

Folly 341

Chapter 341:

Feng Xiaohua finally blew up.!

"Are you crazy?"

This was the harshest thing she had ever said in her life, and after saying it, her face turned red.

She had never seen someone so shameless.

Couldn't drive him away, couldn't scold him away, he ate at her house, used her things, and even meddled with her private laundry.

"Xiaohua..." Yu Liulang still hesitated, but thinking that his wife was about to become someone else's wife, he had already thickened his skin to stay, so he couldn't back down.

Even if he got rejected.

"Xiaohua, just think I'm crazy, I don't know what's wrong with me either, knowing you're getting married, I can't eat or sleep.

Yesterday noon I left my sister's house, walked all the way, didn't even eat.

On the way here, I thought the whole way, I don't want you to marry someone else, and I don't want you to be alone your whole life, the only way is for me to marry you."

"What did you say?" Tears started welling in Feng Xiaohua's eyes, she stared at Yu Liulang, and immediately large tears began to fall.

Yu Liulang panicked, lifted his sleeve to wipe her tears, but instead of drying them, he rubbed her face red.

Her face was burning, but Feng Xiaohua continued to stare at Yu Liulang.

"Don't cry, if you feel wronged marrying me, I'll do more work, although I only have one-third of the family tea leaves, I have my feet, I won't let you suffer..."

This was probably the most embarrassed Yu Liulang had ever been, the more he explained, the harder Feng Xiaohua cried, until she was about to faint.

"Luo Xiu'er... what to do? You're marrying me?"

After all, being a girl, once moved, she started asking the questions she'd always been afraid to ask.

"It's all in the past, it's all over, I won't go to her house again, I won't see her family again, I don't like her anymore."

The words Yu Liulang found hard to say came out easily in that instant.

He stared eagerly at Feng Xiaohua.

"Xiaohua, will you marry me?" Yu Liulang was timid, yet brave, he knew he only had this one chance.

If he missed it, it would be gone.

Feng Xiaohua dried her tears and suddenly smiled. "Since you've chosen, you can't regret it, from now on, you can only have me in your heart, otherwise I'll divorce you!"

"You... accepted?" With a surge of joy in his heart, Yu Liulang grabbed Feng Xiaohua's hand and quickly rushed towards the Old Yu Family.

He, Yu Liulang, is getting married...

...

...

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng pushed a whole cart of things back to the Old Mu Family house, not even getting a chance to sit down before they saw the furious Old Mrs. Mu.

The incident of Old Mrs. Mu wetting the bed was seen by Gou Dan and spread throughout the village's children.

Now, the entire Er Gui Village knew about it, Old Mrs. Mu didn't dare to leave the house, she had to find the culprit responsible for the loud noise early that morning.

Finally, in the yard, she found the big clump of puffed rice on the pigsty fence that Mu Shuangshuang had piled up.

"You little brat, you dare to come back."

Old Mrs. Mu started berating her with no hesitation.

Mu Shuangshuang frowned, couldn't help but grumble in her heart: Does this old woman have a liking for her? Accuses her every few days.

"Granny, what's up now, it's only noon, what did Shuang do to provoke you?"

Though the two went to the market today, they came back earlier than any other time.

Lu Yuanfeng stood on the side, extremely dissatisfied with Old Mrs. Mu's immediate cursing.

To him, Shuangshuang hadn't done anything wrong, she shouldn't be scolded, and the third branch had already divided the family, they shouldn't be suppressed all the time.

"You little brat, what are you looking at, there's nothing for you here, get out of here!" Old Mrs. Mu noticed Lu Yuanfeng's unfriendly gaze and berated him as well.

"Granny, what are you doing, Fengzi is a guest we invited."

"A guest? Pfft, did I agree? A pair of shameless kids, messing around all the time, who knows what nasty schemes you're plotting."

"Granny, speak with respect, Fengzi and I are innocent, and I'm only thirteen, I'm not as capable as you say.

If you must handle these affairs, go manage Second Aunt, in town I saw her having a meal with a man in his fifties."

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng saw Mu Zhenzhen, dressed like an official's daughter, while strolling in town.

Mu Zhenzhen was truly beautiful, it was normal for someone to invite her to a meal, but this is ancient times, Mu Zhenzhen in ancient times.

A little indecency and people would gossip.

And Mu Zhenzhen was indeed a bit over the top.

"What... what did you say? Zhenzhen having a meal with a man in his fifties?" Old Mrs. Mu staggered, nearly falling to the ground.

She remembered what her youngest daughter said, the second daughter had been going to town frequently and not coming back until evening.

Could it really be that she did something shameful?

But even so, Old Mrs. Mu's heart still tilted towards Mu Zhenzhen.

"Stop smearing here, making up lies just to harm others, I'll beat you to death." Old Mrs. Mu raised her hand and aimed a slap at Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang wasn't foolish, she dodged at that instant, while she dodged, Lu Yuanfeng's hand caught Old Mrs. Mu's slap.

"Mu Family, what Shuangshuang said is the truth, there's nothing indecent between Shuangshuang and me, we are still young, please don't tarnish our reputation."

Lu Yuanfeng held Old Mrs. Mu's wrist, though without applying force, it made Old Mrs. Mu extremely uncomfortable.

"You two are in cahoots, of course this stinky girl says something and you follow, don't think I don't know what's in your hearts."

Even so, Old Mrs. Mu was stubborn and unwilling to relent.

"Fengzi, let her go, we can't wake someone pretending to sleep, anyway, there are many villagers going to town now, someone will eventually see."

By then, the one embarrassed won't be just my second aunt. Whether Da De will be affected, no one knows."

Mu Shuangshuang knew Old Mrs. Mu's weakness, as long as it concerns Mu Dade, it was a big deal in her eyes.

Old Mrs. Mu stomped her feet in anger right where she stood, not even pursuing the incident of being scared into wetting herself this morning, she rushed back to the Old Mu Family, asking Mu Dalian to find her father, Mr. Mu.

The third branch's yard finally quieted down, but another storm was about to erupt soon.

"Fengzi, our family has many messy affairs, just treat it as a joke, don't take it to heart, don't trouble yourself over it." Mu Shuangshuang said.

"I know, I just think you're very burdened!" Lu Yuanfeng replied.

Chapter 342: Butler

"Actually, it's okay, don't think too much about what you've been through, just think more about what the future holds for you."

Mu Shuangshuang took the opportunity to offer some 'chicken soup for the soul', not caring whether it was comforting or not.

But what she didn't know was that this sentence had already taken root in Lu Yuanfeng's heart and became the only creed in his life.

"I understand, Shuangshuang, do you want to take a rest first?"

"Silly, if I go and rest, who will cook lunch? Go and call Yuanbao over, I'm getting ready to make lunch." Mu Shuangshuang laughed out loud.

You know, this silly boy just loves to be shy. Even though he spent money on meat, he couldn't bring himself to say he'd have lunch here.

"True!" Lu Yuanfeng scratched his head, seemingly regretting what he had said.

"Shuangshuang, I'll help you out, I know how to chop vegetables and meat."

"Alright, but I have to go check on Little Black Dog first, see if I can catch some fish by the creek."

They were delayed by Old Mrs. Mu before, which caused Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng to rush back in vain.

Taking Lu Yuanfeng along, they tiptoed into her room. Upon entering, she noticed Little Black Dog wasn't there, and Little Black was nowhere to be seen either.

"Oh no, Little Black and Little Black Dog..."

"Shh, under the bed!" Lu Yuanfeng lowered his head, pointing at two black furry things that looked like balls of yarn under the bed.

"Little Black, come out quickly." Mu Shuangshuang beckoned to Little Black with her finger, but the little thing acted as if it didn't hear and didn't budge.

Lu Yuanfeng also called out.

"Little Black, how did you and Little Black Dog end up under the bed, come on out."

"Hiss hiss~" Little Black called out a few times, still guarding the space under the bed. To avoid being disturbed, it deliberately turned its head away, facing its butt towards Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng.

Mu Shuangshuang rolled her eyes at Little Black and said:

"Now you have two choices, first, stay under the bed forever, and I'll cut off all your food supply."

Second, come out immediately, and I'll take Little Black Dog to Uncle Zhang to get checked, and by the way, I'll give Uncle Zhang the ten taels of silver."

Mu Shuangshuang had all the patience in the world, and after speaking, she moved a chair from the room and handed it to Lu Yuanfeng.

"Fengzi, let's sit here and see if Little Black comes out today or not."

Under the bed, Little Black let out a few whimpering sounds, seemingly ready to surrender.

But once Mu Shuangshuang set her mind on something, she generally wouldn't change it easily.

"Crying won't help, neither will rolling around!"

Mu Shuangshuang said this all in one breath, and finally, Little Black begrudgingly came out from under the bed.

Together with the little black dog, and when Little Black Dog emerged, Mu Shuangshuang finally understood why the two little things had to hide under the bed.

Little Black Dog's chin was swollen, and its fluffy black curly hair couldn't hide the bun-like chin, giving it a big-headed doll appearance.

Mu Shuangshuang held back her laughter and picked up Little Black Dog.

"You may be a bit ugly, but you're cuter than others!"

Regardless of whether Little Black Dog understood, Mu Shuangshuang pointed at Little Black and said, "Quickly, go fetch the money."

With a quick move, Little Black darted into the mouse hole.

This was probably its most generous act ever.

Lu Yuanfeng stood aside, watching in astonishment as Little Black went into the mouse hole, first dragging out a string of money, then a small cloth bag.

Going back and forth at least seven or eight times until it finally gathered ten taels of silver.

"Shuangshuang, you had Little Black stash your money?"

This was probably the most novel money-hiding method Lu Yuanfeng had ever seen, but it was indeed amusing.

"Yeah, when people hide money, there's always a risk of being caught, but Little Black won't; it's so family-oriented that it brings any silver it finds back home."

Mu Shuangshuang should say, with Little Black around, she wouldn't starve herself for the time being because this little thing is a money grubber.

It would go out wandering now and then, bringing all sorts of weird stuff home.

Sometimes, it's really a penny or two, but more often, it's other people's aprons...

Who knows if it got addicted to stealing from Old Mrs. Mu last time.

In any case, it's a pet with a story.

Carrying Little Black Dog out the door, Little Black followed to tidy up, putting everything it took out back in place.

Fortunately, it was close to lunchtime, and Zhang Huai Shu was at home. Mu Shuangshuang, carrying the silver and holding Little Black Dog, approached him.

"Grandpa Zhang, could you help me check whether Little Black Dog is okay, and also, what it should eat recently?"

Zhang Huai Shu took Little Black Dog into the house, and when he came back out, he had several dozen packets of medicine in hand.

"This little thing is fine now, you can take it back. Just feed it some plain porridge and greens daily.

Try to feed it soft food, and it should be better in ten days to half a month. This medicine is for your father, he's probably running low."

Mu Shuangshuang took the medicine, thanked him, and handed over the ten taels of silver she brought to Zhang Huai Shu.

"Grandpa Zhang, this is for my dad's medical expenses. Thank you for all your help."

Zhang Huai Shu was so surprised his jaw almost dropped.

"Girl, where did you get these ten taels of silver from? Didn't I say pay me next year?"

Zhang Huai Shu wasn't an unreasonable person. Given how the third couple's household was doing now, he hadn't thought of kicking them when they were down.

"Fengzi and I made some money doing business, just enough to pay your consultation fee, and besides, holding onto this money made me nervous, so I figured I might as well give it to you. It'll help me sleep better at night."

"Haha! You, girl, are indeed very funny."

Zhang Huai Shu had never seen such an amusing child in his life. He couldn't help but take a few more glances, and the more he looked, the more he felt that this girl suited Feng well.

Feng and he had known each other for a long time; back then, that boy had quite a temper, always getting into fights and then coming to him for medicine.

He was just not much of a talker, and he seemed like a shy gourd from a young age.

By contrast, this little girl talked a lot and had a bright personality.

When it comes to marrying and living, you need someone different from yourself.

"Alright, you should head back early too. By the way, your father's condition allows him to walk around a bit now.

Just remember, no getting angry, no heavy lifting, no carrying loads. After winter passes, I'll check and decide on the next steps for his recovery."

Zhang Huai Shu patiently repeated what he had said countless times before accepting the ten taels of silver.

"Alright, thank you, Grandpa Zhang. We'll head back then."

"Wait, I have a few words to say to Fengzi." Zhang Huai Shu beckoned Lu Yuanfeng over with a finger.

Lu Yuanfeng followed him into his house, and as soon as they entered the courtyard, Zhang Huai Shu couldn't resist being gossipy.

"Feng, you've been hanging out with that girl lately? No wonder you haven't brought me any food recently." Zhang Huai Shu lowered his head, pretending to be disappointed, and said to Lu Yuanfeng.

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"No, recently the weather's been hot, and the big prey doesn't come out much. Even the rabbits and wild chickens have gone deep into the mountains, it has nothing to do with Shuangshuang."

Lu Yuanfeng quickly explained, but to his surprise, Zhang Huai Shu still wore a teasing expression.

"Alright, old man like me wasn't really after something delicious, just joking with you.

But, boy, you're like a closed gourd. Do you even know how to get along with girls?"

Lu Yuanfeng nodded, then shook his head, looking completely bewildered.

"You're really dull! Remember, if you want to get a wife, first, you can't be too self-aware.

Second, you have to be willing to put in effort. As for what that effort is, you'll have to figure it out yourself."

As Zhang Huai Shu finished speaking, his wife from inside the house, Cui Family, poked her head out.

"Old man, who's there? Should I invite them in for a meal?"

"No need, it's Feng. He's got something to do later."

Zhang Huai Shu replied, hurrying back inside the house.

When he reached Cui Family, she took out a handkerchief and said to Zhang Huai Shu, "You're all sweaty, hurry and wipe off."

"Why don't you wipe it for me? My hands are dirty!" Zhang Huai Shu squinted his eyes and shamelessly replied.

"You're really incorrigible!" Cui Family rolled her eyes at Zhang Huai Shu in mock anger, but still picked up the handkerchief and wiped the sweat off his forehead.

Holding Cui Family's hand, he walked into the house, not forgetting to turn back and give Lu Yuanfeng a "did you get it?" look.

Lu Yuanfeng nodded at him, and inside, he kept pondering over what Zhang Huai Shu had said.

When he left, Lu Yuanfeng had a more enlightened look on his face, he roughly understood what Zhang Huai Shu meant.

"Fengzi, what did Grandpa Zhang say to you? Why do I feel like your expression is a bit more serious than usual?"

"Nothing much!" Lu Yuanfeng gave a slight grin, revealing his good-looking white teeth.

"Fine, don't tell me then!"

Mu Shuangshuang didn't believe that Zhang Huai Shu didn't say anything, that person looked like someone who always had advice, although he seemed normal in front of her.

"Really, nothing." Lu Yuanfeng added another sentence, afraid Shuangshuang would remember, he continued, "Let's quickly see if there are any fish, Si Niang will go back later."

"Sure!" Mu Shuangshuang held the Little Black Dog tighter, but she felt she needed to speed up.

Walking towards the foot of Niuwei Mountain to the north, Lu Yuanfeng was fishing in the creek while Mu Shuangshuang was nearby collecting fishwort.

Water boiled with fishwort and gold and silver flower has detoxifying effects. Giving it to the Little Black Dog to eat shouldn't be a problem.

Little Black had been sticking to Mu Shuangshuang's side, intently watching the Little Black Dog.

Afraid Mu Shuangshuang would do something sneaky.

This made Mu Shuangshuang really curious, she squatted down and poked Little Black.

"Hey, little thing, tell me, what's the relationship between you and Little Black Dog? Did you know each other before, or was it that day on the mountain that you provoked the black snake, and Little Black Dog got bitten for you?"

Little Black spun in circles, making a "hiss-hiss" sound from its mouth, its meaning unknown.

"Alright, alright, say what you want, but you and Little Black Dog can only develop a friendship, any other feelings are absolutely not allowed, you are of different species."

Mu Shuangshuang deliberately said it to spite Little Black because she believed it understood.

Indeed, Little Black bared its teeth at Mu Shuangshuang and kept clawing with its paws.

After Mu Shuangshuang put the Little Black Dog down, it finally calmed down.

She picked some more fishwort, and also dug out some roots to take back. The roots of fishwort can also be made into a dish, the taste is pretty good though the smell isn't pleasant, which is why Mu Shuangshuang rarely digs up the roots of fishwort.

After she finished, Lu Yuanfeng was also done.

She approached, Lu Yuanfeng was holding a knife, cleaning stuff off the fish's back.

He scraped off layer after layer of scales with the back of the knife, working diligently, even spending time to remove a single scale.

Once the scales were clean, he began to gut the fish.

Suddenly, the always quiet Little Black Dog came up, seemingly wanting to eat the fish Lu Yuanfeng caught.

"Little Black Dog, you can't eat this stuff right now, first get your body back in shape."

Maybe it was bitten by a snake, from start to now, the Little Black Dog hadn't barked once, staying quietly, avoiding moving if possible.

It seemed like a very clever dog.

The Little Black Dog curled up, turning into a small meatball, but its eyes remained fixed on the fish in Lu Yuanfeng's hand.

Just then, Lu Yuanfeng had already cleaned the fish's insides, including removing the gills.

Honestly, in this era, the number of men who can do these chores could be counted on one hand.

The male dominance phenomenon was too serious, even a fierce woman like Old Mrs. Mu had to bend to Mr. Mu.

Lu Yuanfeng really was an exceptionally good man, willing to work, although his cooking was lacking, his skills as a helper were not to be underestimated.

After cleaning up two fish, they, along with a Black Mink and a dog, went home.

Yu Si Niang was already busy in the kitchen, rice washed, vegetables cleaned, even the fire was lit.

"Mom, you can rest now, Fengzi and I can handle this."

Yu Si Niang's clothes were all muddy, apparently just coming back from the paddy field.

"Let me do it, you've been working hard in town, I can do some chores at home, how tiring can it be?"

Yu Si Niang wasn't willing to let her daughter work alone, unwillingly refusing.

"The farm work is really exhausting, Shuangshuang isn't unfamiliar with it. You spend time with Dad, and later tell me why Grandma caused trouble at noon."

Mu Shuangshuang believed that since Old Mrs. Mu made such a fuss, there must be a reason, just one she didn't know.

"Mom doesn't know, but I do know why your grandma's angry."

When she came home, she first went to Zhao Yun's house, to see if Zhao Yun needed any help, and coincidentally, Zhao Yun told her about Old Mrs. Mu wetting the bed.

She didn't dare laugh, after all, it was her mother-in-law, if she made it too obvious, she'd definitely be criticized.

"Then tell me!" Mu Shuangshuang perked up her ears, earnestly watching Yu Si Niang.

But Yu Si Niang hesitated since Lu Yuanfeng was there. Technically, she shouldn't say it, but he was on good terms with them.

"This..."

Seeing Yu Si Niang's dilemma, Lu Yuanfeng considerately said, "Aunt Si, I'll go check on the piglets and chicks."

After Lu Yuanfeng left, Yu Si Niang lowered her voice: "Your grandma wet the bed this morning!"

"Huh?" Mu Shuangshuang's lips twitched, then she burst into laughter.

Old Mrs. Mu, a woman in her fifties, wetting the bed?

Wow, that's really something, but why would she target her? It's not like she forced her to wet the bed.

"Shuangshuang, you better stop laughing, if others find out, it could cause big problems."

Yu Si Niang was very anxious, she didn't even dare to laugh herself, afraid of being accused of being unfilial.

"Don't worry, mom, we're family, others won't find out."

Chapter 344: Old Mu Family's Fortune Plan

In the kitchen of the Old Mu Family, Mrs. Liu rushed left and right, finally managing to get the midday meal prepared.

Before it was even on the table, Old Mrs. Mu spoke up again.

"Fourth daughter-in-law, clean up the kitchen before you come; also, bring in the dried clothes, with the sun this strong, how will the clothes keep their color?"

Mrs. Liu had been about to eat, but upon hearing Old Mrs. Mu's words, she had no choice but to go work again.

Once she left, Mu Xiangxiang came over.

"Mom, I want to eat meat, how can we eat these plain dishes?"

"Xiangxiang, wasn't it just yesterday that mom made you meat soup? How have you already run out?"

Old Mrs. Mu couldn't resist; this little girl, whom she cherished, could never be fully satisfied.

"Mom, that was yesterday. I'm at the age when I need to grow. You wouldn't want me to not grow up, right!"

Mu Xiangxiang shook Old Mrs. Mu's body, and Old Mrs. Mu immediately surrendered.

"Alright, alright, tomorrow we'll ask your fourth sister-in-law to buy some meat. What do you want, meatballs or just meat soup?"

"Meat soup, just make me a bowl, too many meatballs are greasy!"

At the dining table, the interaction between Old Mrs. Mu and Mu Xiangxiang was incredibly warm, but the others watching found the scene quite glaring.

"Mom, I'm pregnant, and haven't gotten any nourishment yet. Can you see if it's possible..." Mrs. Lin gathered her courage to try and request some good food.

"What nourishment, you know if you eat too well, the child will grow too big, and when the time comes my grandson will suffer during birth. Are you deliberately trying to cause trouble?"

Old Mrs. Mu's questioning left Mrs. Lin so angry her mouth twisted.

In all her life, she'd never seen such stinginess, being pregnant, and not even being given a single good meal.

"Mom, I'm just worried about your grandson being too weak, so..."

"Enough, I can tell from the look on your face what you're going to say, don't play pitiful in front of me. The family finances are just so much, we got meat for Gou Dan's aunt, so you can't have any."

Having said that, Old Mrs. Mu picked up the bowl of vegetables from the table and started piling the food into Mu Xiangxiang's bowl, while the others hadn't even started eating yet.

"Mom, you're so nice. Dad, you eat some too, stop fussing over me."

Mu Xiangxiang wasn't good at much, but she had a sweet tongue, and in one sentence, she made Mr. Mu feel warm inside; however, he still reminded Old Mrs. Mu.

"Old lady, second daughter-in-law is pregnant with a child of our Old Mu Family. The necessary nourishment must be provided. I've been thinking recently, we also need to buy some chicks and bring back a pig."

This has been on Mr. Mu's mind for a long time; their family has lost two chickens to theft, and of the remaining three, only one is laying eggs. If this continues, the Old Mu Family will soon have no eggs.

They might not even have chickens.

Hearing about buying chickens and pigs, Old Mrs. Mu panicked.

"Old man, what are you saying, buying a pig? The eldest is coming back soon, our family will soon be like a phoenix. Buying more livestock now would be a waste of money, wouldn't it?"

"Besides, our family doesn't have extra money for those things."

The runaway pig from back then still pains Old Mrs. Mu's heart; of course, she wouldn't want to spend money on pigs again.

"Don't fool me, don't I know our family's finances? Anyway, I've decided, we will raise pigs and buy chicks."

Once Mr. Mu made the decision, the rest of the people seemed to be charged with energy, extremely happy.

Raising pigs means having a new year's pig to slaughter; there'll be plenty of pig's blood and whatever meat isn't sold can make for a hearty meal, though this year it's too late for a new year's pig since it's already July.

In just five months, it'll be New Year.

"Mom, raising pigs is a good thing. Think about it, why does my third sister-in-law's family raise pigs? Isn't it because there's money to be made? With so many people in the Old Mu Family, how come we can't?" Mu Danian quickly expressed his view.

"Exactly, they say golden pigs, golden pigs, maybe when we raise pigs, our good luck will come too," Mu Dazhong chimed in with an uncharacteristically positive comment, even feeling quite clever about it.

Old Mrs. Mu was still stubbornly resisting, after all, this spending would be her silver.

Ultimately, it was Mu Xiangxiang saying she wanted to eat the new year's pig that made Old Mrs. Mu finally throw aside her hesitation.

Old Mrs. Mu mainly thought a chick costs three wen. If she were to catch them, she'd have to get more than the third sister-in-law's family.

The third sister-in-law's family got thirty-five, so she'd get forty, costing a hundred and twenty wen.

Then about the piglets, she'd have to get two. Pork prices are all fifteen wen, so piglets should cost about the same.

A twenty-something-pound pig would cost three hundred wen.

Thinking about it made Old Mrs. Mu feel breathless.

"I, this old woman, will do it for the children, tomorrow we'll go to Tie Dao Village to get chicks, and the piglets can be gotten from Wang Erma's house."

The chicks from Aunt Ge in Tie Dao Village were well-known for being high quality, and Old Mrs. Mu's first choice was there.

Mu Danian, hearing this, thought of how he hadn't seen that flirtatious Chen Hong for so long, and now had the perfect excuse to visit.

"Mom, I'll go to Tie Dao Village. I know more people, maybe I can get a discount."

"Really?" Old Mrs. Mu eyed him suspiciously; a hundred and twenty wen wasn't a small sum, and she wouldn't easily let it slip.

"Of course, if you trust me, leave it to me. If not, there's nothing your son can do."

Mu Danian's sincere tone, coupled with his recent lack of troublemaking, reassured Old Mrs. Mu.

"Alright, I'll leave this to you. If you don't handle it well, don't bother coming back."

The chick matter settled, but the piglet?

Old Mrs. Mu looked around the room, just about to ask when Mrs. Lin nudged her husband under the table.

Feeling the pain, Mu Dazhong understood his wife's intention. "Mom, since the fifth brother is contributing to the family, I'll handle the piglets. I promise to complete the task."

Old Mrs. Mu nodded in satisfaction.

"This old woman is truly blessed, sons who are sensible, and a daughter who is obedient, except for some who are useless at critical times!"

Old Mrs. Mu gave Mu Dajiang a mean glance, her harsh words coming relentlessly.

Mu Dajiang lowered his head, not daring to meet Old Mrs. Mu's eyes.

"Okay, since everything is decided, let's eat, and after the meal, everyone mind their own business!" Mr. Mu ordered, and everyone began eating.

Mu Dajiang hurriedly picked up some food for his bowl, but just a few bites in, Old Mrs. Mu raised her voice.

"Fourth son, if you're not going to eat, don't pile your bowl with so much food, leaving none for others?"

Mu Dajiang awkwardly smiled, "I...I will eat, I will eat!"

He said he would eat, but still didn't.

Chapter 345: Lose Money

Mu Dajiang was reprimanded by Old Mrs. Mu several times, but each time he just smiled and continued to add more food to his plate.

Just when Old Mrs. Mu was about to explode, Mrs. Liu walked in from outside, looking like she had finished all the chores.

"Jinhua, hurry over and eat."

Mu Dajiang dragged the seat beside him back, and once Mrs. Liu sat down, he gave her all the dishes he had placed in his bowl.

Old Mrs. Mu was furious, Mu Dajiang's actions seemed like a slap to her face.

"Fourth child, what do you mean by this? Do you think I shouldn't make your wife do the chores or what?"

"Are you hiding things for this annoying woman? Do you want to rebel?"

The matters of the third branch had always been a thorn in Old Mrs. Mu's heart. She had let the third branch get away with things before, but now she wouldn't let the rest of the family do the same.

"Mom, Jinhua is my wife, your daughter-in-law. She has done so much work and often doesn't get a full meal. Shouldn't I keep some food for her?"

"Doesn't get a full meal? What has she been eating every day? Dirt or urine? You useless thing, you must be driven crazy by the third branch, trying to rebel, are you?"

"I'm not!" Mu Dajiang stiffened his neck and finally squeezed out these three words.

"Not? Not what, not falsely accusing me, the old lady, or thinking you can defy me?"

As Old Mrs. Mu spoke, she sat down on the ground and slapped her thigh.

"Oh, how unfortunate is my fate, I raised a son who has forgotten his mother after getting a wife..."

"Unjust heavens, help, Mu Dajiang, you're not human..."

"I raised you through thick and thin, and this is how you treat me..."

Old Mrs. Mu was like someone performing a tragic opera, directing and acting all by herself.

And the members of the Old Mu Family cooperated perfectly.

First was Mu Xiangxiang, she said, "Fourth brother, how can you do this? Mother raised us with difficulty, hasn't had a good life, has worked all her life for us, and now you've forgotten her after getting a wife. How is she supposed to live on?"

"Fourth child, even your second brother has to say, building a family shouldn't mean defending your wife like this. Women are hardy, have you ever heard of a woman starving to death? There are only those who refuse to be lonely, sneak around, and get beaten to death."

The whole Old Mu Family chimed in one by one, leaving Mu Dajiang speechless, finally forcing him to apologize and admit fault for the matter to conclude.

But life for the fourth branch would surely become even tougher.

Mu Shuangshuang was making lunch at home and kept hearing noises coming from the Old Mu Family's kitchen.

Knowing that the Old Mu's household was picking on honest people again, she felt nauseated.

Back then it was the third branch, now it's the fourth branch...

"Shuangshuang, what's up? Do you want to go over and check?"

Lu Yuanfeng heard Mu Dajiang's name and knew it was about the fourth branch, aware that Shuangshuang was quite good to the fourth branch, so he asked.

"No need, I guess my fourth uncle has already apologized, saying anything wouldn't help now."

Lu Yuanfeng sensed Shuangshuang's low spirits and started to offer comforting words.

"Actually, you don't need to worry too much. Mr. Mu, though biased, is still reasonable, and your fourth uncle won't suffer too much.

Besides, addressing temporary issues doesn't solve the root of the problem, even if you help the fourth branch today, once you leave, they will be bullied again."

Mu Shuangshuang understood everything Lu Yuanfeng said, avoiding assistance to prevent the fourth and third branches from becoming adversaries one day.

People are such complex creatures.

Once you help once, every time afterward they will expect you to act. If you don't act, you will be cursed.

The little good you did will vanish without a trace.

Perhaps, this is another interpretation of helping someone thoroughly, of going the distance for the Buddha. If you don't help to the end, not only will previous efforts be wasted, but all good deeds done might bring trouble.

"Fengzi, don't worry, let's continue making delicious food, unaffected by others."

After lunch, Mu Shuangshuang fed Little Black Dog some porridge. The little thing, though its mouth was ugly, could still eat.

It's different from Little Black, who eats raw food, while Little Black Dog eats cooked food.

Perhaps because it's the first time trying cooked food, half a bowl of porridge was consumed in no time, the bowl licked clean.

After handling Little Black Dog, Mu Shuangshuang stepped outside and noticed two people standing in the yard.

Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian were lined up, entering Mu Dashan's room.

They immediately said, "Third brother, I heard you grabbed some chicks, let me take a look."

"Old third, I heard you grabbed a pig, your life is getting better, I'm really envious."

Mu Dashan looked awkwardly at the unexpected second brother and fifth younger brother, really not knowing how to handle them.

Just as he was thinking how to respond, he heard Mu Danian say, "Third brother, later I will go to Tie Dao Village to grab forty chicks, how many does your family have, could it be fewer than us?"

"I will also grab piglets later, two at once."

With the conversation at this point, Mu Shuangshuang understood they were showing off.

Yet her bun-faced dad was still blessing them.

Mu Shuangshuang rushed up, pushing Mu Danian and Mu Dazhong aside and exclaimed, "Dad, why are you out of bed? You need to rest, can't work. You've turned a lot paler recently, wonder if it's because you don't have to work."

As soon as not working was mentioned, Mu Danian and Mu Dazhong got angry.

Now these two can dodge work, but the tasks have doubled, not just doubled, even laziness gets scolded.

Right now, the weeds in the cotton field are almost three feet high, and to take a break, they use excuses like these.

"Shuangshuang, why didn't you greet us elders when you saw us?" Mu Dazhong took his anger out on Mu Shuangshuang.

"I did greet, what's up, didn't you hear? My voice is that loud, second uncle, could your ears... be deaf?"

Do you want to get treated by Grandpa Zhang, I heard he recently concocted many medicines, all good stuff.

They specialize in treating the heart and lungs, whether it's wolf's heart and dog's lungs, or pig's heart and pig's lungs, one dose cures it."

Mu Shuangshuang said with a cold smile.

Mu Danian was furious. "Second brother, this brat is mocking us as wolf heart and dog lungs, pig heart and pig lungs!"

"Old third, did you hear, your daughter is so cruel-hearted. We, as her uncles, came to see you, yet we are humiliated by a junior, you must give us an explanation."

Mu Dashan was stunned, standing there without speaking.

"Second uncle, what kind of explanation do you want, tell me, if Shuangshuang can do it, she certainly will." Or not, Mu Shuangshuang rolled her eyes, inwardly despising the people before her even more.

"Simple! Give money, because you hurt us, you must use our method to settle it, otherwise you know the consequences of disrespecting elders." Mu Dazhong said.

Chapter 346: Moving Out of the Old Mu Family?

"Second Uncle sure likes to joke, asking for money at the drop of a hat. It's just that I'm not sure if the family steward agrees."

"Steward?" Mu Dazhong was taken aback, unable to respond immediately.

Since when did the third branch have a steward? Haven't seen any new faces in the third branch.

While still curious, he saw Mu Shuangshuang call into the room.

"Little Black, someone wants to take your money!"

No sooner had she spoken than a black shadow dashed out from Mu Shuangshuang's room, leaping onto Mu Dazhong's head in just a few steps.

Mu Danian was instantly excited, "Second Brother, that's a Black Mink! Catch it; it's worth a lot of money!"

Mu Shuangshuang frowned upon hearing Mu Danian's words.

Although she didn't know how Mu Danian recognized Little Black as a Black Mink, since he already knew, Little Black had to show what it's made of.

"Little Black, they're going to eat you. Deal with it yourself!"

Little Black used both of its paws at once, fiercely scratching Mu Dazhong's scalp, causing him to yelp in pain.

"Ouch, this beast wants to rebel, Fifth, kill it..."

Mu Dazhong went mad, reaching out to grab Little Black. Mu Danian followed him, chasing it around Mu Dashan's small room.

The thing was, Little Black was quite agile, darting and jumping around the not-so-large room.

Mu Shuangshuang watched coldly, wanting to see how this pair of monkeys would bounce around.

"Second Brother, Fifth Brother, what are you up to?" Mu Dashan couldn't sit still anymore.

The last time Little Black was lost, he almost worried himself sick. If something were to happen again, the family wouldn't have a moment's peace.

"Third Brother, this little beast was sitting on my head, defecating and urinating last time. This time I'm definitely catching it!"

"Fifth Brother, let's do this together!"

The two exchanged a glance and looked at Little Black, who was perched at the room's entrance.

"Alright, this time we'll skin this little beast."

Both lunged at Little Black simultaneously, but Little Black swiftly dodged.

With a "bang," Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian collided, while the culprit, Little Black, dashed out of the room and leapt onto the roof.

"Second Brother, there's already a lump on my head..." Mu Danian said tearfully.

"I'm going to fight this little beast today."

The two men stormed out, breathless with anger, yelling as they looked at Little Black on the rooftop.

"This little beast is getting out of hand. Let's hit it down with stones."

Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian kept escalating, while Mu Dashan grabbed the wooden pillow from the kang and threw it at one of them.

The wooden pillow hit Mu Danian hard on the back of his head.

"Get out, just get out, our family doesn't welcome you!"

When Mu Dashan got angry, he truly appeared frightening. The scar on his eyelid bunched up, and his gaze lost its usual gentleness.

Mu Shuangshuang knew the man was feeling protective of Little Black.

"Are you crazy, Third Brother, are you crazy..." Mu Danian howled, clutching his aching head.

Mu Shuangshuang felt it was about time, grabbed a wooden stick from the floor, and began to swing it at Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian.

"Dare to bully my dad; are you even human? The third branch is already dirt poor, yet you want my dad to give you money for meat..."

"Second Brother, what's that girl saying, when did we say we wanted to buy meat?" Mu Danian shouted while dodging blows from the stick, not forgetting to ask Mu Dazhong.

"How should I know? This crazy girl, ouch... it hurts..."

Mu Shuangshuang cried and shouted loudly, her movements never ceasing.

Soon, people unfamiliar with what was happening gathered around.

Pointing fingers at Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian.

"Hey, what's with Mu the Second and Mu the Fifth? Old Mu hasn't been up to work for months, and they're still trying to exploit him."

"You all know it wasn't divided before, all Old Mu Family's work was done by Da Shan, and now Da Shan's sick, they're bullying Si Niang and her kids."

"Well, this is unjust. Old Mu doesn't even care. Mu Dade might have made it, but with brothers like these, who knows how far he can go."

"Couldn't have said it better, one rotten apple spoils the whole barrel, let alone two..."

"Shuang, don't hold back. We support your third branch. Your second uncle and fifth uncle deserve what's coming."

With the villagers voicing support, Mu Shuangshuang swung the stick with renewed vigor.

The wailing grew louder as Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian tried several times to snatch the stick from Mu Shuangshuang's hands, but she kept dodging like a nimble monkey.

Instead of getting the stick, their hands got swollen from hits.

The commotion got so big, even Mr. Mu, resting in the main room, was alarmed. He hurried outside.

Seeing a crowd gathered outside the third branch's yard, Mr. Mu's blood boiled.

"Everyone get back. Shuang, you stop too. Daring to hit your uncle, you want to turn the world upside down?"

Mu Shuangshuang anticipated this scene, so she threw down the stick and looked pitifully at the people watching.

Soon enough, the crowd began speaking up for Mu Shuangshuang: "Old Mu, your granddaughter is indeed sensible beyond words. It's Dazhong and Danyan who came causing trouble at her home, and the young girl couldn't bear it, so she acted."

"Yeah, Uncle Mu, Shuangshuang's not at fault. We've seen it all. She's just a child, and if she didn't act, she'd be bullied to death. Don't disregard her just because she's a girl."

With people chiming in, Mr. Mu didn't know how to reprimand Shuang anymore.

He glared at Mu Shuangshuang, dragging Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian out of the third branch's yard.

Mu Shuangshuang contentedly put away the stick, turning to thank the crowd.

"Thank you, everyone, for speaking up for Shuang!"

Seeing the show over, the crowd, appreciating Mu Shuangshuang's politeness, laughed and went back to their homes.

Once the yard quieted down, Mu Shuangshuang waved to Little Black on the roof, and the small creature leapt into her arms.

Rarely did the little thing not disdain her, and Mu Shuangshuang gladly soothed it, smoothing its fur.

Mu Dashan came out from inside, the redness from his earlier rage still lingering.

Seeing his daughter unharmed, he sighed in relief.

Yet it only deepened his guilt.

His second brother and fifth brother were the most troublesome in the Old Mu Family, most difficult for him to deal with.

"Shuang, do you think we should move elsewhere?"

Mu Dashan felt terribly upset. Since falling ill, it's his daughter Shuangshuang who suffered every time.

Mu Dashan's decision stunned Mu Shuangshuang. Looking at the man before her, somehow she felt he was tougher than before.

"Dad, I've thought about it before, but not right now. For now, our family doesn't have the capacity to build another house, and they're just causing a fuss. I won't let myself be taken advantage of."

Chapter 347: Matchmaking

Mu Dashan let out a long sigh after listening to Mu Shuangshuang's analysis.

Can't leave, does it mean we can only passively take the blows?

Mu Dashan's worries were visible to Mu Shuangshuang, but regardless, she didn't have any spare money to build another house right now.

Besides, running away won't solve the current problem. Anyway, her thrifty uncle will return, and by then, even if she doesn't take action, the Old Mu Family will be in chaos themselves.

What's more, she spent money and effort to build the kitchen. If she went through such trouble again, not only would Xiao Han's tuition for next year be gone, but all these things would just benefit the Old Mu Family people.

"Dad, Grandpa Zhang said you can go for a walk when you have nothing to do."

"I see the weather is warm. Just go out and walk every morning and evening after meals."

"Take along the mosquito-repelling pouch, and it shouldn't be a big problem."

"Shuangshuang, this family really relies on you. Otherwise, even if Dad wasn't sick, he might not be able to support this family."

"Dad, what you're saying is hypothetical, not valid. In my opinion, you still shouldn't think about anything and try not to get too emotional."

...

...

Mr. Mu pulled Mu Danian and Mu Dazhong into the main room, grabbed the broom from the door crack, and aimed to whip them.

Mu Danian quickly pleaded for mercy. "Dad, today's this issue really isn't our fault. We went to the third brother's to ask about raising piglets and what kind to buy. In the end, Shuang went crazy and started slinging mud at us."

"Yeah, Dad, I can testify. I and Fifth didn't do anything. It's just that Shuang relied on the villagers helping her to go against us. We're really pitiful!"

Mu Danian was always a liar, and with Mu Dazhong added in, they could make dead people seem alive.

Mr. Mu understood them clearly; he just couldn't stand the eldest daughter from the third house telling family affairs to outsiders.

"You both better stop going over there and stop doing these reckless things. If you cause any more trouble, I'll deal with you."

"Dad, we know we were wrong, we know, we won't dare again. We'll go catch piglets and chicklets now."

Mu Danian tugged at Mu Dazhong's sleeve. The two exchanged a look and hurriedly ran away.

The main room fell silent instantly. Mr. Mu felt suffocated, unable to calm down for a long while.

Just then, Old Mrs. Mu came in from outside. She saw something was off with Mr. Mu and quickly asked.

"What happened? Old man, what's going on, talk to me."

"Do you think we made a mistake by letting the third branch separate back then?" Mr. Mu has always been brooding over this matter.

He couldn't eat or sleep because of it.

"When we divided the third branch's fields back then, I thought one day, when they can't make it on their own, they'd come back, and then we'd still be a family."

"But ever since Shuang started that worthless business, everything changed. The third branch kept getting better and better but also increasingly disrespectful. My words, as the old man, don't count anymore."

All his life, Mr. Mu was respected, even if his sons weren't promising, in front of him, they were polite. Only Shuang from the third branch defied him countless times.

As if his words were meaningless.

Mr. Mu recalled the acre of good land given away from his hands, those two times he provided food, and felt increasingly dissatisfied deep down.

"Old man, not mentioning that nasty girl is fine, but mentioning her makes me angry. She's nothing but bad luck, even saying our Zhenzhen is out there eating and drinking with others."

"What did you say? Zhenzhen is out there eating and drinking with others?" Mr. Mu narrowed his eyes, instantly shooting two cold beams from them.

Realizing she misspoke, Old Mrs. Mu quickly explained.

"No, I didn't mean that. I meant... old man, that's what the nasty girl said, don't take it seriously!"

Old Mrs. Mu initially wanted to discuss a solution with Mr. Mu, but considering her man's temper, she hesitated and thought of secretly asking Zhenzhen.

If it were true, she'd ask her not to go anymore.

If it's not, she'd skin that nasty girl.

"Not take it seriously? You think the money for her recent clothes came from nowhere? How do you think she eats in town? She just did something disgraceful last time. Have you forgotten?"

At the thought of that piggy bank, Mr. Mu felt his blood reverse flow; he couldn't let this daughter keep fooling around.

"Old woman, this time, we have to let Zhenzhen learn a lesson. Otherwise, what if she causes trouble for the eldest?"

Old Mrs. Mu was deeply troubled; both hands are precious to her, and the second daughter is now pitiful after being divorced. But if she harms the eldest, she'd be deserving of ten thousand deaths.

"How about... we find a marriage for Zhenzhen? Anyway, our daughter is pretty, finding a good family shouldn't be hard."

Mr. Mu thought for a moment and nodded in agreement. "Then you quickly bribe the matchmaker. We don't expect them to be super-rich, just need to ensure Zhenzhen has good food and drinks."

Mr. Mu knew his daughter's nature all too well. She married Zhuangzi because their family had plenty of land back then.

But he always kept these things to himself, never saying them out loud.

"I'll go inquire now and check if those two young ones went out for business."

...

...

Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian parted at the courtyard gate.

Mu Dazhong held six hundred coins for buying pigs, while Mu Danian had one hundred and twenty coins for buying chickens.

With this comparison, Mu Dazhong felt a bit light-headed.

"Fifth brother, aren't you silly? The chicken batch isn't even in our village, and you only have one hundred and twenty coins. I have six hundred here."

Initially, Mu Danian felt uneasy about going to Tie Dao Village for Chen Hong.

But now, hearing Mu Dazhong's words, he felt dissatisfied.

"What's so great about six hundred coins? It's not even your money. If you have the guts, save it up!

I bet you can't save it. The price of a pig is more than three hundred, not less.

Little chickens are different. Someone might give me one for free, and I can save money. So, second brother, you're losing on this trip!"

Mu Danian's words made Mu Dazhong red-eyed, staring at the one hundred and twenty coins in his hand.

"Fifth brother, why don't we swap then? Didn't you say you're sore? Buying a pig isn't a long errand. I'll do it for you!"

Mu Dazhong felt Mu Danian made sense. He took this job, hoping to keep some silver for himself.

Even just a coin or two, saving adds up.

"Second brother, stop scheming. I won't let you take my benefits. If you want money, find your own way."

Mu Danian turned his head proudly toward the village entrance.

Mu Dazhong stamped his feet where he stood, holding the six hundred coins, but felt no joy.

Originally, their second branch had five hundred coins, all because of his mother!

Chapter 348: Buying Pigs

Mu Dazhong carried six hundred coins and spent the whole way thinking of how to save money.

Finally, he arrived at Wang Erma's house.

As the only big pig slaughterer in the nearby villages, Wang Erma's family still had dozens of pigs.

There were three sows that were just for birthing.

The latest litter of piglets was born more than a month ago, and now they weighed nearly twenty pounds.

Wang Erma had been hoping every day for someone to buy his pigs, so he could make another profit.

"Erma, where are you?"

Wang Erma's house always smelled terrible; even at the door, Mu Dazhong caught whiff of the stench and couldn't help covering his nose.

Wang Erma had just finished clearing out the pig manure from the pig pen, and upon hearing someone call for him, he came out.

But he didn't expect to see someone he didn't really want to see.

Mu Dazhong was Mu Shuangshuang's second uncle, so he wasn't welcomed.

"What are you doing here? Our family doesn't welcome people from that smelly girl's family."

Last time, half of Wang Erma's pork ended up spoiled because of Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng, losing a huge sum of silver.

Wang Erma dreamed of teaching Mu Shuangshuang a lesson.

"People from the smelly girl's family?" Mu Dazhong repeated this sentence before quickly saying, "Erma, what are you saying? You know the third branch has split off. I've never liked that smelly girl."

Wang Erma hesitated for a moment; indeed, Mu the Third had divided the household, everyone knew, but could he just let it go after his losses?

"Erma, don't think I'm talking too much. I've wanted to deal with that smelly girl for a long time, but there's never been a way. You don't know, today I even got beaten up by her."

As he spoke, Mu Dazhong rolled up his sleeves, and Wang Erma noticed there were indeed red marks there.

Immediately, he decided to let Mu Dazhong into the yard.

"Dazhong, you say you're her second uncle and being bullied like this by a smelly girl, don't know how to fight back? If I were you, I'd have strangled that girl."

"I want to, but that smelly girl has Lu Yuanfeng by her side; he can punch a wild boar dead, and I'd lose half my life going up against him."

Mu Dazhong spoke half-truthfully, unknowingly striking a chord with Wang Erma.

The enemy of an enemy is a friend.

Wang Erma began to be nicer to Mu Dazhong.

"Dazhong, tell me, what did you come here for today? To buy meat?"

"My mother wants me to catch two pigs, can you take me to look at them?"

"Alright, let me know which one you like, I'll give you a discount as long as you have the chance to give that smelly girl a good beating in the future."

Following Wang Erma, Mu Dazhong entered the Wang Family's backyard pig sty.

You have to admit, the Wang Family's backyard is indeed big; it's just because of the pigs that it's terribly smelly.

Leading Mu Danian to stop outside the pigsty, Wang Erma pointed to the sows and piglets in the pen, "Pick whichever you want in here, once you've chosen, we'll weigh them, and I'll give you a discount."

Mu Dazhong personally went into the pig pen, selected a few pigs, but found them too fat.

With great difficulty, he chose two, both weighing twenty pounds.

At this rate, he definitely couldn't save money.

"Erma, although we didn't spend our childhoods together all the time, we did catch fish in the river together. I'll be honest, I came today to find cheaper piglets."

"You know my mother, stingy, cheap, miserly, unwilling to spend money. All the household money was given to my eldest brother; now, catching piglets, it's all from pennies saved."

"Even so, there's not much..."

Mu Dazhong spoke as if pitifully, and Wang Erma sighed.

"Dazhong, I understand your family's situation. How much can you offer? Let me see if I can get you a pig."

Mu Dazhong extended his hand, holding back all fingers except the index and middle fingers.

"Two hundred coins? For one pig? Let me think..."

Wang Erma calculated the cost in his heart; two hundred coins could only buy a suckling pig, but the pigs at home have been raised for so long, it's not worthwhile!

"Erma, I haven't finished speaking; I meant one hundred coins per pig, is there any?"

One hundred coins for a piglet — this was the funniest joke Wang Erma had ever heard in his life.

"Dazhong, you're joking to the point of killing me with laughter; a normal piglet can't be sold for one hundred coins. You think you're buying a sick, dying pig!"

"Go back and tell Old Mrs. Mu; buying a pig is one coin for one goods. If it's truly one hundred coins, then it's only for a dead, sick pig."

This was the most patient Wang Erma had ever been.

Since he started selling pork, they'd always been short of weight.

His attitude towards people had never been good, but this time, if it hadn't been for the fact that this person had a grudge against that smelly girl from the Old Mu Family, he wouldn't have bothered explaining so much.

Mu Dazhong was about to die from frustration inside; holding these six hundred coins without being able to do anything.

Just as he was thinking of buying the two skinniest pigs, Wang Erma slapped his thigh.

"Look at me, there are two pigs at our house, started having diarrhea a few days ago, stopped recently but just stayed in the pigpen, I'm afraid of infectious diseases, so threw them aside, if you want, take them for two hundred coins."

Wang Erma estimated that the pigs would live at most three days; anyhow, the rule here was once out the door, no returns.

"Really? Then I'll take these two, but you have to make it festive, add a red flower or something."

Mu Dazhong laid out his demands, then followed Wang Erma to another pigsty to see the two piglets.

Just as Wang Erma said, the two piglets had dull eyes and weak steps.

Obviously destined for a short life.

But Mu Dazhong was still determined to buy; when Wang Erma hung a flower on the pig's head, Mu Dazhong paid.

He used Wang Erma's wheelbarrow to bring the two piglets back.

The Old Mu Family exploded on the spot.

Originally, one piglet from Mu Shuangshuang's house attracted the villagers to gather round; now with two pigs, the threshold was almost trampled over.

Someone pointed to the pigsty, saying, "The Old Mu Family really isn't just an ordinary family; first Da De going for the imperial exam, then the third branch buying pigs and chicks.

Now it's the Old Mu Family's turn; they bought two golden pigs at once, looks like they're about to strike it rich!"

Old Mrs. Mu couldn't stop smiling, glancing at the pigs in the pen every so often.

The piglets were lying in the corner sleep; but the red around their necks was glaringly bright.

"Old Second, you're the family's hero, accomplished great deeds." Old Mrs. Mu praised Mu Dazhong.

"That's right, but it's all thanks to Mother's guidance; here are five coins, Mother can keep them."

Mu Dazhong pulled five coins from his pocket and gave them to Old Mrs. Mu, who smiled even more happily.

Mrs. Lin didn't know what had happened, just knew her man was foolish for not keeping the five coins to himself.

"Don't know how your Fifth is doing, should've reached Tie Dao Village by now!"

Chapter 349: One More Shameless Than the Other

Mu Danian indeed reached Tie Dao Village, but right now he's enjoying life with Chen Hong.

A roast chicken, a pound of beef, and a pound of baijiu.

A hundred and twenty wen spent completely.

Chewing roast chicken, drinking wine—this is life!

"Little girl, isn't it great being with your brother?"

Mu Dazhong started speaking lewdly again.

Chen Hong stuffed a big chicken leg into her mouth, mumbling indistinctly.

"Come on now, didn't you say it was money from your mom to catch chicks? If we spend it, won't your mom skin you alive?"

In Tie Dao Village, everyone knew the fame of Old Mrs. Mu, and Chen Hong never left her name out of her speeches.

"It's worth being skinned for you. Tell me, little girl, how long has it been since you last came to see me? Don't you miss me?"

"Miss you? What's the use? Your older brother hasn't returned yet, I have to depend on those two old things at home.

You tell me, those two old fuddy-duddies are so old, yet they hold onto the silver so tightly. Why don't they just give it all to me?"

Chen Hong complained angrily while Mu Danian occasionally drank and ate beside her.

"Ah~ This sorghum wine is stronger than rice wine, but there won't be many good days like this."

Soon, after eating and drinking, the two of them went at it in the bushes without fearing getting caught.

Afterward, Chen Hong looked satisfied and her attitude toward Mu Danian improved.

"Danyan, don't say I didn't help you. We have a widower in Tie Dao Village, surname Liu.

That old bastard, over fifty and still a lecher; later I'll lure him, and you seize the chance to steal the chickens from his house. Then take the chickens back and tell your mom you bought them... hehe!"

Upon hearing this, Mu Danian got as excited as a chicken on hot coals and sprang up.

"Really? Honghong, you're truly my savior. I just love you!"

Mu Danian hugged Chen Hong and gave her several big kisses.

After dressing, they both went to the house of that Old Liu in Chen Hong's words.

She deliberately pulled her clothes apart a little to reveal some white skin, and as she knocked on the courtyard door, she did so gently.

"Uncle Liu, are you there?"

Old Liu came out quickly, and upon seeing it was Chen Hong, he started drooling from the corners of his mouth.

"Oh, it's Chen Hong? What's up, coming to my house?"

Chen Hong was flirtatious, everyone in the village knew, Old Liu couldn't believe such a bargain fell on his lap.

"Uncle Liu, I want a drink of water, is it okay if I come inside?"

"Yes, yes, yes..."

Old Liu led Chen Hong into the house, and Mu Danian snuck in after, finding the chicken coop and taking forty chicks.

Putting them into a burlap sack, he ran off.

Chen Hong dealt with him inside for quite a while, and when she felt enough time had passed, she suddenly pushed away the groping hands on her.

"Uncle Liu, what are you doing? If you keep touching me, I'll tell the village chief."

"Honghong, you let me touch you just now!" Old Liu, not the cleverest, only remembered Chen Hong placing his hand on her chest.

"If I told you to die, why don't you go? You old fart, just trying to take advantage of me, tricked me to come inside, you wait and see."

"I'll let everyone in the village know what you've done, your daughter married in Dahuo Village, right? I'll make sure her in-laws know what kind of person her daughter-in-law is."

Mentioning his daughter, Old Liu showed some emotion in his eyes and quickly let go of Chen Hong.

Originally thinking Chen Hong would leave after this, who would've thought she'd make such a bold demand.

"Old Liu, hand over all your valuables, or I'll scream harassment!"

"We have no money, all our money went to Fengfeng, I..."

"Fine, don't give it, help! Harassment! Old Liu is harassing a widow..."

Old Liu, at his age, suffered a loss and still had to give money; after Chen Hong left, he fainted on the bed.

Chen Hong pocketed the one tael of silver she extorted from Old Liu in her bra pocket.

She felt insecure without money.

"Little girl, got it done?" Mu Danian, carrying the chicks, asked curiously.

"Of course, you better hurry back, and don't come to Tie Dao Village for a while."

After Chen Hong's instruction, Mu Dazhong gave her a pat on the butt, leaving with satisfaction.

With chickens, and pigs, the Old Mu Family this time really strutted with pride.

Old Mrs. Mu originally thought the second son's job was well done, but upon seeing the already grown chickens, couldn't help but praise Mu Danian.

"Danyan, you're truly a good son of mine, knowing to bring back such big chickens. These chickens can now be set free with the big chickens."

"Danyan, how come someone sold these chickens to you so cheaply?"

Old Mrs. Mu was very curious, growing feathers meant they had almost grown up, and with proper care, there would certainly be no loss.

And outside, such chickens wouldn't sell for less than eight or ten wen.

"Didn't I say it was due to a connection? Mom, just focus on raising the chickens and don't worry about anything else."

Mu Danian's words made Old Mrs. Mu extremely pleased.

"If you'd been this smart before, our Old Mu Family would've been rich by now."

"We're not bad now, either, since our Old Mu Family has our big brother."

Mu Danian's flattering words hit Old Mrs. Mu's heart.

"Alright, alright, I'll cook you an extra meal tonight, how about a boiled egg?" Old Mrs. Mu asked.

"Yes, I haven't had an egg for ages, I've been craving one."

Seeing this, Mu Dazhong quickly spoke up. "Mom, I caught the pig as well, I worked hard.

"Enough, second son, as the older brother, give in to your younger brother. The eggs at home are for selling, if you eat one, we'll lose income."

"..."

Mu Dazhong knew Old Mrs. Mu was biased, but he had no choice but to return to his room defeated, like a losing rooster.

Old Mrs. Mu looked at the ground full of chicks, feeling extremely happy.

She couldn't resist showing off a little, and asked her third daughter-in-law Yu Si Niang to come and work for her.

When Old Mrs. Mu arrived, Mu Shuangshuang and Yu Si Niang were tying grass bundles in the courtyard.

Using a bow and arrow shape made from tree trunks, the pile of grass included dry fir branches, silky grass, and a large heap of various grasses and twigs.

Mixing them together, they made bundles, to be used as fire starters in the winter.

On a farm, straw had these few uses: either make bundles or burn it directly as fertilizer, never wasted.

"Third son's wife, starting today, you'll feed the pigs in the family, and those chicks too, you feed them as well.

Don't talk about dividing the family, you and Dashan are supposed to support us in our old age. If you don't, I'll let everyone in the village know you're unfilial and neglect your elders."

Chapter 350: Kneel Down

Old Mrs. Mu's accusation of unfilial conduct, not caring for the elders, frightened Yu Si Niang, causing her to stop pulling at the grass.

She quickly stood up, her hands and feet trembling uncontrollably, looking at Old Mrs. Mu with some apprehension in her eyes.

Not to mention in the village, but throughout the Da Ning Dynasty, being unfilial is a grave matter.

"Mom, please don't say that, I... I'll go work."

"Mom, this is a matter within our own family, you don't need to help with it," Mu Shuangshuang quickly interjected to stop her.

Old Mrs. Mu was clearly bullying excessively; making the third branch do family chores, for what reason?

"Stupid girl, shut your mouth for me. This is adults talking, where do you get the right to speak?" Old Mrs. Mu scolded loudly.

Mu Shuangshuang rolled her eyes, not afraid of Old Mrs. Mu at all.

"Grandma, what you're saying is wrong. My father said so himself; I'm the one managing the affairs of the third branch. A man's word is as strong as iron."

Mu Shuangshuang meant that currently she is in charge of the third branch matters, whether to work or not is up to her decision.

"You... you..." Old Mrs. Mu was so infuriated her blood stuck in her throat, unable to swallow or spit it out.

"Grandma, you're not feeling well, let me call someone!"

Mu Shuangshuang shouted towards the direction of the Old Mu Family: "Grandpa, grandma is about to faint, hurry up!"

Mr. Mu, immersed in the joy of acquiring new items for the home, heard Mu Shuangshuang's voice and quickly sent Mu Danian to assist.

Old Mrs. Mu wasn't fainting, just feeling unsteady on her feet. As soon as Mu Danian arrived, she pointed at Yu Si Niang and said:

"Yu Si Niang, today your chance is in front of you. If you don't go, I'll let the whole village know how unfilial you and Old Three are."

"Mom, Shuangshuang is still a child, she... she doesn't understand. I'll finish up the chores here and then go feed the pigs, please don't be upset."

Yu Si Niang was clearly ready to compromise, but Mu Shuangshuang was obviously unwilling.

"Mom, you...?" Mu Shuangshuang just started to speak when her mouth was covered, and Yu Si Niang smiled awkwardly. "Shuangshuang, listen to your grandma, don't speak."

Old Mrs. Mu received a confirming answer and her whole demeanor turned triumphant, like a victorious rooster, sticking her tail up to the heavens.

"Finish the tasks at hand, go feed the pigs now, or if our family's piglets starve to death, you'll pay for it! Also, remember well, even if our families are separated, you must still respect us, the Old Mu Family!"

Old Mrs. Mu finished speaking smugly, ignoring how angry Shuangshuang was, turned to Mu Danian and said: "Fifth, let's hurry up and leave, I don't want to stay a moment longer in this unlucky place!"

"Alright!" Mu Danian nodded compliantly but when he looked at Mu Shuangshuang, his eyes showed a hint of disdain.

After Old Mrs. Mu left, Mu Shuangshuang approached.

"Mom, why did you agree with grandma, are you really afraid of people saying you and dad aren't filial?"

In ancient times, being unfilial was indeed a grave matter, but if Old Mrs. Mu was specifically looking for trouble, there wasn't much to fear, was there?

"Shuangshuang, you're still young and don't understand. If your grandma really spread word in the village, it wouldn't just affect me and your dad, even you, Xiao Han, and Little Zhi would be affected. Mom is alright, but you will need to get married and start families in the future."

Yu Si Niang firmly wanted to go, and Mu Shuangshuang could only sigh, unable to do anything else.

"Mom, just go feed the pigs this time, and don't go again later. If you really feel you can't refuse grandma, avoid her when you see her next time, and let Shuangshuang deal with her."

Yu Si Niang listened to Mu Shuangshuang's words, tears glinting in her eyes, knowing her daughter was sensible; she felt all her hardships were worthwhile.

"Mom understands, focus less on our family matters and think more about your own future."

"My own future?" Mu Shuangshuang was perplexed. "What future could I have, just dealing with daily needs."

"Look at you, child, it's almost the Qixi Festival. You should wish for a good match."

"Haha, mom, you're worrying too early. Our fate hasn't even been written down."

She would only be fourteen after the Qixi Festival; no matter what, she wouldn't choose to get married at this age.

First, due to her weak body, and second, due to modern thinking, she couldn't fathom marrying and having children at such a young age.

"How is it unwritten? Fengzi is good; if you have no one in mind, why not consider someone nearby, just to know the person well and avoid wrong things."

"Mom, stop joking around. Marriage needs mutual consent from both parties, let alone the parents' approval. Fengzi is young too, and he doesn't show any interest."

Actually, when Yu Si Niang mentioned Lu Yuanfeng, Mu Shuangshuang felt nervous inside, her heartbeat was even slightly faster than usual.

But in the end, it was still an uncertain matter.

"How do you know he has no interest?" Yu Si Niang stubbornly asked.

This left Mu Shuangshuang at a loss.

She truly didn't know how to answer. "Mom, let's stop talking about this and finish the chores quickly!"

"But your grandma..." Remembering Old Mrs. Mu's threats before leaving, Yu Si Niang was fearful.

"You've already promised her, if she feels she can't wait, then let's not wait. Our third branch has plenty of work, we can't stop everything for her."

Listening to her daughter's words, Yu Si Niang's previous anxiety turned into relief.

"Then let's be resolute and finish up quickly."

With two people working together, tying the bundles was easy.

After two sticks of incense, Mu Shuangshuang and Yu Si Niang had bundled all the grass in the yard.

Stacked neatly in a circle of space reserved beside the pigsty.

Just in time as the sun set, Mu Zhenzhen, who had been out the entire day, finally returned.

In just a few days, Mu Zhenzhen's attire had changed to resemble that of an official's wife, dressed in silk and satin, with luxurious clothes.

These items were all displayed on Mu Zhenzhen's body, her glance was light-hearted, and her gaze towards the Old Mu Family had several traces of disdain.

After being in the Crystal Pavilion for a long time, having her return to a thatched house would mean she couldn't stay for long.

Moreover, Mu Zhenzhen's days had indeed been lavish recently.

"Kneel for me!"

Mr. Mu arrived at some unknown time, and upon opening his mouth, demanded Mu Zhenzhen to kneel, which she naturally refused.

"Dad, what's wrong with you, lost your mind? Why should I kneel!"

"You unfilial thing, daring to go out behind the family's back to accompany those old men, do you know what your behavior means?"

Accompanying for meals and drinks, in Mr. Mu's conservative mindset, had already turned into something very dirty.

"Dad, what are you talking about, what do you mean accompany old men, how dare you slander me?"

Mu Zhenzhen felt shocked but her stubborn nature made her continue to resist.