

Folly 511

Chapter 511: Full of Crooked Ideas

Mu Dalang had a hearty meal at the third branch, and helped them clean up the kitchen.

After finishing, he didn't leave immediately but waited for Shuangshuang to help him solve his doubts.

Mu Shuangshuang put the last bowl into the cabinet and walked over to Mu Dalang.

"Big Cousin, if you have anything to say, just say it. I'll help as much as I can!"

Mu Dalang wasn't someone else, he was no different from her own brother.

So, she was willing to help.

Yu Liulang felt warmth in his heart, feeling the kindness Shuangshuang passed to him, and he didn't have so many apprehensions anymore.

"Shuangshuang, I told Grandpa and Grandma about my plan to farm sheep, but..."

"But what?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"I was rejected. First, Grandma opposed, then Grandpa also advised me to give up." Mu Dalang sighed.

He was not usually indecisive, but after coming back, seeing all the mess at home, he actually developed a fear.

"So, Big Cousin got scared? Scared of failure? Scared of being blamed by Grandpa and Grandma?" Mu Shuangshuang wanted to hear Mu Dalang's answer.

She understood her Big Cousin somewhat.

He had a clear conscience and was righteous in doing things.

Such a person easily succeeds, but also suffers easily.

"No, I'm not scared, it's just..."

"Just what? Just still scared? Big Cousin, why don't Grandpa and Grandma let you do business, let you farm sheep? Isn't it because it costs money? If I'm not wrong, Grandpa and Grandma definitely want you to farm land, that doesn't require capital."

Currently, whenever Old Mrs. Mu bends, Mu Shuangshuang would know what color she'll poop,

She only cared about Mu Xiangxiang and Mu Dade.

There was Mu Zhenzhen before, but unfortunately, she ran away with another man, otherwise, the Old Mu Family would be even more chaotic.

Two tigers cannot exist on one mountain, Mu Xiangxiang and Mu Zhenzhen definitely couldn't coexist.

Mu Dalang was surprised at Shuangshuang's cleverness but also lamented that he wasn't even as sharp as a fourteen-year-old sister.

"Then what do you think I should do, Shuangshuang?" Mu Dalang stared at Mu Shuangshuang, full of expectation.

"In my opinion, Big Cousin must do this thing, and not only do it, but do it well, and finish it before Uncle comes back!"

Mu Shuangshuang's words contained several meanings.

Mu Dalang understood the previous ones, but he didn't understand why it had to be done before Uncle returns.

"Shuangshuang, I don't understand..."

"It's okay if you don't understand, just do as I say. I don't have much else, but I'm willing to invest three taels of silver and partner with you, Big Cousin."

Sheep, sheep milk, sheep wool, these are all good things.

And this year, the third branch doesn't have any cotton. Instead of spending money on cotton elsewhere, it's better to invest and earn the money back. Then it wouldn't hurt.

Besides, sheep wool, used for clothes and whatnot, is especially warm, not worse than cotton.

Mu Dalang was extremely excited. A single sheep, by current prices, was estimated to be four hundred wen each. With Shuangshuang's three taels, that's seven, plus more than one tael he had, he could buy three more, ten sheep, indeed a considerable scale.

"Shuangshuang, are you really willing?" Mu Dalang asked, unable to believe it.

"Of course, I believe in you, Big Cousin. Coincidentally, the grass under Niuwei Mountain grows especially well."

Mu Shuangshuang had noticed the place, sheltered from the wind on all sides, maybe even in winter, there would still be grass to save on fodder money.

After listening to Mu Shuangshuang's words, Mu Dalang felt that his visit today was worth it, and the partner Shuangshuang was even more attentive than he had imagined.

"Alright, in the coming days, I will go to the town to book the sheep!"

"Okay! Then I wish you success, Big Cousin, but don't forget to tell Grandpa and Grandma that the sheep are being fostered by your master."

Old Mrs. Mu, that vampire, if she knew the sheep belonged to Mu Dalang, she'd definitely try to seize them.

Mu Dalang understood this point himself, so he agreed with Mu Shuangshuang.

After discussing such an important matter, Mu Shuangshuang also took out the investment money. Logically, Yu Liulang should have left, but he still had something on his mind.

He didn't know if he could ask this sister.

"Big Cousin, you forgot what I said again? Weren't you very bold before? You helped me with so much the first time you came back, why are you scared now?"

Mu Shuangshuang didn't want Mu Dalang to distance himself from her.

Among all the relatives, only Mu Dalang had genuine care for her and the third branch.

Even the honest fourth branch had someone Mu Shuangshuang disliked.

"Shuangshuang, you know last time Grandma introduced a girl to our Fifth Uncle..."

Mu Dalang told Mu Shuangshuang about Huang Bitu, including the encounter with Matchmaker Sun today.

He knew that some words, once spoken, cannot be taken back.

He couldn't let go of Huang Bitu.

Sometimes, the person you fall for at first glance becomes the one in your heart.

Mu Shuangshuang, after listening, didn't have as many worries as Mu Dalang.

First, Miss Huang from the Huang Family didn't marry Mu Danian, so she was free; whom she chose to marry was her own business.

Second, since Matchmaker Sun came, it proved that Miss Huang's heart also had her Big Cousin, which meant mutual affection.

If so, what's there to worry about?

"Big Cousin, in my opinion, you should take this chance to marry Miss Huang, start a family and establish a career. With a wife, while you're busy with your business, she can help out."

Mu Dalang was a good person, and Mu Shuangshuang believed he would cherish Miss Huang just like Yu Liulang cherished Feng Xiaohua.

"Shuangshuang, about our Grandpa and Grandma..."

Mu Dalang, being honest, couldn't solve those problems.

But Mu Shuangshuang was different; as long as the problem could be solved, she was for convenience in any way possible.

"That's simple. Grandpa and Grandma's part is the easiest to handle, I can help you! But as for Miss Huang, we still need to have Matchmaker Sun arrange a meeting to ask her opinion.

If she is on board, I can tell you a way that guarantees Grandpa and Grandma will beg you to marry Miss Huang."

Mu Shuangshuang was very confident, which relieved Mu Dalang.

He took a long breath and nodded heavily.

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At dinnertime, Mu Dalang left the Old Mu Family to find Matchmaker Sun, asking her to arrange a meeting with Huang Bitu in town, but this matter could only be known to Huang Bitu alone.

Mu Dalang didn't want to ruin the girl's reputation.

"Alright, in three days, let's meet in town. You can treat her to lunch, buy something; we'll just play as ordinary friends. What do you think?" Matchmaker Sun asked.

"Okay, I'll trouble you with this, Matchmaker Sun. If it works out, I'll thank you separately."

Upon hearing the thanks, Matchmaker Sun's face immediately broke into wrinkles of joy.

Saying thanks is practically a matchmaker's red envelope.

Matchmaker Sun was overjoyed. She couldn't get a matchmaker's red envelope from Old Mrs. Mu, but she could get it from her grandson. Heaven was finally being kind to her.

Chapter 512: Don't Let Me Starve and Lose Weight

As soon as Matchmaker Sun left, Mu Dalang's emotions were a mix of tension, anxiety, and anticipation, intertwining to make him lose his appetite for dinner.

At dinnertime, the fourth branch finally returned home, and the four of them seemed like new people, with smiles on their faces.

Mu Dajiang was holding a wooden bucket, which contained the day's spoils for their fourth branch.

However, the fourth branch did not bring it to the Old Mu Family, but went straight to the third branch to find Shuangshuang.

It was dinner time, but the third branch's meal wasn't ready yet. Tonight, Mu Shuangshuang made something simple, just some wild vegetable porridge, so when the fourth branch came, she wasn't planning to have them stay for dinner.

In the kitchen, Mu Shuangshuang put the lid on the pot and saw Mu Dajiang standing at the door.

She exclaimed in surprise, "Fourth Uncle, what brings you here?"

Mu Dajiang's face flushed slightly. He was embarrassed to say something like this, but if he didn't come to find Shuangshuang, there was no one else who could help him.

"Shuangshuang, could you do your Fourth Uncle a favor? If it's too difficult, it's okay not to do it."

Afraid of troubling Mu Shuangshuang, Mu Dajiang added another sentence.

"Fourth Uncle, why don't you tell me first?" Mu Shuangshuang didn't rush to agree. Her abilities were limited, and if she promised something she couldn't do, it would only be her own embarrassment.

"These are the fish your Fourth Aunt and I caught outside all day; we want you to help us sell them in town," Mu Dajiang said cautiously.

Afraid that Shuangshuang would scold him.

After all, the fourth branch hadn't split from the family, and the money earned should be handed over to Old Mrs. Mu.

Mu Shuangshuang glanced at the wooden basin of fish; there were four in total, each weighing about a pound or so. At eight copper coins per pound, these could earn them nearly thirty pennies.

Indeed, it wasn't a small amount for the fourth branch.

"Fourth Uncle, I might not be able to go to town tomorrow; it won't be possible until the day after. How about I take them to the village to sell instead? The price might be a penny less than in town, seven copper coins per pound."

Most of the things Mu Shuangshuang sold in the village were cheaper than in town.

Logically, it offered convenience to the villagers, saving them a long trip, but if it wasn't cheaper, the villagers would rather trek through the mountains than buy there.

"But it's getting dark; will anyone still buy?" Mu Dajiang hesitated greatly.

"No problem, the weather isn't hot, so they won't spoil if left out, and at this time of year, a hot fish slice hotpot isn't bad."

At the end of August now, the weather was no longer hot, unlike in summer, where once you processed a fish, any thicker meat would start to stink quickly.

Now, you just needed to process the fish, make a few horizontal cuts on its body, and sprinkle some salt.

Half-believing, Mu Dajiang watched as Mu Shuangshuang found a scale for him. She gave the scale to Mu Dajiang, weighed the fish, totaling four pounds and one tael, and she didn't charge for that extra tael. Mu Shuangshuang gave Mu Dajiang twenty-eight copper coins and carried the wooden bucket out.

As Mu Dajiang left the yard of the third branch, the entire fourth branch was waiting for his good news.

Especially Mu Xiaxia, who had just been turned down by Mu Shuangshuang, felt a bit anxious.

"Dad, did Sister Shuangshuang..." Mu Xiaxia asked hesitantly.

"Shuangshuang gave us twenty-eight copper coins."

Happiness spread across the man's face.

He'd never seen that much money in his life.

In the first half of his life, he was farming, but the amount of money earned was never disclosed by Old Mrs. Mu.

Every time the family's rice was sold, his father and his other brothers would take it to town.

It never passed through his hands.

"Twenty-eight copper coins, that's a lot..." Mrs. Liu was also overjoyed.

She'd been saving for a long time, only managing to save one copper coin, which had been given to Si Niang back then, and she hadn't had another chance to save since.

Now, all of a sudden, there was twenty-eight copper coins, how could she not be excited?

"But Dad and Mom, how are we going to take the money back? We're not home during the day, Grandpa and Grandma will definitely scold us."

The fourth branch knew beforehand that going out today would result in Old Mrs. Mu's scolding, but they did it anyway.

This home was suffocating them.

This was also what Mu Dajiang worried about.

After some discussion, they decided to bury those copper coins somewhere and come back for them later at night.

The three of them chose a spot not far from Mu Shuangshuang's house.

Once they left, Little Black jumped to where they had buried the money, dug up the soil with its paws, and moved the copper coins one by one into its mouse hole.

After over twenty trips, not a single coin was left for the fourth branch.

Having done all that, Little Black curled up with Lai Mi, dozing off.

By the time Mu Shuangshuang returned, it was quite late. She had visited several households in the village and finally sold the fish, with the last one given to Yuan Feng.

Upon returning home, even Yu Si Niang was back and was preparing dinner in the kitchen.

"Isn't Yuan Feng coming tonight either?" Yu Si Niang asked in surprise.

She had just returned and noticed Shuangshuang wasn't there, thinking that Shuangshuang was with Yuan Feng, thus a bit curious.

"Yuan Feng said he won't be coming for the next few days; he's got things to do at home, but when I went to his house, he wasn't there.

I made a fish soup for him and threw in some pickled vegetables. When he gets back, he'll have something simple to eat for dinner, which should suffice for tonight."

Lu Yuanfeng was really busy. The entire area behind the mountain was waiting for him to clear. She wanted to help, but he refused, citing the forest's abundance of snakes and insects and the risk of bites.

Mu Shuangshuang wasn't afraid, but she couldn't resist Lu Yuanfeng's insistence.

"I see. I thought he'd come over, so I deliberately heated up two more dishes," Yu Si Niang said, a bit disappointed.

Someone who always ate with them suddenly wasn't there anymore, and it felt odd.

"Then we'll eat them ourselves. It won't go to waste anyway. I'll go get my dad!" Mu Shuangshuang said, heading into the house.

Elsewhere, after working all day, Lu Yuanfeng came home, and before he could wash his face, Yuanbao ran out, shouting, "Second Brother, Sister Shuangshuang came by and made us dinner."

Lu Yuanfeng's frown relaxed as he entered the kitchen, catching the fragrance of fish.

He almost started drooling instantly.

"When did Shuangshuang leave?"

The big iron pot was still steaming, releasing an aroma that whetted one's appetite.

"She left a while ago. Sister Shuangshuang said you have to cook it yourself, she didn't have time today. She'll help you tidy up the house tomorrow."

Yuanbao tried his best to recall every word Shuangshuang had said.

He nodded as he spoke.

"Oh, right, Sister Shuangshuang also said that it's getting cold, and you must dress Yuanbao warmly. Don't skimp on money, make sure to buy lots of good food for Yuanbao, so he doesn't get skinny from hunger!"

Yuanbao earnestly said to Lu Yuanfeng.

Chapter 513: Got Retribution

The last sentence was obviously added by Yuanbao himself.

Lu Yuanfeng was at a loss whether to laugh or cry.

In recent times, he's been busy with lots of things, indeed neglecting him.

Lu Yuanfeng felt a bit moved, and his expression softened slightly.

"Yuanbao, do you blame Second Brother for not having time to spend with you?" Lu Yuanfeng asked.

"Of course not, Second Brother should spend more time with Sister Shuangshuang. Yuanbao has Little Zhi to accompany me. When I grow up, I want to marry Little Zhi, just like Second Brother and Sister Shuangshuang."

"Do you know what a wife means, Yuanbao?"

Yuanbao had a good relationship with Little Zhi, which Lu Yuanfeng always knew, but he didn't know that in Yuanbao's heart, Little Zhi was positioned as his wife.

"I know, just like Sister Shuangshuang and Second Brother. Little Zhi and I are young. You will definitely say I don't understand, but it's okay. I am willing to give all my meat to Little Zhi."

After all, he was just a child, speaking in a confused and somewhat jumbled manner.

Lu Yuanfeng didn't take it to heart either.

He busied himself for a while, taking the cooked fish out of the pot and putting rice and sweet potatoes in to cook.

Just as he finished adding firewood, a faint sobbing sound came from outside, very faint but Lu Yuanfeng heard it clearly.

"Second Brother, outside..." Yuanbao also noticed.

"I'll go out and have a look," Lu Yuanfeng said.

As soon as he stepped out, he saw Xia Guagua crying uncontrollably outside his courtyard.

Seeing someone he didn't like, Lu Yuanfeng frowned, turned around, and walked away.

This time, he wouldn't give Xia Guagua a chance to enter his house again.

Xia Guagua got anxious and called, "Brother Yuanfeng, I really know I was wrong. I'm in a terrible state now. My mother is forcing me to marry Wang Fugui. The Wang Family doesn't like me; they feel ashamed of me, and Wang Fugui..."

Since the last time Xia Guagua was caught by the villagers, her life hasn't been easy. Wherever she goes, people call her a slut, a cheap woman.

Even Gu Jiulian no longer supports her, just wanting her to marry into the Wang Family.

Wang Fugui is not a decent person. Even before marriage, he goes to brothels and has even tried several times to force himself on Xia Guagua.

Now, Xia Guagua feels like living is worse than dying.

But deep down, she still can't let go of Lu Yuanfeng.

Yuanbao rushed out of the house and yelled at Xia Guagua, "You are too bad, Sister Shuangshuang never harmed you, but you keep causing her trouble. Not only my Second Brother doesn't care for you, but even I don't care for you!"

"Go away, don't appear in front of my house's courtyard, or I'll call the village head to deal with you!"

Yuanbao's words were still childish, but the kind of loathing they expressed was clear enough.

He, like Lu Yuanfeng, was very protective of those close to him.

Even if the people he cared about did something wrong, they were still right.

People he didn't like were wrong even if they did the right thing.

Xia Guagua was shocked. She had given so much food to Yuanbao to please Lu Yuanfeng and helped him with laundry, but he turned his back on her in a flash.

"Yuanbao, don't you owe me for all the food I gave you? When your dad bullied you, it was me who helped you, and now you're asking me to leave. Why do all of you think that woman is good?"

Xia Guagua thought she wasn't any worse than Mu Shuangshuang, but why did no one like her?

She knew the outcome this time wouldn't be good either, but she couldn't resign herself to all the efforts she made being in vain.

Stubborn and unyielding, that's what Xia Guagua was like. Once she believed in something, she clung to it no matter how many bad things she did, never turning back.

"Sister Guagua, I'm still calling you that. You can't compare to Sister Shuangshuang. Sister Shuangshuang never expects anything in return for her efforts. She has made a lot of delicious food for me too, but she never asked for anything in return."

Yuanbao knew full well who was good to him and who had ulterior motives.

Though he was young, he wasn't blind.

Every time, although Xia Guagua had given him a lot of things, she had asked him to put in a good word or betray his Second Brother.

Yuanbao naturally didn't have a good impression of Xia Guagua.

"Yuanbao, let's go inside and eat!" Lu Yuanfeng didn't want Yuanbao to have more contact with Xia Guagua, so he called out to Yuanbao.

"Alright!"

The two of them went back into the house, ignoring Xia Guagua. At that moment, Xia Guagua felt humiliated, thinking of how much she had given.

Xia Guagua began to wail loudly.

It was dinnertime, so the villagers were all at home. Hearing such a harrowing cry, they naturally flocked over.

Xia Guagua started to accuse.

"Lu Yuanfeng, you liar, you said you would marry me, that you'd be good to me forever. Liar, liar..."

The villagers were abuzz. Wasn't this Fengzi with Old Mu Family's Shuang? How come with this Xia Guagua...

And wasn't Xia Guagua supposed to marry Old Wang Family's son?

The villagers were confused but were also eager to hear more juicy details.

Lu Yuanfeng had never seen such shameless people; even slinging mud wasn't done this way.

"Xia Guagua, don't falsely accuse me anymore. On normal days, I don't even let you in my house; where did this talk of marriage come from? I, Lu Yuanfeng, stand upright, this lifetime, I only like Shuangshuang."

The crowd was again in awe. It's hard for any girl to bear being exposed like this.

But she deserved it.

In the villagers' eyes, Xia Guagua had long had an unclear relationship with Wang Fugui.

Now she cries at another man's doorstep. The implications aren't shallow.

Nominally, Xia Guagua was also Lu Yuanfeng's sister in the villagers' eyes. It's absurd for a sister to love her brother.

"Ah, we aren't interested in the Old Lu Family's mess, just as long as Xia Guagua marries the Wang Family's son. Otherwise, this issue spreads to other villages, who would dare marry a girl from our village?"

Currently, though the villages were near each other, basically, the news wouldn't spread outside. But once it did, it would be a huge deal.

The matchmakers typically arranged marriages and had the authority to choose which village's girl to pick. But if someone like this is in the village, others would reconsider if they want daughters from this village.

If that's the case, it might affect finding a good match for their own daughters.

So someone went to call Gu Jiulian to handle the situation.

After a while, Gu Jiulian came up to take away the person.

"You girl, why are you out when you're sick? I already called the doctor and got your medicine, once you take it, you'll see who's in front of you."

Gu Jiulian immediately said to the crowd, pointing at Xia Guagua.

She was shrewd, knowing that the most important thing now was to preserve her daughter's reputation, or else if the Wang Family's marriage fell through, she'd be done for.

"Mom, I'm not sick, I'm serious. Why can't I speak? Lu Yuanfeng is just a scoundrel. He harbors a criminal, that man called Xing Beichen in our village is a criminal!"

Chapter 514: Specialized in Handling All Defiance

Many villagers in Er Gui Village had dealings with Xing Beichen, and they all saw him as an exceptionally kind person.

Now that Xia Guagua accused him of being a criminal, everyone found it hard to accept all at once.

Lu Yuanfeng hadn't entered the kitchen yet, so Xia Guagua's words naturally reached his ears clearly.

Xia Guagua was undoubtedly thick-skinned; if something didn't go her way, she wanted to destroy it, without considering how much trouble her words might cause others.

Lu Yuanfeng furrowed his brows and turned to Xia Guagua, saying, "Have you caused enough trouble? Gone crazy enough? Xia Guagua, just how many people do you intend to slander before you're satisfied?"

"I'm not crazy, don't think I don't know. That Xing Beichen was nursing his injuries at your house back then. You even dared to deceive the villagers, saying he was a distant relative.

Lu Yuanfeng, do you think everyone in the world is a fool? When your mother married your father, her family severed ties with her; they didn't have any relatives who would associate with you."

Xia Guagua laid everything she knew out in front of everyone.

As the crowd was still in shock, she started inciting the villagers again.

"Everyone, listen to me. That day, I was outside and saw Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Shuangshuang taking care of a bloodied Xing Beichen. They even got a doctor for him to treat him inside the house.

That Xing Beichen was so badly injured, he surely isn't a good person, and might bring disaster to our Er Gui Village. Everyone think, if the elderly and children in our village are implicated because of Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng's actions, what will we do?"

Xia Guagua was in a desperate situation; if she couldn't have someone, no one else could.

Only by driving Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Shuangshuang out of the village could she be at ease!

The villagers exchanged glances.

Some things were alright to just watch from a distance if they didn't involve oneself, but it wasn't so simple if it did.

"Fengzi, who exactly is this Xing Beichen? Is Xia Guagua telling the truth?" someone from the village asked.

"Of course it's true, I also saw that person covered in blood, looking like he had been slashed countless times. You tell me, would a normal person be hacked like that?"

The speaker's voice was rough and hoarse, like a drake, wasn't it Ma Houhou, who had been stung half to death by wasps because of Mu Shuangshuang?

After so much time recovering, he had finally healed.

But there were still wasp sting marks on his face, making it horribly ugly.

Of course, he had never seen Xing Beichen injured; he was just happy to lie if it could disadvantage Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Shuangshuang.

Ma Houhou was a neighbor not far from Lu Yuanfeng, so his words convinced more people.

Someone shouted for Lu Yuanfeng to get out of Er Gui Village, and gradually, more people echoed this sentiment.

Lu Yuanfeng wasn't someone good at defending himself; he didn't like laying everything out in the open.

As he was about to enter the house, ignoring the villagers, he realized Yuanbao, who had been following him, was missing.

A while later, Yuanbao returned, with Shuangshuang following behind.

It seemed that both had run over, especially Shuangshuang, who had a thin layer of sweat on her forehead.

But once she entered their courtyard, Shuangshuang immediately calmed down.

"Yo, what's everyone doing here?" Mu Shuangshuang asked, feigning curiosity.

"Shuang, you came just in time. Xia Guagua and Ma Houhou say the man you two saved is a criminal, and bringing disaster to our village. Is it true?" a villager asked.

"Of course not. Fengzi and I are just kids; he's seventeen and I'm fourteen. How could we have the ability to save a criminal we don't even know?"

Mu Shuangshuang loudly denied.

She then continued, "Xing Beichen was actually a relative of Fengzi. A relative staying for a few days is nothing extraordinary, I'm sure everyone would agree with that kinship switch.

I know some people have interacted with Xing Beichen and should know he's a well-mannered person, how could he be a bad guy?"

Mu Shuangshuang wasn't afraid of Xia Guagua.

She had indeed seen Xing Beichen injured before, but Mu Shuangshuang wouldn't admit to things without evidence, right?

Xia Guagua had anticipated Mu Shuangshuang's denial, and she had prepared evidence.

"Everyone, don't worry, I'll get the evidence for you!"

Xia Guagua walked towards her house. This time, Gu Jiulian didn't stop her, because she was eager to see Lu Yuanfeng chased out of Er Gui Village.

She knew Lu Yuanfeng had recently bought several acres of land, and if he left Er Gui Village, wouldn't all that land be hers?

So now Gu Jiulian was itching to see Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Shuangshuang chased out of Er Gui Village.

A while later, Xia Guagua returned with a tattered piece of clothing in her hands, still stained with blood, though it had dried.

Mu Shuangshuang keenly noticed it was the clothes bloodied when Xing Beichen was injured that day; she remembered Lu Yuanfeng had said the clothes had been dealt with.

Why it was now in Xia Guagua's hands was a mystery to Mu Shuangshuang.

But she quickly reacted, snatching the blood-stained clothes and giving Xia Guagua a slap.

"Xia Guagua, you're shameless. How could you keep the clothes Fengzi wore when he went boar hunting last time? He's your cousin, how could you think so poorly of him?"

Xia Guagua was hit into a daze, temporarily unable to react, staring at Mu Shuangshuang in shock, evidently not believing she dared to hit her.

"You..."

As Xia Guagua started to speak, Mu Shuangshuang cut her off.

"What you? My and Fengzi's relationship is approved by my parents, even Matchmaker Sun knows about it. Once I come of age next year, there'll be a betrothal. Or do you think your status is higher than mine?"

Mu Shuangshuang puffed out her chest, loudly questioning Xia Guagua.

They say striking first confers the advantage, while delaying leads to disaster.

Xia Guagua explained, "Don't believe her, everyone. Those clothes aren't Lu Yuanfeng's, Lu Yuanfeng never had such clothes; they belonged to Xing Beichen."

"How do you know Fengzi doesn't have those clothes? Have you seen his wardrobe? Xia Guagua, while the villagers are here, let's straighten this out."

Last time, was it you who cut up all of Fengzi's clothes with scissors, leaving him with nothing to wear, forcing him to cobble together two sets of clothes?"

"I..." Xia Guagua felt guilty, she had indeed done that.

But it didn't mean the clothes in her hands belonged to Lu Yuanfeng!

"Look, everyone, this Xia Guagua hesitates with everything she does. It's obvious she's guilty!"

"I really don't know how Fengzi and I offended her, for her to cling to us so relentlessly."

"Everyone watched Fengzi grow up, is he someone who makes empty promises? Xia Guagua claimed Fengzi promised to marry her; it's nothing but a rumor she started to get her hands on those few acres of land Fengzi owns."

Chapter 515: Where Did Mu Danian Go?

"If Fengzi and I were kicked out of Er Gui Village, his land would all go to Xia Guagua's family. Everyone doesn't want to see their goodwill being used by others, right?"

Mu Shuangshuang's skill of lying with open eyes wasn't developed overnight.

After listening to Mu Shuangshuang's words, Xia Guagua and Gu Jiulian were so furious they almost tore Mu Shuangshuang apart.

The villagers slowly started to understand the trick.

It's also because Xia Guagua's reputation isn't good, her messy affair with Wang Fugui has long been the talk of others over tea after meals.

Even when they crawl under the quilt to do that thing, they'd talk about it a bit.

"Humph, so young yet so skilled at lying, doesn't anyone care about my opinion, Ma Houhou?"

Ma Houhou, who had been silent, said loudly.

But is saying this still useful at this point?

The balance in the villagers' hearts had already tipped; they trusted Mu Shuangshuang.

"Ma Houhou, that's enough. Who doesn't know you have a grudge with Shuang? Last time you angered her until she coughed up blood."

"That's right, Ma Houhou. Shuang and Fengzi being kicked out of Er Gui Village doesn't benefit you either, unless you want to be exposed like Xia Guagua."

The villagers, one after another, spoke, and their words were surprisingly unanimous.

Gu Jiulian knew things were exposed, and the villagers didn't believe them, so she simply dragged Xia Guagua towards her house.

"Mom, what are you doing? Let go of me." Xia Guagua shouted while struggling.

"Let go? You're not embarrassed enough yet, are you? Hurry up and get back!"

Gu Jiulian just prayed at this moment that the Old Wang Family wouldn't find out.

Her daughter hadn't yet married but was messing around with Wang Fugui. Hopefully, the Wang Family wouldn't just kick her away.

Dragging Xia Guagua back to her room, Gu Jiulian pushed her in and locked the door from outside.

Xia Guagua was completely locked in the room.

"Mom, why are you locking me? Let me out, let me out..."

Gu Jiulian was determined to marry off Xia Guagua, and no matter how she cried out, she wouldn't open the door.

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Mu Shuangshuang came over to save the day, and after saving the situation, naturally had to go back.

Besides, she hadn't eaten yet.

"Fengzi, I'm heading back now. In the future, when you encounter this kind of woman raving, just leave it to me!"

After all, a man shouldn't hit a woman, and Mu Shuangshuang didn't want Lu Yuanfeng to lose his dignity.

But she was different; she dared to say anything and do anything.

She had hit people; because of her young age, she would be forgiven, but Lu Yuanfeng was different.

If he laid a hand in front of the villagers, even a reasonable situation would turn unreasonable.

"Shuangshuang, why don't you stay here and finish your meal?" Lu Yuanfeng suddenly said.

The big pot of fish hadn't been tasted by Lu Yuanfeng yet, but he knew it would be delicious.

Seeing Lu Yuanfeng's hopeful eyes, Mu Shuangshuang couldn't figure out how to refuse.

"Then I'll eat here, but I need to be quick; my family is still waiting for me."

It only took a bowl of fish soup's time, and after drinking it, Mu Shuangshuang went back.

Lu Yuanfeng was also looking satisfied.

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As night fell, the family of four tiptoed under the moonlight to their money hiding place, only to be dumbfounded upon arrival.

The dirt pit originally used to bury money had been opened, and not a single coin was left.

The family of four looked at each other, almost crying.

Twenty-eight copper coins; how many fish would have to be sold to earn that back?

The most important thing is, none of them knew who took it.

Mu Dajiang's face turned instantly white, he was about to kneel down and call to heaven.

Who would have thought, at this time, Old Mrs. Mu and Mrs. Lin suddenly stepped out from the shadows.

"Mom, I said the fourth room must have a secret hidden from us; the whole family came here, must have hidden the money!"

Hiding money in the Old Mu Family was a taboo, and if caught, there was definitely no good outcome.

Old Mrs. Mu tiptoed on her small feet straight to Mu Dajiang and jumped up, spitting a mouthful of phlegm onto Mu Dajiang's face.

"Bah, how dare you hide money, you traitor! I'll take your miserable lives!"

At this time, Mr. Mu wasn't around; Old Mrs. Mu didn't care about anyone's face, speaking without any restraint.

Mu Dajiang, already beaten down, couldn't bear being scolded by Old Mrs. Mu. Sweat the size of soybeans fell from his forehead, looking completely like he had a dead face.

Old Mrs. Mu and Mrs. Lin happily went to pick up the money, only to find that the place was only a pile of dug-up dirt, nothing else.

Old Mrs. Mu didn't see the fourth house digging anything, so they hadn't moved beforehand. Since that was the case, it meant Mrs. Lin had lied.

"Good for you, Mrs. Lin, tricking me out in the middle of the night; I must have been too nice to you, letting you think I'm easy to deceive."

Outside the yard, there was a noisy commotion; people who were asleep were woken up.

Mu Shuangshuang lit a lamp, just in time to see a copper coin under the table. Without much thought, Mu Shuangshuang picked up the copper coin and got dressed.

At this moment, beside her family's yard, Old Mrs. Mu was scolding Mrs. Lin, using particularly harsh words.

Mrs. Lin kept begging for forgiveness, saying she'd been wrong, the fourth room didn't secretly hide money or anything.

Mu Shuangshuang thought of the copper coin in her pocket, it seemed to still have a muddy feeling.

After a while, Old Mrs. Mu and Mrs. Lin went back.

All the members of the fourth room were still there, puzzled, suspicious, and despairing.

Mu Shuangshuang approached, unnoticed by everyone.

"What are you doing?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

Mu Dajiang shook his head, refusing to speak. As for Mrs. Liu, she looked half alive.

Mu Shuangshuang tentatively asked, "Did you lose money?"

The three of them, six eyes, stared at her as if she had done something major.

Mu Shuangshuang instantly understood.

It must be Little Black, who is attracted to money and, upon seeing silver here, dug it all up.

"Shuangshuang, you..." Mu Dajiang said cautiously, afraid to offend Shuangshuang.

That money was what she gave them.

Although they sold fish, if Shuangshuang didn't help sell it, they wouldn't earn a single penny.

"I didn't take your money; I know who did."

"Who?" Mu Xiaxia asked.

"Wait here, I'll go call it; it should be asleep now."

Little Black had long stopped sleeping in its little house; ever since Lai Mi came around, Little Black wandered everywhere, unafraid of being caught, as Lai Mi took the risks for it.

Mu Shuangshuang went in and gave Little Black a good scolding, making it hiss non-stop.

Reluctantly, Little Black spat out the twenty-seven copper coins; the remaining one was in Mu Shuangshuang's hand.

The matter was successfully resolved; the fourth room got their money and avoided having it taken by Old Mrs. Mu.

Just two days later, something big happened in the Old Mu Family; Mu Danian, who usually bounced around, suddenly disappeared. For two whole days, it was as if he'd vanished.

Mu Shuangshuang started to wonder if that time Lu Yuanfeng tossed him into the river and drowned him.

Chapter 516: Provincial Matchmaker Red Envelope

Mu Shuangshuang shared this idea with Lu Yuanfeng.

Lu Yuanfeng was hesitant, but was sure that bit of water wouldn't drown anyone.

This made Mu Shuangshuang even more puzzled.

If the person couldn't drown, why didn't they return?

Could they have been bitten to death by a dog? Or got rabies?

Mu Shuangshuang had Da Huang bite Mu Dalian's butt back then, and she didn't see Da Huang touching any other parts!

With this, Mu Shuangshuang became a little more worried.

However, this worry didn't last long, as it faded. At the last banquet at the Old Yu Family, someone ate and then deliberately asked the Old Yu Family for the location of Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng's village, then started coming over to invite people.

It was September 16, not yet the busiest autumn harvest time in the village. It was a birthday banquet, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng discussed it and accepted their first job.

Both parties immediately set the menu, and it was no different from the Old Yu Family's menu, but the requirement from this family was an all-inclusive package, they didn't even need their own people for serving the dishes.

The entire banquet was all-inclusive for Mu Shuangshuang.

There have always been two types of banquets, one is all-inclusive, where the host doesn't provide manpower or materials, just pays.

The other type is where the host provides materials and manpower, and only a chef needs to come over.

The first type definitely earns more, after all, the materials and such, whether more or less, are controlled by the chef, who has the initiative.

Of course, the second type is more worry-free, but earns less, there is no initiative, the host says what is what.

In short, this was Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng's strict sense first customer, although the time had not yet come, both Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng already had plans in mind, this time, they would make a name for themselves, let everyone know how amazing she and Fengzi are.

Returning home, Mu Shuangshuang took some green vegetables she picked from the garden to Zhao Yun's house.

Zhao Yun was very surprised and asked, "Shuang, why are you giving me so many green vegetables, keep it for yourself to eat."

Mu Shuangshuang shook the basket in her hand and said, "Aunt Xiao Yun, the vegetables I planted last time are almost ready to eat. Sometimes, just go and pick some green vegetables yourself, they would only go to waste in the field."

In just over two months, the vegetables were growing very well, plus Yu Si Niang's careful care, Mu Shuangshuang had no worries about the green vegetables now.

Just the variety was still not enough.

After the autumn harvest, they could rush to plant some winter melons or something.

Aunt Xiao Yun laughed endlessly, not because of Shuangshuang's vegetables, but because she watched as the third branch gradually got up and their days became more and more prosperous.

"Then I won't be polite with you, I'll take these vegetables."

After delivering the vegetables, Mu Shuangshuang let out a sigh of relief, and as soon as she returned to the third branch's yard, she heard Old Mrs. Mu loudly speaking in whispers with Mrs. Lin by the latrine, as if afraid others wouldn't hear.

Mu Shuangshuang simply went along with their wishes and quietly approached.

"I don't know where Fifth has gone, not seen for two whole days. If I didn't know his lazy nature, I old woman wouldn't know what to say."

"Mother, I guess Fifth has been captivated by some vixen. Why don't you quickly find him a wife, make him settle down?"

Mrs. Lin was eager to find Mu Danian a wife to share the workload.

"Don't mention marriage, it infuriates me the old woman!" Old Mrs. Mu said angrily.

"Mother, what are you angry about? Finding a wife for Fifth is a good thing, you should be happy."

"Happy, Lin, do you really take me for an old muddlehead or a fool? That Huang family girl set her eyes on your son, not on Danyan."

Old Mrs. Mu, in a fury, spilled everything like beans from her mouth.

Mrs. Lin was equally astonished.

Huang Bita set her eyes on her son?

"Mother, what did you say? That Huang Bita is two years older than my son Da Lang, I don't want this shrewish woman to be my daughter-in-law!"

About the Huang family, Mrs. Lin had made inquiries early on, they were a poor family, three acres of thin land, no brothers had found a wife. If they married such a girl, it would surely be a burden on her son.

Moreover, with Uncle Dog Egg about to graduate from high school, who would choose to settle down before the government papers came in?

Her son Da Lang surely had to find a landlord's daughter, a wealthy man's daughter to be worthy of Da Lang.

What Mrs. Lin said greatly satisfied Old Mrs. Mu.

Now, she seemed to have found a friend on the same side.

Her attitude towards Mrs. Lin improved a bit.

"Lin, don't cook dinner tonight, I'll call Old Four's wife, that lazy woman, thinking she's a young mistress, now does nothing. I old lady will flay her alive today."

Old Mrs. Mu and Mrs. Lin's voices gradually faded away.

Mu Shuangshuang walked out from the shadows.

It seemed her elder brother and the Huang family girl's romantic road was quite bumpy.

Understandably so, her second uncle and second aunty were money-seeking, high-eyed, and low-performing, it was improbable they'd esteem the Huang family girl's background.

Moreover, the Huang family girl had mentioned it to Mu Danian, placed on Mrs. Lin's head, she would definitely not agree.

Mu Shuangshuang pondered for a bit and decided to handle this matter as soon as possible.

Taking the bamboo basket in her hand to the kitchen, putting it away, Mu Shuangshuang hurried to find Matchmaker Sun and discussed her idea with Matchmaker Sun.

Matchmaker Sun's eyes on Mu Shuangshuang changed from astonishment to delight, followed by admiration.

"Shuang, what's your brain made of? How did you come up with such a good method, I've been a matchmaker for over thirty years and never used this method."

Mu Shuangshuang chuckled, looking mysterious, but didn't say a word.

"Oh dear, the fault was my old woman, tell me, tell me! If you manage to say something, in the future when I make matches for you, I won't ask for the matchmaker's token, how about that?"

Matchmaker Sun's matchmaker token is the highest among the matchmakers here, if she said no matchmaker token, Mu Shuangshuang would save two hundred coins.

"Matchmaker Sun, I'd like to tell you, but my mind's ideas, well, they're often unstable, even if I want to talk, I might not remember what to say, you see..." Mu Shuangshuang raised an eyebrow, looking troubled.

Matchmaker Sun felt resentment from the bottom of her heart!

It's already inside one's head, how could it still be unstable?

Thinking it was Mu Shuangshuang, Matchmaker Sun sighed.

"Little Ancestor, if you want me to do something, just say, I, Matchmaker Sun, admit defeat to you."

Matchmaker Sun wore an about-to-cry expression.

However, on her face, this expression still looked quite alarming.

After all, her matchmaker makeup would fall like a shower of powder with each move!

"Well, well! Matchmaker Sun, you're the most famous matchmaker here, frequently running between villages, knowing many people, could you help me find someone?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"Of course, it's just a person, as long as you can say it, as long as it's within my reach, I assure you I'll keep an eye out."

Matchmaker Sun patted her chest in assurance!

Chapter 517: Huang Bitu and Mu Dalang

With Matchmaker Sun's assurance, Mu Shuangshuang felt relieved.

This woman, although she usually talked nonsense, did have impressive connections.

The person Mu Shuangshuang wanted her to find was none other than Lu Yuanfeng's mother.

If you persist, Mu Shuangshuang believed that she would surely find her.

"Since that's the case, I'll tell you why I'm so smart!" Mu Shuangshuang pretended to be mysterious, and as expected, Matchmaker Sun leaned in to listen.

"The fact is... my parents are very smart, so naturally, I am too!"

"..."

Matchmaker Sun was at a loss, but Mu Shuangshuang handed her a portrait and warned her not to tell anyone before running off quickly.

Matchmaker Sun considered herself unlucky and swore to have less contact with the girls from the Third Branch of the Old Mu Family!

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The next day, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng went to the town to sell cold noodles, while Mu Dalang went to meet Miss Huang.

According to Shuangshuang, Mu Dalang had to settle this matter before Mu Danian returned, otherwise, Mu Danian would definitely cause trouble.

The three of them went together because Mu Shuangshuang promised to help convince Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu.

Upon reaching the town, Mu Shuangshuang delivered the cold noodles and sold the freshly sprouted bean sprouts, then went to the place Matchmaker Sun had arranged.

Huang Family Village was about twenty to thirty miles from the town, similar to Er Gui Village, and it would take about an hour to get there.

Matchmaker Sun and Miss Huang left late and arrived at the town around noon.

Having met once before, there was no concern about recognizing the wrong person.

Mu Dalang was sitting at the table, sometimes standing up, sometimes sitting down, as if there were bugs on his seat.

"Big cousin, what's wrong with you? Uncomfortable seat or are you hungry?"

Mu Shuangshuang smiled playfully and teased Mu Dalang without hesitation.

Mu Dalang's face turned as red as a monkey's bottom.

In his heart, he admired his cousin.

Bold in her actions, she did what she wanted to do.

He and Miss Huang, without their parents' consent or arranged matchmaking, made such a big decision based solely on that fleeting moment of attraction.

Yet Mu Dalang didn't regret it, he wanted to live for himself, just like Shuangshuang.

"Shuangshuang, do you think my outfit looks good?"

Mu Dalang asked again, unsure.

"Of course it looks good, my big cousin is handsome, any girl would like you!"

Mu Shuangshuang spoke the truth, Mu Dalang had been an apprentice in town for years, his attire was the best among all the men in the Old Mu Family.

He had a variety of styles, and the quality wasn't bad either.

After Mu Shuangshuang spoke, she suddenly felt a piercing stare directed at her, turning she saw Lu Yuanfeng with his lips slightly pursed.

Shuangshuang knew that this little pot of jealousy had been tipped over.

She chuckled and then said seriously, "Big cousin, what I just said doesn't count for me.

I'm very loyal in my feelings, apart from Fengzi, there's not a hint of distraction in my eyes, so give up on those thoughts!"

This was probably the strangest expression of love Mu Dalang had ever seen.

He laughed heartily, the previous tension instantly disappearing!

He started looking forward to today.

After a while, Matchmaker Sun arrived with a man and a woman.

The man looked to be in his thirties, tall but like a skeleton, face glistening, appearing malnourished.

His clothes were full of patches, but his features resembled Miss Huang's.

He should be her unmarried brother, and the eldest, because his back was slightly bent, a look acquired from years of hard work.

"Ah Bi, who's this?"

The man spoke abruptly, asking in front of Mu Shuangshuang and the others.

Huang Bitā's face instantly turned red with embarrassment, she originally didn't want her big brother to come, but he insisted on seeing for himself.

"He..."

Huang Bitā pointed at Mu Dalang, who stood up blushing, unsure of what to do.

Mu Shuangshuang glanced at them; this didn't look like a matchmaking, more like meeting the family.

The Huang family's guardian was Huang Daniu.

On Mu Dalang's side, it was her and Fengzi.

Both lowered their heads, not daring to look each other in the eye.

Huang Daniu unabashedly examined Mu Dalang, from looks to attire, and finally spoke after observing for a long time.

"Our family is very poor, we only have three acres of land, and it's fourth-class barren land with no yield. Even daily subsistence is an issue."

The man's opening line was quite unique, catching everyone's attention.

"My little sister has been thoughtful since young, she saves food and clothes for us brothers, but even so, my sister is still my treasure.

If anyone dares to bully Ah Bi, I, Huang Daniu, would risk my life to not let them have peace!"

On this point, Mu Dalang wholeheartedly agreed.

He knew that today Huang Bitu was willing to come over because she was willing to marry him and follow him, and he wouldn't back down, regardless of what the family said.

If worst comes to worst, he'll do like the Third Branch and separate to live on his own, after all, with the silver he has from selling sheep, it's enough for him and Bitu to live.

Since he's resolved, Bitu is his wife, and he'll protect her.

"Huang Daniu, rest assured, if I marry Bitu, I'll treat her as my treasure, even if problems arise, I'll never let her get hurt."

Mu Dalang's words moved Huang Daniu deeply.

He knew his family's condition well.

Poverty wasn't the issue, the real problem was he and his brothers were burdens, unable to support themselves, any family that marries his sister will have concerns.

Plus, over the years, his sister became an old maid while taking care of them, missing the best age for marriage.

"As long as you treat my sister well, we won't ask for the five taels of silver bride price from the Huang Family."

The man's words were powerful, and there was not an ounce of joking.

Everyone present, including Matchmaker Sun, was stunned.

She had been matchmaking for many years, and not asking for a bride price upon marriage happened only twice; first being a pockmarked forty-year-old spinster in the Zhao family.

And the Second being Yu Si Niang from the Third Branch of the Mu Family.

Is Huang Bitā about to be added to the list?

"Big brother, what are you talking about? Without the bride price, how will you and second brother afford to marry?"

"Without the bride price, do you intend to remain bachelors for life?"

Huang Bitā's voice was already choked with tears.

She chose to get married because of the bride price, three to five taels of silver would be enough to help her big brother find a woman who was already married.

A man can't be single forever, he must settle down, marry, and continue the lineage!

Mu Shuangshuang could understand Huang Bitā's agitation because marriage is also one way to become wealthy for such a large family.

"Ah Bi, if you're well, that's better than anything else!" Huang Daniu said.

As things reached a point, Mu Shuangshuang stood up.

"Everyone, let's not discuss this issue first, I'm more concerned about Miss Huang's opinion of my big cousin."

Chapter 518: Mutual Restraint

Even though I know that discussing this now means Huang Bitā has Mu Dalang in her heart.

But nothing beats witnessing.

Mu Dalang is all fired up right now and has jumped in with both feet; if things don't work out in the end, how sad will the two of them be?

Matchmaker Sun is also someone who can read the room. After listening to Shuangshuang's words, she quickly said, "Shuangshuang is right, let's eat first and get to know each other while dining."

Having traveled such a long distance, it's reasonable to be hungry.

Called the waiter and started ordering dishes.

Matchmaker Sun can't eat without meat and immediately ordered braised pork. The Huang siblings, being the type that knows how to run a household, only ordered stir-fried beans.

Lu Yuanfeng is generally not picky about food. Besides what Shuangshuang cooks, everything else is just about the same for him.

So, he let Shuangshuang decide.

The Da Ning Dynasty is not like modern times; menus for dishes aren't available, so everything needs to be reported by the waiter.

Mu Shuangshuang has roughly checked the meal prices before, and they're slightly more expensive than usual places, but it's packed, so the food must be really delicious.

This meal will cost tens to hundreds of wen, but if Mu Dalang successfully takes care of his wife's matters, it's definitely worth it.

"Waiter, do you have any signature dishes you can suggest to us? Something tasty yet affordable."

The waiter tilted his head and thought for a moment, then suddenly pointed to the next table, "That's the new dish introduced by our owner. It's still testing; one portion costs only forty wen, but when the trial ends, it'll probably start at eighty."

As the waiter pointed, everyone turned their heads to look.

Just then, a handsome young man dressed in lavish clothes had a white porcelain plate in front of him, holding a dark-colored egg.

The egg was cut into four pieces, sprinkled with various seasonings around it.

Though the young man initially looked disgusted, after eating a piece of the century egg, he started devouring it with a look of insatiable satisfaction.

Mu Shuangshuang's eyes immediately widened; wasn't the item being devoured by the person at the next table the century egg she sold to Xue Yi?

"Waiter, is your owner Xue Yi?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

The waiter nodded. "Yes, our restaurant recently changed owners. The owner's surname is Xue."

Mu Shuangshuang's anger grew stronger.

Ah, the scoundrel was indeed a scoundrel!

Bought it from her for ten wen, sold it for forty, eighty.

Damn it, it made her furious!

Mu Shuangshuang thought Xue Yi bought it for Old Mrs. Xue, so she didn't make money off Xue Yi.

Suddenly, the thought of the five hundred duck eggs still in the urn at home popped up in Mu Shuangshuang's mind.

"Miss, would you like to try our new dish—century egg? If so, I can tell the kitchen to prepare one for you."

"No, thank you. We'll order other dishes instead..."

After ordering two more dishes, the Huang siblings didn't allow any more ordering, saying if they weren't full, they'd order more.

Mu Shuangshuang became more intrigued with Huang Bitu and her impression of her improved significantly.

Logically, the male side should pay for the meeting meal, and they don't necessarily have to end up together.

So the female side could order freely, eat lavishly, and leave when finished.

But the Huang siblings weren't like that, from such small details, Mu Shuangshuang could see that Miss Huang knew how to manage a household.

A good homemaker.

The dishes were soon served, and seeing the food on the table, Huang Bitu and Huang's brother dared not move.

Only after Matchmaker Sun started eating did they begin.

After a few bites, Matchmaker Sun began to praise, "Bitu, Dalang, if you ask me, you two are the most compatible couple I've ever seen. The girl is beautiful, and the boy is steady."

"Dalang has also lived in the town for many years, almost like half a townsman. With you two together, I believe it's only a matter of time before you become rich."

Huang Bitā secretly glanced at Mu Dalang, then quickly turned away.

Mu Dalang felt thrilled when he sensed Huang Bitā looking at him.

On the dining table, they expressed their mutual feelings; the Huang Family doesn't oppose Dalang as a younger brother-in-law, provided that Matchmaker Sun can settle matters with the Old Mu Family.

If earlier, Matchmaker Sun thought Old Mrs. Mu was hard to deal with, now she feels it's not an issue at all.

Even the bride price, she managed to fully secure it for the Huang Family.

After they finished lunch, Huang Bitā and Mu Dalang strolled alone while Matchmaker Sun went to visit her relatives in the county.

As for Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng, they naturally wandered around the town.

Mu Shuangshuang was deeply familiar with the daily food prices, knowing clearly when the price for certain vegetables would rise.

Of course, this was all for ease in doing business.

The whole afternoon, Mu Dalang took Huang Bitā wandering around the street.

Mu Dalang was very familiar with the town, and whenever they reached a place, he could describe its significance.

As time went on, Huang Bitu began to admire Mu Dalang.

Women always hope their men have enough experience and a rich life story; although Mu Dalang is only sixteen, he's experienced more than ordinary people.

As for Huang Bitu, at eighteen, there isn't much difference from a young girl of fifteen or sixteen.

Their union perfectly complements each other.

On the way back to Er Gui Village, Mu Dalang kept praising Huang Bitu, having already made up his mind to marry Miss Huang.

However, his eyebrows couldn't hide his worries; he was worried his family would object.

Mu Shuangshuang assured him repeatedly, only then did he relax.

By the time they returned to the village, it was already late; Matchmaker Sun wouldn't deal with Mu Dalang and Huang Bitu's matter today and would wait to do so tomorrow.

Recently, it was getting closer to September, and students from various places were returning from the Autumn Examination, with ever-worsening results.

The Old Mu Family's initial joy suddenly turned into worry.

Old Mrs. Mu mumbled daily, with a heart as restless as ants on a hot pot.

The eldest son's reputation has no solutions, and even he hasn't returned.

Old Fifth is even more ignorant, not seeing him for two full days; if Old Fifth weren't fond of running around, Old Mrs. Mu would think something had happened to him.

As days went by, Old Mrs. Mu became increasingly uneasy.

Until Matchmaker Sun came to propose marriage again, Old Mrs. Mu found no place to vent her fierce anger.

"You old bag, why are you coming to my house again? Do you still want to match up that tramp?" Old Mrs. Mu said with irritation.

Matchmaker Sun had a flicker of displeasure on her face but quickly calmed down.

"Old sister, I came today to clarify something, which I didn't explain clearly last time.

The reason I didn't propose for Danyan is mainly because Danyan's birth date conflicts with Miss Huang's.

If forced together, neither would have a good outcome; I heard Danyan was lost, so I intentionally mentioned this."

Matchmaker Sun spoke in an orderly manner, and Old Mrs. Mu yelled at her, "Pfui, it's your conflict, my son is fine!

If there's a conflict, it's that tramp's fault; tell that tramp not to enter the door of our Old Mu Family!"

Chapter 519: The Troubles of the Old Mu Family

Old Mrs. Mu kept calling out while spitting in the direction of Matchmaker Sun.

Matchmaker Sun almost got disgusted to death, but due to the purpose of her visit today, she didn't back away. Instead, she laughed and said, "Old sister, I'm not here today to arrange a marriage for Danyan, nor for Miss Huang."

In the Er Gui Village area, Matchmaker Sun had some prestige, so Old Mrs. Mu didn't dare to offend her too much.

Last time, offending Fu Wu already cost her quite a bit of silver.

Moreover, because Matchmaker Sun might still need to propose a marriage for Mu Xiangxiang in the future, Old Mrs. Mu's expression softened.

"Then why are you here? Do you have a girl from a good family to introduce?" Old Mrs. Mu asked.

"No, actually, it's like this. Didn't you ask me to find a wife for Mu Dalang last time? I saw that Danyan and Miss Huang's eight characters weren't compatible, so I simply tried matching Miss Huang with Dalang.

Who would have thought, the fortune-telling showed that the two are a match made in heaven and being together would bring prosperity to the east.

When I looked, isn't the east your eldest son's room? Maybe if they marry, your eldest son's good news will come."

Using the eight characters of Huang Bitu and Mu Dalang to talk about marriage was a method taught to Matchmaker Sun by Mu Shuangshuang.

She said that as long as she used this method, her grandmother would agree for sure.

Matchmaker Sun had been a matchmaker for many years and had never thought of using fortune-telling or matching eight characters as a reason.

First, it simply didn't occur to her.

Second, she had professional ethics, and if she fabricated stories and got exposed, it would ruin her reputation as Matchmaker Sun.

However, Mu Shuangshuang told her that she could say this without having to take responsibility later, which gave Matchmaker Sun the courage to use it.

Old Mrs. Mu's expression suddenly became strange, not for anything else, but because of the words Matchmaker Sun said.

Mu Dade was the apple of Old Mrs. Mu's eye, her darling treasure, and Mu Dade carried the hopes of the entire Old Mu Family.

Becoming an official and shaking off the identity of a commoner all depended on Da De alone.

"Is what you're saying true?" Old Mrs. Mu asked suspiciously.

"Oh, my dear sister, those words place me in a tough spot. This was all personally said by Wang Banxian from the town."

"Do you know why my reputation as Matchmaker Sun spans the entire Er Gui Village and the surrounding villages? Do you know why the couples I introduce rarely end in divorce?"

"How would I know, if I did, I wouldn't need you as a matchmaker." Old Mrs. Mu replied disdainfully.

Matchmaker Sun forcibly suppressed her anger, knowing that there was a spoiled little girl in the Old Mu Family she would eventually get back at.

"Hehe, let me tell you, for all the couples, I go to the town to consult Wang Banxian. As long as he says the eight characters are suitable and they'll have fortune together, I bring back the proposal. If not, I don't even mention it."

Old Mrs. Mu understood now, but since it was a big matter, she couldn't immediately agree with Matchmaker Sun: "Well, you go home first. I'll discuss this with my old man."

Matchmaker Sun wasn't in a hurry because Mu Shuangshuang told her that people from the Old Mu Family would come to her.

Once Matchmaker Sun left, Old Mrs. Mu rushed to her own room.

In the past few days, Mr. Mu inexplicably fell ill, lying in bed all day, finding no joy in eating or doing anything.

Even when Old Mrs. Mu spoke to him, he was indifferent.

In truth, the concerns he and Old Mrs. Mu had were similar, all about the Autumn Examination of the eldest son, as the entire family's hopes rested on him.

Thinking about all the silver collected for the eldest son, Mr. Mu felt a pang of regret. Over the years, front and back, it amounted to nearly two hundred taels of silver.

Had it been converted to land, the Old Mu Family would have over thirty mu of second-grade land.

Old Mrs. Mu entered the room and talked to Mr. Mu about the matter.

Mr. Mu, who had been lying for several days, actually sat up.

"You're saying our family's situation turned out like this because we initially wanted to match Miss Huang with Fifth?"

"Exactly, that's what the old hag said. And she said that our family would prosper if that promiscuous girl from the Huang Family were with Da Lang."

Mr. Mu thought it over carefully and realized there was some truth: from the moment Huang Bita came to the house, the Old Mu Family ran into various misfortunes, starting with losing face at the Old Yu Family's feast, then Fifth disappeared.

And now, there's no news from the eldest son.

It seems to be an unfavorable match.

The concept of mutual generation and restraint in nature is something even Mr. Mu understood.

But for this mutual generation, must it specifically be Miss Huang?

Mr. Mu still had some reservations, after all, he would be introducing this girl to his son as a daughter-in-law, and now to transform her into a granddaughter-in-law, how could he overcome this hurdle?

"Let me think about this. Old lady, don't bicker with the fourth branch. Fourth can't divorce his wife; in a few days, the second son's wife's cooking is just awful."

He lay bedridden because of a mental block, but now that he had an opportunity to resolve it, he regained his strength.

So he started talking about household matters.

"The second son's wife is too lazy, grabs ingredients carelessly, I often see when she picks vegetables, she doesn't clean them thoroughly, and the bowls remain greasy; she doesn't even know if they're washed."

Without mentioning it all was well, but bringing it up made Old Mrs. Mu uncomfortable all over.

"The second son's wife's belly, you'd think it's been several months, why hasn't there been any sign?" asked Mr. Mu suddenly.

"Who knows, maybe it's a girl. When she was pregnant with Qing, wasn't she barely showing?"

Old Mrs. Mu became increasingly convinced that Lin's pregnancy was with a girl, and knowing it might be a girl, she didn't even want to feed Lin.

"Alright, alright, let's put this matter aside. At the fourth's place, quickly have his wife cook meals. Arrange for the second son's wife to do other tasks, like raising pigs or cleaning, just don't have her cook, I'm getting up to walk around."

Mr. Mu got out of bed, completely unlike how he was before.

Listening to him, Old Mrs. Mu went to the fourth branch to tell Mrs. Liu to prepare lunch.

The two walked in different directions, and Mr. Mu wandered over to the third branch.

Mu Shuangshuang was in the yard raising the big black pig, cutting pig feed into small pieces, mixing in some swill, and a little coarse rice bran; the wild boar ate with relish.

It snorted incessantly, and Mu Shuangshuang occasionally used a stick to scratch it, making Little Black docile under her touch.

Mr. Mu felt momentarily awkward.

The family pig and the third branch's pig were raised around the same time, but the third branch's pig was three times the size of the Old Mu Family's white pig.

No idea if it was damaged at the root, but no good thing could fatten up that white pig.

Mu Shuangshuang sensed someone behind her and turned to see Mr. Mu watching the big fat pig, immediately putting her on high alert.

Chapter 520: Why Should My Son Marry a Peasant?

Mu Shuangshuang tightened the hemp rope around her family's big fat pig and stood up abruptly, trying to block Mr. Mu's view.

This protective instinct naturally stabbed deeply into Mr. Mu's eyes.

Mu Shuangshuang didn't care about that.

Old Mu Family's nature can't stand seeing others doing well.

She painstakingly raised a big fat pig, hoping to sell it next autumn to save a gift for Xiao Han's teacher, and it can't be messed up by the narrow-eyed Old Mu Family.

"Shuang, grandpa doesn't want your pig, there are pigs at home," Mr. Mu explained awkwardly.

But Mu Shuangshuang just didn't believe it.

"Oh, forget it, grandpa is just passing by here and wants to ask you a few questions," Mr. Mu softened his attitude quite a bit.

Maybe it's because he's been ill these last few days, there's no one to attend to him at the bedside, making Mr. Mu feel uncomfortable inside.

In any case, Mr. Mu is now eager to find someone to give him advice.

"Grandpa, just ask!"

Mu Shuangshuang guessed it was about Mu Dalang and Huang Bitu. Given how much Mr. Mu cares about face, under normal circumstances, he wouldn't let his grandson propose to someone his son has already been linked to.

He can't afford to lose face like that.

But compared to face, Mu Dade's title naturally mattered more.

"Do you think it's worth celebrating for the whole family if your eldest uncle passes the exam? Is it the biggest thing compared to anything else?" Mr. Mu asked.

Mu Shuangshuang certainly didn't agree in her heart.

Even if Mu Dade passes, it's only the glory of the eldest house, and Old Mu Family shouldn't expect to gain any benefit.

But outwardly, Mu Shuangshuang still said, "Eldest uncle's matter is our family's big deal, otherwise why have my second uncle and my fifth uncle worked hard for so many years?"

Mu Shuangshuang consciously led Mr. Mu to think about Mu Dadian.

Mr. Mu considered it, too.

Not marrying a wife for Fifth all these years, on one hand, is because Fifth is flirtatious, a womanizer; anyone in the village, as long as they're female, he's eager to hook up with, maybe no one's willing to be his wife.

Another reason is marrying Fifth cannot go without three or five taels of silver, and Old Mu Family's silver all went to the eldest for exams, no spare money to find a wife for Fifth.

Just like Shuangshuang said, Fifth has been single for so many years, what's the rush now.

Mr. Mu's internal balance has already tilted towards Mu Dade.

"Shuang, grandpa knows what to do now, grandpa is heading back!"

Mr. Mu had a lighter expression on his face and walked straight back, seemingly ready to announce something significant.

After entering the Old Mu Family's main room, he discussed with Old Mrs. Mu, and Old Mrs. Mu agreed it was logical.

Fifth's part was easy.

Once Huang Bitu marries in, she would be their granddaughter-in-law, Fifth's niece-in-law.

As long as Huang Bitu does anything poorly, Old Mrs. Mu would personally discipline her, making sure she knows the house rules of Old Mu Family and her power.

"In that case, I'll go find Matchmaker Sun and settle this matter early," Old Mrs. Mu said.

At this moment, Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu were anxious and wanted to resolve this quickly, fearing the longer it takes, more things could go wrong.

"Then first call in the families of Second and Fourth, and Da Lang, this is his lifelong matter, he needs to agree."

After a while, everyone was in.

Mrs. Lin loudly protested.

"Dad, I don't agree with this, Fifth doesn't want her, and neither can we in the second house."

"Exactly, others might think we're picking up discarded shoes for our Da Lang," Mu Dazhong echoed.

The second house already had plans, any arrangement should wait until the eldest's title is finalized.

Now discussing, it's too early.

"Discarded shoes? Humph, Second, what you say, Mrs. Lin was engaged to someone else before, and then thought you were better, our family was better, and broke off the engagement, so is Mrs. Lin discarded shoes?"

Moreover, Miss Huang hasn't even spoken to Fifth, just said she'd see, Fifth didn't return, doesn't that mean she didn't see?"

Old Mrs. Mu snorted coldly, a few words weighed heavily, silencing Mu Dazhong.

Mu Dazhong was never her match, trying to argue with her was impossible.

"I don't care, in any case, I don't agree, that girl from Huang Family won't be allowed into our home."

Mu Dalang opened his mouth, just about to retort, remembering Shuangshuang's words.

This matter, anyone can engage, but not him.

The more he shows reluctance, the more bride price the Old Huang Family can bargain for.

"You don't agree, what do you use to disagree? You eat my wife's food, use my wife's things, still dare not listen to my wife's words, you're defying!"

Old Mrs. Mu was angry, thinking of someone contradicting her made her furious.

"Mom, you also have to think about our Da Lang, as it seems eldest brother is soaring high, Old Mu Family is about to rise, you're letting Da Lang marry a mudlegs, isn't that harming him?" Mrs. Lin spoke, filled with resentment.

"Mudlegs, so what? Mudlegs are also Old Mu Family's granddaughter-in-law, moreover, the three Huang brothers will help Da Lang, who can compare?" Mr. Mu said heavily.

Mrs. Lin and Mu Dazhong opened their mouths, just about to speak, interrupted by Old Mrs. Mu.

"If you don't agree, then leave, Old Mu Family doesn't need people who don't respect elder's opinions, your father and I are still healthy, and you don't listen to us, you should have been put in a urine bucket and suffocated right after being born!"

After being scolded relentlessly, Mrs. Lin still wouldn't back down, spoke again, only to be whipped with the stick from the door gap by Old Mrs. Mu, who then yelled that she agreed.

Old Mrs. Mu thought: Tsk, just tough-skinned, teach them a lesson and they quiet down.

With the adults having no objections, naturally, it's Mu Dalang's turn.

"Da Lang, what do you think of Miss Huang?" asked Mr. Mu.

"Grandpa, there's no issue with her, but I want to establish a career before getting married, now Da Lang has nothing, marrying a wife would risk distracting from my career, this way, gains do not match the loss!"

Mrs. Lin listened to her son's words, was excited, thinking her son rejected, her tail went up to the sky.

But she underestimated Mr. Mu's level.

"So, didn't you say you want to raise sheep? Raising sheep needs pasture, our family has two good dry lands for you as pasture, this time, whatever you want to do, you do, we won't interfere."

Mr. Mu gave the initiative to Mu Dalang.

Mu Dalang felt excited inside, thinking what Shuangshuang said was true, the more he opposes, the more grandpa and grandma want to pair him up with Miss Huang.

"Grandpa, I still don't want, Huang Family wants five taels of bride price, I don't have that much silver, don't want to lose face." Mu Dalang continued.

"Alright, these aren't for you to worry about, your grandma and I will handle this."