

Folly 361

Chapter 361: Fengzi's Gift

"Second daughter-in-law, are you dead? Xiangxiang is throwing a tantrum! Why don't you persuade her for me, you want to die!"

Unable to scold Mu Qingqing, Old Mrs. Mu vented on Mrs. Lin, not caring that Mrs. Lin was pregnant at the moment.

Mrs. Lin wasn't even upset about being scolded, because her daughter was so sensible, and was about to be chosen as the weaver.

"Mom, it's not Qingqing's fault. It's the villagers who chose. If you're unhappy, I'll have Qingqing step down." Mrs. Lin pretended to be obedient.

Old Mrs. Mu was so angry she almost fainted.

"Oh, Mrs. Lin, you're quite cruel-hearted. That dead girl is on the stage now. If she steps down, how will the villagers laugh at our Old Mu Family?"

Old Mrs. Mu was angry but not stupid. If Mu Qingqing stepped down now, folks would think she was biased.

"Mom, I didn't mean that. I'm just doing it for Xiangxiang's sake!" Mrs. Lin retorted, inwardly cursing Old Mrs. Mu as an old hag.

"For Xiangxiang's sake, you should learn from the third branch. Look, did Shuang come? Did Yu Si Niang come?"

Only your second and fourth branches cause trouble. If it weren't for you coming, Xiangxiang would have been the weaver by now."

Old Mrs. Mu uncharacteristically praised the third branch, her venomous gaze almost piercing through Mrs. Liu and Mrs. Lin.

Mu Xiaxia was protected behind Mrs. Liu, not daring to peek out at all.

"Mom, that stinky girl..."

"Are you calling her a stinky girl? You better behave, pray that Qing doesn't get selected, or I'll skin you!"

Leaving harsh words, Old Mrs. Mu began to comfort Mu Xiangxiang.

Calling her all sorts of endearments, but Mu Xiangxiang was hardly appeased when she threw a fit.

And so, when the weaver was selected, Mu Xiangxiang was still upset.

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On the north side, under Niuwei Mountain, a bright bonfire blazed, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were roasting meat around it.

Because they had two bonfires and Mu Shuangshuang had sprinkled realgar powder around, they didn't worry about snakes coming.

The children gathered around playing games and chatting about fun things, while Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were busy roasting meat.

Lai Mi resolutely stuck by Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng, eyes fixed on the rabbit meat Mu Shuangshuang was roasting.

The Little Black Dog was dirty, its fur scruffy, stuck with burdock burrs that wouldn't come off.

"Fengzi, when Lai Mi is a bit older, I want to give it a bath and teach it to guard the house."

Mu Shuangshuang had interacted with police dogs before, understood the basic training, and Lai Mi seemed clever enough to possibly train as a hunting dog.

Currently, it's summer, and the truly valuable things in the mountains haven't appeared yet. Once winter comes, those treasures emerge, and she and Fengzi should head into the mountains.

Winter is the best time for hunting, but also the most dangerous; the animals coming out then are generally hungrier.

They're also more ferocious.

Having a hunting dog would increase their safety.

"Sure, let me know when you're ready and I'll give it a bath."

Lu Yuanfeng decided to take on the task of bathing the dog; he had the birthday gift for Shuangshuang in his pocket.

He was hesitating about giving it.

While Mu Shuangshuang was watching the rabbit meat on the grilling rack, occasionally turning the rack, soon the aroma of rabbit filled the air.

Lai Mi looked at the meat on the rack, swallowed, letting out "woof woof" sounds.

Little Black comforted it, preparing to jump up and grab the rabbit meat.

Mu Shuangshuang watched all this.

She couldn't help but roll her eyes.

What kind of animals did she raise, so capable?

"Little Black, if you're not afraid of turning your fur into a bald patch, go ahead and grab it. I've never eaten roasted mink, after all."

Little Black retracted its paws, making "hissing" sounds, bowing to Mu Shuangshuang, looking adorably at her.

It seemed to want Mu Shuangshuang to deliver it personally.

Unfortunately, Mu Shuangshuang wasn't that easy to trick.

"If you want rabbit, there are two ways: one is to wait, and the other is to catch it yourself. You better think clearly about your choice."

Mu Shuangshuang looked at Little Black playfully, curiously anticipating how it would choose.

Little Black chose the first option, sitting obediently watching.

At that moment, Lu Yuanfeng couldn't sit still, taking a silk box from his pocket and handing it to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Birthday gift, if you don't like it... you can..."

Lu Yuanfeng dared not be rejected, leaving himself an out in his words.

"Anything Fengzi gives, I like without even looking, but don't buy me such expensive things in the future. If you think it's my birthday, a flower crown will do."

"How did you know what's in the box?" Lu Yuanfeng was stunned, just a box, how did Shuangshuang know?

"I guess it's a bracelet."

The silk box was bright red, with carved patterns outside, just by looking at the silk box, it was clearly not cheap.

Moreover, the box was fairly square, just about bracelet-sized.

Lu Yuanfeng nodded; he indeed bought a bracelet, a jade one, though it wasn't great quality, it was worth three taels of silver.

Though he knew Shuangshuang didn't care about the money.

"May I open it?"

"Yes! Certainly." Lu Yuanfeng himself was a bit embarrassed.

When Mu Shuangshuang opened the box, the dark green jade bracelet inside instantly drew her attention.

This piece of jade was more beautiful than any she'd seen in modern times, and holding it, there was a cool feeling.

"Fengzi, this... wasn't cheap, right?"

Modern jade ranged from a few hundred to thousands; this ancient piece couldn't have been cheap either.

Lu Yuanfeng shook his head: "It's not expensive, as long as Shuangshuang likes it."

Such a simple sentence warmed Mu Shuangshuang's heart, warmer than the bonfire itself.

"You really are... anyway, I'll keep the gift, we have a long time ahead together."

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng had long been entangled; scrutinizing these matters would be pretentious now.

She picked up the bracelet, putting it on her hand.

Fortunately, it didn't slip off her wrist; by the firelight, Mu Shuangshuang examined it closely, liking Lu Yuanfeng's gift more and more.

She thought that was it, but when Lu Yuanfeng mentioned there was more, Mu Shuangshuang was dumbfounded.

One bracelet was already the biggest gift—was there something else?

Lu Yuanfeng stood up, heading towards his home.

Mu Shuangshuang remained in place, grilling meat, curious about what Lu Yuanfeng was talking about.

Chapter 362: The Pig Is Dead

Lu Yuanfeng came over carrying something, but Mu Shuangshuang couldn't see what it was, as it was covered with a thick layer of cloth.

However, she could vaguely see a bit of light.

When Lu Yuanfeng got closer, he suddenly uncovered the cloth wrapped around the thing.

Instantly, a glow appeared in front of Mu Shuangshuang.

It was a cloth bag, but what was inside was anything but ordinary.

A whole bag full of fireflies, emitting a flickering light.

"Wow, so pretty!"

Little Zhi turned around, stared at the bag, and exclaimed loudly.

"Little Zhi likes it? Unfortunately, this is a gift from my second brother to Sister Shuangshuang; he caught them for several nights."

Fireflies weren't hard creatures to catch in ancient times, but catching such a big bag wasn't an easy task either.

The glow of the fireflies, like a giant lampshade, trembled as Mu Shuangshuang received the thing handed over by Lu Yuanfeng.

"How much time did you spend preparing these? Aren't you tired?"

Those words "aren't you tired" were the best cure for Lu Yuanfeng's fatigue; he shook his head. "Not tired. I said I'd give you a moon, now I can hang it for you."

Tonight was indeed just as Mu Shuangshuang had said before; the moon didn't come out, but the sky was full of stars.

Lu Yuanfeng found a nearby branch and hung the fireflies on the trunk, looking from afar, it truly seemed like a moon hanging in the tree.

Mu Shuangshuang looked at the bag of fireflies, then at Lu Yuanfeng, and at this moment, she suddenly understood what had been confusing her all along.

Is it liking?

Or caring?

Perhaps both!

Realizing she liked Lu Yuanfeng, Mu Shuangshuang cursed herself countless times in her heart.

She felt she was crazy, Lu Yuanfeng was so good to her, yet she had imprudent thoughts.

She was truly...

Mu Shuangshuang couldn't find words to describe herself, all she could do was curse herself inwardly.

In her heart, Lu Yuanfeng was truly good, a good person, and good to her...

The more she tried not to think about it, the more her heart dwelled on it, making Mu Shuangshuang feel entirely confused.

The brocade box she held was gripped tightly, with blue veins protruding on her wrist, and the bewildered expression on her face made Lu Yuanfeng even more concerned.

"Shuangshuang, what are you thinking of?"

Thinking about what?

Thinking about how she somehow liked a younger guy, which shouldn't be, given she had an older mindset, she should prefer someone older.

How so?

Mu Shuangshuang's face gradually turned red, her heart raced, and when she looked up, she saw Lu Yuanfeng's concerned eyes, making her blush and heartbeat even stronger.

The meat was finally roasted, but Mu Shuangshuang had no desire to eat it.

She couldn't eat anything at all.

But just because she didn't want to eat, didn't mean the kids wouldn't; the kids who had been watching the fun all rushed up to ask Mu Shuangshuang for roasted rabbit meat.

Only then did Mu Shuangshuang come to her senses, took down two rabbits, and handed one to Lu Yuanfeng.

"Wait a minute, it's still hot, let Brother Yuanfeng cool it down for you before you eat."

That's what Mu Shuangshuang said, and that's what Lu Yuanfeng did. When the rabbit meat cooled down, her heart still hadn't calmed.

The aroma of the rabbit meat wafted through the air, the enticing smell making everyone drool.

Clearly, they had just had dinner, but now they felt hungry again.

"Shuangshuang, hurry up and eat some, I'll save some for Uncle Dashan and Fourth Aunt."

Lu Yuanfeng thought Mu Shuangshuang was worried that two people at home hadn't eaten yet, but it wasn't the case; she was contemplating her own issues.

The bag of fireflies was still hanging not far away, moving with the breeze, flickering, just like her heart.

"I'm fine, you guys eat."

But even as she said that, Lu Yuanfeng still tore off a rabbit leg for her, urging her to eat it.

While eating rabbit meat, everyone sat together, making it easier to talk.

Yuanbao was devouring the rabbit meat, chewing and speaking unclearly at the same time.

"Sister Shuangshuang, everything you make is the best I've ever had, what will you do if you get married someday?"

Those words made everyone present change their expressions.

Whenever Lu Yuanfeng thought of Shuangshuang getting married, his face fell.

Xiaohan didn't like the thought of his sister leaving home either.

Little Zhi pouted, seeming unwilling to let someone else enter his current world.

"Hmph, I don't want anyone else to marry my sister; I only want Brother Yuanfeng and my sister to be together."

This was probably the best thing Lu Yuanfeng and Yuanbao had heard, as Little Zhi expressed their feelings exactly.

"Little Zhi, don't babble nonsense, do you even know what being together means?" Mu Xiaohan scolded Little Zhi loudly.

Little Zhi was frightened and started crying loudly.

This crying extinguished the hope they had painstakingly built up.

Earlier, Mu Shuangshuang had secretly glanced at Lu Yuanfeng, especially when Little Zhi said those words.

But unfortunately, Lu Yuanfeng kept his head down, so she couldn't tell what he meant.

She pulled Little Zhi into her arms, comforting her softly: "Don't cry, don't cry, Brother Xiaohan didn't mean it. He just thinks some things are lifelong commitments and should not be said casually.

Just like you can't promise to give away your favorite thing ten years from now, because you don't even know if it's what you'll like or if it will be important to you."

That's the rationale, but Little Zhi was still young.

After being shouted at, her crying was unrestrained.

"I don't care; Sister has to be with Brother Yuanfeng, I don't care..."

Yuanbao wanted to pick up and kiss Little Zhi at this moment, feeling he'd finally found an ally.

This Xiaohan wasn't good at all, stopping Little Zhi from talking and always having a cold face like an ice block, not fun at all.

"Little Zhi, if you keep talking nonsense, I won't be your brother anymore."

Mu Xiaohan chimed in again, and this time, Mu Shuangshuang lost her temper.

"Xiaohan, Little Zhi is already like this, and you still scold her. If anything happens, you can talk to me at night."

Moreover, Mu Shuangshuang remembered that last time she talked to him, her relationship with Lu Yuanfeng had already improved; so why now?

Mu Shuangshuang didn't know that Mu Xiaohan had made up his mind to protect his sister himself in the future, without relying on anyone else.

Mu Xiaohan didn't speak again, and only then did Mu Shuangshuang manage to comfort Little Zhi.

By this time, it was already late, and the village's weaver had likely already been chosen.

Everyone hurriedly cleaned up a bit and then went back.

Before leaving, Mu Shuangshuang chatted with Lu Yuanfeng for a while, but they didn't mention Little Zhi's words.

After finally arriving at Old Mu Family's house, Mu Shuangshuang immediately heard a series of heart-wrenching cries.

"My pig..."

"Why aren't you moving anymore..."

"I'm doomed, somebody, a pig in the pen has died..."

Old Mrs. Mu's coarse cries suddenly rang out, followed by chaos at Old Mu Family's house.

Everyone rushed towards the pig pen!

Chapter 363: Does Your Face Hurt?

"Oh dear, what happened? How did our perfectly good pig just die? Could it be that the person feeding the pig gave it something it shouldn't have eaten?"

Mrs. Lin was the first to rush out, deliberately putting on a look of surprise.

She covered her mouth and screamed.

Mrs. Lin knew exactly how the piglet died, or rather, she had been hoping the little piglet would die.

Because recently it was Mrs. Liu and Yu Si Niang who were feeding the little piglet.

No matter who took the blame, it wouldn't affect their second branch.

"Third daughter-in-law, fourth daughter-in-law, get out here right now..." Old Mrs. Mu shouted at the entrance of the pigsty.

Earlier that evening, Mu Qingqing had acted as a weaver girl, which made Old Mrs. Mu angry, so she sent Mu Qingqing to kneel at the main hall door, then came out to check on their precious piglet, only to find...

Old Mrs. Mu was both anxious and furious, and all she wanted now was to rip apart whoever caused her pig's death.

Mrs. Liu almost rushed out at the sound of the shout, and before she could even speak, Old Mrs. Mu slapped her hard on the face.

With a loud smack, Mrs. Liu was slapped heavily on the face, causing her to fall to the ground, blood dripping from the corner of her mouth.

Mu Xiaxia rushed forward to help Mrs. Liu up, just about to question Old Mrs. Mu on why she hit people, but Mrs. Liu held her hand to stop her.

"You wretch, tell me, what did you feed our piglet, if you don't spill it today, I, this old lady, will take your life!"

Old Mrs. Mu's eyebrows were drawn into a straight line with anger.

Mrs. Liu, covering her mouth, started sobbing softly.

"Mother, I don't know, I don't know anything."

Mrs. Liu wanted to say the piglet seemed to have problems from the moment it was caught, but she feared that saying so would make her not believed and beaten even more severely.

"Don't know anything? Who taught you to say that? Yu Si Niang, or did you come up with it yourself?"

Old Mrs. Mu was convinced that the piglet in the house was poisoned by Yu Si Niang and Mrs. Liu conspiring together, with the purpose of not letting their Old Mu Family have a good time.

Mr. Mu put on his clothes and came out of the house, looking at the crowd gathered around the pigsty, his brows furrowed tightly. He scanned everyone with displeasure.

"What are you all shouting about in the middle of the night? Can't people get some sleep?"

Old Mrs. Mu pointed at the already motionless piglet in the pigsty and said, "Old man, our piglet was poisoned by this vixen and Yu Si Niang."

Old Mrs. Mu pointed at Mrs. Liu, full of anger.

Mrs. Liu was so frightened she collapsed onto the ground.

"Father, I didn't do anything, I didn't poison..." Mrs. Liu knelt on the ground, crying pitifully.

"Did nothing, how did my piglet die then? Could it have died on its own?"

Beside her, Mu Dazhong felt guilty, touching his nose upon hearing Old Mrs. Mu's words. The piglet indeed died on its own, but he wouldn't foolishly admit it.

"Old man, make the third and fourth divorce these two vicious women today," Old Mrs. Mu said irritably.

Mrs. Liu cried even harder, yet even in such a state, she clutched Mu Xiaxia's sleeve tightly, preventing her from saying a word.

Mu Dajiang's face turned red, and he hoarsely shouted at Old Mrs. Mu: "Mother, go ahead and beat or scold me, I won't divorce Jinhua."

Mrs. Liu felt a sigh of relief after hearing her man's words, but deep down, she was still uneasy, her heart in turmoil.

"You'll be the death of me, how dare you speak to me so loudly, you unfilial son, you little beast, I raised you for so many years, and for a woman, you dare to shout at me." Old Mrs. Mu raised her voice, shouting back at Mu Dajiang.

Mu Dajiang lowered his head, stubbornly staring at Old Mrs. Mu.

"Mother, regardless of what you asked me to do before, I would do it, but this matter I cannot agree to."

"Jinhua is my wife, the mother of my children. If you insist on making me divorce her, then our fourth branch..."

"Your fourth branch what? Split off then, go ahead, pack your things and get out now, our Old Mu Family doesn't need useless people like you."

"Don't expect me to give you an acre of land; if you have the abilities, do like the third branch's girl and build your own house, reclaim your own wasteland!"

Old Mrs. Mu was convinced that the fourth branch dare not split off; she knew them too well, bold in intent but cowardly in action. Besides, they were counting on Da De to have a good life, they would definitely not leave.

Mu Dajiang's mood suddenly dropped at Old Mrs. Mu's words.

Some words were stuck in his throat, unsure how to vocalize them.

Old Mrs. Mu continued scolding without relenting: "If you can't handle it, don't take on porcelain work, just because you think your wings are hard, you can fly now, be careful not to fall and kill yourself!"

"Alright, enough of this senseless shouting, do you think others can't hear?" Mr. Mu roared, and Old Mrs. Mu immediately fell silent.

But even so, her eyes were still fixed on Mrs. Liu and Mu Dajiang, as if wanting to skin them alive.

"Old Fourth, go call all of the third branch over here, today I want a clear explanation of how that perfectly fine pig ended up dead."

"Dad, let me go!" Mu Dazhong stood out, taking the initiative to take on the task of calling people.

After all, this matter started because of him, he couldn't let the third branch turn the tables.

"Hurry and come back!" Mr. Mu waved him off.

Mu Dazhong walked towards the third branch, wandered around their place without making a sound, then punched himself in the eye.

He covered his eye and charged out.

Without saying a word, just his panicked look was enough to mislead others into thinking he was beaten up.

"Old Second, why are you covering your eye? Was it the third family's girls that hit you, that little wench, right?"

Old Mrs. Mu jumped up excitedly.

"That little bastard has turned the sky upside down, if I don't thrash her today, I'm not done!"

Old Mrs. Mu rolled up her sleeves, ready to go beat someone.

"Granny, what are you doing? Who are you going to thrash?" Mu Shuangshuang curled her lips, her gaze fixed intently on Old Mrs. Mu.

The Old Mu Family really seizes every opportunity to blacken her name.

Who knows what grudge or resentment there is, this mess is being flung towards the third branch at every turn.

If she hadn't been uneasy just now, standing in the yard, afraid their third branch would have been set up by this bastard Mu Dazhong.

"Second Uncle, you just punched yourself in the eye in our yard, Shuangshuang was worried you'd hurt yourself, so I came to check. How's your eye, Second Uncle?"

As soon as Mu Shuangshuang spoke, Mu Dazhong's face turned beet red.

He stretched his neck, just about to retort, but Mu Shuangshuang beat him to it.

"Second Uncle, don't lie with your eyes open, remember there are deities three feet above your head, if you lie in front of the deities, be careful your future wealth and high status might be taken away!"

"You little wench, you..." Mu Dazhong was furious, pointing a quivering finger at Mu Shuangshuang.

"Old Second, get lost, this is not where you speak!" Mr. Mu glared at Mu Dazhong, taking control of the situation in his hands.

Chapter 364: Look at My Ability

"Shuang, why didn't your mother come?"

Mr. Mu knew that recently Mu Shuangshuang hadn't visited the Old Mu Family, so this matter had nothing to do with her.

"Grandpa, my mom and dad are asleep, especially my mom, who has been busy all day today without even having a sip of water, thinking she might get to eat a dumpling."

Mu Shuangshuang was sarcastically commenting on Old Mrs. Mu, who made Yu Si Niang work all day and didn't even offer her lunch.

As for those dumplings that were made, Yu Si Niang didn't even get to see them.

It was said that those dumplings filled with needles, copper coins, and red dates were secretly hidden away by Old Mrs. Mu, and a whole bowl was given to Mu Xiangxiang.

Mu Xiangxiang ended up getting the good fortune of the year.

She had the most skillful hands, the most money, and could give birth to good children early – all benefits went solely to Mu Xiangxiang. Only Old Mrs. Mu would do such a thing.

"You shameless girl! Yu Si Niang is my daughter-in-law; I can order her around however I want!" Old Mrs. Mu said with a smug expression.

Old Mrs. Mu's behavior really made people want to slap her.

If the person in front wasn't the mother of Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang, Mu Shuangshuang would have charged forward and torn her mouth apart.

How could someone be so disgusting?

Favoritism is one thing, but to talk like this about your daughter-in-law...

"Alright, Shuang, since your mother hasn't come out, you tell us what exactly your mother and Fourth Aunt gave to the piglets at home. How come those piglets died!"

"Grandpa, why do you think the piglets were poisoned? Was it guided by someone with intent, or do you know it yourself?"

These words left Mr. Mu flustered.

Mr. Mu turned to ask Old Mrs. Mu, "Hurry and tell Shuang what's going on!"

"Dad, what's there to tell? It's already obvious that it's Shuang's mother and Xiaxia's mother who conspired to kill our family's piglets." Mu Dazhong, rising from the ashes, chimed in again.

"Second Uncle, these words of yours are so certain. Why don't you explain why my mother and Fourth Aunt would do such a thing?"

"It's simple. The third branch divided the family and got too little land, so they resent dad and mom. As for Fourth Sister-in-law, she usually does the most work, so it's not surprising she resents dad and mom too."

Mu Shuangshuang listening to Mu Dazhong's words just wanted to open this man's brain to see what's inside; they even spoke such blunt truths to drag the third and fourth branches into the water.

"Second Uncle, Shuang only just found out that you are so insightful!" Mu Shuangshuang began complimenting Mu Dazhong.

It's said that you don't hit smiling people; seeing Mu Shuangshuang praise him, Mu Dazhong nodded smugly.

"That's right, if I, Mu Dazhong, don't understand things, who does?"

"Grandma, you heard that even Second Uncle thinks you're biased, giving the third branch too little land, and Fourth Aunt does the most work in the Old Mu Family."

"You... dare to set me up?" Realizing he had fallen into a trap, Mu Dazhong bristled like a battle-ready rooster, with all his hairs standing on end.

Mu Dazhong's words nearly enraged Old Mrs. Mu to death. "Mu Dazhong, shut up and get out of my sight!"

"Mom, don't fall for the shameless girl's tricks; she... she just doesn't want the third and fourth wives to bear responsibility. Think about your piglets, how cute they were when they arrived, along with the red flowers."

"Exactly, mom, don't let that shameless girl lead you by the nose!" Mrs. Lin also panicked, knowing full well that if Old Mrs. Mu learned they were the ones behind this, being pregnant wouldn't help.

"Enough, if any of you argue again, sleep in the pigsty!"

Old Mrs. Mu hated it when people affected her judgment, especially when people liked interrupting her.

The second branch people, scolded, retreated to the side, but still stared hard at Mu Shuangshuang.

"Shuang, tell us, did your mother and Fourth Aunt poison the piglets in this house?" Mr. Mu stared at Mu Shuangshuang and asked.

"If I say no, will grandpa believe me? Grandpa called Shuang here, simply doubting the third branch, right?" Mu Shuangshuang asked with a cold laugh.

"You, girl! If you can provide evidence to prove your innocence, of course we won't wrong you!" Mr. Mu replied with an air of justice.

As the household's decision-maker, Mr. Mu often sought fairness most of the time.

"Does Second Uncle have evidence that the pigs were conspired by our two families? Accusations are easy; disproving them makes the third branch run themselves ragged!"

"Can't you talk to me properly? If you have evidence, show it; if not, go back and have Si Niang prepare silver and buy us another pig, and this matter will be over!"

Mr. Mu thought of himself as generous, not even investigating the third branch's responsibility.

"Can't let it go, though only one pig died at home, who knows if the other might die the next day? Yu Si Niang dares do such a thing, she must be punished, we need to fetch four little piglets."

When shameless, one becomes invincible; Old Mrs. Mu embodied shamelessness.

"Grandma, you're right, the pig in the pigsty indeed won't live much longer!"

"But Shuang is curious, if this matter is unrelated to the third and fourth branches, how will grandma compensate us for our reputation?"

One way or another, Old Mrs. Mu wanted to ruin the reputations of the third and fourth branches while benefiting herself.

If everyone knew the third and fourth branches conspired to kill Old Mrs. Mu's pig, they'd reek in name.

No one would dare be around such 'sinister, malicious' people, even avoiding them when they see them.

"What a joke, would I make mistakes? If it's not you two branches, I'll kneel and apologize to you!"

This time, Old Mrs. Mu really had too much confidence; she felt the piglets were the best and any problems had to be caused by others.

Mu Shuangshuang laughed and said, "Hope grandma remembers her promise!"

After speaking, Mu Shuangshuang entered the pigsty in front of everyone.

After a while, that dead pig was carried out of the pen by Mu Shuangshuang.

Others, thinking it inauspicious, backed away.

Especially Mrs. Lin, who covered her mouth, deliberately acting as if she was gagging.

"Shameless girl, what are you doing? You know I'm pregnant, what, you want to kill me and the fat boy in my belly?"

"Second Aunt, the child in your belly isn't even a month old, what happy occasion?"

Besides, weren't you just saying how cute the piglets were, what a shame they died? Now that I'm holding one out, you find it disgusting? You're changing your tune rather quickly!"

With a few casual remarks, Mu Shuangshuang angered Mrs. Lin enough to feel tight in her chest, stomping her foot over and over.

This feeling made Mu Shuangshuang very happy.

When the enemy is unhappy, she's happy!

When the enemy is happy, she's happier!

Chapter 365: Kneeling and Apologizing

"Oh, I'm so angry, I'm so angry!" Mrs. Lin muttered to herself on the side.

But no one paid her any attention at all.

Mu Shuangshuang stood up and took the torch from Mrs. Liu's hand to illuminate the piglet's body.

She groped around the piglet's body, leaving everyone puzzled, yet surprisingly, no one stopped her.

"Grandpa, Grandma, this piglet was already sick before it was caught, and with the hot weather these past few days, it suddenly died."

Mu Shuangshuang had previously worked with a coroner for a while and was familiar with the general process, though it was for humans back then, and now it's for animals.

"You're talking nonsense! The piglet was fine when it was caught; Mother can testify!" Mu Dazhong was excited.

"This piglet has skinny legs, not much meat, and even the skin is loose. Normally, piglets don't walk much shortly after birth; they mostly lie around. Moreover, pigs are particularly easy to fatten up."

"Only a sick pig that doesn't eat much and is not in good health would have so little meat."

While talking, Mu Shuangshuang lifted the pig's hoof for everyone to see.

Sure enough, as she said, the little piglet's skin was loose, and pulling on it created wrinkles.

"That doesn't prove anything. Some pigs are just small at birth, and Mother only gave so much silver; I could only choose the skinny ones." Mu Dazhong explained.

"Alright then, let's look at its butt." Mu Shuangshuang lifted the piglet's tail, showing everyone its butt.

"There's evidence of diarrhea on this pig's butt, already dried up, probably for several days. Auntie, haven't the piglets pooped for days?"

Mrs. Liu nodded. "Yes, for several days!"

Mrs. Liu had also found it strange before, wondering why the caught piglets didn't poop. At the time, she thought they were just too young, but now it seems that wasn't the case at all.

"That's it, the piglet was only caught a few days ago, and it hasn't pooped these past few days. That means this poop was from before it was caught, so the person who caught it wasn't careful in choosing!"

Mu Dazhong panicked, his heart now pounding in his throat.

Old Mrs. Mu suspiciously stared at Mu Dazhong: "Second, did Wang Erma deceive you? Did he give you pigs that were about to die?"

"Mother... that's not it... don't listen to that wretched girl talk rubbish. She clearly wants to throw mud on your son's name; you have to believe me."

"Stop trying to steer clear of the issue. Just tell me how you bought the piglets from Wang Erma. How could he agree to sell them to you five Wen cheaper?"

Wang Erma was notorious for being stingy in the village. From him, not to mention five Wen, even half a Wen discount was impossible.

Old Mrs. Mu was blinded by those five Wen back then and didn't check the piglets carefully.

Now that things have come to this, it's supposed to be her bad luck.

"Mother, I have a good relationship with Wang Erma, that's why he gave them to me cheaper." Mu Dazhong was almost at his limit now, with Old Mrs. Mu's sharp gaze and the wretched girl staring at him.

"A good relationship? What relationship do you have with him? How come I don't know? If you have such a good relationship, go ahead and return these two pigs, and bring back three hundred Wen."

Old Mrs. Mu gave a disdainful look at Mu Dazhong.

At this point, Mu Dazhong had become an untrustworthy person in her heart, and if he didn't give a reasonable explanation today, she wouldn't let him off.

"Mother, aren't you pushing me? Are you not aware of Wang Erma's rule? Goods sold are non-refundable, has anyone in the village gotten a refund from him after buying meat?"

Besides, just because of a few words from that wretched girl, you've cleared her and the third and fourth branches from blame, and now everything is pinned on me; I'm not convinced!"

Mu Dazhong had a look as if a dead pig isn't afraid of boiling water, with his arms crossed.

Mu Shuangshuang coldly watched him for a long time. "Since Second Uncle insists on irrefutable evidence, I'll give you one today!"

Mu Shuangshuang got up and went to Old Mu's kitchen, returning with a kitchen knife in hand.

Under the torchlight, Mu Dazhong saw the knife glinting coldly, making him clench from fear.

"Mother, the wretched girl wants to kill someone..."

As soon as he said that, everyone began to retreat and hide to the side.

Mu Shuangshuang walked through the crowd directly to the piglet. With one swipe, some pig blood splattered on her. Holding the knife, she sliced once, twice, finally extracting the pig's stomach, and cut it open in front of the Old Mu Family.

"See that? Completely empty, this pig hadn't eaten anything at all!"

Mu Shuangshuang's evidence threw everyone's attention directly onto Mu Dazhong.

"Second Brother, since it wasn't our issue, why... why blame it on our fourth branch?" Mu Dajiang accused.

"Exactly, Second Brother, although our fourth branch has nothing, we are upright and wouldn't do such nasty things." Mrs. Liu, covering her swollen face from being hit, questioned Mu Dazhong.

Mu Dazhong himself was at a loss for an answer. He reached out to nudge Mrs. Lin, hoping she'd think of a solution, but who knew, Mrs. Lin had already hidden away out of fear.

With a hardened heart, Mu Dazhong thought, let someone else suffer misfortune instead; just blame everything on Wang Erma being unlucky.

Mu Dazhong suddenly knelt in front of Old Mrs. Mu.

"Mother, I was deceived! At the time, Wang Erma said he knew me since childhood and wanted to give me a discount, and since our family doesn't earn money easily, I accepted... Little did I know he'd trick me with these nearly dead pigs, I'll go find him!"

Mu Shuangshuang watched Mu Dazhong perform a one-man show with a side-eye.

This man, from initially framing the third branch to now distancing himself, executed each step so convincingly.

If it were in modern times, he might be the best supporting actor!

"Find him? What will you find him with? This matter, I'll have to personally address. I want to see just how arrogant this bastard dares to be!"

Old Mrs. Mu rolled up her sleeves, ready to go fight.

"Grandpa, Grandma, now that everything is clear, I won't be involved anymore. But Grandma, you did say that if it had nothing to do with the third and fourth branches, you would bow and apologize to us."

"Wretched girl! You won't let it go, will you? Dream on about an old woman like me bowing and apologizing!" Old Mrs. Mu outright denied what she had said, unwilling to fulfill it.

Back then, she only said it casually, thinking the third and fourth branch should be taught a lesson.

Now, even if it wasn't the third and fourth branch, she wouldn't do something beneath her dignity.

"Grandma, what's there to be so worked up about? Shuangshuang hasn't finished speaking. What I mean is, I'll pretend I didn't hear that sentence, just as long as you don't 'immediately think' of the third and fourth branches whenever something happens!" Mu Shuangshuang smiled brightly.

She was still holding a kitchen knife in her right hand and a piece of pig stomach in her left, which in such a dark night, added a somewhat terrifying, frightening aura.

"You..."

Chapter 366: Shuangshuang's Troubles

"How dare you threaten me, you old hag?" Old Mrs. Mu shrieked.

All evening, it was only her voice that Mu Shuangshuang could hear, piercing her ears.

She didn't want to continue this with Old Mrs. Mu; getting some sleep was the most important thing at this hour.

"Grandma, I'm heading back to sleep! You can have Second Uncle take back this knife since he's the one who caused all these troubles."

As soon as Mu Shuangshuang finished speaking, she flicked the knife in her hand towards Mu Dazhong's foot.

Mu Dazhong was startled and quickly stepped back several paces, but even then, the knife stopped just next to his foot.

Looking at the vegetable knife with traces of blood still on it near his foot, cold sweat dripped from Mu Dazhong's forehead.

"You... you..." Mu Dazhong was so terrified he couldn't speak, just kept glaring at Mu Shuangshuang.

Mrs. Lin beside him was also stupefied.

"Qingqing's dad, are you alright? Don't scare me like this. If something happens to you, what am I supposed to do with the kids?" Mrs. Lin rushed over, shouting in concern.

"You wretched woman, are you wailing for the dead? I haven't even settled tonight's score with you, and now you want to cause trouble for me."

Old Mrs. Mu's attention was on Mu Shuangshuang, but Mrs. Lin's mention of Qingqing's dad reminded her of Mu Qingqing still kneeling in the main hall.

Thinking of her Xiangxiang sobbing in the room, Old Mrs. Mu wanted to skin these two troublemakers.

"Mom, that brat tried to kill Dazhong. You saw it, the knife is right beneath Dazhong's foot." Mrs. Lin couldn't help but retort.

However, it only made Old Mrs. Mu more impatient.

"It's just a knife, isn't it? Your man's foot is still intact, why are you squawking? Is your daughter showing off because she became a weaver, wanting everyone to know that? Did Qing do it to stick gold on her face?"

Mu Qingqing was selected because she leveraged Mu Dade's reputation on the platform.

The village was ecstatic over Mu Dade's Autumn Examination; the celebrations attracted much attention, despite some unhappy occurrences in between. No one could deny that Mu Dade was the only hope to move forward in the village.

Once he became an official, even Fu Wu and the Wang Family in the village might not compare to him.

Mu Qingqing merely broadened people's expectations for Mu Dade and garnered the village's support.

Old Mrs. Mu sneered at Mrs. Lin.

Mrs. Lin blushed and backed away, not wanting to provoke Mu Shuangshuang anymore.

She went back to her room and hadn't even sat down when Yu Si Niang came over.

As soon as she entered, she took Mu Shuangshuang's hand, looking her over for any injuries.

"Shuangshuang, did your grandma bully you?"

Their first instinct upon hearing the commotion was to rush out, but Shuangshuang stopped them.

She said if they went out, it would only confirm her as the troublemaker at home, and she needed to handle it herself to resolve the issue.

Despite not going out, Yu Si Niang was restless, pacing back and forth, wanting to rush out and check, but afraid it would add trouble for Shuangshuang.

"Mom, don't worry. I'm clever, Grandma can't bully me. But as for you, ever since you helped feed the pigs and relaxed a bit, Grandma has been hounding you, always asking you to do this or that."

Mu Shuangshuang regretted deeply letting Yu Si Niang handle anything related to filial piety. Besides, filial piety isn't just about talking.

The villagers aren't blind to the situation of the third branch; if they were expected to hope, it wouldn't come from there.

"Child, using the word 'hound' with your grandma? What do you take her for? You mustn't say that next time."

Yu Si Niang chided Shuangshuang with reproachful words, yet her tone was more pampering.

"Alright, I won't say it!"

Showing proper respect to elders is necessary, and she could curse that old hag in her heart.

Yu Si Niang's face grew even more radiant with a smile.

"Actually, helping your grandma with chores doesn't feel tiring. I've gotten used to it. Besides, as a daughter-in-law, taking care of the in-laws is normal. How else can we handle family affairs?"

Yu Si Niang may have a bit of wildness, but her education was still the oldest, most traditional kind.

Her thinking skewed towards the ancients.

Mu Shuangshuang had been trying to guide her; it had some effect, but curing it was still challenging.

The emperor wants a minister dead, the minister must die; the father wants a son dead, the son must comply.

This mindset was deeply rooted.

Like the fourth branch, beaten like that, yet dared not resist, could only cry to the side.

In modern times, this would be absolutely intolerable.

But in ancient times, everyone saw it as normal.

There's nothing to be done; Old Mrs. Mu is the mother-in-law, and Mrs. Liu is the daughter-in-law.

"Mom, you need to step out and see; if Grandma truly treats you and Fourth Aunt well, it's natural to be filial. But if she doesn't see you as human, why run to her? Isn't that asking for abuse?"

Mu Shuangshuang changed her approach, this time directly questioning Yu Si Niang.

"But your grandma is..."

"Yes, my grandma is an elder, but people say 'Father is kind, son is filial.' If the father isn't kind, why should the son be filial?"

"What if it's you; would you let Xiao Han's future wife wash clothes in the winter and then be scolded harshly?"

Mu Shuangshuang picked just one of many things that Yu Si Niang did, yet it was enough to make one grit their teeth.

Yu Si Niang shook her head.

She understood everything Shuangshuang said, but after so many years, she was accustomed to it. Changing suddenly, she feared she couldn't adapt.

"Shuangshuang, maybe I should go to town and find some work."

Working temporary jobs meant earning money while avoiding Old Mrs. Mu.

"Just that if I wasn't here, there'd be no one to cook for you all."

Currently, Yu Si Niang was doing farm work, still able to prepare meals at home on time. If she left, the household would definitely not fare as well.

"Mom, why work so hard in town for Grandma? Before, Shuangshuang didn't understand, causing you to suffer so much. Now Shuangshuang is grown and won't let you go."

Thinking of Yu Si Niang, who had to go to town as a helper regardless of the weather and only earned six coins daily, Mu Shuangshuang was adamant about not letting her mother return to work.

"But..."

Yu Si Niang was about to say something, interrupted by Mu Shuangshuang.

"Mom, it's late, you should rest early. I'll keep an eye out for work, but it shouldn't be far. The town is absolutely off-limits."

There is work that pays money, not extremely busy.

Yu Si Niang sighed before leaving the room.

Only then did Mu Shuangshuang start washing up, completing the routine before lying in bed, thinking about what Yu Si Niang had mentioned.

Currently, Yu Si Niang staying home wasn't good; Old Mrs. Mu always wanted her doing this or that, sometimes even supervising, not giving her time to rest.

Chapter 367: Yu Liulang's Happy Event

"But what kind of work can I find?"

In the village, the work for the second half of the year is probably picking cotton for others, which isn't easy. You stand all day long.

It's not that Yu Si Niang can't do the work. Mu Shuangshuang just feels that since she can earn money, she shouldn't let Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan toil too hard.

The money earned by risking their lives doesn't seem worth it.

Thinking about this, Mu Shuangshuang slowly drifted into sleep...

The next day, Mu Shuangshuang got up very early to take the old hen out to get some fresh air. As for the chicks, they could only be taken out after the sun came up.

As she started to busy herself with preparing breakfast, the courtyard gate was kicked open, just as she was about to shout and ask loudly.

Yu Liulang actually came in.

Following behind him was a young girl with bright eyes and white teeth.

"Uncle Liu, Aunt Liu, how come you're here so early?"

Mu Shuangshuang had known that Yu Liulang would come around Qixi, but who would have thought it would be today and so early in the morning.

Yu Liulang's face was red, and there were fine beads of sweat on his face. Before he could speak, Feng Xiaohua stepped forward and pulled a handkerchief from her waist.

"I told you not to rush like that, sweating all over. Hurry, wipe it off."

"Why wipe, men're meant to bleed and sweat, it's normal."

Yu Liulang said stubbornly, but as soon as Feng Xiaohua offered her handkerchief, he still cooperated by lowering his head, letting Feng Xiaohua wipe his sweat.

This scene could be considered a massive dose of dog food, directly serving a big bowl to Mu Shuangshuang.

She tactfully stepped aside, giving space to Yu Liulang and Feng Xiaohua.

She'd heard before, when you like someone, you can't bear to look away, Yu Liulang didn't believe it, even when he later met Luo Xiu'er, he didn't believe it.

But when he was with Feng Xiaohua, he truly believed it.

Clearly, he'd been looking at someone for ten years, but the more he looked, the more he couldn't get enough. No matter how he looked, he couldn't take his eyes off.

Worried when out, worried at home, afraid someone would snatch his treasure away.

"Alright, didn't we bring some things for Shuangshuang's house? Quickly take them out."

Feng Xiaohua blushed deeply under Yu Liulang's gaze, she stretched out her hand and lightly patted Yu Liulang's chest, which immediately made Yu Liulang's face bloom with happiness.

"I'll go do it now, you go inside and rest, Shuangshuang's house is very clean."

Yu Liulang didn't want Feng Xiaohua to get tired and wanted her to go rest.

"Sixth Son, there you go again, I'm fine, I do all sorts of chores at home and I'm not a delicate person. You go and bring the things in, I'll chat with Shuangshuang for a while."

After all, Shuangshuang was the matchmaker for her and Sixth Son.

Feng Xiaohua still remembers the cunning expression on Shuangshuang's face when she first came up with the idea.

In the kitchen, because of Feng Xiaohua and Yu Liulang's arrival, Mu Shuangshuang's breakfast was more than usual.

She was kneading dough, the dry flour gradually forming into small dough balls in her hands.

The sound of the dough thumping on the table echoed in the kitchen, giving it a more homey atmosphere.

"Shuangshuang, let me help you!"

They had only met twice, but Feng Xiaohua had a particularly good impression of Mu Shuangshuang. She really liked Shuangshuang a lot.

"No need, Aunt Liu, you just rest beside me. Today I'll cook for you and my uncle, it'll be my way to congratulate you both for finally being together."

"You..." Feng Xiaohua blushed again.

After all, as an unmarried girl, being called Aunt Liu directly by Mu Shuangshuang made her incredibly happy, implying Shuangshuang acknowledged her.

But she also felt a little embarrassed, as she hadn't married Sixth Son yet and was already taking the seat of Sixth Son's wife.

Seeing Feng Xiaohua's discomfort, Mu Shuangshuang spoke up: "Aunt Liu in my heart is Aunt Liu, and no one else. Don't feel embarrassed, matters of affection are between you and my uncle, others have no right to mock."

Only then did Feng Xiaohua breathe a sigh of relief.

Indeed, it's she and Sixth Son who are to marry, who are to live together, what right do others have to meddle?

"Shuangshuang, thank you, if it weren't for you, Sixth Son and I would still be as we were." Feng Xiaohua said sincerely.

But Mu Shuangshuang just shook her head with a smile.

"Aunt Liu, actually, even without me, you and my uncle would've ended up together. You two are here today, not because of my method, but because you genuinely like each other."

If it wasn't for love, Yu Liulang wouldn't have returned.

If it wasn't for love, no matter how much Mu Shuangshuang did, it wouldn't have mattered.

"You mean... Sixth Son liked me before?" Feng Xiaohua was extremely surprised.

"Yes, that's why you ended up together. I heard from my grandma that my uncle often went to your house to help, picking tea, plowing fields, fixing roofs, these chores he did every year, saying he sees Aunt Liu as his sister, which I don't believe."

Yu Liulang himself was slow to realize, and over these years, keeping tied to someone he didn't love, but Feng Xiaohua indeed should thank herself.

If she hadn't awakened Yu Liulang, they would've had to suffer even when together.

"Shuangshuang, thank you, really thank you!"

Covering her mouth, Feng Xiaohua said excitedly to Shuangshuang.

She never thought she'd have a moment of standing under the clear sky and seeing the moon. She even thought that if Sixth Son didn't marry, she wouldn't marry for life, and that would count as being together.

Who knows, in ten, twenty, thirty years, when he thought of settling down and remembered her, she wouldn't have lived in vain.

"Aunt Liu, let's not say any more polite words. Since you're at our house, just eat well, drink well, and have fun!"

Although there's not much fun in a farming household, these words had to be said.

"Mm! Your uncle also said he'd stay a few more days to help your mom finish all the fieldwork."

There's not much to do at Yu Liulang's house lately, the tea trees are looked after by family, so he simply followed the previous plan and came over with Feng Xiaohua.

This also reflects, indirectly, how much Yu Liulang values Yu Si Niang.

"Haha, then I've got to go buy some dry land."

Dry land is essential, Mu Shuangshuang had already planned that since Yu Liulang is here, she might as well take this time to buy dry land and let her uncle help with plowing and planting vegetables.

"Well that'd be great, I could help you plant vegetables!"

"Haha, Aunt Liu seems capable of everything, my uncle really found a treasure."

When Mu Shuangshuang went to Feng Xiaohua's house, Feng Xiaohua was feeding chickens and ducks, judging by her skilled work, it's evident she does it all the time.

With Feng Xiaohua married to him, Yu Liulang definitely won't have to worry about household matters himself.

During their conversation, the protagonist Yu Liulang came in, carrying a burlap sack on his shoulder, filled with corn.

"Shuangshuang, these were picked from Xiao Hua's field, much larger than the corn we have at home!"

Chapter 368: The Cook for Red and White Events

"Ah?"

Mu Shuangshuang was stunned. She hadn't expected Feng Xiaohua to actually bring a bag of corn over.

This...

In this world, there probably isn't a better aunt. First, she gave them a hen, and now, corn.

"Haha, you're dumbfounded, aren't you? I told Xiaohua that you'd be shocked, and really, you are! And that's only part of it; Xiaohua also brought fifty duck eggs."

Yu Liulang said this with a proud look on his face, pleased that his wife was so close to his sister.

"Uncle, how could you let Aunt bring so many things over..." Mu Shuangshuang didn't even know what to say to Yu Liulang. Feng Xiaohua sent things, and not only did he not feel embarrassed, he felt proud.

What kind of logic is this!

"Shuangshuang, don't blame your uncle. He gave me all the money he's saved over the last ten years—our corn and duck eggs are his too."

Over the past ten years, except for the silver given to the Luo family each year, every penny and silver coin was saved by Yu Liulang and put into a black jar.

When he gave the jar to Feng Xiaohua, she was stunned.

The two of them counted for a long time before finally getting the total, and with all the broken silver and copper coins, it came to more than thirty taels, which many people couldn't save in a lifetime.

It was then that Feng Xiaohua realized how much trust Yu Liulang had in her.

"Haha, Uncle, you did the right thing, Shuangshuang likes it."

It's only right for the wife to manage the finances.

Mu Shuangshuang thought, suddenly remembering that Lu Yuanfeng had also saved quite a bit of silver with her. He...

This was something she shouldn't think about. As soon as she thought about it, her heart raced, and her mind went blank.

"You're truly a clever one, with such a sweet mouth. Uncle will just leave the corn in the kitchen for you. Call me when you need to move it."

"Hmm, okay, thank you, Uncle!" Mu Shuangshuang nodded obediently.

Yu Liulang went back outside to continue moving things, and as soon as he stepped out, he ran into Yu Si Niang, who had just gotten up.

Before Yu Si Niang could say anything, Yu Liulang spoke first.

"Sister, I'm getting married. Congratulate me quickly!"

At this moment, Yu Liulang wore a genuine smile on his face. The person in front of him was not just his sister but also the one who raised him, no different from his own mother.

Yu Si Niang's mouth formed an 'O' shape. She hadn't yet registered the meaning of her brother's words.

When she finally understood, she was so overjoyed she almost fainted.

"Liulang, you're not just saying this to make me happy, are you?"

"Sister, I'm really getting married. To Xiaohua. We've set the date—next month on the 16th."

Next month on the 16th, which is August 16th, right after the Mid-Autumn Festival, when the family would still be together.

"Liulang, you..." Yu Si Niang wanted to say her brother was acting too fast, but given she'd been waiting for this for ten years, it wasn't fast at all.

"Sister, you must come by then!"

"What are you talking about? You're my brother. Of course, I'll be there for your wedding!"

"Hehe, yes!" Yu Liulang thought he was silly for saying such a thing.

But he was genuinely happy.

"Wait here. I'll head to Wang Erma's place to buy some meat to treat you."

In the kitchen, Mu Shuangshuang heard Yu Si Niang talking about going to Wang Erma's to buy meat and quickly came out.

"Mom, don't go. Grandma plans to cause trouble for Wang Erma today. If you go, you're bound to be scolded by her."

Mu Shuangshuang thought today would surely be a massive commotion. Old Mrs. Mu, with her fierce nature, would definitely flatten Wang Erma.

From now on, the Old Mu Family members probably won't be able to buy meat from Wang Erma's anymore.

"But since your uncle and Xiaohua are here, we can't not have meat dishes!"

Yu Si Niang cared about her brother. Every time he visited, they treated him with the best food and drink. Now that his future wife was here, she wanted to bring out all the good stuff.

"How about I go to town to buy some? I'll be back before noon," Yu Si Niang proposed.

"Forget it, Sister. Xiaohua and I don't mind. She's brought duck eggs; we can just fry a bowl of them."

"Mom, no need to worry. Later, I'll take Little Black and Lai Mi up the mountain to have a look. What we can find there is much more than what's outside."

Mu Shuangshuang was speaking the truth. If you live by the mountain, you should make use of the mountain's resources.

Scraping food from the fields can barely keep you fed; to live better, you have to look elsewhere.

"I don't feel safe with you going alone!"

To this day, Yu Si Niang still had a dreadful impression of Niuwei Mountain and didn't want her daughter to take risks there.

"I'll go find Fengzi to go with me. Will that be okay?" Mu Shuangshuang said helplessly.

However, being cared for like this made her happy. Family taking care and showing concern for her was much better than being indifferent.

Mentioning Lu Yuanfeng got Yu Si Niang to finally nod in satisfaction.

"Remember to invite him and Yuanbao over for lunch at noon. Tell him not to bring anything. Every time he visits, he brings so much stuff that I'm embarrassed."

Almost all of Mu Shuangshuang's firewood was provided by Lu Yuanfeng, with him delivering some every few days.

Previously, Mu Shuangshuang's house was even short on firewood, but now there was an abundance stacked beside the pigsty.

"Alright, I'll go make breakfast!"

Mu Shuangshuang busied herself in the kitchen, making breakfast with pancakes, fried dough sticks, and a wild vegetable porridge. Before bed last night, she had also ground some soybeans to have soy milk ready in the morning.

At the meal table, Yu Liulang, while biting into a pancake, chatted with Feng Xiaohua.

"Xiaohua, isn't my niece's cooking particularly good?"

Feng Xiaohua nodded vigorously while sipping soy milk and eating fried dough sticks. "Indeed, much better than those hired cooks for banquets in the village."

"Aunt, you said that for banquets in the village, people are hired to cook, not done by the family themselves?" Mu Shuangshuang picked up on this crucial piece of information and directly asked Feng Xiaohua.

"Yes, usually when hosting a banquet, there's already so much going on at home, where's the time to cook yourself? Shuangshuang, are you interested in becoming a cook? I do know someone in that field and could introduce you to learn."

Feng Xiaohua thought it would be a good option; after all, having a skill meant not going hungry and being able to support the family.

"But cooking isn't easy, with so many people waiting to eat, it would be busy from morning until night."

Cooking for weddings and funerals pays well, but it's indeed tough for a girl.

"Uncle, Aunt, I don't want to learn from someone else; I just want to do it myself. For weddings in the village, they're usually concentrated in the latter half of the year when it's not the farming season, so doing this won't delay work."

Chapter 369: I've Eaten More Salt Than You've Eaten Rice

"But you're a girl!"

Feng Xiaohua still felt uneasy.

"That's why I need to find some help!"

Mu Shuangshuang thought about it for a moment; with the money she and Lu Yuanfeng currently had, it wouldn't be a problem to support Yuanbao and Xiao Han in their studies.

But if they were to start a business in town, they didn't have enough silver, so it might be better to save up slowly. After all, she and Fengzi were still young and maybe they'd come into some money one day.

"If you really can find someone, this job is indeed pretty good." Feng Xiaohua nodded.

Generally, when people throw a banquet, there are two ways: one is to negotiate a menu with the chef and then buy the ingredients themselves for the banquet. The other way is outsourcing, and in that case, the chef earns the most.

Moreover, a banquet consists of just one or two meals, and the hard work lasts only for a short period.

"Let me be your assistant, I have nothing else to do anyway." Yu Si Niang said with a smile.

Yesterday, she was still thinking about work, and today her daughter came up with the idea, which was impressive. Plus, she had worked as a kitchen assistant in town before, so kitchen duties were not a problem for her.

"Haha, that's great. When Xiao Hua and I get married, we'll invite Sis and Shuangshuang, then it'll be like 'keep wealth within the family.'" Yu Liulang's words made everyone burst into laughter, creating a harmonious atmosphere at the dining table.

...

...

Old Mu Family

Since last night, after Mu Shuangshuang clarified matters, Old Mrs. Mu didn't sleep at all. Early in the morning, she wanted to stir up trouble at Wang Erma's house but was stopped by Mr. Mu.

Mr. Mu felt that Wang Erma behaved unfairly, and if they went alone, they might not gain any advantage. So he wanted to wait until breakfast was over, and then make a fuss when the villagers went out for a walk.

He intended to teach Wang Erma a lesson.

After breakfast, everyone from the Old Mu Family came out. Mrs. Lin and Mu Dazhong were dilly-dallying, especially Mu Dazhong, who had been in the latrine all morning and still hadn't come out.

"Fifth, go see if your second brother has fallen into the pit or something, why hasn't he come out yet." Mr. Mu called to Mu Danian, who was idly standing by.

"Hmph, don't you know Old Two's nature by now? He knows he's done something wrong and is hiding." Old Mrs. Mu snorted coldly, speaking harshly.

"I don't understand how he still has the face to hide. It's just Wang Erma, not some big man. Ugh, pitiful lack of status."

Seeing his second brother being scolded, Mu Danian was delighted. He had spent the night at Chen Hong's house, enjoying a stormy affair, so he missed out on the family's drama.

However, in the morning, after asking his mother and learning the facts, he could imagine what happened; his second brother must have been up to something.

Otherwise, he wouldn't be hiding in the latrine.

"Mom, regardless of whether my second brother has a reputation, he caused this mess, so he has to go, and the third branch is also part of the family, so they should send someone too."

Mu Danian always liked to join in the fun, and he certainly wouldn't miss today's case.

Old Mrs. Mu found it quite interesting and said to Mu Dajiang, "Fourth, you like to follow the third branch around their tails, so go call them over. If they don't come, neither should you. Fifth, you come with me to the latrine to see if your second brother is licking shit in there."

Old Mrs. Mu always spoke vulgarly, and never had a kind word to say.

The people in the Old Mu Family were used to it, and everyone went about their business according to Old Mrs. Mu's instructions.

Old Mrs. Mu trotted with her small feet towards the latrine, while Mu Danian deliberately muffled his footsteps.

Inside the latrine, the stench had left Mu Dazhong woozy all morning, but he refused to step out.

Dragging it out for as long as possible.

Sitting on the latrine plank, Mu Dazhong hadn't even taken his pants down, as he didn't actually intend to relieve himself.

At that moment, Old Mrs. Mu lifted the latrine curtain and pinched Mu Dazhong's ear with her nails.

"You damned beast! You really were hiding in the latrine. I thought you fell in."

Old Mrs. Mu twisted Mu Dazhong's ear 360 degrees, making him yowl in pain.

"Mom, let go... let go, it hurts, it hurts..."

Mu Dazhong cried out, but Old Mrs. Mu refused to let go. Instead, she dragged Mu Dazhong out of the latrine by his ear.

Being a six-foot-tall grown man, pulled out by a less-than-five-foot-tall old lady by the ear was indeed quite embarrassing, but Mu Dazhong dared not resist, as any movement prompted harsher punishment from his mother.

"Mom, you're going to ruin my ear."

"Ruin your ear so you'll behave, you beast."

Finally, reaching Mr. Mu, Old Mrs. Mu gave Mu Dazhong a kick, directly knocking him to Mu Shuangshuang's feet.

His hand just happened to land by Mu Shuangshuang's feet, and Mu Shuangshuang pretended to be startled.

With a firm step, she directly stepped on Mu Dazhong's hand.

Mu Dazhong let out a loud cry, withdrew his hand, and began to blow on it repeatedly.

"Ouch~ it hurts like hell, it hurts like hell, my fingers are broken, broken..."

Mrs. Lin saw her husband being stepped on by Mu Shuangshuang and rushed up to cause trouble, but was blocked by Yu Si Niang.

"Second sister-in-law, what are you doing?"

"Yu Si Niang, are you blind? Your daughter is bullying our Daddy Gou Dan, do you think you can cover it up?" Mrs. Lin placed her hands on her hips, her belly defiantly pushing against Yu Si Niang.

It was as if to say, if Yu Si Niang dared, she could hit her belly, she wasn't afraid!

"Mom, just now Shuangshuang was wrong. Shuangshuang shouldn't have accidentally stepped on Second Uncle's fingers. Shuangshuang apologizes to Second Uncle."

Mu Shuangshuang's unusually obedient behavior made Mrs. Lin feel something was off, but she couldn't pinpoint it.

Mr. Mu understood, though. Shuang really wasn't apologizing; she was clearly mocking him.

This girl, she truly had a sharp tongue!

"Alright, it's too early in the morning to be making a fuss. Second, you caused this mess, so you have to go, and Shuang, don't try to pull anything in front of this old man. I've eaten more salt than you've had meals."

Mr. Mu's words were a clear indication of his stance, he wasn't taking sides.

Mu Shuangshuang didn't expect him to.

She wasn't Mu Dade, after all; it would be surprising if Mr. Mu liked her.

"Oh!" Mu Dazhong reluctantly nodded.

As for Mu Shuangshuang, she didn't even acknowledge Mr. Mu. She was just a spectator, so why bother herself with what the Old Mu Family did or said?

Mr. Mu certainly noticed and made a mental note. He planned to have a word with the third branch at some point. Shuang's arrogance would eventually cause trouble for the Old Mu Family!

Chapter 370: Old Mrs. Mu Suffers a Setback

In Mr. Mu's eyes, daughters should be obedient and sensible.

They shouldn't have too many little secrets in their hearts.

He felt that Shuangshuang was too petty, and that the affairs of the third branch were always left to the women because the men didn't handle them.

All these things touched on Mr. Mu's sensitive points.

Throughout the journey, he kept his eyes on Shuangshuang, thinking that as soon as she spoke, he, as an elder, would reprimand her.

Unfortunately, Shuangshuang remained quiet all the way, not even engaging with Yu Si Niang.

Mr. Mu couldn't find an opportunity and had to let it go for now.

As soon as they arrived at Wang Erma's house, Mu Dazhong rushed over, and even Old Mrs. Mu couldn't hold him back.

"Wang Erma, get out here! You dared to sell me dead pork. I'm not done with you today!"

Wang Erma had just finished breakfast, and hearing the commotion outside, he came out to find Mu Dazhong shouting at him.

And it was about that pig-selling incident again. Wang Erma's anger flared up immediately.

"Mu Dazhong, you heartless bastard! You dare curse me? You chose those two pigs yourself, and now you want to blame me?"

"Brother Ma, don't get me wrong. I'm putting on a show for others. You hate that brat, right? Later, you can pin this on her."

After the quick exchange, Wang Erma's anger subsided.

He had only one request—to teach Mu Shuangshuang a lesson and vent his resentment.

That brat made him lose half of his pork.

When Old Mrs. Mu and the other members of the Old Mu Family came rushing forward, they saw Mu Dazhong and Wang Erma cursing at each other, both looking like they had deep-seated grudges.

When Mu Dazhong charged forward, Mu Shuangshuang sensed something was wrong. She initially planned to pull Yu Si Niang away, but Mrs. Lin watched her like a hawk, moving whenever she did.

Since that was the case, she had to brace herself and face it.

"Mom, I can't out-argue Wang Erma. You deal with him," Mu Dazhong said, winking at Wang Erma before stepping back.

Old Mrs. Mu, hands on her hips, shouted at Wang Erma, "Wang Erma, you shameless scoundrel, how dare you mess with the Old Mu Family? You go retrieve those two dead pigs yourself and return six hundred coins to this old lady, or I'll make sure you face a lawsuit."

"Oh my, the Old Mu Family really likes to bully people. What's the deal, bringing so many folks? Are you picking on our Wang Family because there's no one here? I'm telling you, I'm not afraid of you!"

Wang Erma stared back directly into Old Mrs. Mu's eyes.

"Alright, you want to rebel? Second, Fifth, Fourth, tear down the Wang Family's courtyard for me. I'll show him just how powerful I am today," Old Mrs. Mu commanded her sons to demolish the walls.

Mu Dazhong definitely didn't want that, as he was counting on Wang Erma to deal with the brat.

He quickly said, "Mom, we should just ask for the piglets nicely. Don't tear down the walls, or we'll have to pay for it later."

"Old hag, don't think you'll get a refund from me! Everything here is sold as-is with no returns!"

Wang Erma's arrogant attitude made Old Mrs. Mu furious.

She pointed at Wang Erma, trembling with rage.

The commotion soon attracted villagers who came to watch the ruckus.

Old Mrs. Mu suddenly felt spirited and sat on the ground, clapping her thighs dramatically.

"Oh, poor me, this old woman! I saved up six hundred coins to buy piglets, and now... now I got cheated by Wang Erma. He sold me two sick pigs, and they died soon after I took them home."

The villagers couldn't believe their ears, especially given Wang Erma's aggressive reputation, so they rallied around Old Mrs. Mu like chickens on a mission.

"Wang Erma, how could you be so unscrupulous! We're all from the same village, and six hundred coins isn't a small amount."

"Right, Mu Dade is going to be an official one day. Do you think you'll have any peace after offending the Old Mu Family?"

The crowd chimed in one after another, and soon they all decided they wouldn't buy meat from Wang Erma again.

Old Mrs. Mu looked smug, thinking they were still too naive to fight her.

Unfortunately, Wang Erma wasn't fazed at all.

The villagers had been threatening to boycott his meat for years and still bought it anyway.

Plus, he was just setting the atmosphere, waiting for the Old Mu Family to get mad enough to point the finger at Mu Shuangshuang, and then see how she'd suffer.

"Wang Erma, you heard what the villagers said! Now give me back the money!"

"So what if I heard it? So what if I didn't? Listen up, you loudmouth, if you keep yelling in front of my house, I'll finish you!"

Mu Dazhong, watching the scene unfold, thought Wang Erma's acting was top-notch. If they hadn't planned it, he'd truly believe Wang Erma was this arrogant.

Old Mrs. Mu had never been this humiliated before and was jumping around in anger.

Members of the Old Mu Family rushed to comfort her, and with red eyes, Mu Dajiang kicked the door of Wang Erma's courtyard.

"You beast, how dare you treat my mother like this! I, Mu Dajiang, will fight you!"

The man's foot hit Wang Erma's courtyard gate so hard that the wall shook.

This time, Wang Erma was genuinely afraid.

The sons of the Old Mu Family—Mu Dazhong was greedy, Mu Dashan was honest, Mu Danian was cunning and lecherous, but Mu Dajiang was known for his silence, rarely speaking.

But it's the silent ones who are the most dangerous.

Thinking about this, Wang Erma felt fearful, especially now that he had stirred up so much hatred.

"Brother Dajiang, it's not my fault. It's Mu Shuangshuang, the third branch's daughter, who asked me to use the sick pigs as healthy ones. She even gave me a piece of silver."

Since this was a performance, it had to be convincing. Wang Erma pulled a piece of silver from his pocket and waved it in front of Mu Dajiang.

Mu Dajiang was instantly dumbfounded.

This had something to do with Shuangshuang?

With that, the entire Old Mu Family turned their gazes to Mu Shuangshuang.

Mrs. Lin was the happiest.

"Mom, I told you that brat had no good intentions! It turns out she's the one who did it, and she even spent a piece of silver."

"Mom, I thought something was off when you mentioned it this morning. How could no one else know there was a problem with the pigs but Shuang? Turns out she was in cahoots with Wang Erma." Mu Danian chimed in.

Mrs. Lin and Mu Danian were experts at taking advantage of situations, especially since they both disliked Mu Shuangshuang, attacking her whenever they could.

"You little brat, you made me go through all this! I'm going to whip you today!"