseng himself, and as for the hens, he could buy them from the village.

However, he had no way of getting red dates and donkey-hide gelatin himself.

Mu Shuangshuang knew well that both red dates and donkey-hide gelatin were for nourishing blood and energy, but they weren't strictly necessary.

"Fengzi, let's not bother with red dates and donkey-hide gelatin, nourishing blood and energy doesn't have to be those things."

The old doctor's expression changed slightly. "Little girl, do you really know medicine? Red dates and donkey-hide gelatin have good effects."

"Doctor Grandpa, I'm not saying red dates and donkey-hide gelatin aren't effective, it's just that they seem expensive, and fortunately, I know there are some foods with the same effect, so I don't have to buy them."

"You little girl so confident, then tell me, what can substitute to nourish blood."

The old doctor and Mu Shuangshuang were at loggerheads, and he wanted to know what the girl was talking about.

"Pork liver, pig blood, black beans, spinach, wood ear mushrooms, all these can do it."

Pork liver was first on Mu Shuangshuang's list because it works pretty well.

Pork liver, in the eyes of many, belonged to the internal organs category, and in ancient times, it wasn't as sought after as it is now, and those with a bit of money preferred pork.

The old doctor was stunned. It was his first time hearing about pork liver's blood nourishing capability. Just because he hadn't heard of it didn't mean it wasn't true, so he decided to remain silent.

"Since that's the case, I won't insist; you can buy or not buy depending on your wishes."

"No, reduce the amount; we still want them." Lu Yuanfeng interjected.

"This?" The old doctor looked at Mu Shuangshuang, who then looked at Lu Yuanfeng.

Hadn't she mentioned alternative foods?

"Shuangshuang, we need fresh pork liver daily, and sometimes it might not be available. Let's buy some red dates; you can eat a few as you please, taking care of your health is most important."

Not allowing Mu Shuangshuang to object, Lu Yuanfeng took the prescription and went to the clinic assistant to get two pounds of red dates and a pound of donkey-hide gelatin, spending thirty-five cents in one go.

Because they were dried red dates, two pounds still had some heft to them.

Lu Yuanfeng felt good about it, thinking with these items, Shuangshuang would be alright.

Mu Shuangshuang walked behind the joyful Lu Yuanfeng at a relaxed pace, wanting to ask him why he bought the medicine but couldn't bring herself to ask.

She could only tell herself to make more delicious food for Lu Yuanfeng and Yuanbao.

To treat him better.

Because things between the two were quite tangled.

After confirming that Shuangshuang had no serious health concerns, Lu Yuanfeng delivered the cold noodles to Jiu Si Xuan, but unexpectedly, Fat Chef greeted him again.

His face, plump with dimples, smiled as he rushed over, directing the assistant to take the cold noodles from Mu Shuangshuang's hands, meanwhile pulling Mu Shuangshuang aside.

"Little Shuang, Uncle has a favor to ask of you. It's urgent; if you help me today, we can expand our business in the future and you can sell other things at Jiu Si Xuan, and I'll provide the space for free."

Chapter 299: Change of Taste

Fat Chef's behavior was extremely attentive. It wasn't a situation that hadn't occurred before, but it was rare.

Usually, Mu Shuangshuang would just deliver things to Jiu Si Xuan, let the staff check them over, and then leave.

But today, asking for favors and offering deals like this—perhaps something big was up?

Even so, Mu Shuangshuang maintained a casually composed appearance. "Uncle, if there's something, just say it. If I can do it, I'll try my best to help. If I can't, there's nothing I can do."

Not making promises lightly is an important rule for Mu Shuangshuang.

"That's right!"

Fat Chef nodded. He had always appreciated the young girl's attitude in speaking and acting.

Neither servile nor overbearing. If he didn't know her age, Fat Chef wouldn't believe that a thirteen-year-old child could have such a calm mind and sensible nature.

"Ah Fu mentioned that your culinary skills aren't bad, and you know how to make some tasty dishes. The sausage you taught him to make last time was really good.

Right now, I just want to ask if you have any recipes or methods that can make our Jiu Si Xuan famous with a big dish?"

Fat Chef's cooking skills are flawless; he can handle all sorts of cuisines. But the people in town have been eating them for a dozen or twenty years. They've grown tired of it, just like he has.

Moreover, across the street, a new restaurant called Wenren Nuan opened, taking away many of their customers every day.

Now, if it weren't for having this novel dish of cold noodles, who knows how many more customers would be lost.

Fat Chef understood that relying on one dish alone couldn't sustain Jiu Si Xuan's long-term operation. Having some fresh dishes would indeed be good.

"Uncle, it's not that I don't have recipes. I do know some sweet, sour, bitter, spicy, and salty dishes, but I'm just a country girl after all. The rice I've eaten surely isn't more than the salt you've eaten, and it might not really work."

"You, young girl, are too modest. You can try it here. I'll arrange the stove for you. If it's tasty, I'll surely offer a fair price."

"I do want to, but Fengzi and I need to hurry to sell these two wild chickens." Mu Shuangshuang pointed, and Fat Chef's gaze fell on the two wild chickens tied to Lu Yuanfeng's wheelbarrow.

The two wild chickens looked big and meaty. Fat Chef made the decision almost without hesitation.

"In that case, sell both of your wild chickens to me. Whatever others offer, I'll match."

"Alright, thank you, Uncle!" Mu Shuangshuang agreed almost as Fat Chef finished speaking, not only that, she urged Lu Yuanfeng as well.

"Fengzi, quickly get the wild chickens weighed for Uncle. Whatever Uncle says, that's what it is."

"Okay!"

Lu Yuanfeng brought the wild chickens to Fat Chef, who took them over and had the staff weigh them. Shortly after, the staff returned.

"Master Liu, the two wild chickens weigh four and a half jin. At the market rate of twenty wen per jin, that's ninety wen."

The price of a wild chicken is twenty, but for an ordinary chicken, it wouldn't be this much because the meat of a wild chicken is more delicious than a household chicken.

Fat Chef paid the money to Lu Yuanfeng on the spot and made a gesture of invitation to Mu Shuangshuang.

The young assistant hadn't heard the two talking before, so he was a bit puzzled at this moment.

Fat Chef, who made good food and was the shopkeeper's younger brother-in-law, hadn't served anyone for years. His good attitude toward a country girl really surprised people.

Upon entering the back kitchen of Jiu Si Xuan, Mu Shuangshuang instantly felt the difference. Compared to her home kitchen, Jiu Si Xuan's was countless times larger, and it was fully equipped.

Looking at the various foods on the table, and at the top, the half lamb leg hanging there, Mu Shuangshuang's urge to cook came over her. Of course, what she wanted to make most was spicy chicken.

"Little girl, just say what you need. When it comes to stoking the fire, if you're unsure, I'll do it myself."

Fat Chef's tone was gentle, and he spoke with respect toward Mu Shuangshuang.

The young helper and other chefs standing nearby were all dumbfounded, taking a long time to come to their senses.

"Uncle, I'm about to start cooking. You can assign anyone you like to tend to the fire, just make sure they're skilled."

The most crucial part of stir-frying is controlling the heat. The large ancient woks were indeed hard to control, so Mu Shuangshuang asked for experienced help as soon as she spoke.

She took a freshly processed fat chicken from the table, washed it clean with water, and picked up the kitchen knife on the table.

Chop, chop, chop—within moments, she cut up a whole chicken. And sure enough, the knife at this restaurant was incredibly sharp, far better than the one she bought at the market.

Everyone watched intently as Mu Shuangshuang worked. From the way she handled the knife, Fat Chef could tell she wasn't an amateur. In just a few simple cuts, the chicken pieces were all uniform in thickness.

Most importantly, there were no traces of bone fragments, which meant she was very skilled at cutting chicken.

"Little girl, you're quite amazing for your age with your knife skills!" Fat Chef admired from the side.

"Shuangshuang has always been amazing!"

Lu Yuanfeng watched from the side like a loyal guardian. His gaze followed Mu Shuangshuang consistently, and after she finished cutting the chicken, he showed an approving look.

Next, Mu Shuangshuang moved all the chicken pieces into a large sea bowl, cut some green onions and ginger slices, mixed in salt, five-spice powder, and white wine, and marinated the chicken.

She was the only one busy in the entire kitchen, and everyone else was watching.

The helper in charge of the fire was the best at it in the kitchen. Under Mu Shuangshuang's direction, he selected firewood of appropriate length and width, and lit the stove with pine leaves.

At this point, the chicken had actually been marinating for nearly the time it takes an incense stick to burn.

"Watch carefully, I'm starting to cook spicy chicken!"

Pouring rapeseed oil into the heated wok, in no time, she began adding the marinated chicken pieces. A sizzling sound came from the oil.

The kitchen regulars didn't think there was much difference; they just watched as Shuangshuang fried the chicken pieces one by one and then took them out.

Then she started preparing something else in another wok.

Again, rapeseed oil was added to the heated wok, followed by Sichuan pepper, ginger, green onions, and garlic. After stir-frying for a while, Shuangshuang added bay leaves. At this point, the kitchen was filled with aroma. When Shuangshuang chopped red dried chilies and added them to the wok, everyone was dumbfounded.

With those red dried chilies in the wok, could the dish really be edible?

Chapter 300: Good Things Keep Coming

As it turns out, it's not just edible, it's exceptionally delicious.

When Mu Shuangshuang put the chopped celery into the pot with the already mixed chicken and seasonings, she heard someone swallowing their saliva.

The aroma, it was really too enticing!

Especially after watching so many dried chilies go into the pot, despite having doubts, you just can't resist the deepening memory in your taste buds.

No matter what, that fiery red color imprinted in your mind becomes an unforgettable memory.

Mu Shuangshuang took two pairs of chopsticks, first handing them over to Lu Yuanfeng and the Fat Chef. When it came to Lu Yuanfeng, she even thoughtfully prepared a glass of water for him, just waiting for him to eat before she handed it over.

The Fat Chef picked up a piece of golden chicken, chewed it in his mouth; the chicken was crispy on the outside, tender on the inside, dry, fragrant, and spicy, making his mouth water.

Spicy as it was, the more he ate, the more he wanted to eat. He grabbed several pieces in a row, and his mouth was almost red from the spice, but he just couldn't stop.

After Lu Yuanfeng ate five pieces, Mu Shuangshuang stopped him. In such hot weather, if there's no cooling tea or something, eating this spicy food might cause a nosebleed.

"Yuan Feng, drink some tea first to soothe your throat!"

"Hmm!" Lu Yuanfeng took the tea and started gulping it down. The fiery sensation in his mouth gradually faded, and the water that Shuangshuang handed over became incredibly sweet in his mouth.

"Sss~ Delicious, so delicious, young girl, you make me love and hate this!"

As the Fat Chef spoke, his mouth still made a hissing sound. Those who hadn't eaten it yet all stared at the chicken in his hand.

Being stared at for so long, the Fat Chef also felt a bit apprehensive.

"Why are you all looking at me? Pick up some chopsticks and eat!"

As soon as he finished speaking, each person who was once so reserved rushed forward, their chopsticks quickly grabbing food. In no time, a whole pot of spicy chicken was devoured clean.

It's just a pity that they couldn't eat the chilies and seasonings, otherwise, everyone would've swallowed those too.

"Young girl, this dish of yours is indeed not bad, but with such spicy food, I'm afraid it might cause some problems after eating it."

The Fat Chef expressed his hesitation. Just based on what he ate just now, he feared he might have a problem going to the toilet with bleeding the next morning. No matter how delicious the food is, if it causes such harm, it can't be a long-term thing.

"That's exactly what I wanted to say. If you make it a main dish, you don't need to add so many dried chilies. And you can prepare a pot of gold and silver flower tea or fish mint tea. Of course, I and Fengzi can provide these."

Dried chilies paired with cooling gold and silver flower tea is indeed a perfect match!

The gold and silver flowers on Niuwei Mountain are countless in number, and Mu Shuangshuang thought that, with her family and Fengzi's family, drinking as much as they want wouldn't even scratch the surface of the gold and silver flowers on the mountain. Since that's the case, why not rely on the mountain and the water for resources?

"How about this, I'll give you five taels of silver for your recipe. As for the gold and silver flowers you provide, I know they should be easier to pick in the mountains. So, I'll pay three coins per pound, but they must be dried flowers. How about it?"

Gold and silver flowers indeed have significant uses in ancient times. But as the Fat Chef said, they aren't rare items in the mountains. In the market, they're generally one coin per pound, so she's essentially making twice the silver from the Fat Chef.

With such good conditions, how could Mu Shuangshuang refuse? She glanced at Lu Yuanfeng, seeing that he was also quite happy, she agreed immediately.

"Then thank you, Uncle! I'll bring the gold and silver flowers next time along with the cold noodles, how about that?"

"Sure, I'll have someone spread the word: three days from now, we'll be having a grand dish at Jiu Si Xuan, hahaha!"

The Fat Chef laughed so hard that his eyes became slitted lines, showing how happy he was today, even giving pay raises to the staff in the kitchen.

After signing the contract, Mu Shuangshuang couldn't wait to leave Jiu Si Xuan with Lu Yuanfeng.

"Yuan Feng, we've got a way to make money again!"

With five taels of silver from selling the recipe in her pocket, plus the nine hundred coins from delivering cold noodles, Mu Shuangshuang felt light on her feet as she walked. The whole world seemed extraordinarily lovely in her eyes.

The crowded streets were no longer crowded, the noisy shouting was no longer bothersome. In short, everything was wonderfully incredible.

Lu Yuanfeng watched Shuangshuang, who was jumping around like a child; following behind her, he had to push the wheelbarrow and occasionally protect her from bumping into others or being bumped into.

Though it was a bit overwhelming, he thoroughly enjoyed it.

If they could stay together like this for a lifetime, it would be enough!

The two of them finally stopped at a peach vendor's stall. Lu Yuanfeng stopped to buy two pounds of peaches and handed them to Shuangshuang.

"Take these back for Little Zhi and Xiao Han. Do you want any mountain pears? They're probably good too."

Whenever they went out, Lu Yuanfeng would buy some snacks for Mu Shuangshuang, but he always used the excuse of giving them to Little Zhi and Xiao Han.

Mu Shuangshuang used to protest, but now she doesn't say anything. Anyway, she'll sort things out when she gets back and then deliver some to Fengzi's house.

"Alright, let's buy more and feast to our hearts' content!"

This time, Mu Shuangshuang rushed ahead to pay, purchasing three pounds of mountain pears.

With her hands full of peaches and pears packed in a wooden bucket, Mu Shuangshuang's smile was almost about to overflow. Suddenly, she saw a young girl wearing a pink silk dress on the street, a dress so familiar whether it was its cut or embroidery.

"Yuan Feng, we have another chance to make some money today!"

"Hmm?"

"It's at Ah Ru's! I just saw someone wearing clothes made from my design. Let's hurry and take a look!"

Mu Shuangshuang grabbed Lu Yuanfeng, and he pushed the cart as the two of them rushed towards Ah Ru's fabric shop at the fastest speed.

Just like last time, Ah Ru's fabric shop was still quiet. As soon as Mu Shuangshuang stepped in, Ah Ru came up to greet her.

"Shuangshuang, you finally came. I've been waiting for you for days. Did you know? I sold two of those dresses for one tael of silver each."

Initially, Ah Ru didn't set a price, and her clothes were bought by people who came specifically to buy them after finding the shop.

"Really? I knew it could work. Ah Ru, you're amazing!"

"No, you're the impressive one. Let me tell you, since those two dresses sold, people think they're beautiful. Today, a lot more people came by to inquire. I'm planning to raise the price a bit more to see if I can sell them for two taels of silver."

"If that's the case, that'll be wonderful! Ah Ru, we're going to make a fortune!"

The two young girls, who had only met once, held hands and complimented each other without any reservations. Meanwhile, their impression of each other had further increased in their hearts.