

Folly 481

Chapter 481: Teaching Zheng Xiu

There weren't many customers in Jiu Si Xuan at the moment, just a few people having breakfast.

Carrying cold noodles, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng entered Jiu Si Xuan. Before they could see the Fat Chef, they were blocked by Zheng Xiu, who was standing at the door with an arrogant expression.

"Hey, ugly thing, I'm here to inform you, don't bother coming to our restaurant to deliver things anymore!"

Zheng Xiu got straight to the point, leaving her words behind.

Mu Shuangshuang rolled her eyes dramatically.

Being called an ugly thing first thing in the morning.

Damn it, how was she ugly? She was clearly the beauty of Er Gui Village. Was this person blind?

Ignoring Zheng Xiu, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng continued to head inside.

This, however, infuriated Zheng Xiu.

"Are you so shameless? You can't live without relying on men? First, you relied on Lu Yuanfeng, and now on our family's restaurant. I'm telling you, I'll leave it here today that I don't want your cold noodles."

Zheng Xiu spoke without filtering her thoughts, saying whatever came to her mind.

But she completely angered Mu Shuangshuang.

"Are you blind or brainless? Don't want my cold noodles? Who do you think you are? Do you even have the right to refuse? I have a contract with Jiu Si Xuan, it's not up to an uneducated illiterate like you to decide!"

Mu Shuangshuang looked arrogant, as if mocking. This insufferable thing was acting all high and mighty, thinking she was some big deal just because she was an owner's sister.

Joking aside, anything of mine, wherever I put it, would sell, not just to your place!

"You little bitch, you... you dare to scold me?" Zheng Xiu was furious, her face turning dark. Being the daughter of the County Magistrate, she was pampered from a young age, who dared to give her attitude?

"I'm not just going to scold you, I'm going to hit you!"

As soon as she finished speaking, Mu Shuangshuang rushed over and slapped Zheng Xiu twice.

"Slap~ Slap," two slaps, and Zheng Xiu's face turned red.

Furious, she shouted at Mu Shuangshuang, "I'll fight with you."

The two started grappling, pulling each other's hair and pinching flesh. Zheng Xiu, after all, was too pampered, not a match for Mu Shuangshuang, getting beaten and crying out loud.

The whole restaurant staff were shocked.

Or rather, secretly delighted.

This Zheng Xiu was indeed too arrogant, demanding everyone to serve her when she came, complaining if food was late, even deducting wages.

Without kneeling for a greeting while serving, you'd be thrown out.

Zheng Xiu was just a pampered miss, only when the owner was around would she behave.

"Oh dear, what are you doing, don't fight!" The Fat Chef came out from the kitchen, sweating in anxiety seeing this scene.

He remembered clearly that the owner was still upstairs.

At the moment, Zheng Zhi indeed was present, but he was just watching the spectacle.

His third sister really was used to being domineering; no one dared to provoke her from childhood to adulthood. Apart from his words, she wouldn't listen to anyone else.

This time, a lesson wouldn't hurt!

Lu Yuanfeng wanted to pull Shuangshuang away. Just as he approached, Shuangshuang stopped him.

"Fengzi, don't come over. I'm settling accounts with this crazy woman today. I haven't even settled the score for her ambush last time."

Mu Shuangshuang spoke loudly, and Zheng Zhi upstairs heard her words clearly.

He frowned and turned to ask his attendant.

"What's this about what Miss Shuangshuang said, speak!"

Being the son of the County Magistrate, Zheng Zhi knew some things could be done, some could not.

There's no wall that lets no wind through.

If Zheng Xiu indeed did something life-threatening, it wasn't just her disgrace but Zheng Gang's career on the line.

"Young master... young master, last time at the City God Temple, Miss humiliated Miss Shuangshuang, asked Young Master Lu Yuanfeng to leave Miss Shuangshuang, but was refused by Young Master Lu Yuanfeng. She had people ambush them outside the town, intending to take Miss Shuangshuang and Young Master Lu Yuanfeng's lives!"

After the attendant finished speaking, Zheng Zhi's face turned colder, originally planning to intervene when appropriate, but now it seemed unnecessary.

As long as she keeps a half-life!

No one stopped them, and Mu Shuangshuang fought even more viciously.

"Calling you a foul mouth, you young girl, so young, why imitate jealousy, learn to foul-mouth!"

"Weren't you trying to kill me? Come on then?"

As she spoke, she dealt a few more slaps.

The customers in the restaurant were all driven out by the sharp-eyed Fat Chef.

No one dared to step forward and separate them because Mu Shuangshuang's hands were tightly locking Zheng Xiu's body, separating them might unwittingly hurt Zheng Xiu.

"Boo hoo..." Zheng Xiu was beaten to tears, her hair all over the floor, her eyes bloodshot, staring fixedly at Mu Shuangshuang.

"Tell me, you won't make trouble for anyone in the future, be a good person!" Mu Shuangshuang pinched Zheng Xiu's chin, speaking fiercely.

Zheng Xiu wouldn't comply, the pain is already here, at most she'd be beaten to death!

"Not saying? I'll slash your face today."

Just as Mu Shuangshuang finished speaking, Lu Yuanfeng somehow found a kitchen knife and handed it to Mu Shuangshuang.

It was a slaughtering knife used for deboning.

Upstairs, Zheng Zhi's attendant was almost scared out of his mind.

"Young master, young master, they..."

Zheng Zhi's heart also tightened. Disciplining his sister was one thing, being disfigured was not what he wanted.

But in his heart, a voice told him to wait, just wait!

Mu Shuangshuang approached Zheng Xiu with the big knife.

"Will you talk or not?"

The blade touched Zheng Xiu's face, and she even smelled the rust and pork odor on the knife.

"Boo hoo, you bastard..." Zheng Xiu cried and cursed.

"Then let this bastard teach you what it means to be a human," Mu Shuangshuang said as she raised the knife, posing to take action.

Zheng Xiu cried uncontrollably, she'd never seen such a gangster attitude in her life: beat if you can't win an argument, and even slash her face after beating.

"Boo hoo hoo... I was wrong, I won't... I won't trouble people anymore." Zheng Xiu cried almost out of breath.

Mu Shuangshuang didn't see the intent to kill or hate in her eyes

She must be genuinely afraid.

She moved the knife back a little, still fierce, "Tell me, will you pester Fengzi when you see him?"

Zheng Xiu originally didn't like Lu Yuanfeng. She followed him around just because he was indifferent to her, and she wanted to prove her charm.

"I won't..."

Zheng Xiu cried sorrowfully, and having received the answer she wanted, Mu Shuangshuang tossed the big knife aside.

But she didn't strut off; instead, she picked up Zheng Xiu.

Speaking earnestly, "You're very beautiful, in Qingshan Town, even in the county, you're a top-notch beauty. Most people will be enamored with you."

"But you must understand, life is about more than these; there are other things. For poor people, eating is the top priority. We poor folks, living step by step with our own efforts, is already not easy. Why would you deprive us of our right to survive?"

Chapter 482: Give a Sweet Date

Mu Shuangshuang is not a reckless person, or rather, she had already seen Zheng Zhi when she entered the door.

At first, she tentatively probed the bottom line of Zheng Zhi step by step.

If Zheng Zhi came out to stop her, she would not act, at most she would tell him about what Zheng Xiu had done and let him discipline Zheng Xiu.

Mu Shuangshuang had analyzed Zheng Zhi's character.

He is meticulous, holds a high position, his father must be an official, and he himself should have been influenced since childhood.

Mu Shuangshuang has no other skills, but she thoroughly understands human psychology.

Zheng Zhi probably doesn't like his sister's temperament either, as she can easily get into big trouble, which won't just affect Zheng Xiu alone by then.

In any case, this time, Mu Shuangshuang won.

Give a slap, then offer a sweet date.

Mu Shuangshuang was giving Zheng Xiu a lesson.

Though she may not necessarily listen.

"Zheng Xiu, what happened today was partly my fault, I can apologize to you, but there was a reason for it, if you hadn't provoked me and treated me like nothing, things wouldn't have happened."

"In the future, when we meet, you can hate me, but I will never sit back and wait for trouble!"

"If you hit me, I will fight back, I will never be a coward!"

After Mu Shuangshuang finished speaking, she helped Zheng Xiu to sit down on a bench. Lu Yuanfeng handed the cold noodles to Fat Chef and apologized; Mu Shuangshuang didn't take the nine hundred wen, considering it as medicine money for Zheng Xiu.

After leaving Jiu Si Xuan, Mu Shuangshuang was in a great mood, but the person next to her seemed to have the feeling of an impending storm.

With a grim face, he didn't say a word.

Mu Shuangshuang looked at Lu Yuanfeng with a flattering smile. "Fengzi, today was a special situation, didn't I say last time that I'd make up for it?"

"I didn't let you pull me away just now because I was afraid that girl would hurt you, and she is a girl after all, men and women should keep a distance, it wouldn't look good."

Mu Shuangshuang's plea for peace was too obvious, and actually, when she spoke, Lu Yuanfeng's heart softened.

But he doesn't want Shuangshuang to always leave him out.

He hopes to stand in front of Shuangshuang and protect her.

"Fengzi, look, what's that?" Mu Shuangshuang pointed at the sky.

Lu Yuanfeng naturally looked up puzzled, and at that moment, Mu Shuangshuang jumped up, hugged Lu Yuanfeng's neck, and kissed him.

The soft lips carried a moist sensation, like cotton candy, soft and comfortable.

Lu Yuanfeng's heart stirred, and his hand wrapped around Shuangshuang's waist.

"Fengzi, are you not angry anymore?"

Maintaining this posture, Mu Shuangshuang looked at him expectantly.

At this moment, her eyes were full of brilliance.

At this moment, Lu Yuanfeng felt like he had the whole world.

At this moment, all his discontent and unhappiness vanished, he only hoped that time would stop at this moment.

Yu Liulang, watching from the side, was quite excited. His niece did have a way; if only he could be as thick-skinned as her, wouldn't he have married a wife a long time ago?

Yu Liulang suddenly reached for Feng Xiaohua's hand.

"Xiaohua, let's go back and try this posture too!"

Feng Xiaohua's face instantly flushed like a monkey's butt.

"You're so improper, already an uncle and still not embarrassed!" Feng Xiaohua teased and then buried her head.

The dispute between Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng ended with Mu Shuangshuang's kiss, and the four of them sold all the bean sprouts before finding a shop to have breakfast.

Three bowls of noodles, four people, Mu Shuangshuang had eaten well before leaving, although they traveled, she wasn't hungry, but since Lu Yuanfeng was a man, he could eat more.

Feng Xiaohua usually didn't have a big appetite, so one bowl of noodles between two women was the best.

Noodles in town weren't cheap, a bowl cost three wen, and if you added an egg or meat, it would be five wen.

Almost the amount Yu Si Niang earned for a day's work as a kitchen helper a long time ago.

But both men were quite generous.

All three bowls were meat slice noodles, with three or five big pieces of meat on top, the amount of meat was fair, and the meat was drizzled with oil, garnished with scallions and cilantro, it looked appetizing, and at least visually appealing.

In fact, cooking at home, fifteen wen could buy a pound of meat, a pound of meat with chili could stir-fry a big bowl, and if you make noodles, it's enough for the whole family.

But since they were out, they didn't mind.

Feng Xiaohua gave most of her noodles to Mu Shuangshuang, even most of the meat slices.

"Aunt Xiaohua, what are you doing? I ate breakfast." Mu Shuangshuang was anxious, trying to take the bowl, but was too slow.

"Even if you had breakfast, you're bound to be hungry, Er Gui Village is twenty or thirty miles from town, no matter how much you and Fengzi ate, it's still a long way to go."

"Yeah, Shuangshuang, your aunt is family, take it. Besides, I still have plenty!" said Yu Liulang as he added meat to Feng Xiaohua's bowl.

Almost simultaneously, the meat from Lu Yuanfeng's bowl was also all given to Mu Shuangshuang.

"What are you doing?" Mu Shuangshuang and Feng Xiaohua asked together.

"We're feeding our wives, only when they're well-fed and plump can we prove our ability!" Yu Liulang chuckled.

Lu Yuanfeng nodded in agreement with Mu Shuangshuang's uncle's view.

Both men protected their bowls well, not giving Mu Shuangshuang and Feng Xiaohua a single touch.

Helpless, Mu Shuangshuang could only start eating.

The meat slices weren't as tasty as Mu Shuangshuang imagined; she thought they should be spicy meat slices with boiled noodles and chili oil, which would be the best combination.

But outside, everything was kept simple.

Mu Shuangshuang ate half a bowl and couldn't eat any more, nor could Feng Xiaohua.

The two looked at each other, not knowing what to do.

Wasting food was definitely not good.

Just as the two were at a loss, Lu Yuanfeng turned his head and asked Shuangshuang.

"What's wrong? Can't eat anymore?"

Mu Shuangshuang obediently nodded.

She indeed ate a lot, if she ate more, she would burst.

Although she dreamed of getting fat, but you can't become fat in one sitting.

Lu Yuanfeng took Mu Shuangshuang's bowl and started eating with his own chopsticks over the leftovers.

Mu Shuangshuang looked shocked, and when she looked at Feng Xiaohua, Feng Xiaohua also looked helpless.

The two men probably colluded today, whatever one did, the other followed suit.

But it was really warm, Mu Shuangshuang felt quite moved.

After breakfast, all four were full, making them energetic.

This time, Feng Xiaohua's most important item, the wedding dress, didn't need to be bought, all thanks to the roll of red cloth Shuangshuang bought last time.

This time, it was mainly to buy earrings, jewelry, and the like.

And some fruits, as for the dishes for the banquet, they had to be ordered today and delivered to Yu Family Village on the fifteenth of August.

Getting married is not a simple matter!

Chapter 483: Joining to Open a Restaurant

Shopping is a daughter's favorite thing, but for men, it may not be a matter they particularly enjoy.

Fortunately, Lu Yuanfeng and Yu Liulang were cooperative enough.

The women bought things, while they carried them, occasionally offering a few sensible opinions.

Of course, the first items to be reserved were melon seeds and peanuts.

These items are to be laid out on the table when relatives and friends come, serving as an appetizer before the meal.

To put it plainly, it's to pass the time while guests wait for the meals to be served.

Both wedding and funeral feasts entertain the whole village, which means at least ten tables, and if each table requires a pound, then it's at least a dozen or so pounds.

Fortunately, this time, Yu Liulang had enough money set aside for buying household items.

Along the way, the quantities purchased were relatively large.

After buying the fruits, Yu Liulang suggested looking at jewelry.

Jewelry and earrings and such things are not cheap, and ancient jade earrings were particularly popular, but truly, what everyone liked most were gold items and gold jewelry.

Gold has been a currency in the Da Ning Dynasty, so things made of currency are naturally expensive, followed by silver-made accessories.

"You two men don't need to go in, I'll go with Shuangshuang!"

Feng Xiaohua rarely took the initiative to ask Yu Liulang to do something. Of course, she was eager to stay outside, even giving Feng Xiaohua the money pouch.

Mu Shuangshuang also refused Lu Yuanfeng.

What a joke, she wasn't interested in those pieces of jewelry, unless it was a silver ingot she might consider.

Once inside the jewelry shop, Feng Xiaohua's first request was for Mu Shuangshuang to find her the cheapest.

"Why?" Mu Shuangshuang was curious.

"Your uncle treats me very well, taking care of all the money matters, but this time he spent too much, and that's not how a household should be run. Save wherever possible."

Feng Xiaohua lost her mother at a young age and had only a crippled old father at home. The fields were mostly managed by Yu Liulang, while she relied on raising chickens and ducks to support herself and her father.

She knew well that every penny must be spent wisely; only then can real savings be accumulated.

She had a long-term view; currently, she had several dozen taels, but once new furniture was added, along with bridal bedding, the money would flow like water.

Adding to that, Yu Liulang was already twenty-six and needed a child sooner, lest they wait indefinitely for him to have a son.

After listening to Feng Xiaohua, Mu Shuangshuang felt her uncle had truly found a gem.

Which woman doesn't dream of a fairy-tale wedding, envied by all, radiantly beautiful?

But ultimately, marriage is the affair of two people; outsiders find it glorious, yet the sweet-sour and bitterness still have to be tasted by oneself.

As long as that man is willing to give his all for you, likes you through actions, treats you well instead of just talking, then even without those outward displays, it's inconsequential.

Anyway, a woman after marriage should hold the financial power!

Spend what you may now; it's still yours.

Understanding this, Mu Shuangshuang began actively responding to Feng Xiaohua's words, looking for the cheapest jade earrings with the most beautiful design.

After much selection, she chose a pair of small flower-shaped earrings that matched Feng Xiaohua's name perfectly.

As for the remaining items, Feng Xiaohua didn't want them, but Mu Shuangshuang still picked a bead hairpin.

Single pins, double hairpins, there were many rules in the Da Ning Dynasty, and after marriage, a daughter's home couldn't lack a hairpin.

Two items cost one tael and two qian (200 wen), which made Feng Xiaohua ache inside.

Their faces were less cheerful, and the four strolled around again, now it was already noon.

The four had initially planned to finalize the menu at a restaurant, then order the materials for the day.

They chose a restaurant that looked relatively cheap, ordered a few vegetarian dishes, had a pot of tea, while having this talk over tea.

"Shuangshuang, what do you suggest we order?"

Yu Liulang and Feng Xiaohua were both serious people. Last time after hearing Shuangshuang considering being a chef, naturally, this opportunity should go to family.

Mu Shuangshuang too was a very serious person. She had previously thought she could provide Yu Si Niang some work, to save her from being used as labor every day by Old Mrs. Mu.

At the same time, the communal feast usually takes place during the farm's downtime, not delaying matters while earning money.

Now Mu Shuangshuang wanted to do this because it's a good way to get through various villages—the more places she goes, the better her chance of finding Lu Yuanfeng's mother.

In every village, as long as she builds good relationships with one family, she can get to know several others, and people finding people, word of mouth must be the easiest way to find someone in the Da Ning Dynasty.

"Chicken and fish plus appetizers and soup are indispensable; Shuangshuang has no objection. As for the rest, I plan like this: some meatballs, a green vegetable, a bean sprout dish, and finally a dry pot spicy intestines..."

Mu Shuangshuang named each dish one by one, mentioning the ingredients and prices.

She planned the spicy intestines as the main dish mainly because they were cheap and readily available.

The bean sprouts and greens were already at home, especially the vegetables; those planted earlier had grown quite a bit.

Mu Shuangshuang's house had plenty in the vegetable garden; greens only grow when eaten.

"Alright, we'll go by what Shuangshuang said. After lunch, we'll go and make purchases!"

Everyone's afternoon meal at the restaurant wasn't particularly good. The portions were insufficient and quite expensive.

Yu Liulang ate without savor, remembering the delicious meals at home, pondering it deeply.

"Shuangshuang, if you say, how great would it be if we had that cook? Wouldn't we be eating and drinking well? Plus having a restaurant in town, when visiting next, we wouldn't have to rush back."

Yu Liulang expressed his thoughts.

"But I heard opening a restaurant requires several hundred taels. We don't have such money," Feng Xiaohua said.

"Uncle, Aunt, not hiding from you, Fengzi and I have discussed our future path and considered opening a restaurant or shop, but not now—firstly, we don't have enough capital. Secondly, we're preparing for spring to send our two younger brothers to school."

"This involves considerable expense, yet within three years, at most, Fengzi and I will surely find a stable career!"

Selling cold noodles, hunting—these activities can only earn small amounts. The third branch, along with Lu Yuanfeng and many others, requires a lot monthly for food, clothing, and essentials.

First, we must ensure food security, then go on to expand business; that is the way to survival.

"Alright, your uncle and aunt will join in. We don't have much, but we'll contribute twenty taels."

"Uncle, why don't you discuss such a big decision with my aunt?" Mu Shuangshuang said teasingly.

"Haha, it was discussed, and this is exactly what your aunt meant. She said you know how to do business; surely you'll earn money following you."

Chapter 484: Saving Money for the Child

"Besides, we're saving money for our own kid, hehe!" Yu Liulang said with a smile.

Yu Liulang has saved over thirty taels of silver over the years and given them all to Feng Xiaohua. They took five taels to arrange a banquet and bought various things.

The remaining twenty taels are all in the hands of Feng Xiaohua.

Feng Xiaohua held the silver, not knowing what to do with it. Without a child yet, even after having one, the family has food and drink, and the real concern should be when the child reaches a few years old.

If it's a boy, he must be sent to school.

But in the family, one sister-in-law, Mrs. Li, watches Yu Liulang daily, wishing she could skin him and dig out all his secrets.

Instead of keeping it at home where thieves might target it, Feng Xiaohua straightforwardly suggested that Yu Liulang ask Shuangshuang if she needed capital for business ventures.

So that's how the scene came about.

Mu Shuangshuang felt grateful.

Twenty taels is not a trivial amount. Not to mention whether it can be earned back, if it gets lost, it would all be wasted.

Mu Shuangshuang felt warm inside; at least there are relatives who can comfort her from the distress caused by Old Mrs. Mu's family.

After lunch, the four went their separate ways, and when everything was arranged, they parted ways. But Mu Shuangshuang did not return home immediately.

She thought of going to Uncle Da Niu's house to arrange a few things.

Mu Shuangshuang wasn't joking this time; anyway, Huang Da and Huang Er didn't have anything serious to do, so if she recruited them to help, even if she wasn't cooking, her mother wouldn't be exhausted.

Mu Shuangshuang ordered thirty-six hot pot stoves in one go; after all, banquets can't do without hot pot stoves.

Mu Shuangshuang also ordered alcohol stoves to be picked up on August 14th.

Mu Shuangshuang recalled learning from history that alcohol, once distilled, can become highly concentrated, so it can burn due to its high concentration.

Even firewood could be saved; the best part about alcohol is that it's smokeless, but Mu Shuangshuang wouldn't share this trick with anyone except Fengzi.

These are her secrets for future success, and she won't tell her family because the Old Mu Family is still like a time bomb.

If they find out, she'll only stir trouble for herself.

After all the tasks were done, it was already the latest when Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng returned, and the sun had set while they were still on the path two miles away from the village entrance.

"Fengzi, let's say it's the first time we've watched the sunset together."

Mu Shuangshuang sat cross-legged on Lu Yuanfeng's wheelbarrow with a happy face.

The sunset only appears when the sun sets in the water; when the dawn rises, the sky gets brighter, and when the sunset appears, the sky gets darker.

"I'll watch it with you every time!" said Lu Yuanfeng.

"Fengzi, has anyone told you that you're really good at sweet-talking!" Mu Shuangshuang teased.

But deep down, she was indeed joyful.

Mu Shuangshuang has a thick skin and sees things quite openly.

But in the face of emotions, she's very passive, not knowing how to like someone.

But Fengzi seemed to be like a guide.

Even though he didn't understand much, he knew how to respect and care for her.

He is different from other men.

He is worth Mu Shuangshuang staying by his side!

"Shuangshuang, everything I say is heartfelt. I like the feeling of being with you, it's so relaxing, like all troubles have disappeared," Lu Yuanfeng spoke again.

Mu Shuangshuang tilted her head, feeling sweet inside, like she had eaten honey.

"Then let's watch many more sunsets together in the future!"

"Yes! I'll always be by your side," Lu Yuanfeng said with a cheerful smile.

When they arrived at Er Gui Village, the two quickened their pace and just reached Mu Shuangshuang's house to see Yu Si Niang peeping through the side door.

"Mom, were you waiting for me again?" Mu Shuangshuang shook her head helplessly.

Seeing them, Yu Si Niang finally let go of her hanging heart.

Daughters are different from sons; a son can be wild outside, no problem, but a daughter must be cherished like a treasure.

"Dinner's ready, and when you guys hadn't come back yet, I was thinking of looking for you. Did you pick out good things for your sixth uncle today?"

"Yes, everything that needed discussion is sorted. But I've calculated, and on the night of August 15th, we'll have to celebrate at grandma's house."

After all, with more than ten tables, except for those that must be prepared on the day, Mu Shuangshuang might prepare them the night before or get up early in the morning to do so.

"That's good; ever since I got married, I haven't spent Mid-Autumn Festival at my mother's house. But regarding this matter, your dad has to make the decision. But it's alright; if he doesn't agree, I'll twist his ear."

Yu Si Niang asserted forcefully.

Mu Shuangshuang covered her mouth and giggled, knowing well that her mom always listens to her dad; whatever her dad says is final!

"Mom, let's quickly eat. After a whole day, I'm hungry!" Mu Shuangshuang said.

Only then did Yu Si Niang rush to the kitchen with urgency, set up the dishes, and called Mu Dashan out.

Recently, Mu Dashan had been taking medicine daily and felt less weak.

Previously, he used to sweat profusely at night and was prone to nightmares. Ever since he started recuperating, those symptoms have disappeared.

So, at the dining table, Mu Dashan mentioned this, and everyone was particularly happy.

"How about I go to work too?" Mu Dashan tentatively asked.

But he faced unanimous opposition.

"Dad, health is the foundation for everything. If you don't take care of your health and something happens while working, what will the family do?" Mu Shuangshuang advised.

"Exactly, Uncle Dashan, we're not in a rush. You've rested long enough; I'll help Shuangshuang with the work at home and won't let her be exhausted."

Lu Yuanfeng looked directly at Mu Dashan, his gaze firm.

"Fengzi, I know you're good to our family, to Shuangshuang, but I'm a man and can't always rely on you young ones. I..."

"Who said you rely on the kids? I'm going to earn money with Shuangshuang on August 15th." Yu Si Niang blurted out.

"Then I'd be living off my wife?" Mu Dashan worried aloud.

But Mu Shuangshuang chuckled. This old couple, they pretend to be reasoning, but secretly, aren't they just flaunting their affection?

"Dad, how could you say you're living off your wife? Aren't you making bamboo baskets and straw fans at home? These can be sold to supplement the household and aren't lacking money."

"Exactly, Daddy is awesome! Little Zhi likes Daddy the best." Little Zhi raised her head and made a heart sign to Mu Dashan.

This is what Mu Shuangshuang taught her, to show love to those you like by making a heart sign.

"Alright, alright, I can't win against you guys; you all have something to say!" Mu Dashan shook his head helplessly.

Then he added, "Let's eat. From now on, the last one to finish will wash dishes, clean chopsticks, and tidy up the kitchen!"

After he spoke, everyone grabbed their chopsticks and started gobbling down like a battle. A bowl of sweet potato and wild vegetable rice quickly emptied.

Chapter 485: No Problem with Uncle Passing the Exam

Time flew by quickly, and it was already the Mid-Autumn Festival, the final session for the examinees participating in the Autumn Examination in Qianzhou Prefecture.

After the first exam on August 9th, Mu Dade sent a message saying that he performed exceptionally well this time and was confident that passing was not a problem.

The entire Old Mu Family erupted in joy.

The smile on Mr. Mu's face was broader than usual.

Mr. Mu told everyone he met that his son would definitely pass this time, and the villagers actually believed him.

In recent days, people have been coming to the Old Mu Family to offer congratulations one after another.

Everyone seemed to be caught up in the dream woven by Mu Dade, except for Mu Shuangshuang, who was the only clear-headed one.

She also found it quite puzzling; Liu Zian initially mentioned three exams on August 9th, 12th, and 15th.

Today is the 15th, and logically, there should still be an exam, which hasn't even started yet. So how could Mu Dade predict the future?

But when she thought about Mu Dade's habit of boasting without a second thought, Mu Shuangshuang was relieved.

However, Mu Dade was so confident this time; if he didn't pass, the Old Mu Family probably couldn't continue living in Er Gui Village because it would be too embarrassing.

So, with ill intent, Mu Shuangshuang cursed for Mu Dade not to pass so that he would be utterly humiliated and let the Old Mu Family face the consequences of excessive bragging.

At this moment, Mu Shuangshuang was busy with Mid-Autumn Festivities. The Mid-Autumn Festival is considered a major holiday, a day for family reunions to enjoy the moon and eat mooncakes together.

Mu Shuangshuang got up early to make mooncakes with Yu Si Niang. In the past, she always bought mooncakes with various fillings from outside, but she had never made them herself before.

Even if these mooncakes were just the Five Kernel type.

But it's better than nothing.

The women of the Da Ning Dynasty were the most versatile she had ever seen—they could do everything.

Following Yu Si Niang's instructions, Mu Shuangshuang was kneading dough when Little Zhi suddenly rushed in and whispered to her, "Sister, Brother Yuanfeng is calling you, you should go out!"

"What's he here for?" Mu Shuangshuang didn't move, but Yu Si Niang next to her urged her on.

"Fengzi is calling you, you should go see, I can take care of things here, and we don't have to make a lot. Besides, we still have to go to your grandma's place this afternoon."

Tomorrow is Yu Liulang's wedding day, so it's normal for Yu Si Niang to be excited.

If it weren't for today being the Mid-Autumn Festival, Yu Si Niang would have gone to help out days ago.

Beneath the willow tree, Lu Yuanfeng was holding a large sieve full of dried osmanthus flowers.

As she approached, the scent of osmanthus hit her, and Mu Shuangshuang felt a little intoxicated.

"Why aren't you coming inside?" Mu Shuangshuang asked with a smile.

"Today's a day for family reunions. I won't go in. These osmanthus flowers are for you; you must take them yourself," Lu Yuanfeng emphasized the words "take them yourself," as if there was another meaning behind them.

Mu Shuangshuang immediately sensed it. Looking at the pile of osmanthus flowers stacked high in the middle, there seemed to be something hidden there.

"Fengzi, we are a family; when I reunite, you naturally have to come along. Besides, aren't we going to my sixth uncle's house together this afternoon? That's also a kind of reunion."

In the past, when Mu Shuangshuang went to be the head chef, she couldn't have done it without Lu Yuanfeng's help, and the two had agreed to travel to the surrounding villages together.

Lu Yuanfeng's face flushed with happiness, being acknowledged by Shuangshuang.

"I'll go get Yuanbao, you take your time tidying up."

With that, Lu Yuanfeng ran off, not giving Mu Shuangshuang a chance to speak.

Helplessly, Mu Shuangshuang moved the osmanthus flowers into her room. She reached out and pushed aside the flowers, revealing a purple hairpin lying among them. The hairpin had a simple little flower, but it looked especially beautiful.

This wasn't the first gift Mu Shuangshuang received from Fengzi, but it was indeed her favorite. The headband Fengzi bought her, the purple hairpin Fengzi gave her, and the bamboo mat Fengzi gifted her...

Mu Shuangshuang remembered them all clearly.

Holding the hairpin in hand, Mu Shuangshuang carefully arranged her hair and inserted the hairpin.

Then she changed into another purple dress, which Ah Ru made for her to wear for Yu Liulang's wedding the next day.

Throughout the Da Ning Dynasty, when someone was getting married, others were not allowed to wear red clothes. On the day of the wedding, the bride should be the most dazzling person.

So Mu Shuangshuang couldn't wear her red dress.

Exiting her room, Mu Shuangshuang heard two young children gasp in amazement.

"Sister, you look beautiful!"

Little Zhi rushed over and hugged Mu Shuangshuang's leg.

The amazement in his eyes was evident.

"Little Zhi looks great today too! Not just Little Zhi, but Xiao Han looks great as well, and when Yuanbao arrives, he will too."

Ah Ru had made outfits for the three kids as well, which arrived just in time for the Mid-Autumn Festival. It was a rare occasion for everyone to wear new clothes.

Today wasn't hot, so there wouldn't be any sweating even if they played around. Since Mu Shuangshuang had put on her new clothes, her smile hadn't faded.

Just as she was looking forward to eating mooncakes and reuniting with Fengzi later, she noticed a sneaky head peeking around outside her yard, under a big tree. Upon closer look, who else could it be but Mrs. Lin?

Mu Shuangshuang rolled her eyes.

Was Mrs. Lin planning to steal something?

In broad daylight, how could she be so bold?

So Mu Shuangshuang stood up and circled her family's kitchen to get behind Mrs. Lin.

Mrs. Lin was still looking around, puzzled by Mu Shuangshuang's disappearance. "Huh, where did that little girl go? She was just here!"

"Second Aunt, what are you doing?" Mu Shuangshuang suddenly jumped out, shouting loudly.

Mrs. Lin was so startled that she fell to her knees and took quite a while to get up.

"You little brat, trying to scare me to death!" Mrs. Lin patted her chest, still shaken.

At this point, Mu Shuangshuang found it odd that a pregnant woman, after being frightened, didn't instinctively hold her belly first.

Why did she pat her chest first?

Mu Shuangshuang thought of something but wasn't sure.

"Second Aunt, what were you sneaking around my yard for? Trying to steal something? Or did you see something you wanted and planned to take it?"

Mu Shuangshuang's blunt words almost made Mrs. Lin spit blood in anger.

"You little brat, how could you speak so rudely? How did I steal anything from your house? I'm telling you, don't smear me with your accusations."

"Would someone like Second Aunt still need others to smear you?"

Mu Shuangshuang snorted coldly, not forgetting who once tried to steal fish from their home in the middle of the night and fell into a pig's slop basin.

"Oh, you little brat, will you die if you stop gossiping about me? I kindly invited your third branch to eat, and you make me so angry!" Mrs. Lin stomped her foot in anger.

"Sorry, Second Aunt, but please go back. Our third branch has cooked our own meal; we're not going!"

Chapter 486: Reunion at All Costs

Mu Shuangshuang finished speaking, lifted her chin, and arrogantly walked past Mrs. Lin.

Leaving Mrs. Lin cursing furiously behind her.

Back in the kitchen, she could still hear Mrs. Lin's scolding voice.

Yu Si Niang couldn't help but ask worriedly, "Shuangshuang, what's wrong with your second aunt? Who is she cursing at?"

"My second uncle! Don't worry!" Mu Shuangshuang casually replied.

Yu Si Niang listened, feeling it didn't sound like she was cursing the second uncle, but since her daughter didn't elaborate, she didn't ask further.

"Oh, right, Mom, earlier my second aunt said my grandparents wanted us to go over for Mid-Autumn Festival, but I refused."

Mu Shuangshuang mentioned it casually, also observing the woman's reaction, and seeing she had no longing intentions, she felt relieved.

Sure enough, her family's buns were no longer just buns.

However, she hadn't been happy for long when Yu Si Niang spoke again.

"Shuangshuang, in the past, when our family hadn't split up, the Mid-Autumn Festival was also a big family gathering. Your Fourth Aunt and I would be in the kitchen, making mooncakes early in the morning, also fried dough twists, and gui hua cakes. Your grandma was stingy, but during festivals, she would still allow these festival snacks."

"You were just a tiny thing back then, standing beside the stove, barely visible. When I was making mooncakes, you would watch beside me. When I wasn't paying attention, you climbed onto the table, grabbing a freshly made mooncake. Your hands and mouth were burnt, but you wouldn't let go of that mooncake."

"Your grandma came in and slapped you, calling you a greedy thing. Back then, I thought, if our family could separate, how great it would be. I would make mooncakes, and you could eat as much as you wanted without me saying a word."

As Yu Si Niang spoke, her eyes gradually reddened.

"Mom, let the past be the past, don't think about it anymore. Isn't our family doing quite well now? Although we're not a big family anymore, we have our small family, and when we eat something, no one says anything."

At this moment, Mu Shuangshuang felt fortunate not to have the original owner's memories; otherwise, such unbearable memories might suffocate her.

"Yes, today is a day for reunion, Mom shouldn't cry, Mom has to make mooncakes for you all, you can eat as much as you want."

Yu Si Niang wiped her tears, seeming to speak to herself, but also to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Yes, yes, I must eat a lot today!"

Mu Shuangshuang started busying herself again with Yu Si Niang in making mooncakes.

Mrs. Lin returned to the Old Mu Family, putting on a pitiful act.

In the main room, only her voice could be heard.

"Mom, you have no idea what that damn girl said. She said she wouldn't eat our stinking rice, wouldn't walk through our stinking door, and even threatened to beat me if I went again. Mom, that damn girl is too arrogant."

Beside her, Mu Dalang frowned, hearing his mother clearly telling untruths. He couldn't help but defend Shuangshuang, "Mom, Shuangshuang isn't that kind of person. Even if she really doesn't visit, she would only say she won't come!"

"Shut up, you brat! You dare to side with outsiders before your wings are fully grown? What's so good about that wretched girl? Why are you protecting her? Did she enchant you or something?" Mrs. Lin angrily shouted at Mu Dalang.

Mu Qingqing also nodded in agreement beside them.

"Exactly, big brother, could you have fallen for that wretched girl? Remember, you're cousins."

"Shut up, Qingqing, Shuangshuang is your sister, my sister. Aren't you ashamed saying such things?"

Mu Dalang was furious; he never imagined his own sister could say such filthy things.

"Mom, look at big brother..." Mu Qingqing stomped her foot, looking reluctant.

"Alright, all of you say less. Today is Mid-Autumn, a day for family reunions. A family should harmoniously have a meal together. Dalang, you have good relations with the third branch, and they trust you. Go call the third branch to join us for the reunion meal."

Mr. Mu interjected just in time, preventing a big argument.

"Okay, grandpa, I'll go right away!"

Behind him, no matter how Mrs. Lin yelled, Mu Dalang didn't stop, instead striding swiftly, disappearing in no time.

He went straight to Shuangshuang's house, entered the kitchen, and stated his purpose directly.

"Shuangshuang, Fourth Aunt, grandpa asked me to call you over for lunch. He said it's a rare family reunion, so hurry up and come with me!"

"Big cousin, we've already started making our own food, so we won't be going. Earlier when the second aunt came, Shuangshuang already said we wouldn't have time to go."

Mu Dalang had come, and Mu Shuangshuang's attitude made a complete 180-degree turn for the better.

"Big cousin, why don't you wait a bit? My mom's mooncakes are almost ready."

Yu Si Niang had already prepared some mooncakes, all molded in various shapes—round, square, even animal shapes.

Making so many types of mooncakes was something Mu Shuangshuang hadn't imagined.

The method of making mooncakes in ancient times was particularly simple. Start by frying with oil, with fillings like rock candy, pine nuts, walnuts, candied fruits, jujube paste, and peanuts. The fillings inside are soft.

Yu Si Niang poured half a pot of rapeseed oil into the large iron wok. This was nearly half a month's oil supply for the third branch. As the oil gradually heated, she began placing mooncakes in the pot.

Seeing this, Mu Dalang actually didn't leave. He started helping out by adding firewood to Shuangshuang's household.

He wasn't a Golden Noble, but a capable hand at tending the fire.

They say the hardest part of making food is preparation. In just a while, the mooncakes were scooped out one by one. Instead of giving them to the kids immediately, Yu Si Niang sprinkled on a small handful of sesame seeds and a few pieces of dried fruit.

The first batch of mooncakes wasn't given to anyone but placed in a clean bowl and set beside the stove, where the Kitchen God's altar was.

Usually, any delicious food made at home would first be offered to the Kitchen God.

In anticipation that during the night of the twenty-third of the twelfth lunar month, when the Kitchen God ascends to heaven, he might say some good words on their behalf.

The second batch of mooncakes was given to Mu Dalang, along with a fork and a small knife.

These were all prepared by Uncle Da Niu for them; everyone at home, including Lu Yuanfeng, had a set each.

Yu Si Niang hadn't known what they were for before, but when it was time to make mooncakes, she realized they could be used to cut mooncakes.

However, since Shuangshuang said it wasn't mainly for mooncakes, Yu Si Niang didn't bother to ask in detail.

Mu Dalang looked at the knife and fork, completely baffled.

He knew that mooncakes at home were usually eaten by hand, but that was after they were cold; so what was this for?

Seeing his confusion, Mu Shuangshuang kindly demonstrated the use of the knife and fork.

"Big cousin, freshly made mooncakes are too hot to eat by hand. We'll cut them with this knife and use the fork to eat."

The mooncake slices were just slightly larger than a thumb, perfectly revealing the filling inside.

Mu Shuangshuang handed the knife and fork to Mu Dalang.

Mu Dalang took them, ate a piece of mooncake, and was immediately delighted in his heart.

His third aunt's craftsmanship was unsurpassed; it was truly delicious!

Chapter 487: It's a Woman's Business, Don't Interfere

"But I still like using my hands, that's how I get the feel!" Mu Dalang chuckled.

Perhaps he really considered Mu Shuangshuang as one of his own, so he didn't feel awkward saying such things.

"I actually think the same, mooncakes should be eaten by hand to get the full flavor!"

"Haha..."

The kitchen was immediately filled with laughter and chatter.

Mu Dalang's "return without success" made Mr. Mu feel embarrassed. This time, he personally came to invite the third branch over.

But before he even stepped out of the main house, Old Mrs. Mu started taunting him.

"Old man, what are you doing? If that rotten girl won't come, then she won't come. She's not of the Old Mu Family's blood anyway."

"Aren't you ashamed, licking your old face to beg them? Aren't you just reluctant to part with the now-rounded third daughter-in-law?"

Old Mrs. Mu's words almost drove Mr. Mu to death.

"You old hag, can't expect ivory from a dog's mouth! The third daughter-in-law is my daughter-in-law; how can you say such things?"

"Why can't I say it? With so many people in this family, you don't care, always running to the third branch. What am I supposed to think? Our Xiangxiang is quite grown up, but I've never seen you care about her!" Old Mrs. Mu said fiercely.

She was now eager to peel off the third branch's skin, so inviting them for dinner was out of the question!

Mu Xiangxiang beside her was also very agitated.

If the third branch doesn't come, there'll be one less family to eat mooncakes later, and she certainly doesn't want the third branch to come.

"Dad, if you want the third branch to come, I won't eat!" Mu Xiangxiang threatened.

"Old man, did you hear that? If the third branch comes, Xiangxiang won't eat, and if Xiangxiang doesn't eat, I won't let the fourth daughter-in-law cook, none of you will eat!"

The matter of inviting the third branch for Mid-Autumn ended inconclusively.

Mr. Mu felt a blockage in his heart, preventing him from feeling better for quite a while. None of his sons or daughters-in-law even looked at him, and even though he clutched his chest, no one asked.

Mr. Mu suddenly felt uncomfortable.

Clearly, his eldest son was about to finish high school, but why did he feel like this family was becoming less of a family?

"Second daughter-in-law, don't be lazy, hurry to the kitchen to help, we're not raising lazy, bad wives here.

Mrs. Lin certainly didn't want to go; the kitchen was greasy, and there was so much work to do. She was more suited to eating.

"Mother, isn't Mrs. Liu already in the kitchen? Can't she handle everything herself? Why go and help her? Besides, I can't stand the smell of oil because I'm pregnant."

"I'm telling you to go, so go. This is a house full of men; you have no business speaking here as a woman."

"If you want to be lazy, don't come into the Old Mu Family's house. Don't think that just because the eldest is about to become successful, you can do nothing. Let me tell you, doing nothing but eating makes you a pig, so get lost!"

As Old Mrs. Mu spoke, she pushed Mrs. Lin out, shoving her all the way out.

Mrs. Lin cursed Old Mrs. Mu outside the house before angrily walking toward the kitchen.

At this time, in the kitchen, Mrs. Liu had already shaped the mooncakes and was waiting to make more before frying them later.

Mu Xiaxia was in the kitchen helping Mrs. Liu make the food. Like Mu Shuangshuang, she asked about the method her mother used to make mooncakes.

But Mrs. Liu wasn't as sentimental.

This family with more than a dozen mouths to feed took quite some time just to prepare the food. Mrs. Liu had been up working before sunrise.

Up until now, she hadn't had a sip of water. The breakfast for Mid-Autumn wouldn't be cooked separately, just the mooncakes and the fried twists or little snacks afterwards.

"Mrs. Liu, mother asked me to tell you to hurry up; the whole family is waiting for you to eat, their bellies are almost empty!"

Mrs. Lin suddenly appeared at the kitchen door, urging Mrs. Liu.

Mrs. Liu was already tired after working all morning, and this urging made her feel even more dizzy.

Looking at the already shaped mooncakes, Mrs. Lin suddenly wanted to eat them, so she hurried.

"What are you still doing? Make these mooncakes first, if you delay mother's meal, she'll peel your skin."

Mrs. Liu shuddered, causing her movements to slow. Mrs. Lin rushed over.

"Can't you hear me? I said to make these snacks first; are you deaf?"

Mrs. Lin cursed and spat as she scolded, causing Mrs. Liu to dodge naturally. This dodge enraged Mrs. Lin, who grabbed something from the table and aimed at Mrs. Liu.

With a crash, the basin of mooncakes that had just been made fell to the ground.

Mrs. Liu turned pale with fright, as did Mrs. Lin. If the old lady found out, they'd be skinned alive.

Mrs. Lin immediately yelled.

"Mother, Mrs. Liu knocked all the mooncakes to the ground!"

This shout made Mrs. Liu feel like she had been struck by lightning, staring blankly at Mrs. Lin.

"Second Aunt, you're lying. You knocked them to the ground yourself, why blame my mom?"

Mu Xiaxia loudly accused, but Mrs. Liu pulled her down, causing Mu Xiaxia to sit right on the mooncakes, dirtying them with mud, turning the white flour into "gray flour."

Old Mrs. Mu came in just in time to see Mu Xiaxia sitting on the ground, the mooncakes that had been shaped spread all over, squashed under Mu Xiaxia's bottom.

And Mrs. Liu stood "looking panicked" nearby.

Old Mrs. Mu immediately understood what had happened.

"Good gracious, you two wasteful women, fools, dared to smash my mooncakes, I won't spare your lives today!"

"A bunch of sows, all they do is eat, you've gone too far!"

Old Mrs. Mu picked up a stick from the stove and struck Mu Xiaxia.

Previously, she swore to Xing Beichen not to touch Mrs. Liu, but now all those words meant nothing, striking and scolding.

"You worthless thing, all of you in this house are equally bad; don't these mooncakes cost money?"

Mu Xiaxia was struck, causing her leg to swell immediately.

"Grandma, it wasn't me or my mom, it was Second Aunt, she knocked the basin over, it was her who ruined the mooncakes!"

Mu Xiaxia cried and explained.

"Mother, don't listen to this little girl nonsense, I hadn't even entered the kitchen. Just now I heard this mother-daughter duo discussing stealing the first mooncake. I intervened, and that's why they're scared."

Mrs. Lin looked at Old Mrs. Mu with a face full of grievance.

This only fueled Old Mrs. Mu's anger.

"Greedy lot, the second daughter-in-law has spoken. What else is there to say?"

The stick slammed mercilessly onto Mu Xiaxia and Mrs. Liu, who first protected Mu Xiaxia but later both tried to escape.

The men in the house only cared about eating, paying no attention to what was going on outside.

Mu Dajiang wanted to rush out and look but was stopped by Mu Dazhong.

"Fourth brother, it's a woman's affair, why are you joining in?"

"Exactly, fourth brother, which family's backyard doesn't catch fire? As long as fish aren't caught in the crossfire, we should just turn a blind eye!" added Mu Danian.

Chapter 488: Mastering the Art of Lying

"Get out of the way, I'm going to find Xiaxia's mother."

Mu Dajiang's eyes were bloodshot as he glared fiercely at Mu Dazhong, then pushed past him and rushed out.

"Dad, look at Old Fourth, he doesn't listen to me, his elder brother!" Mu Dazhong said helplessly.

Mr. Mu stood up and walked outside.

Mu Xiaxia held her mother's hand, desperately running forward, only to find herself in Mu Shuangshuang's yard.

At this moment, Yu Si Niang had already made the second batch of mooncakes, along with fried dough twists and fritters. She was waiting for the third batch of mooncakes to finish so she could fry these.

"Mom, later I'm thinking of sending some mooncakes to Little Yunzi's aunt, Uncle Er Gouzi, and Grandpa Zhang's house. What do you think?"

Mu Shuangshuang asked as she added firewood.

"Of course it's good, dear. We can't finish all of this anyway."

Suddenly, the yard was filled with commotion, curses, and women's screams. Mu Shuangshuang immediately recognized Liu Jinhua's voice and threw down the firewood in her hands.

"Mom, watch the stove, I'll be right back!"

In the yard, Old Mrs. Mu was wielding a stick, beating Mrs. Liu and Mu Xiaxia. Mu Xiaxia was limping, likely from a beating from Old Mrs. Mu.

"Grandma, what are you doing?" Mu Shuangshuang cried out to stop her.

"You brat, stay out of the Old Mu Family's business. Today I'm going to beat these lazy, deceitful women!"

Old Mrs. Mu swung the stick again towards Mrs. Liu.

Mu Shuangshuang frowned and stepped forward, holding back Old Mrs. Mu.

"You brat, let go of me." Old Mrs. Mu tried to snatch the stick back, but Mu Shuangshuang's grip was like an iron clamp, impossible to break.

"Grandma, I can't let you kill someone in my yard today. It's a day for family reunion. Our third branch can't have bloodshed, or how will we celebrate?"

On a day meant for reunion, Mu Shuangshuang wouldn't allow such misfortune to occur.

Mrs. Lin, rushing over, began to accuse loudly.

"Mom, this brat is in cahoots with the fourth branch! Maybe it was her who told the fourth branch to ruin our mooncakes. Don't let her off!"

"No, mom, it was the second sister-in-law who knocked them over, it was her..." Mrs. Liu cried, her face swollen and pitiful.

"You're lying! You were greedy, got caught by me, got scared, and knocked over the mooncakes yourself, then blamed me." Mrs. Lin pointed at Mrs. Liu's nose, cursing.

For some reason, Mrs. Liu suddenly went berserk, charging at Mrs. Lin and slapping her hard several times.

The power of an honest person exploding is tremendous. Mrs. Lin was so dazed by the hits that it took a while for her to react.

"Liu Jinhua, how dare you hit me, I'll fight you to the death!"

The two women immediately tangled into a brawl, grabbing necks, pulling hair, pinching flesh, using every trick women know.

Despite this, Mrs. Liu slowly started to lose.

Seeing this, Shuangshuang shouted, "Grandpa, come quickly, Second Aunt is going to kill my Fourth Aunt and my sister Xi Xia!"

"Grandpa, someone's going to die..."

Mr. Mu had just reached the yard under the big camphor tree of the third branch when he heard the screams and rushed over.

The two women on the ground were already in a frenzy, Mrs. Liu's hair was undone, and Mrs. Lin's face was a mess. They looked at each other as if they were mortal enemies.

Old Mrs. Mu was still struggling in Mu Shuangshuang's grip.

"You all, get apart! It's a holiday, do you need someone to die to be happy?" Mr. Mu roared angrily.

"Xi Xia's mother, what's wrong with you?" Mu Dajiang saw his wife beaten like this and rushed over anxiously.

Just then, Mu Dazhong blocked Mu Dajiang again.

"Old Fourth, your wife hit my wife, you want to help her without asking me?"

"Daddy Gou Dan, you're just in time, they hit me! Mrs. Liu knocked over the mooncakes herself and tried to blame it on me, they're so cruel!" Lin chimed in.

The scene was chaotic, and in the kitchen, Yu Si Niang sorted things out, and when she came out, she saw Lin and Mrs. Liu together and somehow found the strength to separate them.

With the two apart, the tension eased a bit, but Mu Shuangshuang still didn't let go.

"You brat, let go of me!"

Old Mrs. Mu, unwilling to be held by Mu Shuangshuang, cursed and spat at her. If Mu Shuangshuang hadn't dodged nimbly, the spit would have landed on her face.

But Lin, standing behind her, wasn't so lucky. The spit hit her face, making her scream and almost retch.

Mu Shuangshuang grew more suspicious. She noticed several times during the fight that her Fourth Aunt hit Lin in the stomach, but she showed no discomfort.

Moreover, throughout the whole thing, she was set on hitting her Fourth Aunt, without an ounce of concern for her stomach.

If, as she claimed, she was carrying a boy, wouldn't you expect her to show some care for her belly, at least like she did with Gou Dan?

Gou Dan was only for her to discipline.

It could only mean one thing: Lin wasn't pregnant at all.

Realizing this, Mu Shuangshuang had a sudden clarity.

However, she wasn't sure if she should expose it. Logically, Lin wouldn't do such a thing just for fun; she might be up to something.

But this matter didn't really concern her.

After thinking it over, Mu Shuangshuang decided to keep an eye on things.

"Everyone shut up! Old second, hold your wife! Old fourth, watch Mrs. Liu! Shuang, you take care of your grandma! Anyone who makes trouble again will be thrown out!"

Mr. Mu's furious yell finally calmed the chaos, and those looking to profit from the mess dared not move.

Now it was Mr. Mu's turn to take control.

"Now tell me, what really happened today?"

Lin naturally accused Mrs. Liu, elaborately describing everything from entering the house to the incident.

Mrs. Liu and Mu Xiaxia told the truth. Mrs. Liu held back tears, her eyes only slightly reddened, but Mu Xiaxia sobbed uncontrollably, hiccupping incessantly.

"Grandpa, you must believe me and my mom, we didn't touch the mooncakes."

"Didn't touch them? The mooncakes were under your butt! Do you think your grandpa and grandma are fools? It's obvious you and your mom did it on purpose so no one else could have mooncakes." Lin continued to throw mud.

Mu Shuangshuang immediately knew who was lying.

At this point, she had no choice but to speak.

"Second Aunt, earlier you said Fourth Aunt and Xiaxia planned to steal the mooncakes and got scared when you caught them, accidentally knocking them over. Now you say they did it on purpose, so no one else could eat them. Why do you keep changing your story? Or are you just lying?"

Mu Shuangshuang's words startled Lin.

She started to stutter.

"You... you... you brat, don't you dare throw mud at me! I'm not afraid of you, I'll tell you that!"

Chapter 489:

"Aunt Second, your explanation is useless to me. You need to explain to my grandparents since the money for those mooncakes was given by them."

Mu Shuangshuang seemed indifferent.

"Mrs. Lin, tell me, old woman, what exactly is going on today?"

Old Mrs. Mu is not easily fooled; upon thinking it over, something seems off.

She wouldn't dare accuse others, but Mrs. Liu stealing food?

Her courage is smaller than a mouse's. If she shouted, Mrs. Liu would be so scared she might wet herself.

There's something fishy about this.

"Mother, are you suspecting me, suspecting your eldest grandson?" Mrs. Liu recalled her own "fake goods" and began to act pitifully.

"Humph, you know very well yourself." Old Mrs. Mu said sarcastically.

"Mother, I'm innocent. If I did such a thing, then let the child in my belly die terribly."

As soon as she finished speaking, Old Mrs. Mu slapped Mrs. Lin.

"If you die, you die, but don't drag my grandson down! I'll beat you to death!"

Old Mrs. Mu was about to strike again when Mrs. Lin ran to Mr. Mu.

"Dad, save me! Mom's going to kill me."

Mr. Mu, with a stern face, dropped the tobacco in his hand heavily onto the ground.

"In this family, who is in charge, who calls the shots? Are you all rebelling against me? Do you still consider me your father?"

Of course, the sons nodded.

"Dad, you're definitely our biological father. If not you, then who?" Mu Danian said with a flattering smile.

Among these people, he had the sharpest mind, knowing when to yield and when to speak nicely.

"Yes, Dad, we'll stop causing trouble. Whatever you say goes!" Mu Dazhong nodded too.

"And you, old woman, lately you haven't been respecting me as the head of this household. Do you think you'll be in charge from now on?"

Old Mrs. Mu's expression changed immediately.

A wife should act according to her husband, a widow according to her son!

No matter how fierce she is, the sky in this household is still her husband, Mr. Mu.

She should stand by her man, not disgrace him.

"Old man, of course you call the shots in this family—who dares to defy you, I'll skin her!"

Old Mrs. Mu glared fiercely, suddenly appearing more savage!

But this savageness was directed at Mu Shuangshuang.

Old Mrs. Mu's eyes were full of warning.

Mu Shuangshuang just smiled without replying. After all, she didn't get along with the old lady, and she didn't believe a stare could kill.

"Regarding today's incident, I, the old man, won't pursue it. Those preparing food should continue doing so!"

"Wife of Old Fourth, I asked your Second Sister-in-law, Sixth Son, to invite you over for the festival before, but you all wouldn't come. I, the old man, am here now, humbly inviting your family to come over, just to keep this old man company and have a chat, it'll be nice!"

As Mr. Mu spoke this much, Yu Si Niang couldn't refuse.

"Grandfather, Feng Ziyuan was originally going to celebrate at our house, we..." Mu Shuangshuang said awkwardly.

"Let him come too. I know he has a good relationship with your family."

Mr. Mu rarely showed generosity, but Old Mrs. Mu felt a piece of meat being taken away.

The things made at home during the Mid-Autumn Festival weren't bad, why should outsiders benefit?

But remembering that she had just promised to give her husband face, she could only angrily glare at Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang originally didn't want to go, but Old Mrs. Mu's look stirred a desire within her to go. Anyway, her family hadn't prepared lunch yet, so all snacks would be brought to her grandmother's house for dinner.

Deciding so, Mu Shuangshuang nodded.

"Grandpa, we'll definitely come for lunch! It'll be a family reunion."

Mr. Mu finally felt satisfied and left.

Inviting someone, three visits to the cottage—Mr. Mu should have been unhappy about this, but somehow, today he felt inexplicably happy. He told himself he must let the third branch know later that the eldest was going to succeed in the examination.

The matter ended, and although Mrs. Liu felt aggrieved, she wasn't severely blamed.

In the courtyard, only the family of the fourth branch remained.

Mu Shuangshuang directly invited them to the kitchen, brought out the mooncakes, but none of the three ate.

"Uncle Fourth, Aunt Fourth, please have some. Just take a few for Xiao Chu later."

Xiao Chu was only three years old. Usually, when Mrs. Liu worked, the child played around at the kitchen or in the threshold of the main room.

Or he would play alone with a broken pottery bowl in the sand in front of Old Mu Family's courtyard, scooping sand alone for an entire afternoon or morning without needing supervision.

So, during the previous altercation, he didn't appear.

"Shuangshuang, Aunt Fourth thanks you for helping out earlier. Aunt Fourth doesn't know how to repay you."

Saying this, Mrs. Liu started to wipe her tears. She still had that punk hairstyle, her hair unkempt, looking quite haggard.

"Shuangshuang, Si Niang, thank you for helping Xiaxia's mother earlier, I... I also don't know how to thank you." Mu Dajiang added.

"Ah, we're all pitiful people. Our family situation is similar to yours and endured through thick and thin for some time. Better days will come soon, naturally things will improve!"

"Yes, better days will come along soon!" Mu Dajiang said, opening his mouth with great effort to say this.

But will good days really come?

Mu Dajiang didn't know. Yet, the three still each ate two mooncakes that weren't hot but were warm.

Yu Si Niang chose two mooncakes and asked Mu Dajiang to deliver them to Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu.

This time, Mu Shuangshuang said nothing.

Mid-Autumn, the day of reunion—let Baozi Niang make baozi once more!

"Mom, I'll take some mooncakes to Aunt Xiao Yun!" Mu Shuangshuang packed three mooncakes into a bowl, divided them into three portions, then found a bamboo basket to hold everything and went out.

The fourth branch only took one mooncake for Xiao Chu; the rest were adamant about not accepting, leaving Yu Si Niang no choice but to let the fourth branch go.

With the mooncakes given by the third branch, Mu Dajiang was surrounded as soon as he returned to the main room.

"I told you, Old Fourth and the third branch have a good relationship. If he went, he surely could bring mooncakes back."

Mu Dazhong reached out to grab them, but Mu Dajiang blocked him.

"These are for Dad and Mom, Brother Second, no eating them!"

In the pottery bowl, there were only two mooncakes. Fortunately, the portions were sizable enough for Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu.

Old Mrs. Mu snatched the bowl, didn't let Mu Dajiang speak, and started scolding.

"Stingy people truly are stingy. So many people in the house, and they only send two. Is this for feeding cats? Not even enough for Xiangxiang."

"Mom, I want to eat!" Mu Xiangxiang said nearby.

"Good Xiangxiang, Mom will give these to you." Old Mrs. Mu handed both mooncakes to Mu Xiangxiang, ignoring the looks from the other sons.

Mu Dazhong stood beside, drooling.

Chapter 490: Rushing to Go

Mu Xiangxiang, in front of everyone, devoured two big mooncakes until not a crumb was left, even licking her fingers repeatedly.

Her ten fingers, at this moment, were glistening, covered in Mu Xiangxiang's saliva.

Logically speaking, Mu Xiangxiang eating all the good stuff by herself would be considered disrespectful, but Old Mrs. Mu watched her eat with an indulgent smile.

In the family, the most fierce one didn't speak up, who would dare criticize?

Of course not!

"Mom, I want more!" Mu Xiangxiang licked her fingers and looked pitifully at Old Mrs. Mu.

"Alright, alright, I'll see if your Fourth Aunt has made more!"

The basin that fell to the ground earlier was just part of the Old Mu Family's mooncakes. Old Mrs. Mu firmly believed that within such a short time, Mrs. Liu should have gone to make more mooncakes in the kitchen.

"But I want to eat Third Sister-in-law's, the ones she makes have sesame and dried fruits, they're so delicious."

Mu Xiangxiang clung to Old Mrs. Mu's hand, acting spoiled and coy.

Old Mrs. Mu's heart melted immediately.

"Then we'll wait for your Third Sister-in-law to come later, I'll have her bring you more!"

At lunchtime, Mu Shuangshuang brought the whole family to the Old Mu Family's to mooch a meal.

Lu Yuanfeng initially didn't want to go, but Mu Shuangshuang promised him any condition, as long as it wasn't too much.

Understanding that men value face, Mu Shuangshuang knew there was no need to respect someone like Old Mrs. Mu. Besides, Lu Yuanfeng would eventually be a part of her family, so it was good to get familiar with the oddball she faced every day in advance!

The lunch was also prepared by Mrs. Liu, working tirelessly like a spinning top from morning until night without a rest, and by the time the meal was ready, she couldn't even straighten her back.

It just so happened that despite all her hard work, there wasn't even a chair for her to sit on.

The supposed absence of a chair was because Mu Shuangshuang glanced around and saw only one empty seat at the dining table. But Mu Xiangxiang wasn't there, which meant that seat was reserved for her, leaving no place for Mrs. Liu.

As usual, there were two tables, one for children and one for adults. Breaking tradition, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng chose to sit at the children's table to avoid seeing Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu's old faces.

Mu Xiangxiang went to the outhouse and, seeing the third branch's people arrived without bringing mooncakes, threw a tantrum immediately.

Especially seeing Mu Shuangshuang wearing new purple clothes and well-styled hair today, jealousy surged in her heart.

"Mom, I want to eat mooncakes." Mu Xiangxiang said while shrugging her shoulders, acting all coy and spoiled.

"I'll go to the kitchen to get some for you!" Old Mrs. Mu stood up, taking just a few steps before being stopped by Mu Xiangxiang.

"I don't want it, I said I want Third Sister-in-law's with sesame. I want sesame."

Sesame is not common among farm households.

Because the seasons for sesame and cotton overlap, land used for sesame cannot be used for cotton.

Given that sesame seeds are tiny and yield low, farm families prefer to plant cotton.

"Third Daughter-in-law, your sister calls so pitifully, don't you know to go get some mooncakes from home? Still thinking of holding back, waiting for what, to lay eggs?"

Yu Si Niang was stunned, initially wanting to stand up, but was held down by her husband.

"Mom, weren't two mooncakes sent earlier? I heard you and Dad didn't eat them, they were given to Xiangxiang. She's just a girl, doesn't have to do anything. Eating two mooncakes isn't enough?"

Mu Dashan's words resonated strongly.

No one knew when, but he started confronting Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu directly.

For things Mr. Mu said, he would choose to refuse.

For this issue today, if his parents had eaten that mooncake, perhaps he might still give Xiangxiang some. Now having eaten two, it's not possible to have more.

Mu Dashan's speech shocked everyone in the upper room.

Everyone knew that Mu Dashan was introverted, always obeying Old Mrs. Mu, treating both parents respectfully after moving out, never saying a harsh word.

What's gotten into him today?

Did he eat the heart of a bear, the gall of a leopard?

But the third branch people couldn't be happier.

Mu Dashan is the family's axis, and when the axis toughens up, others can too.

"Darn Third, why are you so stingy? This is your sister; why can't you give her some food? Now you all have families and businesses, only Xiangxiang is unmarried, aren't you supposed to support her?"

Old Mrs. Mu spoke it as if it made perfect sense, like the whole world owed Mu Xiangxiang something.

Mu Dashan didn't argue with her about this topic, simply sat down without moving.

The result, of course, left Mu Xiangxiang unsatisfied; she started making a fuss again.

"Mom, you don't love me anymore, I want something tasty, and you won't let me, I hate you!"

With that, Mu Xiangxiang picked up chopsticks, furiously grabbing meat from the table.

A bowl of braised pork, she took it all, eating the lean meat, spitting the fat onto the table.

So disgusting!

Yet Old Mrs. Mu couldn't bear to scold her.

It made others fume with rage.

Meanwhile, the dishes were brought one after another, Mrs. Liu busied herself like a spinning top, as Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng stood up to help with serving, while the others generally didn't move.

When the last dish was served, Mrs. Liu was about to head to the kitchen to eat, but Mu Shuangshuang held her back.

"Fourth Aunt, you worked hardest today, have my seat." Mu Shuangshuang offered her chair.

Lu Yuanfeng, Xiao Han, Little Zhi, and Yuanbao also stood up together.

"Sis, take my stool..."

"Shuangshuang, my stool is for you..."

The four offered their spots to Mu Shuangshuang simultaneously, with Old Mrs. Mu glaring fiercely at her.

But Mr. Mu was a bit shaken.

The Old Mu Family had never seen such a scene of courtesy, everyone afraid to miss out, hustling for food the moment it's on the table, ignoring whether others had enough.

Deep down, Mr. Mu appreciated this atmosphere, brothers friendly and respectful, children filial to the elders.

Yet ultimately it was unachievable at home.

He sighed.

Suddenly Mr. Mu said, "Old Third, tomorrow is the day Yu Family's Sixth Son gets married?"

Mr. Mu actually knew long ago, as the Yu Family had already sent someone to invite them.

"Yes, truly a joyous day!" Mu Dashan laughed.

"What time are you going?"

"Today we're going to help out, planning to leave after lunch," Mu Dashan said.

"That's good; tomorrow your mom and I will go in the morning, make it for lunch, and after dinner return home together as a family," Mr. Mu said to himself.

This statement caused ripples in the eyes of the Old Mu Family people.

Attending a banquet isn't like ordinary hospitality, chicken, fish, and meat are abundant, yet their parents wouldn't take them, aren't they being left out of the feast?

"Dad, let me go with you. You and mom are getting on in years; you need someone to look after you on the road, right? Besides, I'm unmarried, and the Yu Family might want me to accompany the brothers!"