

Folly 451

Chapter 451: Partnering to Deal with Old Mrs. Mu

Mu Xiaxia stood in place, unwilling to move her feet.

"What are you still standing here for, hurry up and go!" Mu Shuangshuang couldn't help but raise her voice. Who knew that Mu Xiaxia would glare at her.

Although she quickly withdrew her gaze, Mu Shuangshuang still saw it.

In her heart, her impression of Mu Xiaxia worsened.

In other words, the entire Old Mu Family knew that the only one capable of subduing Old Mrs. Mu was Mr. Mu.

But Mu Xiaxia didn't go to anyone else, specifically coming to her. As for what was behind it, Mu Shuangshuang didn't need to say.

"Sister Shuangshuang, I'm going!"

After saying that, Mu Xiaxia finally ran out into the courtyard.

"Xing Beichen, what are you doing, let go of my grandma!" Mu Shuangshuang walked forward, shouting at Xing Beichen, and at the same time, she made a gesture to Xing Beichen, signaling him not to let go so quickly.

The two had developed a pretty good understanding during this time.

So Xing Beichen understood immediately.

"Why should I let go!" As Xing Beichen spoke, he tightened his grip on Old Mrs. Mu's hand.

"Ow ow..." Old Mrs. Mu began to scream.

"Shuang, quickly make this man let go..." Old Mrs. Mu grabbed at the straw, not even calling the usual little brat anymore.

"Grandma, don't move, I'll speak with him."

Today's matter was quite the headache for Mu Shuangshuang, fortunately Xing Beichen would be leaving tomorrow, so it would have nothing to do with her then.

Besides, Old Mrs. Mu had hit Fu Xiaonan before, so this time, let's consider it as revenge for Fu Xiaonan!

"What are you doing grabbing my grandma, don't you know she's old?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"I didn't mean to grab her, she was unreasonable and hit me, even kicking. Everyone is raised by their parents, the one who married into your grandma's family is a person, not an animal, how can you allow such abuse!" Xing Beichen replied.

"What business is it of yours, I'm telling you, if you don't let go, when my son comes back, he won't be polite to you!"

Old Mrs. Mu still refused to yield, Xing Beichen got angry and picked up a kitchen knife from the table, waving it in front of Old Mrs. Mu.

"You old hag, since you've always been so arrogant, I might as well chop off your hand!"

Only then did Old Mrs. Mu know fear, her body trembled continuously, the fat on her calves twitching.

The kitchen knife gleamed menacingly, seeing Old Mrs. Mu terrified like a mouse gave Mu Shuangshuang a sense of relief.

Pick on the weak and fear the strong, such a person typifies that saying.

"Grandma, you should quickly tell her that you won't mess with my Fourth Aunt anymore, this kitchen knife is blind, if it actually chopped off a hand, you'd be laughed at everywhere you go."

Afraid Old Mrs. Mu wouldn't believe it, Mu Shuangshuang continued adding fuel to the fire.

"This person is a distant relative of Fengzi, he hadn't been in contact before."

"When he came last time, he was covered in wounds, even Fengzi was afraid of him, you might as well avoid provoking him!"

With these words, Old Mrs. Mu thought Xing Beichen was a bandit thug, and her legs went weak, directly kneeling to the ground.

"Mama..."

"Grandma, quickly tell her, you won't bully my Fourth Aunt again, let him hurry and leave."

Old Mrs. Mu had only one thought, which was to preserve her life.

"I... I, the old woman, won't hit the daughter-in-law anymore, hurry and leave, let go of me quickly!"

"Hmph, how do I know you're telling the truth? If I'm not here, you'd likely hit her even worse, wouldn't you?"

Xing Beichen sneered and asked.

"Grandma..." Mu Shuangshuang reminded from the side.

"I swear, if I hit the Fourth Daughter-in-law again, I... I..." Old Mrs. Mu couldn't curse herself, but not doing so meant her life was forfeit.

"You swear, if you lay hands on her again, you'll die a miserable death, your most cherished ones will meet an untimely demise!" Xing Beichen helped Old Mrs. Mu think up one.

Upon hearing this vow, Mu Shuangshuang silently praised Xing Beichen.

Those most cherished by Old Mrs. Mu were none other than Mu Dade, Mu Xiangxiang, and Mr. Mu.

The others were dispensable.

Old Mrs. Mu was about to refuse, but the kitchen knife was placed at her throat, so with tears and snot, she finished her swear before Xing Beichen withdrew the knife.

"Hey, my grandma has already said it, yet you still won't let go?"

Xing Beichen released Old Mrs. Mu, who collapsed on the ground, dumbfounded.

Xing Beichen walked out of the kitchen, threw the kitchen knife at the foot of the sitting Old Mrs. Mu, cutting off the front half of her shoe.

"Ah..." Old Mrs. Mu shrieked, her head hit the wall behind her, and she fainted from the pain.

"Big Brother, come quick, my grandma fell and hurt herself, hurry help her back to rest!" Mu Shuangshuang shouted loudly, motioning with her eyes for Xing Beichen to leave quickly.

The mentioned Mu Dalang hurried forward, holding Old Mrs. Mu and carrying her away.

Xing Beichen quickly left as well.

Mrs. Liu was now disheveled, looking extremely embarrassed.

"Xing Beichen, you'd better go, I'll have my mom cook dinner."

"Alright!" Without seeking an explanation, Xing Beichen quickly left.

Mu Shuangshuang stayed to handle the aftermath.

As soon as she approached, Mrs. Liu whimpered and pulled Mu Shuangshuang into her arms.

An adult seeking warmth from a child was indeed heart-wrenching.

But the environment of the Old Mu Family was like this, either separate from the family or endure Old Mrs. Mu's criticisms.

However, Old Mrs. Mu's recent fall was not light, presumably she wouldn't be able to walk for a few days, so she wouldn't be troubling Mrs. Liu for the time being.

"Fourth Aunt, it's alright now, my grandma won't cause you any trouble," Mu Shuangshuang softly comforted.

Mrs. Liu finally cried herself to exhaustion, slumped motionless in Mu Shuangshuang's arms.

Mu Xiaxia also brought Mr. Mu.

While crying aloud, she said how Old Mrs. Mu had beaten her mother and that she sought Mu Shuangshuang for help to resolve it.

Mr. Mu listened very distressed at first, and his gaze towards Mu Shuangshuang gained a trace of inquiry by the time Mu Xiaxia reached the latter part.

No wonder he looked that way, after all, when Old Mrs. Mu lost her temper, even he had to use strong measures to suppress it.

Mu Shuangshuang had no choice but to relay the story to Mr. Mu truthfully.

Compared to Mu Xiaxia's account, Mu Shuangshuang's vivid retelling made the listener feel a tingling anger while increasing sympathy for Mrs. Liu a notch.

"So, the man took matters into his own hands to stop your grandma from hitting your Fourth Aunt?" Mr. Mu asked.

"Yes, naturally my heart sides with my grandma, but that man's ferocity left no choice but to plead him to release her. The matter is settled now, except my Fourth Aunt was frightened."

After saying so, Mu Shuangshuang pointed to Mrs. Liu, who was still leaning against her.

Mu Dajiang pushed the door open, rushing forward with anxiety upon seeing the situation, he and Mrs. Liu embraced and cried for a while.

With someone taking care of Mrs. Liu, Mu Shuangshuang didn't stay any longer.

She bid farewell to Mr. Mu, giving Mu Xiaxia a significant look before leaving.

She knew that Mu Xiaxia understood!

Mu Shuangshuang was not someone to be trifled with, and since they dared to play tricks in front of her, they should be ready for the day she returns the favor.

Chapter 452: Going on a Date Together

Mu Xiaxia was so intimidated by Mu Shuangshuang's gaze that cold sweat broke out.

For some reason, she felt that this cousin was terrifying!

Mu Xiaxia thought Mu Shuangshuang understood what she had done, but she couldn't be sure, after all, she had no intention to harm anyone.

She just wanted the third and fourth branches to taste what it felt like to be scolded and bullied.

The fourth branch's life was just too hard!

Her mother, too pitiful!

"Old Fourth, take your wife back to rest, I'll have the second daughter-in-law make dinner!"

Mr. Mu made a decisive decision, and it was as if the matter was closed.

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Early the next morning, Mu Shuangshuang took out ten preserved eggs from the jar. She had made a total of ninety preserved eggs, and ten were used over two meals the previous day, leaving seventy remaining in the jar.

Not many, but definitely not few!

This time, she didn't plan to give the preserved eggs to Jiu Si Xuan.

Not for any particular reason, just because of the time Zheng Xiu had someone attack her and Lu Yuanfeng, she hadn't settled that score with Zheng Xiu.

Without reclaiming her dignity, she wouldn't give any good stuff to Jiu Si Xuan anymore!

And there was someone she hadn't seen for a long time; it was time to visit, and the preserved eggs should be given to her.

Back when she made over a tael of Silver from Xue Yi without any effort, Mu Shuangshuang hadn't gone to the Xue Family again, afraid that vengeful man would remember her.

However, every half a month, she would send some things to Xue Mansion.

Sometimes it was cold noodles she specially prepared, other times it was her own pickled dried vegetables or sour long beans, or even pickled vegetables. It was to repay Old Mrs. Xue for being so kind to her!

All the grown bean sprouts were pulled out by her, placed in a large basket, and covered with a wet cloth.

Bean sprouts can't be exposed to light, otherwise, they'd turn green, which would make them unsellable.

Mu Shuangshuang got everything ready before starting to make breakfast.

Lu Yuanfeng and Xing Beichen were up early, just as Mu Shuangshuang lit the fire and washed the pot, both of them arrived.

For breakfast, she planned to make egg fried noodles. The dough, in preparation for the town supplies, had already been proofed, and all that was left was to make the noodles.

The proofed dough could be stretched into particularly long strips. In her previous life, Mu Shuangshuang had seen others making noodles and had asked for some tips, so her noodle-pulling was of the fancy variety. Although it looked manual, the noodles spun in the air.

It was like arranging flowers, extremely beautiful.

Xing Beichen was dumbfounded watching it.

Standing by the stove, he almost wanted to kneel to Mu Shuangshuang. This wasn't just making noodles, it was showing off skills.

He turned his head to see if Lu Yuanfeng was as surprised as he was, but he wasn't.

Lu Yuanfeng was also watching without blinking, but besides indulgence, there was no surprise.

This shouldn't be the first time he had seen it.

Mu Shuangshuang finished stretching the noodles, and by then, the water in the pot had boiled. She put the noodles in the pot to cook, occasionally stirring with chopsticks.

Up close, you could actually see a single noodle spinning continuously in the pot, yet even so, the noodle didn't break.

Midway through, Mu Shuangshuang added water twice, and when the water bubbled for the third time, she scooped all the noodles out and placed them in a wooden basin filled with water.

Egg fried noodles require more than just eggs.

Mu Shuangshuang washed two green onions, took out some bean sprouts, as well as the dried mushrooms from last time.

Mu Shuangshuang diced these ingredients, then poured canola oil directly into the pot.

Only when the canola oil was hot did she put in the green onions, dried mushrooms, and bean sprouts, stir-frying them for a moment, followed by the noodles.

The noodles were broken by Mu Shuangshuang, selecting enough for four servings. She drizzled some chili oil and also added the bean paste that Aunt Zhao Yun had brought over a few days ago.

When the noodles were all fried, the two guys had already instinctively set the table and brought out the bowls and chopsticks.

Four bowls of noodles were served; Lu Yuanfeng and Xing Beichen had large sea bowls.

The other two were small bowls.

"Wait a minute, I'll fry the eggs!"

The hen that Feng Xiaohua had caught was quite reliable, laying an egg daily without fail.

She poured oil again, added some salt to the pot, tossed in two eggs, and fried them until both sides were golden brown. Mu Shuangshuang didn't immediately take out the eggs, but divided them into four portions with a spatula.

This way, everyone got half an egg in their bowl.

Mu Shuangshuang thought she should make some meat sauce to keep at home, as meat wouldn't last long in the summer, but made into sauce, it could last a while.

This way, they wouldn't always miss the taste of meat.

At the dining table, the cooked noodles had delightful colors and a strong fragrance, topped with half an egg, which made Xing Beichen very excited.

In the past few days, the food at Shuangshuang's house tasted a hundred times better than what he had in the Capital.

The food here had the taste of home, very warm and comforting.

"Shuangshuang, is anyone else going to the town?"

Eyeing the untouched bowl, Xing Beichen asked.

"Hmm! You all eat first, I reckon she should be arriving anytime now!"

No sooner had she finished speaking than Fu Xiaonan's boisterous voice echoed, almost bursting in with dust on her shoes.

Luckily, she stopped at the kitchen doorway.

Otherwise, Mu Shuangshuang would definitely have chased her out with a spatula.

"Shuangshuang, Brother Fengzi, I'm not late, am I?" Fu Xiaonan asked apologetically.

From the moment Fu Xiaonan walked in, Xing Beichen's eyes hadn't left her.

Today, she wore a light blue satin dress, with a bit of rouge on her face, her hair styled in the trendy bun popular among girls, with a few strands tied with ribbons darker than her dress on each side, looking extremely playful.

She went straight up, sat down, and then looked at Mu Shuangshuang in surprise: "Shuangshuang, why haven't you changed your clothes or applied makeup yet?"

Fu Xiaonan's remark made Lu Yuanfeng very surprised too.

Was Shuangshuang also going to change clothes and put on makeup?

"Haha, Brother Fengzi, you didn't even know? I thought since you changed your clothes, you were aware."

Lu Yuanfeng had also changed into new clothes today, but it was because Mu Shuangshuang had asked him to the night before.

Lu Yuanfeng hadn't thought much of it.

"Okay, Brother Fengzi, you're really silly. There's a lantern festival event in town today. I asked Sister Shuangshuang to accompany me, and of course, we have to wear our best clothes to the festival!"

Lu Yuanfeng's heart was now racing with excitement.

Even on her birthday, Shuangshuang only wore ordinary clothes, and he had seen her apply makeup to many village girls, but never to herself.

"Fengzi, eat first, after breakfast, give me a stick of incense time to get ready!"

Mu Shuangshuang blushed. She was used to being low-key, and suddenly being high-profile was indeed a bit embarrassing.

"Hmm!" Lu Yuanfeng nodded, starting to slurp the noodles from his bowl.

He couldn't wait to see Shuangshuang with makeup on.

Chapter 453: Just Love Standing with Her

After breakfast, Lu Yuanfeng and Xing Beichen, the two grown men, took on the responsibility of washing dishes.

Fu Xiaonan followed Mu Shuangshuang to the room to help, but really, she just wanted to be the first to see Mu Shuangshuang with makeup on.

Mu Shuangshuang took off her plain clothes and pulled out the gauze dress that Yu Si Niang had her wear on Qixi from her wardrobe.

The style of the dress was drawn by Mu Shuangshuang herself, red and white in color, with two intersecting red lines at the collar. It looked gentle rather than ostentatious.

Unlike the hair bun Fu Xiaonan intentionally had her mother do, Mu Shuangshuang braided three thin plaits, making the top of her head slightly fluffy.

Then, she gathered the rest of her hair into a simple ponytail, making her appear very energetic.

Moreover, Mu Shuangshuang's facial features were delicate, fully exposed for everyone to see at a glance.

Putting on makeup was even simpler for Mu Shuangshuang.

As she was already skilled, a few strokes were enough to complete a beautiful look.

Fu Xiaonan stood beside her, extremely envious; despite not having to work a day in her life, her skin didn't look as good as Mu Shuangshuang's.

"Shuangshuang, you're so beautiful, I can hardly recognize you!" Fu Xiaonan exclaimed.

"You're also beautiful! Let me do the last bit of prep, wait for me a sec!"

Mu Shuangshuang finished by applying eye makeup, essentially just eyeliner. Ancient women didn't use this; typically, makeup involved applying water powder and dusting on a layer of rouge, and that was it.

Mu Shuangshuang's makeup was more detailed.

She heated a piece of wire over an oil lamp, then curled her eyelashes with it.

This made her eyes appear larger.

"Wow, what is this?" Fu Xiaonan was amazed at how her eyes could appear larger so effortlessly.

"Let me help you!" Mu Shuangshuang fiddled around with Fu Xiaonan.

Only then did they prepare to go out.

This was probably Mu Shuangshuang's most cautious moment, yet Fu Xiaonan insisted on embarrassing Lu Yuanfeng.

She rushed out first, watching the intense glow in Lu Yuanfeng's eyes flare up. She looked behind, impatiently.

"Haha, Shuangshuang, Brother Fengzi thought the first one coming out was you. You hurry up!" Fu Xiaonan laughed playfully.

Mu Shuangshuang then slowly walked out.

She knew her makeup was excellent today, but what were Lu Yuanfeng and Xing Beichen being dumbfounded for?

"Miss Shuangshuang, you're truly a phoenix among chickens, only visible once you step out!" Xing Beichen chuckled foolishly, but soon his gaze shifted to Fu Xiaonan.

He noticed that Fu Xiaonan had changed since entering.

Her eyes had become noticeably larger.

Lu Yuanfeng stood in place until Mu Shuangshuang walked up to him.

"What's the matter? Lost in thought?" Mu Shuangshuang raised her eyebrows playfully.

"No... No... Shuangshuang looks very beautiful like this!" Lu Yuanfeng was glad he wore new clothes today; otherwise, standing next to Shuangshuang would show a great contrast.

"Of course, I'm naturally beautiful! But you better watch out, or else I might be taken away..."

Before she could finish her sentence, Lu Yuanfeng pulled her into his arms, seemingly worried about what Shuangshuang had said.

After hugging her, he realized how inappropriate he had been.

"Shuangshuang, I..." Lu Yuanfeng felt he could barely speak coherently.

"Relax, it's just a simple trip to the market. We'll sell as usual, earn our money, and live life the same way!"

Only then did Lu Yuanfeng start to feel assured.

For this trip, due to Fu Xiaonan joining, Fu Wu rented a carriage from the neighboring village for pick-up and drop-off.

Which made their arrival at the town much earlier than usual.

The four went straight to Jiu Si Xuan to drop off the cold noodles. This time, Mu Shuangshuang didn't exchange many pleasantries with the Fat Chef.

She was busy with too many things.

But the bean sprouts sold out quickly, as expected by Mu Shuangshuang, without her having to shout.

People said a good shop, through word of mouth, could attract more customers.

Mu Shuangshuang was familiar with several stall owners due to her frequent visits.

Sometimes prices need to be in line with others', or she'd be ostracized.

Fortunately, Mu Shuangshuang's items were unique; there wasn't another shop selling the same thing, so she'd never been criticized for it.

"Where are we heading next?" Xing Beichen asked.

"Didn't you say you were eager to leave?" Mu Shuangshuang frowned.

She thought Xing Beichen would leave upon arriving in town.

But seeing his keen look, it seemed he didn't plan to leave?

Xing Beichen hesitated; he initially intended to leave early in the morning, but seeing Fu Xiaonan made him reluctant to go.

Because he wasn't sure when he'd visit next time.

And whether Fu Xiaonan would remain the same.

It was awkward, but thankfully, at this moment, Fu Xiaonan pulled Mu Shuangshuang over and said a few words, making Mu Shuangshuang let go of the matter.

"Xing Beichen, Xiao Nan, Fengzi and I need to go somewhere first; it might take a while. How about we meet later at Hua Yuerong in town?"

Hua Yuerong sold cosmetics and other feminine products and was on the main street where the lantern festival passerby would go.

"Alright, Shuangshuang, you and Brother Fengzi go quickly and come back soon!"

Compared to Mu Shuangshuang, Fu Xiaonan didn't hold many thoughts about gender differences and that people shouldn't get too close.

She was innately pure and viewed matters more superficially.

If she found someone agreeable, she'd talk more.

After the four split up, Lu Yuanfeng seemed more at ease, glancing at Mu Shuangshuang beside him lovingly and sincerely.

"Shuangshuang, are we heading to the Xue Family?"

For the last two times, they hadn't been inside the Xue Family's doors; they had given their things to the steward, and several times, Old Mrs. Xue had told the steward to invite Mu Shuangshuang inside next time.

"Yes! Might as well see Old Mrs. Xue!"

Mu Shuangshuang had her own intentions; after what Zheng Xiu had done, she couldn't guarantee wouldn't play dirty tricks next time. Her heart couldn't tolerate injustice.

She'd endure her first harm, but two times in, she'd fight back, even if it meant chaos, and wouldn't let her harm again.

If that's the situation, the collaboration with Jiu Si Xuan wouldn't be possible.

"Okay! Let's hurry!"

Lu Yuanfeng carried a large basket containing the bean sprouts, century eggs, and other mountain goods prepared by Mu Shuangshuang.

All things Old Mrs. Xue liked.

Upon reaching the Xue Family, before Mu Shuangshuang could speak, the steward called out to her.

"Miss Shuangshuang, you must see the lady today; you don't know how she's given me an order. If I don't bring you in to see her, she'll be angry with me!"

Chapter 454: Protecting Her

The housekeeper Xue called everyone, only then noticing the change in Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng.

Both were wearing new clothes, their hair was carefully styled, and they looked particularly energetic.

Standing together, they simply looked like a perfect couple.

"Miss Shuangshuang, Mr. Feng, you both..."

Lu Yuanfeng flashed a brilliant smile, he enjoyed the feeling of standing next to Shuangshuang.

"Don't we look especially good today?" Mu Shuangshuang teased.

The housekeeper Xue naturally nodded.

"Yes, yes, you look wonderful. The old lady is sure to be happy when she sees you. Hurry and come in with me!"

After flattering them, the housekeeper Xue didn't forget to usher them into the Xue Mansion.

Following him, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng soon met with Old Mrs. Xue.

The Xue family's breakfast was later than what Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng had, and when they entered, Old Mrs. Xue was having breakfast. Upon seeing them, she abandoned her meal and came rushing over.

"Shuang, Feng, you're finally here! I've waited for you both, my hair has turned gray from waiting." Old Mrs. Xue said kindly.

"Grandma, I brought you something nice today, would you like to see?" Mu Shuangshuang responded.

Lu Yuanfeng nodded in agreement, greeting the old lady.

"Alright, but accompany me for breakfast first!"

Xue Yi, completely ignored, said with jealousy to Old Mrs. Xue, "Mother, isn't it better to have your son accompany you for a meal? Why need a young girl and boy to accompany you?"

Despite some time passing, Xue Yi's mouth was still asking for trouble.

"An old woman like me enjoys being with young ones, it makes me feel younger."

Old Mrs. Xue stabbed him with her words, making Xue Yi's chest hurt, and at that moment Mu Shuangshuang took a seat.

"Uncle, don't worry, Fengzi and I have already had breakfast, we won't eat your rice!"

"..."

Calling him uncle made Xue Yi feel like his world turned dark.

Before he could gather his senses, Lu Yuanfeng dealt him a fatal blow.

"Uncle, our Shuangshuang is clueless sometimes, please don't be upset!"

That really made Xue Yi stop eating, he dashed outside and pounded his chest several times just to calm himself down.

Upon returning, Xue Yi's face was back to normal, although the pained expression at the corner of his mouth was enough to show how impactful Lu Yuanfeng's 'uncle' was.

Old Mrs. Xue laughed so much her eyes turned into slits, she even ate an extra bowl of rice compared with usual.

Once the meal was over, the housekeeper handed over the items Mu Shuangshuang brought, which she laid out on the table one by one.

The first few mountain goods like mushrooms and wood ears, Old Mrs. Xue had seen before and wasn't overly amazed, but she was still quite pleased. When Mu Shuangshuang took out the bean sprouts and century eggs, Old Mrs. Xue couldn't hold back.

"Shuang, what is this thing?"

Old Mrs. Xue pointed at the century egg, "Why have I not seen an egg of this color before?"

"Grandma, this is a century egg, it tastes great when served cold. I'll make some for you before I leave!"

"Alright!" Old Mrs. Xue nodded, continuing, "I'll join you in the kitchen, every time you come your cooking is so delicious, once you're gone eating what they make is somewhat forced."

This was also the reason why Xue Yi always wanted Mu Shuangshuang to become the cook at the Xue family.

Upon entering the kitchen, housekeeper Xue prepared an apron for Mu Shuangshuang. She followed the previous method and made a cold century egg dish.

Time passed quickly.

Despite the black appearance of the egg, Old Mrs. Xue hesitated but, considering it was made by Shuangshuang, she plucked up courage and ate a sizable piece.

As soon as it entered her mouth, her expression brightened.

She quickly chewed it several times, then gave Mu Shuangshuang a thumbs up.

"You girl, every time you come, you bring me surprises, this is so delicious."

Xue Yi who came in with skepticism couldn't resist the old lady's urging to try it too.

His reaction was similar to Old Mrs. Xue's, although he was more direct.

"Miss Shuangshuang, how many of these do you have? I'll take them all!"

Mu Shuangshuang just loved such forthrightness.

"We still have seventy at home, so tell me the price per piece, and I'll sell them to you."

Mu Shuangshuang's face was unabashed as she spoke, not the least bit embarrassed.

On the contrary, Xue Yi was stunned, it was his first time seeing such business dealings.

"How about I...I offer ten coins each, and you'll sell them all to me. If you have more, bring those along too!"

Seventy would be seven hundred coins, Mu Shuangshuang was almost laughing to tears.

She couldn't resist taking advantage of such a deal.

She was still basking in joy, unaware that Xue Yi turned around and sold them at several times the price to others.

So when dealing with businessmen, be prepared to be cheated, because they're smarter than you!

After bidding farewell to Old Mrs. Xue, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng began their market stroll.

At this point, it felt amazing with nothing weighing on their mind!

Due to the lantern festival, even in the morning, there were already people dragging lanterns along the street.

Lu Yuanfeng found it intriguing and wanted to buy one for Mu Shuangshuang, but she refused.

"Fengzi, let's buy sugar-coated fruits and get one for Xiao Nan and Xing Beichen each, then I'll accompany Xiao Nan to buy some girly stuff."

"Okay!" Lu Yuanfeng nodded.

They quickened their pace, undeniably, Mu Shuangshuang's attire today indeed made her look striking. Shortly after they set off, the young men around were already giving her several looks.

If it weren't for the tall and sturdy Lu Yuanfeng beside her, someone might have approached already.

Lu Yuanfeng would from time to time block those gazes directed at Mu Shuangshuang, and when there were crowds, he kept Shuangshuang by his side to prevent anyone from bumping into her.

Mu Shuangshuang felt sweetness surrounding her everywhere today.

With Fengzi there, she dared to walk with swagger, confident that anything harmful would be blocked by Lu Yuanfeng.

When they located Xing Beichen standing outside Hua Yuerong looking around.

Lu Yuanfeng's protective stance remained unchanged.

"Xing Beichen, why didn't you go inside?" Mu Shuangshuang curiously asked.

Xing Beichen wore a pickle face, unsure of how to respond. Xiao Nan was inside buying things, he wanted to gift her something but only had this little Silver with him, renting a cart would leave him with zilch.

And in the county, he didn't know anyone.

"Shuangshuang, Fengzi... Xiao Nan's inside choosing things, I..." Xing Beichen struggled to voice his dilemma.

"What's up with you? Why are you hesitating? If you have something to say, say it clearly!"

Mu Shuangshuang was impatient, seeing a grown man behaving timidly.

Xing Beichen, spurred on, found some courage.

"Could you lend me a tael of Silver? Once I get back to town, I'll send someone to repay you. I want to buy something for Xiao Nan!"

Upon finishing, Xing Beichen lowered his head, not daring to face Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng!

Chapter 455: Worth It for You

Xing Beichen's words revealed two things.

First, his intentions towards Fu Xiaonan are not simple!

Second, he is very poor!

Money isn't really an issue because Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng both know that he's currently in the non-propertied phase.

But the problem is that Xing Beichen has started having thoughts he shouldn't have about Fu Xiaonan, and that's troublesome!

After all, Fu Xiaonan has a childhood sweetheart, Brother Song Qingshan. It's expected that the two will get married within two years.

While Mu Shuangshuang was pondering, Xing Beichen lowered his head; after all, borrowing money isn't a particularly glorious thing.

Just as Xing Beichen was backing down, two pairs of hands suddenly appeared in front of him. One was broad, the other slender, and each hand had a piece of broken silver in its palm.

"Take it!" Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng said at the same time.

They smiled knowingly after speaking, demonstrating perfect harmony.

Xing Beichen was stunned. He only borrowed one tael, but the two of them handed over two taels.

If it were the old Xing Beichen, he surely wouldn't have known what two taels represented.

Ever since he started building the dam here, listening to those living by the river, he realized.

Two taels could perhaps support a farming family for a year.

Five taels might even allow one to marry a wife.

He watched Shuangshuang and Fengzi earn thirty copper coins by selling bean sprouts in the morning, but such money isn't earned every day.

"What are you dazing for? Take it quickly! Xiao Nan will pick something later and pay herself!" Mu Shuangshuang reminded the overwhelmed person.

Only then did Xing Beichen gratefully look at the two.

"Thank you both! Once I arrive at the county, I will repay you tenfold!"

Xing Beichen took the silver and entered Huayuerongli.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng didn't rush in but worriedly eyed Lu Yuanfeng.

"Fengzi, you think this will be okay? After all, Xiao Nan has someone she likes."

Fu Xiaonan is Mu Shuangshuang's friend.

Xing Beichen is too!

Mu Shuangshuang doesn't want any of them to be hurt.

"Shuangshuang, I think this matter depends on fate. Although Fu Xiaonan has her beloved, anything can happen unless they're married."

Out of loyalty and trust in character, Lu Yuanfeng took Xing Beichen's side in this matter.

"That's what you say, but you see Xiao Nan now, her heart and eyes are all on Song Qingshan. If things go as you said, she couldn't avoid being hurt."

Mu Shuangshuang has seen Song Qingshan once.

But it was just a fleeting glance at the village entrance; he was sitting in a carriage while Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were traveling, pushing a wheelbarrow.

The carriage just went straight ahead and didn't make it convenient for the same village.

Even though Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng didn't need any convenience.

"It probably won't happen; fate favors good people. Shuangshuang, let's go in. I'll pick a gift for you!"

Lu Yuanfeng had long wanted to buy something for Shuangshuang. Women rarely come to this shop, and since he's here, he must choose something for Shuangshuang.

In Huayuerongli, waves of cosmetic scents wafted; Mu Shuangshuang's house has cosmetics, so she went somewhere else.

A shop in the Da Ning Dynasty isn't ideal because things are piled together without clear categorization.

For example, one box of rouge costs twenty coins, and the box next to it costs a tael; without the shop assistant's introduction, it's hard to choose.

Mu Shuangshuang wasn't interested in the hairpins, hair clasps, or earrings in Huayuerongli.

In between, Lu Yuanfeng picked up a pair of pearl earrings, but Mu Shuangshuang refused; she doesn't have pierced ears and doesn't want such burdens.

In ancient times, women pierced their ears with needles and thread, which easily got infected.

Finally, she stopped at a counter selling hairbands.

"Assistant, that red one..."

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng spoke at the same time.

Mu Shuangshuang was wearing a red outfit today; if she tied it with a red hairband, it should add quite a bit.

Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Shuangshuang had similar thoughts, but he just thought the hairband looked nice.

"You two guests have a good eye; this hairband is imported from the Capital, and today is the cheapest day; usually, we sell for eighty coins, but today it's twenty!"

Twenty coins really aren't cheap for the average person!

But for Lu Yuanfeng, as long as Shuangshuang likes it, it's worth it.

"I'll take this!" Lu Yuanfeng handed twenty coins to the shop assistant.

The assistant smilingly gave the item to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Fengzi, help me tie it in my hair!" Mu Shuangshuang handed the hairband to Lu Yuanfeng.

Lu Yuanfeng took the hairband, but his hands trembled uncontrollably.

Tying the hairband for Shuangshuang, he would inevitably touch her, causing Lu Yuanfeng's self-control to falter, thinking of never letting go.

Lu Yuanfeng lowered his head, placing his hand on Mu Shuangshuang's glossy black hair, beautifully radiant.

Moreover, even upon closer inspection, there was no smell of soapberry.

Lu Yuanfeng suddenly thought of the phrase "white hair to eyebrow."

It's something he heard when villagers got married, probably saying the two stayed together until even their eyebrows turned white, never separating.

After a few entangling moments, the hairband was tied, adding some charm to the black hair.

Lu Yuanfeng couldn't take his eyes off; his face slightly reddened, then he took a deep breath, reminding himself to remain calm.

"Shuangshuang, it's done!"

Mu Shuangshuang excitedly said, "Too bad there's no mirror, or else I'd take a look!"

"Who said there's no mirror? You two guests, our shop has it prepared!"

While speaking, the assistant handed a copper mirror to Mu Shuangshuang.

Through the hazy mirror, Mu Shuangshuang saw a blurry reflection, but thankfully, it was still somewhat clear.

"Not bad, definitely worth the money!" Mu Shuangshuang said with satisfaction.

Lu Yuanfeng was also happy, having bought what they wanted, they went to see Xing Beichen and Fu Xiaonan.

Just in time, Fu Xiaonan looked at a jade bracelet priced at two taels. Fu Xiaonan thought it expensive and wouldn't buy it.

Xing Beichen, without hesitation, paid for it and directly gifted it to Fu Xiaonan.

"Brother Xing, it's not about anything else; I really can't accept it, it's too costly!"

This time Fu Xiaonan went out, her budget was at most one tael; more than that, not only would she not buy it, but even if she could, she wouldn't spend that money.

"Xiaonan, treat it as my parting gift to you. I... I don't know when I'll be able to come back and visit here."

For the first time, Xing Beichen felt powerless; he usually did whatever he wanted, because he always succeeded.

But this time, regardless of his effort, the distance remained!

"But it's really too expensive, Brother Xing, I understand your goodwill!" Fu Xiaonan shook her head and refused.

Chapter 456: Going Up the Mountain to Log

Mu Shuangshuang tugged at Lu Yuanfeng's sleeve, signaling him not to go over.

After all, at such times, Xing Beichen didn't want anyone to see him in a sorry state.

Xing Beichen's bracelet ultimately wasn't given away.

The secret crush ended without resolution.

Mu Shuangshuang, Lu Yuanfeng, and Fu Xiaonan took him to the carriage, and after he left, Fu Xiaonan finally breathed a sigh of relief.

Earlier, she felt that if she hadn't maintained a shred of sanity, she would have wanted what Xing Beichen offered.

If that really happened, Fu Xiaonan would certainly hate herself.

The rest of the time, the three of them strolled around, and it wasn't until the carriage came to pick them up in the afternoon that they left!

...

...

In recent days, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng worked together to plant vegetables on three acres of land, then watered them for two days.

Mu Shuangshuang estimated that it was also time to construct the public restroom.

So the two of them discussed and decided to go to the mountain for lumbering, and maybe hunt some game!

With bows, axes, saws, and ropes prepared, Mu Shuangshuang entered the mountain with Little Black and Lai Mi.

Lu Yuanfeng intended to train Lai Mi as a hunting dog, so Mu Shuangshuang occasionally used police dog training methods to instruct Lai Mi.

After some training, the dog indeed barked when encountering unusual circumstances.

But because of Mu Shuangshuang's reward system, Lai Mi turned from a slim puppy into a fat ball of flesh.

Additionally, with Lai Mi's fluffy fur, every time Lai Mi appeared, Mu Shuangshuang felt like she was facing a moving meatball.

Fortunately, this little meatball could still move on its own.

Arriving at the foot of Niuwei Mountain, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng organized their tools. Mu Shuangshuang wrapped the rope around herself, and Lu Yuanfeng thought the axe was too heavy, so she picked up a saw instead.

During this season, there were still snakes. Remembering the last incident where Lai Mi encountered a snake, Mu Shuangshuang decisively applied some realgar on the two little creatures before they left.

Not hoping for them to catch a big snake, but hoping they wouldn't get bitten.

"Woof woof~" Lai Mi was excited to return to the forest.

"Hiss hiss~" Little Black was too!

However, the necessary caution was present in the two little animals when they went into the mountains; they became quiet, each occupying a side, seemingly protecting Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng.

The mountain air remained fresh, with lush green trees standing on both sides, and the fragrance of flowers subtly permeating the air.

Underfoot, there were dry branches and decaying trees that crunched with each step.

Sometimes when they came across thicker trees, they also had to use an axe to clear them.

With such progress, Mu Shuangshuang felt tired too.

Their pace was slow, occasionally needing to find detours, but they eventually reached their destination.

The location Lu Yuanfeng chose was further inside Niuwei Mountain, where the trees were older compared to the outside firs. These trees were more suitable for building houses or other uses.

Most importantly, there was more game here, giving Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng more choices.

It wasn't peak time for animals to appear, so Lu Yuanfeng started chopping trees.

The axe rhythmically struck a nine-inch tree, and Mu Shuangshuang also found a not-too-big tree nearby to saw.

"Shuangshuang, stop when you're halfway done, leave the rest to me!" Lu Yuanfeng called out.

Mu Shuangshuang understood that he was worried the tree might fall and hurt her.

Mu Shuangshuang nodded heavily.

"Got it, Fengzi, you be careful too!"

As the two were finishing chopping a tree, they suddenly heard cries for help.

The sounds came from not far away.

Just as they wondered whether to go and investigate, Lai Mi, with its chubby body, ran over.

Little Black was sitting on its back, clutching its fur; the two little creatures were probably scared to the point of urinating, letting out painful whimpering.

"What's wrong?" Mu Shuangshuang picked up Lai Mi.

Lai Mi's short legs were still flailing in the air, looking both funny and comical.

Little Black clung onto Lai Mi tightly, refusing to let go.

This pair of hard-luck brothers seemed to have encountered something frightening.

Considering the screams they heard earlier, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng exchanged glances and decided to check it out.

However, Lu Yuanfeng wouldn't let Mu Shuangshuang go.

"Shuangshuang, wait here, if anything's wrong, drop everything and run!"

This was something Mu Shuangshuang taught him — when faced with mortality, money and material possessions are insignificant.

This fool was always like this in situations with agreed-on matters; if there's danger, one person has to take the risk.

Doesn't he know it makes her worry?

Mu Shuangshuang crouched down, putting Little Black and Lai Mi on the ground, speaking softly.

"Lai Mi, I'm giving you a task now; quickly lead Little Black down the mountain. We won't go down, don't come back up!"

After she spoke, Mu Shuangshuang patted Little Black's backside.

Little Black barked twice and actually ran off with Little Black, bolting away.

"Goodness, this dog is too realistic, it should have shown some reluctance or something, but it just ran!"

Lu Yuanfeng chuckled, but this time, he didn't leave Mu Shuangshuang behind.

Mu Shuangshuang grabbed the rope in her hand, picked up the axe, and said to Lu Yuanfeng, "Fengzi, I believe you can protect me, I believe I won't be a burden to you, and I definitely don't want you to face danger alone."

"Either both of us head down or we both face it together!"

The light in Mu Shuangshuang's eyes was so intense that even Lu Yuanfeng found it dazzling.

Lu Yuanfeng hesitated for a moment before nodding.

"But stay behind me; if anything's wrong, run!"

Lu Yuanfeng mentioned escaping twice today, showing his inner tension, otherwise, he wouldn't be like this.

"Alright!" Mu Shuangshuang nodded in agreement.

They walked towards where the cries for help were coming from, with Lu Yuanfeng intentionally slowing his pace.

He had an intuition that the game they encountered this time wouldn't be easier to deal with than the last pig, maybe even more challenging.

They walked deeper into the forest, with older, denser trees blocking out the sunlight.

Such environments were actually more terrifying!

Mu Shuangshuang followed behind Lu Yuanfeng, even suppressing her breathing.

Finally reaching the closest point to the sound, Mu Shuangshuang spotted it at a glance. On the opposite side of the bushes, under a large tree, a gray adult wolf stood.

The wolf's eyes shone with bloodthirsty light, staring intently up the tree.

Upon closer inspection, there were actually two people up the tree.

It was the Huang Brothers, Huang Da and Huang Er.

Previously, they stole Lu Yuanfeng's game and were forced to return everything, and hadn't touched his game since. They originally thought these two had left the mountain, but apparently not.

As Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng spotted Huang Da and Huang Er, the two also saw Mu Shuangshuang, especially Huang Er who foolishly shouted towards them.

"Hey, save us..."

Chapter 457: Wolf

Wolves are incredibly intelligent creatures. Upon hearing Huang Da and Huang Er's shouting, it immediately turned around, glaring ferociously at the surrounding environment.

Almost at the same moment, it leaped towards Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng.

Mu Shuangshuang felt a strong urge to kill Huang Er.

If this idiot had just kept quiet, they could have killed the wolf with one arrow. Now, they're both in danger because of him.

As the wolf lunged at them, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng retreated continuously.

But almost at the same moment, the arrow in Lu Yuanfeng's hand whistled through the air, shooting straight towards the wolf.

Lu Yuanfeng's arrows had been modified, making them far more lethal than before.

At least this time, it pierced the wolf's fur.

The wolf began to bleed.

However, this only made the wolf even more violent.

"Awoo~" The wolf howled, its long claws swiping towards them, Mu Shuangshuang dodged.

But immediately, the wolf charged at her again, as if it had identified Mu Shuangshuang as the weak link between the two.

With a firm grip on her axe, Mu Shuangshuang swung it backward, and it hit the wolf's head precisely.

Yet, it was still alive, howling even louder.

Afraid it's calling for its companions, Lu Yuanfeng shouted to Mu Shuangshuang, "Shuangshuang, step aside, I'll shoot it!"

Three arrows flew simultaneously, all aimed at the gray wolf.

Mu Shuangshuang quickly retreated. At this time, the Huang Brothers climbed down from the tree, and Mu Shuangshuang hurriedly called, "Come help us!"

Just gaining their freedom, the Huang Brothers were in no mood to risk their lives, and without a word, they ran away.

Mu Shuangshuang felt that this has really deepened the grudge between them.

She unwrapped the rope from her body, and when Lu Yuanfeng shot another arrow, she tangled the rope around the wolf's head.

With a strong pull, they finally critically injured the wolf.

By now, the forest was heavily laden with the scent of blood, the wolf still struggling on the ground, Lu Yuanfeng picked up the axe, and with a single blow, finally killed it.

The scene just now was truly too perilous.

Even now, a sense of fear lingered; they exchanged a glance, both breathing a sigh of relief.

They had managed to snatch another life back!

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng thought to themselves.

"Fengzi, let's quickly carry the wolf down the mountain. It's too dangerous with such a strong scent of blood!"

As they spoke, dark clouds suddenly filled the sky, indicating rain was imminent.

It's still morning, so there's time to find shelter from the rain, but should they bring the wolf along?

What Mu Shuangshuang was thinking was exactly what Lu Yuanfeng was thinking.

After working so hard to bring it down, of course, they were unwilling to let it go.

"Fengzi, let's carry the wolf with us. If it starts pouring, we can find a place and roast some wolf meat!"

Lu Yuanfeng tied the wolf up with a hemp rope, then cut a wooden stick, and together with Mu Shuangshuang, they carried the wolf, looking for a path.

The heaviest end of the stick rested on Lu Yuanfeng, Mu Shuangshuang barely exerted any effort.

But even so, Lu Yuanfeng still felt pained.

After walking for a while, thunder started rumbling.

Fortunately, after passing through the dense forest, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng finally found a cave.

Strangely, the cave appeared as if someone had lived in it.

Mu Shuangshuang saw dried branches stacked at the entrance, blocking the way in.

The two of them took some effort to move the branches aside.

Luckily, Lu Yuanfeng had a habit of carrying a flint when he was out, and before the rain started, he found some dry twigs and lit them up to illuminate the cave.

Upon entering, they discovered that the cave indeed showed signs of habitation.

There was firewood, and even a stone bed.

Once Lu Yuanfeng lit the firewood, the entire environment inside the cave was illuminated.

The cave was not large, probably about thirty square meters, small enough to see the end in one glance.

Though small, it had all the fundamental necessities!

Upon entering the cave, they realized there was a well-like structure in the corner, with water dripping from the top of the cave.

There was quite a bit of water in the well.

Perfect for dealing with the wolf.

From the arrangement of various items, Mu Shuangshuang thought it seemed like a woman's abode; there were withered flowers placed at the head of the stone bed.

Outside, peas-like raindrops were falling relentlessly.

"Luckily! We found such a place!" Mu Shuangshuang thought to herself with relief.

Lu Yuanfeng felt the same.

Unexpectedly, his gaze was drawn to a wooden box on the stone bed.

The box looked familiar to him, though he couldn't recall where he had seen it, he was certain he had.

Feeling something drawing him closer, Lu Yuanfeng picked up the box and slowly opened it.

Inside was a handkerchief, and this handkerchief made Lu Yuanfeng tremble uncontrollably.

Mu Shuangshuang was frightened.

She went forward to check.

"Fengzi, what's wrong?" Mu Shuangshuang asked with concern.

"My mother... this is my mother's item!" Lu Yuanfeng confirmed, holding the handkerchief.

Mu Shuangshuang was also stunned.

Wasn't it said that she had been seen carried off by wolves?

Could it possibly be a rumor?

"My mother isn't dead! My mother isn't dead..."

Lu Yuanfeng said excitedly.

Mu Shuangshuang too.

When they entered, she had already taken in the whole cave.

If the person in this cave was indeed Lu Yuanfeng's mother, there was a high probability she wasn't dead.

"Fengzi, we have hope now!"

There's nothing in the world more invigorating than finding hope after experiencing despair.

The two excited people hugged each other, sharing their mutual feelings.

After the joy, Lu Yuanfeng was determined to get to the bottom of the events from back then.

Since he came back, this matter had always been a knot in his heart.

Bit by bit, Lu Yuanfeng told Mu Shuangshuang.

He knew Shuangshuang was smart, maybe she could help him.

Solving cases and finding people was indeed Mu Shuangshuang's expertise.

Listening to Lu Yuanfeng's description, Mu Shuangshuang didn't hear anything suspicious, but it didn't mean there wasn't something truly suspicious.

At the very least, some things she would need to personally ask the Old Lu Family.

"Fengzi, when we go back, take me to ask your family, I think, we need to find a breakthrough from them!"

"Okay! Shuangshuang, are you hungry? Shall I roast some wolf meat for you?"

After such a long ordeal, it was almost noon. Lu Yuanfeng himself was a little hungry but was still excited.

All those things he had believed were suddenly turned into another situation, one he had never dared to dream of.

"Alright, let's smoke this wolf and make smoked dried meat. It'll be easier to carry and we won't have to worry about being hunted by animals!"

Lu Yuanfeng agreed, and fortunately, he brought a dagger when they left.

So, dealing with the wolf wasn't much trouble.

The entire wolf pelt was skinned, though unfortunately, it was perforated by the arrows, otherwise, it could've sold for half a tael of silver.

Seeing Lu Yuanfeng somewhat reluctant, Mu Shuangshuang said, "This pelt can be useful in other ways; we can keep it to make winter socks, or insoles at the very least, or even as a decoration!"

"Shuangshuang is right!"

Chapter 458: Gained Two Lackeys

Lu Yuanfeng used the firewood in the cave to set up a rack, cut the wolf meat into pieces, and roasted them separately.

He also cut a bit more meat and washed the wolf meat clean using the spring water in the cave.

The rainstorm came with a fierce momentum. Outside the cave, bean-sized raindrops were continuously pattering down merrily.

Lu Yuanfeng roasted the meat while Mu Shuangshuang tidied up in the cave, checking to see if there were any clues to be found.

Perhaps due to the passage of time, apart from a bundle of already dried flowers at the bedside and the box Lu Yuanfeng had seen, there was nothing else.

However, judging from the thick layer of dust on the bed, it seemed no one had lived here for several years.

While contemplating, a sparse noise came from outside the cave.

The Huang Brothers, covered in mud and unable to see clearly, stumbled upon the cave by accident, with Huang Er leading the way.

"Second Brother, there's a cave here! I smell meat; I'm so hungry!"

As soon as Huang Er's voice reached the cave, Mu Shuangshuang grabbed Lu Yuanfeng's bow and arrow.

Such is the narrow road fate brings foes to!

Huang Da, filthy all over, heard his brother's words and quickly headed towards the cave. Just as he saw the firelight, an arrow whizzed by, shooting directly at Huang Er's feet.

Scared, Huang Er bounced to the side of the cave wall, his arm hitting the cave wall so painfully that cold sweat broke out.

Both were terrified.

Through the firelight, they could only see two shadows. Before they could look up, two more arrows were shot simultaneously.

Coincidentally, they also landed by their feet.

Huang Da realized they had encountered a master.

He nudged Huang Er, and they both shouted into the cave.

"Great hero, we brothers mean no offense, but it's raining so hard outside. We saw this cave and just came in to take a look. Please be kind!"

Inside the cave, it was quiet. Lu Yuanfeng let Mu Shuangshuang play with the bow and arrow. With him watching, nothing would happen. And if anything did, he would be on Shuangshuang's side.

The wolf meat on the rack gradually started to smell fragrant from the roasting. Having skipped breakfast, Huang Da and Huang Er's stomachs growled even louder with hunger.

"Big Bro, let's rush in. Little brother here is starving to death!" Huang Er said pitifully.

"Do you know what you're saying? You're crazy. They have arrows. If they casually shoot us with an arrow or two and make holes in us, what can you do?"

Huang Da gave Huang Er a disapproving look but couldn't stop drooling from his mouth.

What the heck is so fragrant?

Inside the cave, Mu Shuangshuang had already prepared another three arrows. This time, if Huang Da and Huang Er dared to come in, she wouldn't be polite at all!

Knowing what Shuangshuang wanted to do, Lu Yuanfeng cooperated by staying silent, concentrating on roasting the meat.

This was a game of wits. If Huang Da and Huang Er were smart, it would be fine. If not, Mu Shuangshuang's arrows wouldn't spare them.

At the cave entrance, as soon as there was movement, Mu Shuangshuang fired three arrows simultaneously, though they didn't hit anyone. Huang Da and Huang Er found a large branch outside the cave for cover.

This time, Huang Da and Huang Er could clearly see the people inside the cave.

It was Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng.

"It's you!" Huang Da exclaimed.

At that moment, Mu Shuangshuang stood up from the stone bed, grabbed a nearby rope, and hooked it around Huang Er.

Huang Er was pulled to Mu Shuangshuang's side.

With a loud "slap," a palm struck Huang Er's face.

Huang Er's eyes instantly sparkled with stars, his ears buzzing like a mosquito's hum.

He looked at Mu Shuangshuang in terror. Before he could say anything, Mu Shuangshuang slapped him again.

She said, "Scream! Why aren't you screaming? Treating others' lives like trash is fun for you, isn't it? Keep playing!"

Another loud slap; Huang Er's cheeks were swollen high, Mu Shuangshuang almost using her full strength.

"You treacherous creature, we went out of our way to save you and your brother, yet you dare to put us in danger!"

"And just now, not only did you not help when we asked, but you ran faster than a rabbit. Do you think I won't hold you accountable?"

Huang Er was about to cry, and Huang Da even more so.

By the fire, Lu Yuanfeng sat silently on the stone bed, saying nothing but focused on roasting the meat, exuding a terrifying aura.

Huang Da had an instinct that if anything happened to this young woman in front of them today, both he and his brother would be dead.

Some people, without saying a word, possess a presence that naturally instills fear in others.

Some people, even when roaring, feel like they are bluffing.

Lu Yuanfeng was the former!

"Brother, save me, save me..." Huang Er cried out in pain, pleading with his brother.

"Brother, brother, you should apologize to this lady quickly..." Huang Da said fearfully.

"Big brother..." Huang Er couldn't believe his brother was saying such defeatist words.

"Still calling him big brother means it doesn't hurt, huh!"

Mu Shuangshuang kicked Huang Er to the ground and started punching him furiously.

The whole cave resounded only with the sound of fists landing and Mu Shuangshuang's warning voice.

Huang Da was dumbfounded, watching Mu Shuangshuang stop.

Huang Er had been beaten black and blue, unrecognizable even to his brother Huang Da.

"Boo hoo hoo..." Huang Er cried sorrowfully, his face smeared with tears and snot.

"I was wrong... I was wrong..."

Mu Shuangshuang snorted coldly, having no sympathy for such cowards!

"Hey, hurry up and drag your brother away to avoid dirtying my place!"

Mu Shuangshuang gave Huang Da a disdainful look, her eyes expressing an unmistakable warning.

Huang Da stepped forward, dragging his brother aside.

Just at that moment, Lu Yuanfeng's wolf meat was ready.

He took the wolf meat off the grill and placed it upright to cool.

Only then did Huang Da and Huang Er notice that what Lu Yuanfeng had been roasting was actually wolf meat!

This guy was impressive, managing to take down a wolf.

Huang Da and Huang Er had never hunted a wolf in their lives. The best they'd ever done was catch a small sika deer, and that was only with both of them working together for several days until the deer was exhausted.

Huang Da was full of regret, wondering how he could be so stupid as to offend such a big man.

"Brother Lu, in the past we made mistakes. In the future, my brother and I will obey your every command. If you tell us to go east, we dare not go west. If you tell us to dive into the sea, we won't dare to fly in the sky. Please, take us in!"

While saying this, Huang Da pinched Huang Er's side. Already in pain, Huang Er howled even louder because of the pinch.

Under the pressure of his brother's intimidation, he nodded.

"At Brother Lu's service!"

Hearing the Huang Brothers' words, Mu Shuangshuang choked on a mouthful of meat, unable to swallow or spit it out. Finally, it was Lu Yuanfeng who helped pat her back, allowing her to cough it up.

Chapter 459: Huddle Together

The change in demeanor of the Huang Brothers was truly swift, but after Shuangshuang's earlier incident, Lu Yuanfeng found himself annoyed with these two chatterboxes for no reason.

Thus, the Huang Brothers became the culprits in Lu Yuanfeng's eyes for nearly causing Shuangshuang to choke, and no matter what they said, he wouldn't respond.

Lu Yuanfeng took it upon himself to prepare food for Shuangshuang.

He cut the wolf meat into small pieces before handing them to Mu Shuangshuang.

Huang Da and Huang Er felt somewhat deflated after consuming a large bowl of dog food.

Couldn't this guy at least give them a response?

And couldn't he show off his affection somewhere else?

Nevertheless, no matter how much the Huang Brothers complained or how hungry they got, they could only watch as Lu Yuanfeng fed Mu Shuangshuang to her heart's content.

Mu Shuangshuang felt a bit embarrassed, as to ensure she was full, Lu Yuanfeng hadn't eaten a thing.

She nudged Lu Yuanfeng and said, "Fengzi, I'm full. You should eat quickly!"

"Here, have a drink of water first!" Lu Yuanfeng handed water to Mu Shuangshuang.

In the past, Lu Yuanfeng didn't bring water up the mountain, but after meeting Mu Shuangshuang, he learned to bring these things.

"Okay! You eat quickly, I'll save some water for you!"

Lu Yuanfeng then cut off a large piece of wolf meat.

For himself, he didn't need to cut it into small pieces; he just gnawed on it with his teeth.

Yet even with such a bold eating style, it didn't come off as crude, but rather evoked a sense of heroic vigor.

Perhaps soldiers who have been on the battlefield carry such a demeanor, imbued with the aura of a great general in every move.

Huang Da and Huang Er were on the verge of tears. If they all had nothing to eat it'd be tolerable, but Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Shuangshuang were right there, and the aroma of meat in the air made even their tapeworms stir.

"Big brother..." Huang Er began to cry again.

Poor fellow, bruised and hungry as well.

Boohoo, he wants to go home!

"Actually, it's not that you can't eat, nor that we can't take you in as younger brothers!" Mu Shuangshuang sat on the stone bed, swinging her legs back and forth.

It was clear she was in a good mood, otherwise she wouldn't have said such things.

Knowing Lu Yuanfeng cared about this little girl, Huang Da perked up.

"Miss, however you say, our brother will comply!"

"Really? I slapped him earlier, won't he hold a grudge?" Mu Shuangshuang looked skeptically at Huang Er, her gaze full of disbelief.

Huang Ya gritted his teeth, raised his fist, and gave Huang Er a punch.

"This scoundrel has thick skin, he's not afraid of getting hit, and he doesn't hold grudges. See, I punched him, and nothing happened!"

Huang Da chuckled, but Huang Er clutched his head in pain.

Mu Shuangshuang nodded in satisfaction.

"That's all very well, but talk is cheap. How about this, swear an oath: if either of you ever betray me, may your wife run off, and may your son be Old Wang's next door!"

"..."

The Huang Brothers were dumbfounded. They've encountered formidable people, but never someone as capricious and unreasonable as Mu Shuangshuang!

"!..."

"Fengzi, they don't want to. You work it out!" Mu Shuangshuang leaned back, finding a more comfortable position to sit.

She clearly stated her stance.

She was done outside of it!

Lu Yuanfeng brandished the dagger in his hand menacingly, the chilling intent seemingly targeting the Huang Brothers.

In a panic, Huang Da and Huang Er raised their hands.

"We swear, if we ever betray Brother Lu and Miss, may our wives run off, and may our sons be Old Wang's next door!"

As they said this, Huang Da and Huang Er felt as if they had swallowed a fly.

Their neighbor indeed bore the surname Wang, covered in pustules, an utterly disgusting thought should their wives run off with such a person!

Forget it, they'd better just follow the rules!

With this in mind, the Huang Brothers' eyes changed, the cunningness disappeared, replaced with a newfound sincerity.

Both Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Shuangshuang had sharp eyes and sharp instincts.

Seeing this, Lu Yuanfeng cut off another piece of wolf meat, divided it into two portions, and handed them to Huang Da and Huang Er respectively.

Both suddenly felt warmth in their hearts, as for many years, nobody had treated them brothers kindly.

The Huang Brothers had no parents, and relatives and friends had long since severed ties with them; if it weren't for their knack for petty theft, they would have starved long ago.

Now with Huang Da nearing twenty-five and Huang Er being twenty-three, they had no wives, and not even widows took a fancy to them.

"Waaah..." The two burly men suddenly embraced and cried uncontrollably.

Mu Shuangshuang, watching this scene, could only shake her head in disbelief.

But it also showed that the Huang Brothers weren't rotten to the core; they still had some goodness left in them.

The trio had lunch, and the rain stopped.

Outside the cave, it cleared up, although the sun didn't come out, at least the rain was gone!

The forest exuded an earthy aroma that wasn't unpleasant, carrying that natural scent.

With the rain, the mud became soft, and stepping down left a muddy impression.

Under such circumstances, cutting down trees was out of the question.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng discussed and decided to come back in two days.

Huang Da and Huang Er heard that Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were logging and thought they were up to something big, running over eagerly.

"Bosses, what would you have our brothers do? Even if it's braving knives and mountains of fire, just give the word, we'll do it!"

Just as Lu Yuanfeng was about to refuse, Mu Shuangshuang chimed in first.

"Alright then, in two days, we're logging to make two outhouses. The work of cleaning the latrine and preparing bamboo shards for wiping will fall on you. If the pit gets full, remember to empty it for me. Of course, I'll pay you, but you need to complete a month's probation, unpaid!"

Mu Shuangshuang finished in one breath and happily retreated to the side.

Upon hearing this, Huang Da felt a stab of old blood in his throat, nearly fainting from rage!

Heavens, what did he do to deserve encountering such a madwoman, crafting latrines and even cleaning them?

"What's wrong, you don't want to?" Mu Shuangshuang squinted and asked!

"We are willing, we... are willing...!" Huang Da and Huang Er reluctantly answered.

"That's more like it, rest assured, with Boss and Fengzi leading, you'll surely have food. Work well and I'll promote you with a raise!"

The last line about promotion and raise, the Huang Brothers didn't quite get. As they looked at one another in confusion, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng had already gone far.

The road down the mountain was just as Mu Shuangshuang anticipated, full of hurdles. By the time they reached the foot, the mud on their soles weighed them down so much they could barely walk, prompting Mu Shuangshuang to remove her shoes and prepare to walk back barefoot.

Chapter 460: Mu Danian Wants to Get Married

"Woof woof~"

From the grass came the sound of barking. Mu Shuangshuang paused her motion of taking off her shoes as Lai Mi and Little Black jumped out.

Guessing it had just rained, the two little creatures were all wet, their fur completely damp and sticking together.

Lai Mi kept sneezing, while Little Black was shaking with cold.

As soon as the two saw Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were still alive, they rarely rushed forward together.

"Wow, you guys actually didn't leave!" Mu Shuangshuang teased while picking up Lai Mi and Little Black, deciding not to take off her shoes, and hurried home.

Deep down, Mu Shuangshuang was moved. After all, in times of danger, the two little creatures ran so fast but still had some conscience, knowing to wait for them!

Back home, Mu Shuangshuang burned firewood to make a fire, spending the time it takes to burn an incense stick to dry the fur of the two little creatures. Lu Yuanfeng went to Zhang Huai Shu's house to ask for medicine, and when he came back, he would have to brew medicine for them.

"You guys are really living the life!" Mu Shuangshuang poked Lai Mi's dog head, and the little creature obediently licked Mu Shuangshuang's hand.

No one else could be this ingratiating.

At this moment, something was happening in the main room of the Old Mu Family, with everyone seated together.

The protagonist today wasn't anyone else; it was Mu Danian himself.

Mu Danian had been feeling particularly empty recently. His brothers all married and had children, while he remained alone, with no one to warm his bed at night or heat his feet.

The reason Mu Danian felt this way was that Chen Hong had recently found someone else, kicking him to the curb.

Thus, he swore on the spot to find a maiden, to show that woman.

"Dad, Mom, I'm not getting any younger. All my brothers have gotten married, even my eldest brother has gone off to take exams. It's high time for me to get a wife and carry on the family name, isn't it?"

Mr. Mu was taken aback, forgetting to smoke his pipe.

Right now, the Old Mu Family was dirt poor, with no extra money to find Mu Danian a wife.

"Fifth, you know our current situation. How about waiting until your brother passes as the Champion Scholar, then we'll find you a good one?" Mr. Mu said with a kind voice.

"Dad, give it a rest. Once my brother passes, all your thoughts will be on him alone. Would you still care about me?"

Mu Danian spoke plainly.

"You little rascal, what nonsense are you talking? You're my son; how could I not care?" Mr. Mu was half out of his mind, unable to resist grabbing Mu Danian to scold him.

"Dad, if you really cared, I wouldn't be so old and unmarried. People my age in the village already have three kids. If I keep waiting, others will have grandkids before me!"

Mu Danian wasn't ready to give up.

The others in the main room didn't speak up, but everyone hoped Mu Danian would get married, because a wedding meant inviting the whole village for drinks, and inevitably a good feast.

"Dad, my fifth brother is indeed not young anymore. How about finding him a wife to settle down?" Mu Dazhong suggested nearby.

As soon as he spoke, Old Mrs. Mu glared at him.

"Easy for you to say! Getting married, the betrothal gift? The money for the banquet? Do you think a wife is something you can have just because you want one? Do you think everyone is like your wife Mrs. Lin, sticking to you like a leech and not letting go?"

Old Mrs. Mu berated the second branch fiercely.

Just then, Gou Dan ran inside.

While playing, the snot on his nose was almost about to flow into his mouth, yet he didn't notice.

Old Mrs. Mu naturally got mad.

She rushed over and slapped Gou Dan, making him scream.

Mrs. Lin was furious seeing her son being hit right in front of her; she couldn't swallow this grievance.

"Mom, what are you doing? Gou Dan is still just a child!" Mrs. Lin demanded.

"You shameless woman, when I speak, you don't have the right to butt in! Look at your son, how dirty he is, snot is almost in his mouth!

What kid from any family is as dirty as him? Isn't that disgusting?"

This incident struck Mrs. Lin's sore spot.

A few days ago, Mu Shuangshuang had returned from town in a red dress that looked fantastic; she wanted one for herself.

But she had no money. With no money, forget a nice dress; she couldn't even afford meat.

It was sweet potato porridge every day; at this rate, if her brother didn't return, the whole family would starve!

"Mom, I want our Gou Dan to dress as nicely as the kids from the third branch, but our Gou Dan doesn't have new clothes. Look at his body; it's still from the clothes others discarded from the village the year before, and now it's shredded to bits."

Mrs. Lin said while pushing Gou Dan towards Old Mrs. Mu.

"You shameless woman, daring to oppose me! If you envy the third branch, go ahead and separate out, see if this old lady will give you land."

Old Mrs. Mu didn't lay hands on Mrs. Lin, and she hadn't hit Mrs. Liu in several days.

But she had been tormenting them in indirect ways.

Sometimes, barely at dawn, she'd get up and make Mrs. Liu wash dishes, wash clothes, and feed pigs and chicks.

Then at night, she'd have her carry water for the whole family. It wasn't much different from when she used to lay hands on them.

Mrs. Liu's feet were covered with blisters, bursting over and over again, so much so that she couldn't wear shoes.

Yet even so, Old Mrs. Mu was still not satisfied.

"Mom, we're not talking about my sisters-in-law, it's about me. Get Matchmaker Sun quickly to find me a wife. I need to marry."

Mu Danian reinforced again.

"Didn't you hear your dad say, our family has no money. With no money, how can we get you a wife?" Old Mrs. Mu replied irritably.

"Doesn't our family still have land? Selling another acre, and we'll have it. Dad, Mom, don't blame me for saying you're biased. My brother has everything; he'll even be an official in the future. I have nothing, not even able to get a wife?"

Mu Danian wasn't afraid of Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu's threats of not letting him follow his brother.

He knew his brother's secret, the fact his brother bought the exam questions; he had people as witnesses.

He deliberately revealed it to Chen Hong back then, so that one day when his brother wouldn't give him the good life, he'd show his brother his power!

"Fifth, you've been bewitched, still wanting your dad to sell land. Don't you know the land is our lifeline!"

Mr. Mu was visibly heartbroken.

He absolutely refused to sell more land.

"Dad, come on, our family is about to fly up soon, and then all that land, you're bound to sell it, surely you won't carry it into the city?"

Anyway, I've decided. Next month, I'm getting married. If I have no wife, I'll tell everyone you refuse to marry your youngest son because of my brother.

Let others know about our Old Mu Family affairs and become the laughingstock!"