

Folly 491

Chapter 491: Scamming for Food and Drinks

Mr. Mu heard it and realized it made sense and was just about to nod in agreement when Mu Xiangxiang started crying.

"Dad, I want to go too. I want to eat good food; the food at home is not tasty at all."

Old Mrs. Mu's heart immediately melted.

"Alright, alright, if our Xiangxiang wants to go, I'll take you. Whatever you want to eat, Mommy will get it for you!"

The other branches saw this and promptly chimed in.

"Mom, I'm going to work for the Old Yu Family. If they're short-handed, they won't need to hire outsiders." Mu Dazhong said.

"Mom, I'll help pour the tea. I pour tea very well." Mrs. Lin said.

"Mom, we want to go too..." Mu Dajiang suddenly stood up and said.

At this point, things became problematic.

Old Mrs. Mu had decided not to spend much, at most thirty silver coins. With so many people going, they might be asked for a second round of host money.

In the Da Ning Dynasty, once married, you were considered a separate household, even if not formally divided.

Like Mu Dazhong and Mu Dajiang, when they dine out, only their names can be recorded in the wedding registry.

However, Mu Dalian can because he's not yet married, so he's considered part of the Old Mu Family and can be included under Mr. Mu's name.

"What are you going for? Your sister is so thin, and you don't consider her, plus do you have guest money? If not, don't accept this invitation, or you'll embarrass us!"

Old Mrs. Mu scolded a few sons and daughters-in-law, then turned to coax Mu Xiangxiang.

"Xiangxiang, darling, since you're not married, you can eat with your parents."

Mu Dalian's eyes immediately brightened upon hearing this.

"Mom, I'm not married either, can I go too?"

"Go where? You're a tall and strong man. Who would believe you're not married? They would think we, the Old Mu Family, are deliberately bringing so many people for food and drinks! You may want the embarrassment, but I don't!"

Old Mrs. Mu perfectly illustrated what it means to be biased.

Mu Dalian angrily sat down, his face looking extremely unhappy.

Usually, anything delicious would be snatched away by this little sister, and others either had what she couldn't finish or what she didn't want.

Today with the braised pork, although so many hadn't eaten, she alone finished a bowl and spit the fatty parts onto the table.

Mu Dalian felt that no one could compare to his sister's behavior.

"What are you waiting for? Hurry and eat!" Mr. Mu spoke.

Yet, everyone ate reluctantly, while all the tasty dishes went into Mu Xiangxiang's stomach.

Actually, Mu Xiangxiang didn't eat much; she just had bad habits, being too domineering, wanting to meddle in everything.

For example, if she found a dish tasty but couldn't finish it, she would lick her chopsticks a few times, then stir it in the food, leaving her saliva all over the dish, making others reluctant to eat.

This method was unfailingly successful; even Mrs. Lin wouldn't eat food tainted by her chopsticks.

Because it was too disgusting!

Suddenly, Mu Danian stood up and rushed towards the children's table, seemingly intending to take food from there. Mu Shuangshuang, with sharp eyes, quickly dished out food for her little child and Lu Yuanfeng.

The other kids probably thought the same as Mu Shuangshuang, busying their hands and feet, while Gou Dan directly spat into a nearby bowl.

Mu Danian was so angry he could spit blood.

Mu Shuangshuang and others also felt disgusted and swore never to eat at the same table with Gou Dan again.

The Old Mu Family's upbringing certainly had issues. Regardless of Lu Yuanfeng being a guest, they were too open about family matters, taking him for granted.

Mr. Mu's face was flushed with anger as he was a person who cared deeply about face, feeling his family's actions were undermining his authority.

"Dad, calm down. Xiaxia's mother and I won't go." Mu Dajiang volunteered to back out, easing Mr. Mu's mood a bit.

A meal that turned out strangely but nonetheless ended up as a reunion dinner as Mr. Mu wished.

After the meal, Mu Shuangshuang packed up things to take away, changing out of her new clothes since she was about to work.

Once everything was ready, Mu Shuangshuang locked each door with a big lock.

The piglet at home was entrusted to Aunt Zhao Yun, while Lu Yuanfeng's chicks at the back of the mountain were left unattended as there were bugs in the bamboo forest enough to keep them alive for a day or two as long as they weren't without water.

As for Lai Mi and Little Black, naturally, they'd be brought along.

Mu Shuangshuang now mostly kept Little Black out of the tree house; previously, it was for safety concerns, but with Lai Mi, any warning would have them jumping up barking immediately.

So Little Black's safety was assured.

The group set out on a bullock cart driven by Lu Yuanfeng, with a big red ball hanging from the cart's neck.

Originally, it was to be placed on the horns, but the Wang Family said the cow got agitated when seeing red things, so it was tied around the neck, short enough for it not to see, ensuring safety.

On the journey by bullock cart, arriving at Yu Family Village, they were greeted at the village entrance by Old Mrs. Yu.

Today she wore a dark red dress for older women, her head wrapped in a cloth of the same color, making her strikingly noticeable.

Once Lu Yuanfeng's cart stopped, she immediately ran over.

"Si Niang, my dear child, come over to mother."

Old Mrs. Yu's favorite was Yu Si Niang, and Mu Shuangshuang enjoyed some affection thanks to that.

"Mom, I'm back." Yu Si Niang said softly with teary eyes.

"It's good you're back, I've missed you for so long. Your sixth brother said you would come today, so I prepared mooncakes for you; as much as you want to eat, take it."

Old Mrs. Yu was indeed a good mother, kind-hearted and generous to her children. Knowing that Yu Si Niang didn't get good food at her in-laws, every time she came, all sorts of treats were ready for her, genuinely putting her children at the forefront.

Fortunately, Yu Si Niang now had confidence.

"Mom, today is the day I show my respect to you, I've brought many mooncakes and pastries, all made by myself."

As Yu Si Niang spoke, she moved to get the mooncakes but was stopped by Old Mrs. Yu.

"I trust you, anything you say, I believe. Seeing you living well now, even your cheeks have some flesh."

As she spoke, Old Mrs. Yu's hand was already on Yu Si Niang's cheek.

Indeed, there was some flesh now.

Back when she labored like a horse in the Old Mu Family, she couldn't even have a hearty meal, let alone gain weight.

If it weren't for a job in town where she could at least have extra meals, Yu Si Niang would have been worked to death.

Onlookers were all deeply moved by this scene.

Especially Mu Dashan, having never seen his mother show such warmth to him.

His mother always spoke to him with sarcasm and never with kindness.

"Dad, let's hurry up, or we won't catch up to mom!"

Mu Shuangshuang softly reminded him, and only then did Mu Dashan realize that his wife and mother-in-law had already walked a long distance ahead.

Chapter 492: I Considered You as Human, But You Truly Are

Tomorrow is the big wedding day for Yu Liulang, but people have already started coming to his home to offer their congratulations.

Mr. Yu keeps instructing his wife to bring out some food.

But it's just some sunflower seeds and peanuts, none of the dried fruits are being served.

Yet, Mrs. Li acts like she's had a piece of her flesh cut away, wearing a sour face all day. Even when asked to bring out some snacks for the neighbor's kids, she would shout at them for no reason.

Mr. Yu simply doesn't let Mrs. Li come out anymore.

His son's wedding is a big deal, and if people find out his daughter-in-law is like this, they might think his family is stingy, and then no one would want to associate with the Old Yu Family.

As they were exchanging pleasantries, Old Mrs. Yu arrived at the Old Yu Family's house with the third branch and Lu Yuanfeng's family.

Mr. Yu was overjoyed, grinning from ear to ear.

He was offering snacks and finding seats for the kids.

After all, for the youngsters, eating, drinking, and playing is everything; the three kids found a spot and agreed to play together.

Little Zhi and Xiao Han had only visited the Old Yu Family when they were very small, so they were not familiar with the place.

But kids find unfamiliar places more exciting to play in, and soon they disappeared from sight.

Yu Si Niang sat for a while, and not seeing the kids, she wanted to go and find them, but Old Mrs. Yu called her back.

"Si Niang, these kids are at an age where they're very playful. Didn't you love playing like this when you were young? Let them roam around, Yu Family Village is very safe, no bad dogs or bad people. You haven't been here for a long time, and the new tea in the tea garden, you haven't even tried it."

"Mom, I'll wait for Sixth Son to pour me tea tomorrow as his elder sister, I won't have any today."

With one sentence, Yu Si Niang brought the conversation back to the joyful occasion, and everyone started cheerfully talking about Yu Liulang's wedding.

Mu Shuangshuang sat in the main room for a while and then went to the kitchen.

The kitchen was filled with all sorts of ingredients.

The Mid-Autumn weather was already very cool, so there was no worry about the dishes going bad, even leftovers.

"Shuangshuang, when do you plan to start?"

Upon hearing that Mu Shuangshuang was there, Yu Liulang went straight to the kitchen, wanting to help.

"Uncle, there's no rush. We haven't even had dinner yet, so at least tonight. I'll just change the water for the snails first."

This time, one of the dishes Mu Shuangshuang was preparing was white pepper snails, which are easy for farm families to obtain and don't cost any money.

For this banquet, Mu Shuangshuang went easy on expenses except for chicken and fish.

Even the meat was a wild boar that Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng caught after guarding the mountain for two days.

In short, this banquet was to be as economical as possible.

Mu Shuangshuang wanted to see how much could really be saved if calculated carefully.

"Fengzi, both today and tomorrow will be hard for you and Shuangshuang, I'll make sure to visit your home and thank you properly when I have time in a few days."

Yu Liulang said to Lu Yuanfeng, who was helping Mu Shuangshuang carry water.

"It's nothing, I'm just messing around with Shuangshuang," Lu Yuanfeng laughed, his hands still working nonstop.

With him around, Shuangshuang didn't have to do any heavy work. Of course, Lu Yuanfeng couldn't bear to let her do it either.

How could he let his "future wife" do such work?

Yu Liulang then went back to the front to entertain the neighbors who had come over, and to discuss tomorrow's wedding arrangements.

These past few days, he had not been able to see Feng Xiaohua; he had to wait until after the ceremony tomorrow to meet her in the new bridal room.

Although Yu Liulang missed Feng Xiaohua, he still had to follow the customs.

In the kitchen,

After changing the water for the snails, Mu Shuangshuang checked all the materials needed for tomorrow.

After confirming that there wouldn't be any issues, she was just about to go check out Yu Liulang's new room when she noticed Mrs. Li sneakily standing by the door.

"Oh, Shuangshuang, what good things did you bring for your Sixth Uncle and Sixth Aunt today? Let me, your Second Aunt, take a look as well!"

"You say, we're both their uncle and aunt, Feng Xiaohua hasn't even entered the door yet, and you're already sticking to her. Why aren't you nicer to your Second Aunt here?"

Mrs. Li complained, with envious eyes.

She had seen that the cart full of things had just been dragged down, and over these few days, many of the Old Yu Family's things had been brought over from Yu Si Niang's family.

The more she thought about it, the more jealous Mrs. Li became. Back when she married the second son, Yu Si Niang didn't even give a fart, yet now she was bending over backward for a daughter-in-law who hadn't even entered the door.

She felt indignant!

"Second Aunt, you're speaking nonsense again. Shuangshuang is always fair; everyone is the same. Sixth Aunt is my aunt, and so are you!"

Mu Shuangshuang said politely.

Although she didn't like Mrs. Li, today was Mid-Autumn, and she did not want the Old Yu Family to end up like the Old Mu Family, where they had huge fights over a few mooncakes.

In the end, it wouldn't just be Mrs. Li who loses face; it would reflect badly on everyone.

"Spare me your polite nonsense. How your family thinks, you think I don't know? Hmph, just because you think my Li Family has no one, you stick to that Feng family girl.

Let me tell you, even if my Li Family has no one, my parents are still alive. I don't have a crippled father!"

"Second Sister-in-law, what nonsense are you spouting? Want me to beat you to death?" Yu Liulang happened to walk into the kitchen from outside and overheard these words by chance.

His face instantly turned a liver color with rage, and he immediately grabbed Mrs. Li by her collar and lifted her off the ground.

Everyone in the village knew about Feng Xiaohua's dad being a cripple.

But everyone also knew not to hit a person where it hurts; you don't talk about someone's weak points. Mrs. Li saying such things about her father was like digging at someone's heart.

Although he was mad, Yu Liulang was somewhat relieved that Xiaohua wasn't there; otherwise, how hurt would she be?

So the strength in Yu Liulang's hand naturally increased.

Mrs. Li's feet left the ground, her neck was being choked, and her face instantly turned a liver color.

"Help... mmm mmm..."

Just as Mrs. Li was about to call for help, Mu Shuangshuang quickly covered her mouth.

The Old Yu Family still had many neighbors around. Such shouting and screaming would only bring others over to watch the spectacle.

"Second Sister-in-law, I respect you as my second sister-in-law. But if you dare badmouth Xiaohua even a bit more, you can forget about going to my family's tea garden. I'll speak to my mother about it, and you won't be managing it or getting any profit shares during the New Year!"

The tea garden was the lifeblood of the Old Yu Family; with it, the family could divide a few taels of silver each.

The second branch of the Yu Family didn't farm, and their food, clothes, and usage all came from Yu Liulang. If they really were kicked out, they'd have no way out.

Mrs. Li's face instantly went pale.

She stopped shouting, and Mu Shuangshuang let go of the hand covering her mouth.

At the same time, Yu Liulang tossed Mrs. Li out like a chicken.

Chapter 493: Shuangshuang, Let's Get Married

The kitchen quieted down, finally there was no one who liked to be noisy.

However, Mu Shuangshuang didn't forget to remind Yu Liulang.

"Uncle, my second aunt, you'd better watch out for her. Once Aunt Xiao Hua enters the house, let them interact less. My second aunt has a loose tongue and might say something nasty."

Yu Liulang wholeheartedly agreed with Mu Shuangshuang's words. He nodded and said fiercely,

"I'll keep an eye on it. If your second aunt dares to harm Xiao Hua, I'll give her a piece of my mind."

Mu Shuangshuang admired her Sixth Uncle even more, as he was decisive, just like Fengzi, and trusted unconditionally when protecting someone.

However, Fengzi was better; her uncle was already twenty-six, with years of experience, and it was understandable for him to know such things.

But Fengzi was only seventeen, and having such determination naturally held a special place in Mu Shuangshuang's heart.

"Uncle, take Fengzi and me to see your new house. We're so curious." Mu Shuangshuang raised her eyebrows at Yu Liulang, her eyes full of anticipation.

Mu Shuangshuang was very curious about what a new couple's room in the Da Ning Dynasty would look like.

Following behind Yu Liulang, they went to the backyard.

The Old Yu Family had both front and back courtyards, and because of the large family, they built two kitchens, one in the front yard and one in the back. The main hall in the front yard was for entertaining guests, while the one in the back yard was mainly for family discussions.

Yu Liulang's bridal chamber was in the east wing, consisting of three rooms, covered in bright red balls of embroidery and red paper-cuts with "happiness" characters.

At first glance, it looked particularly festive.

Mu Shuangshuang almost gave it a quick glance, but Lu Yuanfeng memorized all the patterns in his mind.

Now he particularly liked red decorations, which were very festive. He even thought that when he and Shuangshuang got married, they'd decorate the same way.

Entering the bridal chamber, the red room almost blinded Mu Shuangshuang's titanium-alloy dog eyes.

She knew that the ancients liked red when getting married, so the bed sheets and covers were all bright red, but why were the chairs and windows tied with red strings, and why were they woven into a large spider web?

Looking at the dense red lines, Mu Shuangshuang immediately had a lot of black lines on her head.

Just these red lines, how much did they cost?

Thinking about it, the customs of the Da Ning Dynasty were indeed a bit strange.

Yu Liulang knew his niece was puzzled and explained, "These red strings are only used for today. It means that your aunt and I will be entwined together for life, never parting.

By tomorrow morning, we'll take these red strings down and make something else for your aunt."

Mu Shuangshuang glanced at the width of the red strings; they were just right for making a Chinese knot, but definitely unsuitable for embroidery, and fishermen's nets weren't popular here—wearing it out would definitely be a spectacle.

Mu Shuangshuang chuckled inwardly, following Yu Liulang out of the bridal chamber.

With nothing to do at the moment, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng found some time alone. They looked at each other, and Shuangshuang covered her mouth and giggled.

"Fengzi, let's go catch some wild chickens. I'll secretly make beggar's chicken for you."

As she spoke, Mu Shuangshuang began to drool. Normally, they got lots of chances to be together, but today was the Mid-Autumn Festival, with such a beautiful moonlit night, the two just had to "date" alone somehow.

As Mu Shuangshuang expected, on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, everyone was either at home or at the Old Yu Family cracking melon seeds.

The two of them easily made their way to the tea field.

"Fengzi, should we go to the place we went last time?"

It was at that place last time where Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng caught several wild chickens.

Mu Shuangshuang thought they might have the same luck again.

"No, when a wild chicken's territory is destroyed, the rest won't make a nest in that old place. We need to find another spot."

Mu Shuangshuang listened to Lu Yuanfeng's words and was taken aback; she really didn't understand these animal habits.

Lu Yuanfeng estimated that he didn't understand them much either, then explained, "Each animal has its own sense of territory, like rabbits. Even if you see it enter one hole, it might have already run out of another. Waiting won't do any good."

Mu Shuangshuang nodded; that she understood, like an old saying 'a crafty rabbit has three burrows.'

"For larger animals like wolves and tigers, their dens are usually hidden. They don't stay there because they're constantly hunting. As long as they're able to fight, they'd rather choose to stay in the wild."

Mu Shuangshuang nodded again. During her wilderness survival class, the teacher also mentioned this, but she was surprised that such a young lad knew so much.

In ancient times, this knowledge couldn't be learned from books. No book would teach survival skills; instead, they were filled with endless empty sayings.

"Fengzi, you know so much. Did you learn this in the military camp?" Mu Shuangshuang couldn't help but ask.

"Not really. Before I went to the military camp, I explored the mountains, saw a lot, and gradually figured it out."

"Back then, things weren't as good as now. The harvests were poor, there was war outside, the townspeople lived worse than farm families, and that was even less than hunters. I've always thought being a hunter seemed quite free."

"But things have changed over the past few years. In just five years, the fields have grown crops again, and businesses in town are getting better."

Since Shuangshuang started doing business in town, Lu Yuanfeng could see a smile appear more often on those business people's faces.

"Haha, that's also good fortune for us. While we're young, let's make more money, and of course, health is also very important."

Mu Shuangshuang playfully winked at Lu Yuanfeng.

She was petite and charming, with particularly bright eyes, making her look especially cute.

Lu Yuanfeng's mouth moved, and then he suddenly blushed and said, "Shuangshuang, if I accompany you to your grandparent's place for a meal, would you agree to one condition?"

Mu Shuangshuang was taken aback; she had forgotten, this condition was promised at noon because Lu Yuanfeng didn't want to spend the Mid-Autumn Festival at Old Mu Family.

She didn't want him and Yuanbao spending it outside.

It was something she mentioned casually before, not expecting him to remember.

Mu Shuangshuang awkwardly smiled, hesitating whether to playfully back out or something, but Lu Yuanfeng already lowered his head, bringing with him a fresh scent of soap, which struck her senses.

With Lu Yuanfeng's words lingering, Mu Shuangshuang's big eyes widened, her astonishment still unforgotten in her gaze.

And then she heard Lu Yuanfeng speak, "Shuangshuang, let's get married!"

Chapter 494: The Ultimate Kiss

Beggar's chicken, as the name suggests, is chicken eaten by beggars.

However, Mu Shuangshuang could never understand why such a delicious dish should be limited to certain people. Clearly, everyone could enjoy it.

After Lu Yuanfeng caught a wild chicken, he prepared it, wrapped it in mud, and placed it in the fire to roast.

Mu Shuangshuang watched the crimson fire, her face as red as the flames.

Her mind involuntarily recalled the moment two incense sticks ago when Lu Yuanfeng kissed her in a sensational s-h-e kiss and then confessed his feelings.

And yet, in her muddle-headedness, amidst the allure of male charm, she actually agreed—

Now one was staring blankly, while the other was grinning like a fool.

Lu Yuanfeng had been laughing for two whole incense sticks, his face likely frozen from smiling so much.

Mu Shuangshuang coughed softly, and Lu Yuanfeng immediately came over.

"What's wrong? Are you feeling unwell? I can take you to see a doctor."

As he said this, his hand was already on her, and if Mu Shuangshuang hadn't stopped him in time, he would have lifted her up.

"I'm fine, just think you look like a fool when you smile." Mu Shuangshuang spoke the truth.

Lu Yuanfeng's face froze for a moment, then he burst into laughter again.

"That's because Shuangshuang agreed to marry me!"

His slightly magnetic voice sent a shiver through Mu Shuangshuang's ears, and she felt as if feathers were brushing her heart.

She thought, Lu Yuanfeng didn't seem like Lu Yuanfeng anymore.

And she didn't seem like herself either.

Is this what they call not being oneself in the face of love?

It must be!

Mu Shuangshuang concluded.

The two of them, just like this, looked at each other until the beggar's chicken wrapped in mud was done.

Mu Shuangshuang snapped out of it and started to reach for the chicken, only to be stopped by Lu Yuanfeng again.

"Shuangshuang, you've zoned out twice now. It's so hot, you can't touch it with your hands, let me do it!"

He knocked off the mud from the beggar's chicken, and the aroma of the chicken wafted through the air. Mu Shuangshuang squinted her eyes, waiting for Lu Yuanfeng to feed her.

Lu Yuanfeng was more than happy to prepare the food for her, feeding her until she was full.

Eating chicken, chatting away, time flew by so quickly that it was already dusk in the blink of an eye.

It's about time to head back.

Mu Shuangshuang didn't need to prepare dinner today, she only needed to prepare lunch and dinner for tomorrow, with the main meal being in the evening.

In the Da Ning Dynasty, weddings were held in the evening, slightly different from modern times, but Mu Shuangshuang could understand that after so many years, differences were inevitable.

Upon returning to the Old Yu Family, everyone hadn't started eating yet. In the kitchen, Old Mrs. Yu personally led the charge, preparing dinner with her two daughters-in-law.

The neighbors from the Old Yu Family had already left. After all, today was the Mid-Autumn Festival, and family reunion was the priority.

After dinner, everyone sat together, chatting, eating mooncakes, and admiring the moon.

Mr. Yu and Old Mrs. Yu sat in the main hall, enjoying the joy of children and grandchildren gathered around.

As night deepened, the day finally came to an end.

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The next day, the sound of firecrackers and gongs and drums echoed through the Old Yu Family. Though it wasn't yet time to fetch the bride, everyone had already sprung into action.

They vowed to give the Old Yu Family's unwed old bachelor an unforgettable wedding.

The whole Old Yu Family was immersed in harmony and joy, even Mrs. Li uncharacteristically kept her mouth shut, without any comparisons.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were busy in the kitchen. The two got up before dawn, slaughtering chickens, cutting fish, busily and happily.

After Lu Yuanfeng finished slaughtering the chicken and draining the blood, the rest of the work was up to Mu Shuangshuang. She needed to clean the chicken's feathers and then gut it.

Just as she poured the hot water into the wooden bucket, Lu Yuanfeng approached Mu Shuangshuang.

"Shuangshuang, you wash the vegetables, leave this work to me."

Lu Yuanfeng wiped the fish scales from his hands with a cloth and started to squat down to pluck chicken feathers, but Mu Shuangshuang held his hand.

"I just poured the hot water, it's very hot, wait a moment."

Lu Yuanfeng raised his head and saw the concern in Shuangshuang's eyes.

She looked at him for a long time without looking away, making Lu Yuanfeng feel warm inside.

It made everything he did feel particularly invigorating.

After some bustling in the kitchen, a lot of time had passed.

The people of the Old Yu Family, following Mu Shuangshuang's instructions, placed two large iron pots and two large iron barrels outside. The iron barrels were cut open, with a hole in the middle.

In fact, this was a simple stove.

The big iron pot, being larger than the iron barrel, sat on top without any worry of falling.

They added firewood to the hole in the iron barrel, and the pot heated up.

When Mu Shuangshuang came out with a shovel, everyone was stunned.

A teenage girl was holding a spatula that looked like a shovel, fiddling around the large iron pot.

After a while, they saw her add oil to the large pot and start cooking.

Everyone was dumbfounded.

Even Lu Yuanfeng was stunned. Recently, the things Shuangshuang wanted were always weird and wonderful. Although Lu Yuanfeng was curious, he never asked about them. Instead, he devoted himself to helping her prepare.

Little did he expect that these strange items were all used for cooking.

This way, she didn't have to stand by the stove ring, bustling about for an entire afternoon.

Moreover, the large iron pot was specially made; it could fry up enough for over ten bowls at once, just enough for the Old Yu Family's banquet, even leaving some leftovers.

Of course, everything depended on Shuangshuang's control.

The midday meal was attended by close relatives, mostly familiar faces of the Old Yu Family, so sitting down, they had plenty to talk about.

"Shuangshuang, your grandpa and grandma haven't come." Mu Dashan slowly came over.

These past few days, Zhang Huai Shu allowed him to move more, but he still had to take his medicine regularly, and he wasn't allowed to do heavy work.

Especially not tasks requiring lifting or carrying.

"Grandpa and grandma are getting old, it's natural for them to walk slower than the younger people. Plus, with my little aunt, they're bound to be even slower. Dad, don't worry."

Mu Shuangshuang guessed correctly, Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu indeed couldn't move any further halfway there.

Mu Xiangxiang outright refused to get up lying in the grass.

Old Mrs. Mu got anxious and urged her.

"Xiangxiang, we have to hurry, if we delay, we'll only have dishwater to drink."

"Mom, I can't move, I'm exhausted. Why is Yu Family Village so far?"

"I suggested renting a bullock cart just now, but you wouldn't. Now my legs are practically broken."

As she spoke, Mu Xiangxiang tapped her legs, looking utterly exhausted.

Back at the village entrance, the bullock cart was heading to the town. Since it was being rented anyway, Mu Xiangxiang suggested getting the driver to take Old Mrs. Mu, Mr. Mu, and herself to Yu Family Village together.

But who knew, that driver demanded thirty coins on the spot.

Old Mrs. Mu refused to pay.

Usually, a bullock cart ride costs just one coin per person. Three people should only be three coins, but now it had tenfold. Naturally, she turned him down.

Trying to extort her? Maybe next lifetime! Old Mrs. Mu thought to herself.

Chapter 495: All Are Debt Collectors

"Xiangxiang, what do you think we should do?"

Old Mrs. Mu handed over the decision-making power to Mu Xiangxiang.

Mu Xiangxiang was her darling, and Old Mrs. Mu was willing to suffer losses herself but couldn't bear for her daughter to endure any.

"Mom, carry me. You have the strength, and I'm young and not heavy. Otherwise, I won't move."

Mu Xiangxiang stretched out her legs, refusing to budge.

Both Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu were already exhausted, but couldn't bear to leave Mu Xiangxiang behind, so they really carried her forward.

After just two steps, there was a cracking sound from their waists.

"Oh my, my back..."

"Oh my, my back's broken..."

Mu Xiangxiang fell off from the back, and Old Mrs. Mu clutched her waist, cold sweat pouring down.

"Mom, what's wrong?" Mu Xiangxiang was alarmed and exclaimed.

"Xiangxiang's mother, what's happened to you?" Mr. Mu had the same reaction.

Old Mrs. Mu wailed continuously, beads of sweat like beans dripping from her forehead.

"Mom, don't scare me. I won't ask you to carry me again." Mu Xiangxiang spoke with a sob.

Mr. Mu saw the situation, understood it was a sprained back, and started looking around for a bull cart or someone strong.

In the end, he did find one.

A relative of the Old Yu Family, upon hearing that Mr. Mu was Yu Si Niang's in-law, left without a word and took the three of them to Yu Family Village.

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Old Mu Family

With Old Mrs. Mu gone, the few people left at home were in chaos, and the second house even held a special meeting with Mu Danian.

For a while, they couldn't stop thinking about the big meal at Old Yu Family.

After all, it's something exceptional to feast on.

"Fifth Brother, you usually have tricks up your sleeve, what do we do now?" Mu Dazhong was anxious and pacing.

"Yes, this chance missed today won't come again, attending someone else's banquet with too many people will be talked about, but this is Yu Si Niang's family, it's like our own family, no one will criticize us." Mrs. Lin added.

"What else can we do? Let's go! Our parents already left; we'll go after them. When they arrive at Yu Family Village, we'll be there too, pretending that we were called by them.

Our dad is such a face-saving person, he certainly won't chase us away in front of others. We can eat well and not worry about coming back."

Mu Danian had been planning this for a long time; none of them were married kids, so why could Xiangxiang go and enjoy while he had to stay home chewing cold sweet potatoes?

No way!

He definitely wanted to eat delicious food and drink nice drinks.

"That's a good idea, but let's bring the whole family, rent a bull cart to go. When there's a big family, who can our parents punish?"

Also, with Old Fourth and his wife being poor speakers, we can blame them, say they encouraged us. Will our parents blame us then?" Mrs. Lin laughed with her eyebrows raised, looking cunning and fierce.

The three decided on this and then went to find the fourth house.

With Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu away, and Mu Dajiang and the other brothers not getting along, they didn't want to go.

"We won't go; you'll go yourselves!"

The scapegoats didn't want to go, but the three wouldn't agree, and Mrs. Lin directly used Old Mrs. Mu to intimidate Mu Dajiang.

"Old Fourth, whether you go or not, mom instructed, anyone who doesn't go today will have their skin peeled. Xiaxia's mother, doesn't mom already dislike her? If she defies our parents this time, do you think she'll have a good life later?"

This statement completely subdued Mu Dajiang.

He sighed and agreed to go to Yu Family Village.

Mu Dalian went and got a bull cart, spending ten coins, and took the whole family to Yu Family Village.

The fourth house was kicked out individually and walked.

Watching the distant bull cart, the fourth house started their own journey.

...

...

Mu Shuangshuang used the shortest time to cook a pot of dishes.

As for the rice, it was prepared by the eldest daughter-in-law of the Yu Family; she just had to wash the rice, add water, and burn the firewood, just like Mu Shuangshuang, outside.

Lunch wasn't a formal meal, so there was only meat and some green vegetables, along with a fish.

Yet, it was quite sumptuous.

The meal wasn't served on the table when Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu finally arrived late.

As soon as they entered the yard, Old Mrs. Mu sharply saw everyone starting to sit down and quickly urged Mu Xiangxiang.

"Xiangxiang, hurry, find three seats, ones where the dishes are easy to reach."

Mu Xiangxiang saw the situation and rushed to the front, choosing three seats. One was already prepared for someone, but she took the stool, making them fall flat.

"Whoa, who's so uncultured, taking the stool from under my butt?"

"You're the uncultured one; I spotted this seat first, why are you fighting me for it?"

Mu Xiangxiang glaringly gave that person a hard look, sat on one, stepped on another, and directly took off her shoes for the remaining one.

The people around immediately stood up.

Mu Shuangshuang saw this and couldn't help but frown.

This Mu Xiangxiang, creating a scene regardless of place?

Doesn't she know it's someone's wedding day, and she shouldn't be disruptive?

As she was about to stop it, Yu Liulang came out of the house.

As the groom, he had dressed up thoroughly today.

The whole person looked both joyful and spirited, with a bit more charm.

Seeing Mu Xiangxiang with her shoes off, Yu Liulang and Mu Shuangshuang had the same reaction, just wanted to beat the person in front to death.

But since she was his sister-in-law's sister, Yu Liulang just disliked it but went forward and resolved the problem.

The three seats went to Mu Xiangxiang; the relative who sat was given another, along with a pound of liquor as compensation.

Sitting at the main row's chairs, Old Mrs. Mu was full of pride.

She fondly patted Mu Xiangxiang's head.

"Still, our girl is clever, knowing to grab us seats."

Mr. Mu was not looking good because after sitting down, people were pointing at him.

They looked at him with disdainful eyes.

Mr. Mu, who cared about face, couldn't bear such contempt, and was just about to argue with the person, when suddenly dozens of more people appeared outside the yard.

Mu Dazhong, Mu Danian, and Mrs. Lin got off the bull cart, along with a few children.

They rushed in, aiming directly for Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu's table.

"Dad, Mom, we brought the kids over, not leaving one out."

"Old Fourth didn't want to sit in the bull cart, and is behind, don't worry, they should be here soon."

Mr. Mu was infuriated.

Among all relatives, only he brought the whole family, even the grandchildren.

"Hey, hey, please make some room, these are my parents, we need to sit together with them, you find somewhere else."

Mu Dazhong began to drive out other unfamiliar relatives at the table; those unwilling to leave, he had Gou Dan pick his nose in front of them.

Finally, everyone couldn't stand the disgust and left.

Chapter 496: Chilling to the Core

Mr. Mu watched his son and daughter-in-law's actions with a heart full of despair.

He felt that the dignity he'd maintained throughout his life had been completely thrown away.

How did he end up raising such a bunch of gluttonous creatures?

Though he had explicitly told them not to come yesterday, yet today, not only did they come, they also brought along so many debtors. How should the Yu Family see our Old Mu Family now?

Old Mrs. Mu was also worried, not about losing face, but whether they'd have to shell out more for the betrothal gifts for so many people.

Just then, someone approached, pointing at Mr. Mu and said, "Old brother, so it was you!"

This "so it was you" felt like a slap in the face for Mr. Mu, worsening his mood.

He awkwardly smiled at the person, who cheerfully said, "Old brother, it's me, I'm the father of the second Yu daughter-in-law; we met at the Old Yu Family years ago."

Mr. Mu suddenly recalled that the man standing before him was indeed Mr. Li.

When the matchmaker had brought him over to see the potential bride, he had met Mr. Li.

So many years had passed, and he couldn't even recognize the person standing before him.

"So it was you, it's been so long, more than ten years have passed just like that." Mr. Mu sighed with emotion.

"This must be your wife, your son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren? You're so fortunate, surrounded by children and grandchildren. My grandson felt there were too many people today and didn't want to come."

Those words were said without malice, but they hit their target.

Mr. Mu felt that Old Li was subtly mocking him for bringing his entire family over. Mr. Mu's previously warm demeanor instantly cooled.

No matter what Mr. Li said, Mr. Mu only responded with reluctant monosyllables like "hmm" and "oh."

Feeling uninteresting, Mr. Li left.

"Mom, I'm hungry, when can we eat meat?" Gou Dan eyed the still empty table, almost drooling onto it.

"Soon, soon, be good, Gou Dan. Today, Mommy will get you some delicious meat." Mrs. Lin comforted Gou Dan, then glanced around.

According to schedule, the feast should start about now, so why hasn't it?

"Oh, isn't that the third branch's smelly girl? What's she doing there cooking? Is that a shovel?"

Mrs. Lin caught sight of someone standing at the farthest west part of the yard, a large pot set up before her.

She wielded a big iron shovel, and in a moment, a dish was ready.

Once she finished cooking, a woman she didn't recognize stepped forward to plate the food and distribute it into bowls.

"It's that smelly girl. I heard yesterday from Old Three said she was coming to help, turns out she came to cook.

I heard hiring someone to cook costs at least two to three hundred copper coins for a meal." Mu Dazhong chimed in, eyes filled with envy and jealousy.

Hearing two to three hundred coins, Old Mrs. Mu's eyes widened, staring at Mu Shuangshuang as if she wanted to devour her.

That smelly girl has become a money-making tool, showing up everywhere.

Now, Old Mrs. Mu was increasingly convinced that the third branch had stashed away a significant amount of private money and was unwilling to share it with her.

But she had no recourse, that smelly girl wouldn't give in to pressure, and her own son was a coward who listened to his wife.

Old Mrs. Mu, filled with pent-up anger without a target, directed her frustration at Mu Dazhong, sarcastically.

"You just keep staring at them for nothing. No matter how much they earn, it belongs to them. Stop thinking about someone else's things all day and take care of your own."

Mu Dazhong's face turned crimson as a pig's liver.

"Mom, Daddy Gou Dan was just making a remark, what would we want from the third branch? They're like stingy cats, not even filial to you and Dad, how would they have anything for us!" Mrs. Lin wasn't one to take an insult without a defense, dragging the third branch through the mud in retaliation.

Mr. Mu paused slightly, not because the third branch wasn't sharing their earnings with him, but because he remembered a few days ago when he'd asked Old Three's wife to help with the cooking, only to be flatly refused.

Yet now, Shuang, the girl, was cooking for the Old Yu Family. The comparison was stark.

Mr. Mu felt that as Mu Dashan's biological father, his relationship must be stronger than with Yu Liulang, just a brother-in-law. How could they refuse him and yet help the Yu Family?

The more he thought about it, the more upset he became, losing even the will to admonish the children.

The others, seeing Mr. Mu silent and Old Mrs. Mu merely mocking Mu Dazhong, assumed their unauthorized arrival had gone unnoticed and so grew more outrageous.

In the Yu Family's hall, Mr. Yu and Old Mrs. Yu were having a quiet conversation.

The weather today was unusually pleasant, with no sun. A few days ago, to hold the banquet in the yard, Yu Liulang had asked villagers to help set up a large shade tent.

The tables were all arranged under the tent, the cooking nearby, saving time and effort.

Mr. Yu and Old Mrs. Yu were overjoyed, but the arrival of Old Mu's family had dampened their spirits.

"Ah, old woman, what do you think of our in-laws being like this?"

Today is a joyous occasion for our son. It would be fine for them to bring the whole family, we're all relatives, but they can't just push our family aside!"

Mr. Yu looked outside, feeling chilled to the bone.

At the table belonging to Old Mu's family sat Mr. Mu, Old Mrs. Mu, Mu Xiangxiang, and Mu Dazhong's couple, along with Mu Danian—altogether six adults.

Originally, a table seated ten adults, with children sitting with their parents not counted, but Old Mu's family let the children take up several seats.

Just now, he'd watched helplessly as Old Mu's family pushed their own relatives aside with despicable tactics, yet he couldn't openly clash with Old Mu's family—after all, they were his daughter's in-laws.

"Enough, you old fool, you put up with so many things normally, why can't you endure this too?"

"Go out quickly and greet them. Our in-laws are here, you as the steward have to go out and host."

Saying this, Old Mrs. Yu pushed Mr. Yu out.

Mr. Yu reluctantly stepped forward to greet them warmly.

"Oh, old bro, you're here. I was just inside attending to guests when I heard you arrived and came rushing over. Please, don't take it to heart, old bro."

Seeing Mr. Yu approaching, Mr. Mu's strange expression quickly melted into a friendly smile.

"Not at all, we're the ones imposing on your Old Yu Family. Today is Sixth Son's wedding day, and our Old Mu Family wishes him and his bride a lifetime of happiness and unity."

Upon hearing Mr. Mu's blessing, Mr. Yu felt a wave of gratitude.

"Thank you, old brother. There's so much happening today, it's possible I overlooked something, please forgive me, old brother."

The two exchanged pleasantries for a while. Suddenly, the sound of firecrackers crackled outside the courtyard, signaling the start of the feast.

Members of the Old Mu Family brightened, eyes fixated intently on the area where Mu Shuangshuang was busy serving dishes...

Chapter 497: Too Painful to Watch

Mr. Yu let out a long sigh of relief, finally he didn't have to deal with the people from Old Mu Family.

He quickly said, "Old brother, it's time to start the banquet. I have other matters to attend to. Please enjoy the meal and drinks."

Mr. Yu went straight to Mu Shuangshuang and asked, "Shuangshuang, can we start the banquet?"

"Grandpa, yes, let's get the dishes served!"

With a shout from Mr. Yu, the young wives hired from the village went up and started serving dishes one by one to the tables.

Mrs. Lin was also among them, unlike others who were happily doing the work, she didn't want to do it at all.

Why should she serve dishes? They're so greasy and heavy.

While complaining, Mrs. Lin had no choice but to follow the village wives to serve dishes.

Passing by Old Mu Family's table, Mrs. Lin felt someone pat her butt, and turned to see everyone from Old Mu Family staring at the dish in her hand, drooling.

She suddenly felt disdain for Yu Si Niang's in-laws.

A whole family coming to eat and drink, don't they feel ashamed?

Pfft! Filthy folks.

"Sister-in-law, you're so pretty, serve our table first," Mu Danian shamelessly said.

Mu Danian was good-looking, and his sweet talk made the village wives spin around him, Li Juhua was no exception.

Though she kept a stern face, she placed the dish on Old Mu Family's table, putting a big bowl of meat right in front of Mu Danian, then went on to serve elsewhere.

"Not bad, Fifth, you're popular with everyone. That woman doesn't even know you yet brings you dishes," Mu Dazhong exclaimed, but mostly out of jealousy.

Mu Dazhong was also attractive, why didn't any women fancy him?

Facing Mrs. Lin's yellow-facedness every day, Mu Dazhong also wanted to hug a young village woman for some fun, ideally someone else's, that'd be perfect.

"Brother, you need to learn more, women love to hear sweet words, pamper them often."

Mu Danian raised his eyebrows, smiling slyly. He didn't expect to find a woman with such a big butt in Yu Family Village, the flesh felt soft to the touch.

But this woman did enjoy hearing sweet words.

Dishes came one after another, each time it was Li Juhua delivering them, and with each dish, she would receive Mu Danian's praise, talking about beauty like a celestial being, a fairy descending to earth, and alike.

Delivering dishes, Mrs. Lin felt rejuvenated, her face beaming, Yu Erlang finished doing chores in the backyard, seeing his wife in such a flirtatious mode, he couldn't hold back.

"Talented lady, what's going on, why are you smiling so brightly?"

Mrs. Lin rolled her eyes dramatically, "What's it got to do with you? Your sixth brother is getting married, why don't you go and find him, leave me be? And maybe check out Yu Family Village's number one beauty, see if you can bring her into your bed."

"You... you... can you even say such things?" Yu Erlang was so angry his nose crooked.

His hands clenched into fists, wanting to hit the woman before him.

But today is his brother's wedding day, he can't!

"I can say anything, Yu Erlang, I tell you, I'm married to your family, not to serve your parents. Either give me the manager's rights to the tea garden, or I'm leaving!"

The apron on her clothes was dropped heavily onto Yu Erlang, Mrs. Lin stomped into the backyard in anger.

Luckily, no outsiders saw the situation here, everyone was busy eating, otherwise, who knows what kind of ruckus might have occurred.

Yu Erlang looked apologetically at Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng.

"Shuangshuang, do you need more help? Second uncle is here to help."

Mu Shuangshuang shook her head, her impression of this second uncle was good, just that he listened to his wife too much.

Mrs. Lin was very fierce, speaking and acting without thinking, pity her second uncle, so honest and hardworking, yet being bullied like this.

"Second uncle, all the dishes have been served, you go eat, we don't have a second round at lunch."

Old Yu Family made sure the relatives enjoyed the meal, having all the help not go hungry, hence serving everyone at once, which was why Yu Liulang built a pavilion.

However, the evening meal would be served in turns, as there were a dozen tables including villagers and relatives, worried they wouldn't handle it in time.

"Alright then, you and Fengzi also eat early, I'll go find a spot for lunch first."

Mu Shuangshuang waved her hand. "No need, no need, Fengzi and I will eat right here."

Mu Shuangshuang didn't want to join the crowd, not getting to eat much anyway.

She reserved a bit of every dish for herself, and since no one was in the kitchen, it was perfect for the two of them.

"Fengzi, let's take our food and head to the kitchen."

Lu Yuanfeng nodded heavily, he actually preferred eating with Shuangshuang outside, just the two of them, undisturbed.

In the kitchen, Mu Shuangshuang kept placing slices of meat into Lu Yuanfeng's bowl.

"Fengzi, you really worked hard today, it was basically you cooking towards the end."

Seeing him drenched in sweat, Mu Shuangshuang looked very empathetic.

"It's okay, I'm strong, can handle lots of work," Lu Yuanfeng shook his head, "You should eat more meat, being so thin, can't be good."

"Haha, I'm fine, you don't get fat from eating one meal,"

As soon as Mu Shuangshuang finished speaking, there were more pieces of meat in her bowl.

"Not in one meal, we'll eat a bit more each time, eventually you'll gain weight."

Lu Yuanfeng's words made Mu Shuangshuang feel very moved.

Quite a few people cared about her eating and drinking, but none made her feel like this like him.

"Fengzi, we..."

Just as Mu Shuangshuang was about to speak, Yuanbao rushed in from outside.

"Sister Shuangshuang, go take a look outside, I'm laughing to death," Yuanbao laughed, holding his mouth.

"What happened?" Mu Shuangshuang was puzzled, but still followed outside.

It was nothing really, just the people from Old Mu Family fighting over dishes.

All the other tables were quite restrained, at least giving others a chance to grab some food.

But Old Mu Family was completely different.

Perhaps because last time, Xiangxiang alone ate a bowl of braised pork, making others miss out.

As soon as the dishes were fully served, the others swept down, grabbing bowls and scooping into their bowls, stacking high until they could no longer fit.

In a blink, a plate was emptied.

In just that short moment, the table was left with only empty plates and food scraps.

People around started to talk.

Originally, grabbing food during a meal wasn't much, but since it's outside, with so many eyes watching, shouldn't one be more restrained?

So someone couldn't stand it and argued with Old Mu Family people.

The argument almost escalated to a quarrel.

They even claimed people were deliberately bothering their meal.

Mu Dazhong stiffened his neck and shouted directly at that person.

"This is my sister-in-law's family; I eat whatever I want, what's it to you, old man?"

"What's wrong, can't eat yourself, so won't let others eat? I tell you, today I'm not just eating, but eating a lot!"

Chapter 498: Poor Man, Poor Ambition

"Wow, you think you're right now? Your table full of old and weak women and children came over to freeloader, really treating someone else's home like your own."

If you want to have a feast, this is not the way to do it. Poor people with poor spirits!" That person shouted loudly.

"Who are you calling poor? Make yourself clear."

That statement about being poor hit Old Mrs. Mu's sore spot. Originally watching from the side for fun, Old Mrs. Mu stuck her hand on her waist, looking like she was ready to fight.

"Old hag, I wasn't talking about you. Why are you butting in? I'm here to teach your unruly son a lesson for you. You don't know how to discipline him, so I'm helping out without charging you." The man rolled up his sleeves, completely dismissing Old Mrs. Mu.

"Pah, what do you think you are? My son doesn't need you to discipline him."

Old Mrs. Mu spat and cursed loudly.

The relatives of the Yu Family were also very angry, both parties glaring at each other, neither willing to back down.

The tension was rising.

Mu Shuangshuang saw the situation and realized a fight was indeed about to break out. Looking around, she couldn't see Mr. Mu, no wonder Old Mu Family was in chaos. The anchor wasn't there to stabilize things.

Mu Shuangshuang didn't know that back when the dishes were being served, when Mu Danian groped Mrs. Li's butt, Mr. Mu was having a stomach ache and went to the bathroom, still not out yet.

Without Mr. Mu, everyone naturally acted recklessly.

Old Mrs. Mu only cared about Mu Xiangxiang having eaten or not, no one else cared.

"Shuangshuang, we can't ignore this matter, otherwise your sixth uncle's wedding will be disrupted by them." Lu Yuanfeng said.

"Yeah, I haven't seen my mom's relatives now, I guess they're all busy in the backyard, I have to go and check!"

Mu Shuangshuang rushed up, determined not to let a fight break out today. Otherwise, it would ruin her sixth uncle's wedding and embarrass everyone in Old Mu Family, including herself.

"Grandma, what are you doing?"

Mu Shuangshuang approached with a smile. It was a joyous day, and she didn't want to resort to violence.

Old Mrs. Mu snorted coldly from her nose, not wanting to pay attention to Mu Shuangshuang at all.

Mu Shuangshuang then talked to the relatives of the Yu Family.

Luckily, the relatives of the Yu Family were also reasonable people. Upon hearing Mu Shuangshuang was Yu Si Niang's daughter, they exchanged polite words and left.

Quite unlike Old Mrs. Mu's unforgiving style.

Not only refusing to let people leave, but also accusing them of a guilty conscience.

Mu Shuangshuang naturally stopped Old Mrs. Mu, so when the relatives from the Yu Family left, Old Mrs. Mu started to pick on Mu Shuangshuang.

"You brat, you actually help outsiders and not us from Old Mu Family. You ungrateful little creature, your conscience has been eaten by a dog!" Old Mrs. Mu cursed loudly.

"Grandma, if I hadn't intervened earlier, you would have started a fight with my maternal relatives. What exactly are you trying to do today?"

First, a crowd rushed in, drove out the guests, and claimed seats.

Then, the whole family snatched dishes.

Now they're fighting with Yu Family relatives, and even wanting to curse at her.

All these occurrences made Mu Shuangshuang feel that Old Mu Family was deliberately here to cause trouble today.

"Grandma, today is the Yu Family's joyous occasion, everyone is happy, are you really trying to steal the spotlight here?"

Don't say I'm biased or heartless, today we have to differentiate the priorities, and given everyone's watching, it's not only my face on the line, it's our entire Old Mu Family.

Also, my eldest uncle, even if he becomes an official later, but once people know his family started a fight over some dishes, how will his colleagues view him?

Don't say you don't care, my uncle has to do well himself, but promotion requires efforts and coordination from all sides. Any blemish will halt his progress!"

Mu Shuangshuang always reasoned with people who could understand reason.

With Old Mu Family, she only wanted to deal with them using fists.

Unfortunately, there's always a time when someone can't handle the situation.

Old Mrs. Mu's face turned the color of pig liver because of Mu Shuangshuang's words.

But she couldn't find a reason to rebut.

Everything related to Mu Dade seemed like something stuck in her throat.

She stood there helplessly, her eyes slightly glaring, until Mr. Mu came back from the bathroom, looking at the empty bowls on the table, then at the heaps of dishes in his sons' and daughters-in-law's bowls, Mr. Mu was furious.

"You all..."

"Grandpa, today is my sixth uncle's big day, whatever's wrong, we'll talk about it later at home, everyone's watching us, let's not get angry first."

Mu Shuangshuang stopped Mr. Mu's impulse to lose his temper.

Now is not the time to lecture but to let Mr. Mu's table finish eating and find a place to hide quickly.

Mr. Mu listened to Mu Shuangshuang, sighed, and sat down.

The eyes behind him still glaring viciously, Mr. Mu was quite helpless.

But he could only brace himself, as there was nothing left on the table to eat except a bowl of white rice, just as Mr. Mu thought this would be his lunch, suddenly a bowl of vegetables appeared in front of him.

He turned to see Mu Shuangshuang standing by the table.

"Grandpa, quickly eat, later go find my second uncle to arrange a resting place, he's in charge of that today."

After speaking, Mu Shuangshuang returned to the kitchen.

Busy all morning, Mu Shuangshuang was indeed hungry.

The oddities of Old Mu Family weren't easy, but unfortunately her parents couldn't involve in these matters, thinking about it, Mu Shuangshuang decided to let her grandfather watch over this group, who knows what shenanigans they might cause.

Entering the kitchen, Lu Yuanfeng added more dishes for her, filling her bowl thoroughly.

"Hurry and eat, let's rest for a while after, then prepare the food again in the afternoon."

Tasks like fetching and greeting guests don't require Mu Shuangshuang, she and Lu Yuanfeng just need to manage the kitchen area.

Fortunately, the Da Ning Dynasty's wedding ceremony is at night, otherwise Mu Shuangshuang would definitely not have the chance to see Feng Xiaohua enter the door.

"Fengzi, rest later as well. I reckon we'll have to make supper for those people tonight, and it'll be a good time to ask the village head of Yu Family Village if anyone has seen your mother."

Cooking for a banquet to earn money is just one purpose for Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng.

The other purpose is to help find someone.

Many hands make light work, they'll find her eventually.

"Shuangshuang, thank you!" Lu Yuanfeng grinned slightly.

Lately, Lu Yuanfeng had been smiling a lot more often, all because of Shuangshuang's presence.

"Don't mention it between us, we'll keep looking like this for now, if that doesn't work, we'll climb over Niuwei Mountain ourselves and search the other side. I think your mother might be there."

This had occurred to Lu Yuanfeng before, he has a plan, but now is not the time to talk about it, let's deal with this matter first.

Chapter 499: Knows Her Best

After lunch, Mu Shuangshuang tidied up outside and was about to rest when she saw the Mu Family's fourth branch lingering outside the courtyard.

Walking from Er Gui Village to Yu Family Village, the fourth branch family had quite the tough journey. Midway, Xiao Chu refused to walk, so Mu Dajiang and Mrs. Liu took turns carrying the child.

A child of three or four isn't as light as a baby, and they like to move around, which made the journey exhausting and caused them to miss lunch.

The fourth branch didn't dare go inside, but they also didn't dare leave, fearing Old Mrs. Mu would get angry.

Xiao Chu's stomach growled with hunger, and even the older Mu Xiaxia was about to cry.

Mu Shuangshuang rushed out and went straight to Mu Dajiang.

"Fourth Uncle, Fourth Aunt, come in and take a seat; I've saved you some food in the kitchen."

Mu Dajiang and Mrs. Liu were moved and followed Mu Shuangshuang into the kitchen.

Thankfully, she had prepared enough food, just in case some relatives were late and wouldn't have anything to eat.

She set the food on the table and didn't hurry to leave, planning to take Mu Dajiang and Mrs. Liu to see Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu later, so they could look out for each other in the evening.

Unexpectedly, Mu Dajiang asked first.

"Shuangshuang, did your grandma ask about us?"

Mu Shuangshuang was taken aback; wasn't the fourth branch coming on their own?

Considering the way Mu Danian and the others arrived today and Mr. Mu's expression, logically, Mr. Mu should be against it, right?

"Didn't she? Second Brother said your grandma asked us to come early; could it be that we were late, and she doesn't want to see us?"

When Mu Dajiang mentioned Second Brother, Mu Shuangshuang realized they had been tricked by Mu Dazhong; soon, they would become scapegoats again.

"Fourth Uncle, I think I should tell you, don't overthink it; I'm saying this to prevent my Second Uncle and Fifth Uncle from harming you later."

Mu Shuangshuang's voice had barely dropped when Mu Dajiang grew tense.

"Wha... what is it? Tell me, I won't misunderstand." Mu Dajiang suddenly sat up straight.

"My grandparents didn't ask you to come; it was my Second Uncle and Fifth Uncle who took it upon themselves. They're probably doing this to get a free meal, and as for inviting you, they likely want you to bear the responsibility."

It had to be admitted, Mu Danian and Mu Dazhong were quite clever. As long as they involved the usually silent fourth branch, the responsibility would no longer be theirs.

After hearing Mu Shuangshuang's words, Mu Dajiang finally reacted, but he immediately slumped back in his chair, unable to collect himself for a long while.

"Fourth Uncle, don't be like this, this matter..."

Mu Shuangshuang's words were interrupted by Mu Xiaxia.

"What about this matter? This is your own doing! Yes, that's right, your third branch is doing well, but does that mean you can just criticize our fourth branch?"

"Xiaxia..." Mrs. Liu panicked and hurriedly stopped Mu Xiaxia from speaking.

"Mother, you don't have to be afraid; she's not grandma. Just because she has a few dirty coins, does that make her so great? Does she think everyone covets her dirty coins? I'm telling you, I, Mu Xiaxia, don't care!"

Mu Shuangshuang let out a cold laugh and retorted, "Don't you know who started this? Mu Xiaxia, don't tell me you don't know that Second Uncle and Fifth Uncle are tricking Fourth Uncle and Fourth Aunt."

"Yes, I have money, but even with money, I won't give it to you. Mu Xiaxia, the previous two times you tried to set me up in front of grandma, I forgave you because you're young and naive. But if you try to throw dirt on me again today, I won't agree!"

"If you feel wronged, go find out who is really bullying the fourth branch. Don't think that just because we've had hard times in the third branch, we'll also live poorly with you in the future. Forget it!"

Mu Shuangshuang exposed Mu Xiaxia completely in front of Mu Dajiang and Mrs. Liu.

There were two prior occasions where this was Mu Xiaxia's doing.

The first was when Old Mrs. Mu hit Mrs. Liu.

She didn't go to the field to find Mr. Mu; she came to find her, simply to borrow Old Mrs. Mu's hand to harm her.

The second was when Mr. Mu returned; she intentionally said that she resolved the issue with Mr. Mu.

Mu Xiaxia clearly knew that Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu would not allow the fourth branch to come, but she said nothing.

With all these things adding up, Mu Shuangshuang had to reevaluate this younger sister.

"Xiaxia... Shuangshuang, is what she's saying true? Do you really think that way?" Mrs. Liu's eyes reddened as she asked.

"Yes, mother, I just can't stand you and dad being so submissive in front of their third branch. We're all the same, so why can they..."

Mu Xiaxia spoke while crying.

"That's because it's Shuangshuang; she can get up before dawn to earn a few coins, always busy."

After speaking, Lu Yuanfeng stood out.

"No one knows Shuangshuang better than I do; we've done business together in town so many times.

She rarely eats in town, always bringing her own coarse grain cakes from home, reluctant even to buy a bowl of tea in town."

"But she's not stingy. She bought land, sent medicine and food to your fourth branch, and gave food to Aunt Zhao Yun's and Zhao Gouzi's families. She never hesitated to help."

"Even if you feel sorry for the third branch being as poor as you before, Shuangshuang has earned her wealth through hard work. Every cent she earns is hers to spend, and no one else has the right to criticize her!"

Lu Yuanfeng's words were undeniably powerful.

He understood Shuangshuang.

And knew her temperament.

Mu Shuangshuang was too lazy to explain any further; those who understood her naturally did, and those who didn't, no explanation could change their mind.

"Fourth Uncle, Fourth Aunt, even though things have come to this, when you meet with grandpa and grandma later, take the initiative to tell them about this first, so that Second Uncle and Fifth Uncle don't take the lead. I'm going to rest now!"

After saying this, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng went out to rest.

Mrs. Liu and Mu Dajiang sighed where they stood. They couldn't bring themselves to scold or beat Mu Xiaxia, but leaving things unsaid felt like a betrayal to Shuangshuang.

"Xiaxia, you're truly ungrateful! Your mother and I don't think there's anything bad about the third branch; on the contrary, we admire them. They dare to dream and take action."

"Fengzi's right; whatever your Sister Shuangshuang earns, it's hers, and you have no right to comment on it."

"Xiaxia, what you did was really unkind. Not to mention how much Shuangshuang has helped our family, just saying bad things about someone while taking their help is too much."

Mu Dajiang said a string of words, all in defense of Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Xiaxia stood silently.

"Xiaxia, are you really jealous of the third branch?" Mrs. Liu hesitated before speaking. "But do you know, your fourth aunt once told me that as long as our family splits, Shuangshuang will teach us business."

"It's your mother always thinking about your oldest uncle's scholarly title. As long as the family doesn't split, you will become an official's daughter in the future, capable of marrying into a good family, without living as we do, toiling in the fields all your life!"

Chapter 500: Round Rub and Flattened Step

At dusk, the wedding procession set off from the Old Yu Family, accompanied by loud music and fanfare.

Yu Liulang was dressed in his wedding attire, riding a black horse, followed by an eight-man sedan chair, which was quite a grand wedding specification.

For an average rural family, they would typically arrange for a smaller four-man sedan chair, and even that would be considered quite prestigious.

Yu Liulang's grand gesture made everyone in Yu Family Village aware that Yu Liulang cared about Feng Xiaohua and was willing to give her the best.

The sound of the suona gradually faded away, and the dishes that Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were preparing were almost done.

They had rested a bit at noon and then started preparing. With over a dozen tables, it wasn't a small number, and it wasn't something that could be cooked up quickly.

Moreover, this was technically their first hosting event, so they had to do a good job no matter what.

The dishes needed not only to be delicious but also plentiful.

Lu Yuanfeng, from somewhere, found a piece of red paper and was inserting copper coins into it.

"Fengzi, what are you doing?" Mu Shuangshuang curiously leaned over.

"Gift money!" Lu Yuanfeng didn't hide it.

Mu Shuangshuang saw the red paper he grabbed was particularly large, and before long, it was filled with coins.

"Fengzi, how much is that?" Mu Shuangshuang was speechless.

She knew that for most people, giving ten or twenty coins was generous enough, and villagers could even just give five coins as a token of their appreciation.

However, relatives would give a bit more, around fifty coins.

But Lu Yuanfeng seemed to have clearly surpassed fifty coins.

"Why are you giving so much? Thirty coins would be plenty, and besides, us helpers don't need to give gift money."

In Da Ning Dynasty, it's customary for the host family to cover for the helpers.

"Today Shuangshuang's uncle is getting married, and Shuangshuang promised before to marry me, so he's my uncle too. It's about respecting one's uncle. No one ever complains about giving too much." Lu Yuanfeng chuckled.

"You..." Mu Shuangshuang blushed. Technically, he was right, but something felt off.

As she pondered, Lu Yuanfeng moved over to where the gift book was being recorded and filled it out.

When he returned, he was holding four red eggs.

These were similar to attending a modern banquet with cigarettes being handed out; mostly, it was a gesture of goodwill.

"Do you want one? Let me peel one for you."

"Sure, anyway, it will be a while before we get to eat."

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng waited there, knowing they wouldn't get to eat until the second seating was done.

The red eggs in Lu Yuanfeng's hands were quickly peeled, and finally, the peeled eggs were white. After Mu Shuangshuang finished eating, she rested for a bit as excitement started to buzz around.

Feng Xiaohua's home was near Old Yu Family's, and soon the sound of firecrackers indicated that the wedding procession had brought the bride back.

They saw the matchmaker help Feng Xiaohua into the pergola.

Everyone stood up, and a brazier was set at the center of the courtyard for ceremonially stepping over, which Feng Xiaohua accomplished easily with the help of the matchmaker, and a group of people followed to the bridal chamber in the back courtyard.

Mu Shuangshuang now had to get busy as well.

Once the bride entered the bridal chamber, it was time to start setting up for the banquet outside.

The preparation for dinner was similar to that at noon, the same group was setting the table and serving dishes, but this time Mrs. Li did not have a good face for the Old Mu Family.

This was because Mrs. Li had heard from her father that Mr. Mu did not treat him well.

So, Mrs. Li showed no respect to the Old Mu Family either.

Mu Shuangshuang had originally thought that the Old Mu Family would share a table during dinner, but surprisingly, they occupied two tables, one for the Old Mu Family and another mixed one, where Old Mu Family members sat with others.

Sitting at the mixed table were Mr. Mu and Mu Dajiang.

In the evening, everyone in the village had someone attending, and no one brought up the matter from noon.

Coincidentally, Mr. Mu ended up at the same table with Mr. Li, whom he had talked with earlier at noon.

Mr. Li wanted to chat with Mr. Mu again, as they knew each other, and after a while of chatting, the serving of dishes began.

In the back courtyard, due to the ongoing banquet, the bride's room was very quiet.

Mu Shuangshuang took this opportunity to sneak in alone.

Feng Xiaohua, originally bored, perked up when someone she liked came in and naturally wanted to chat.

"Auntie, you look beautiful today."

Mu Shuangshuang observed Feng Xiaohua, who was dressed in a red wedding dress with makeup and eyebrows drawn, adding a touch of charm on top of her previous elegance.

She looked stunning.

"Thank you, Shuangshuang, I'm so nervous!"

It's her first wedding, and she's so nervous she couldn't sleep.

She didn't know what it felt like to be a wife.

She worried that her relationship with Sixth Son would become awkward after their roles changed.

"Auntie, what's there to be nervous about? It's something everyone goes through. In the future, I plan to come to you for advice. Let's be optimistic; it's just a ceremony.

Think about it, once the ceremony is over, Sixth Uncle is wholly yours, for you to mold however you wish. Tell him to go east, and he'd not dare go west."

"Pfft..." Because of what Mu Shuangshuang said, Feng Xiaohua laughed heartily, losing her nervousness completely and instead looking forward to married life.

Just as she was about to express her thanks, two red eggs and half a pig's trotter appeared in front of her.

"Eat up; once the fuss is over, who knows how long it'll be. After eating, we can clean up and have a sip of tea to soothe our throats."

Mu Shuangshuang teased with a smile and a raised eyebrow.

Feng Xiaohua felt a wave of gratitude.

This girl had been helping her from the start.

This was why she and Sixth Son had today.

"Shuangshuang, I've prepared a lot of duck eggs for you. Be sure to come and get them when you go home."

Feng Xiaohua suddenly mentioned the duck eggs, catching Mu Shuangshuang off guard.

"Auntie, last time I was just fooling my second aunt with those; don't take it seriously. The silver was given by my mom, you know how she is with my Sixth Uncle, don't you?"

Feng Xiaohua chuckled helplessly. "I'm not giving them to you for free. Consider it as capital for investment; pay me back when you make money in the future."

Mu Shuangshuang nodded in agreement.

Watching the time, Mu Shuangshuang stood up.

"Auntie, I need to watch things outside; I still have two dishes to cook. Hurry up and eat and take care of these things!"

Mu Shuangshuang left the room and, upon reaching the corner, ran into Yu Liulang.

"How's it going, did your aunt eat?" Yu Liulang asked with concern.

"She did, she did. Uncle, you should grab something to eat too; I'm off to keep busy!"

Yu Liulang nodded, as he too had to go out to drink with the guests.

The bride hadn't entered the hall yet, so she couldn't appear, but once the ceremony was over, the banquet would end as well, leaving Yu Liulang to drink alone.

This meal received rave reviews from everyone.

Many had never seen dishes like spicy stir-fried snails, bean sprouts, and cold noodles. They were all enjoying themselves immensely, even more so than with meat dishes.

Mr. Mu felt proud and told those at the table that the cook was his granddaughter.