

## Folly 521

Chapter 521: Mu Danian's Comfortable Days

Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu had taken care of all the worries of Da Lang, giving him no chance to refuse.

Five taels of silver, if it were any other time, Old Mrs. Mu would definitely not agree.

Not only wouldn't agree, she'd make sure the whole village knew not to marry off any daughters to that "ugly-faced" Miss Huang from the Huang Family.

But when it came to Mu Dade, everything was an exception.

The efficiency of Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu was indeed fast. They told Matchmaker Sun about this matter that afternoon and planned to propose to the Huang Family the next morning. They'd hand over one tael of the bride price now and the remaining four taels after setting the wedding date.

With this one tael gone, Old Mrs. Mu's purse was nearly empty, and they could only wait for the autumn harvest, sell the rice, and save up more silver.

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At this moment, Mu Danian, who had been missing for several days, was mingling at Chen Hong's house.

Last time he got bitten by a dog at the Old Yu Family's place and was thrown into the river. Mu Danian soaked in the river for the better part of a night, crawled up at dawn, and immediately went to find Chen Hong.

Chen Hong was happy to hide a man in her house, anyway, her in-laws were not good to her, so she boldly cheated on them in their own home.

"I say, are you really planning to stay here for a few more days?"

Chen Hong took some food from the kitchen and handed it to Mu Dania.

Mu Dania laid on the bed like a woman in confinement, not having moved for days.

It was nice being at Chen Hong's place. Although Wang Tiejiang didn't like Chen Hong, he never shouted at her, and his wife, Mrs. Zhou, was always polite. Although she liked to hide things, she never entered Chen Hong's room.

After lunch, Mu Dania, feeling more energetic, said, "Why are you in a hurry? My parents haven't come looking for me yet. This time, I must make them realize my importance."

"My older brother is about to return. If I don't make a fuss, where will I stand when he comes back?"

Mu Dania had the most thoughts on this.

His older brother was as vain as his father, so he wasn't worried about being abandoned by his parents.

But Mrs. Jin had always disliked the other members of the Old Mu Family and might resort to trickery.

Thinking of this, Mu Dania played the waiting game, not doing any household work while being well-fed and cared for.

"That might make sense, but are you sure you don't want to treat where the dog bit you?" Chen Hong was still a bit worried.

The dog bite was significant, but Mu Dania just wouldn't get it treated.

"Come on, I don't have much else, but I do have good fortune. Isn't it just a dog bite? When I was a child, I even bit a dog, and nothing happened, right?"

Mu Daniaan was indifferent.

Thinking Chen Hong was making a fuss over nothing.

"But there was someone in our village who went crazy after a dog bite. He started biting people like a dog and was especially afraid of water. You wouldn't believe it; afterwards, he became a madman and almost got beaten to death."

Chen Hong was from Chen Family Village and hadn't returned since she married, but childhood memories were vivid, so she had advised Mu Daniaan countless times to see a doctor.

She didn't want him to go mad.

Mu Daniaan was confident. Not only did he believe he was healthy and didn't need to see a doctor, but even if something were wrong, he wouldn't spend money needlessly.

"Alright, alright, I got it. I'll go back tomorrow. It's been long enough, and it's time to show up, lest my parents think I'm dead."

Mu Daniaan impatiently waved his hand.

The weather was starting to turn autumn cool at this time, sleeping with someone was very comfortable, and coupled with the revealing clothes Chen Hong wore today, Mu Daniaan pulled Chen Hong to start that thing, and soon, soft moans were heard.

Temptation, allure, and debauchery!

Outside, the Old Wang Family couple were so furious they were livid, wishing they could rush in and tear Chen Hong apart.

The thought of Chen Hong doing shameless acts in their son's room with another man made the Wang Family couple feel murderous.

They had long known Chen Hong was not a virtuous person, but hearing her audacious sounds now made them feel utterly disgusted.

"Husband, I think it's time we made a decision. This wench is bringing affairs into our home."

Mrs. Zhou wasn't one to curse people easily, just unwilling to waste her breath on someone like Chen Hong.

These days, she had watched Chen Hong indifferently, just hoping she'd give a little face to her son, considering that she and her husband had supported her for so long without her showing any gratitude.

"Yeah, what Chen Hong's doing is truly outrageous, she brought affairs into our home."

Wang Tiejiang lamented; he had just one son. After his son died, he initially planned to keep supporting Chen Hong, as long as she didn't remarry and continued being the Wang family's daughter-in-law, everything would be fine.

"Sigh, but if we send Chen Hong away, our family will have no one left." Wang Tiejiang felt a deep pain in his heart.

There is no worse pain in life than losing a child in middle age.

That's what he was experiencing now.

"How about we have the human trafficker sell Chen Hong, and with the money, we buy a child to raise?"

Mrs. Zhou tentatively suggested.

Chen Hong had been brought to their home from Chen Family Village. Even though her son Wang Xiaojiang was dead, she was still their daughter-in-law, and they had the right to decide what to do.

"A child... buy a child..." Wang Tiejiang repeated several times.

After a while, he finally nodded. The household needed some life.

"Wife, we should quickly take care of this. Chen Hong always despised our son, didn't she?

Let's sell her to someone old and ugly. That Wang San from Er Gui Village, I heard he's fifty and hasn't married yet. Selling this whore to him couldn't be better."

With Wang Tiejiang's approval, Mrs. Zhou felt assured to proceed with the matter.

By dusk, Mrs. Zhou returned from outside the village, saying, "The matter has been handed over to the human trafficker to handle, and they are contacting Wang San to see if he wants Chen Hong.

I heard Wang San previously offered ten taels, but it's been a while since then, so who knows what the price is now."

In any case, as long as it wasn't a loss.

"And the child's matter..." Wang Tiejiang felt more urgency in his heart.

Previously, they hadn't considered buying a child, but now that the thought occurred, they were very eager.

"Don't worry. I told the human trafficker to find a chubby one, about one or two years old, a child that young is easier to raise, and they wouldn't remember their original family. After a couple of years, they'd become ours."

With Mrs. Zhou's assurance, Wang Tiejiang felt at ease.

By this time, the noise from Chen Hong's room had finally subsided. Sporting a face flushed from the man's attention, she stepped out and saw the two old folks seemingly deep in thought.

Chen Hong complained, "Why haven't you cooked yet? Are you trying to starve me? If you don't cook soon, I might as well leave and find a good family to marry into, better than staying with you two miserly old folks who won't even feed me."

Chapter 522: The Die is Cast

Chen Hong has always been directing the people of the Old Wang Family like this.

However, most of the time, the people of the Old Wang Family wouldn't follow her instructions. If she wants meat, Mrs. Zhou would only give her vegetables.

Especially recently, they've been even less attentive.

So Chen Hong has no kind words for the people of the Old Wang Family.

"Honghong, you're a grown woman now. Why can't you get things yourself? Your mother and I are old, and we're just thinking of enjoying some peace," Wang Tiejiang said displeased.

"Enjoy peace?" Chen Hong laughed uncontrollably, as if she heard a joke.

"If you want to enjoy peace, give me everything from home. I will serve you day in and day out. Otherwise, who will let you enjoy peace?"

Chen Hong's words made Wang Tiejiang and Mrs. Zhou's limbs cold with anger. Mrs. Zhou thought of her plan to sell Chen Hong soon, to suppress her own anger.

She went back to the kitchen to start preparing dinner.

Chen Hong returned to her room to continue mingling with Mu Danian.

The next day, the people of the Old Mu Family went to the Huang Family Village to arrange the engagement with the Huang Family, bringing one tael of silver and fifty eggs. Mu Shuangshuang from the third branch was the only one who went along.

Although it was called joining in the fun, Mu Shuangshuang knew this was what Mu Dalang had fought for her.

Mu Shuangshuang took the opportunity to visit another village, and also to see if anyone there had seen Lu Yuanfeng's mother.

Huang Family Village is not far from Er Gui Village, but compared to Tie Dao Village, it's somewhat farther.

Huang Family Village is surrounded by mountains on all sides, with the only exit being a mountain entrance carved and chiseled between two mountains by countless people.

This mountain entrance is not big, at most around two meters wide.

Mountain paths with countless steep slopes make Huang Family Village's poverty understandable.

To become wealthy, the road must be built first. Only when the road is passable can outsiders come in, and insiders go out.

"Matchmaker Sun, how much longer is it? I can't walk any further."

Mu Dazhong was sweating profusely, looking unwilling.

He complained loudly as he walked.

This trip included only Mr. Mu, Mu Dazhong, Mu Dalang, and her.

Old Mrs. Mu had bound feet, unable to walk much, and as for Mrs. Lin, she really wanted to come, but Old Mrs. Mu wouldn't allow it, saying that she was pregnant. If she went and lost the child, that would be the end.

Mrs. Lin had no choice but to stay at home angrily.

As for the entire fourth branch, they were dispatched by Old Mrs. Mu to the cotton field to pick cotton. After picking the cotton, it would be brought back so that Old Mrs. Mu, Mrs. Lin, and several granddaughters could help peel.

Matchmaker Sun was exhausted as well. She was most reluctant to work as a matchmaker for Huang Family Village. It involved crossing mountains both ways.

At least now the weather wasn't hot. During summer, she wouldn't even want to live.

"Almost there, almost there, Dazhong. I'm an old lady walking here and haven't complained, and you, as a man, are acting so precious that if people knew, they'd laugh their teeth out." Matchmaker Sun fanned herself with a palm-leaf fan.

"Come on, you have thick skin and often walk like this, how can I compare to you?" Mu Dazhong retorted.

Mu Dalang couldn't help but speak up: "Dad, it's not far anyway, just say less. Grandpa walked here too and hasn't complained."

"Hey, you little brat siding with outsiders against your dad, do you have any conscience left?"

When it comes to conscience, the one with the most say is Mr. Mu.

Mu Dazhong didn't usually show much conscience towards him. When there was food, he would take care of himself first.

Mr. Mu looked displeased: "If you have a conscience, why didn't you suggest carrying me to Huang Family Village? If you have a conscience, why aren't you following my old man's wishes?"

"In the whole Old Mu Family, only you and Fifth are lazy. You constantly think of ways to shirk. Today is the big day when Da Lang and Miss Huang get engaged. If you keep at it, turn back!"

Mr. Mu exuded authority with his words, which scared Mu Dazhong into stepping aside, no longer causing trouble.

Finally, they arrived at Huang Family Village, and everyone was somewhat exhausted.

Huang Bitā's home was in the northernmost part of the village, consisting of a few thatched huts. The grass on the roof was dark, resembling rundown houses.

Given the early death of Old Huang's parents, it's no wonder they're so impoverished.

It's no wonder Huang Bitā insists on letting Huang Family's eldest brother hold onto those five taels of silver.

With these five taels, the eldest can marry a wife, and with a woman in the house, someone can tidy up the home, allowing the men to earn money with ease.

At the entrance of the Huang Family Courtyard, all the Huang Family members came out. Huang Bitā stood furthest back, dressed in plain clothes with embroidered shoes full of holes.

Huang Family's eldest brother stood at the forefront, stepping up to greet Mr. Mu.

"Old man, we've prepared some food at home. Please come in quickly!"

Huang Family's eldest brother welcomed them inside as Huang Bitu brought out the food. It wasn't anything unusual, just some fried rice and such made by farming families themselves.

But it was the only thing the Huang Family could offer.

Mu Dazhong sneered: "I say, Huang Family's eldest, we're here today for an engagement. You don't need to treat us so harshly, right? We, the Old Mu Family, sent fifty eggs here. At the very least, you don't have to serve pig food, do you?"

Huang Family's eldest brother's face reddened, wanting to refute, but found no words.

Huang Family's second brother, with a temper, upon hearing Mu Dazhong's words, directly took the bowl of fried rice away from Mu Dazhong.

"If you don't like it, don't eat it. No one's forcing you."

"Second brother, shut up!" Huang Family's eldest brother scolded softly.

Huang Family's second brother retreated, feeling wronged.

Because of this small episode, Mu Dazhong became all the more audacious, looking at the Huang Family with eyes full of disdain.

He particularly looked down on this marriage.

Mu Shuangshuang grabbed a handful of fried rice, ate heartily in front of Mu Dazhong, and after finishing, didn't forget to lick her fingers.

Mu Shuangshuang generally demonstrates her true feelings through actions when silent.

Huang Family's eldest brother watched her cooperate like this and felt a rush of gratitude.

He and Mu Shuangshuang had already met before, so this encounter didn't feel unfamiliar.

Mu Dalang saw this and followed suit, grabbing a handful of fried rice and eating as if no one were watching.

After finishing, he didn't forget to praise Huang Bitu: "Your cooking is great. It's the best fried rice I've ever had."

Mu Dazhong was fuming inside, almost wanting to jump up and hit Mu Shuangshuang and Mu Dalang.

Huang Bitu blushed upon hearing the praise.

After resting for so long, Matchmaker Sun believed it was about time to start.

She stood up to find the village chief of Huang Family Village to settle the matter. As for the wedding day, it had been previously discussed but still awaited Mu Dade's return.

"You all stay and rest. We've prepared everything, I will go call the chief!"

Chapter 523: Loud Thunder, Small Raindrops

Mu Shuangshuang also stood up: "Matchmaker Sun, I'll go with you!"

"Just right, I do need someone." Matchmaker Sun said.

Mu Shuangshuang followed Matchmaker Sun to find the village chief of Huang Family Village.

In the village, weddings and sacrifices are major events, so the village chief of Huang Family Village didn't hesitate and followed them over.

On the way, Matchmaker Sun asked the village chief if he had ever seen anything about Lu Yuanfeng's mother, but the village chief immediately denied it.

Huang Family Village is relatively closed, and it's impossible to hide something with outsiders around.

Moreover, in recent years, he frequently visits every household and hasn't seen anyone's wife like this.

Plus, Lu Yuanfeng's mother is indeed beautiful; once you've seen her, you'd never forget it for life.

Mu Shuangshuang felt a bit disappointed but still forced herself to stay strong and helped Mu Dalang settle the marriage.

Engagement is the simplest; with a matchmaker, parents present, and some simple rituals, it is done.

Lunch was at the Huang Family's place, but what they had to eat was too little, all vegetarian dishes.

Huang Bitu looked nervous. Mu Dazhong had already expressed disdain earlier; if he saw the lunchtime dishes, he would certainly be displeased.

It might even affect her future life.

Huang Bitu was as anxious as an ant on a hot pan, even unaware of when Mu Shuangshuang came in.

"Sister Huang, what's wrong?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"Nothing... nothing's wrong." Huang Bitu was very nervous; she couldn't possibly tell Shuangshuang that she didn't even have ingredients to cook.

"Well, Sister Huang, I know there are mountains nearby, can you take me there? Also, find me some fishing nets and flints or whatever is needed."

Mu Shuangshuang understood the difficulties of the Huang Family; if the Huang Family couldn't satisfy Mu Dazhong and Mr. Mu with this meal, Huang Bitā's days ahead wouldn't be easy.

Mu Dalang couldn't leave, so this task could only be done by her.

Although Huang Bitā was puzzled, she still prepared these things according to Shuangshuang's request.

Since it was still early, taking a stroll wouldn't affect lunch time.

With Huang Bitā leading the way into the mountains, and Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng having run for a long time before, she quickly found the rabbit holes.

Letting Huang Bitā stand aside, Mu Shuangshuang carefully covered each rabbit hole with fishing nets, and at the last hole, she found a pile of wet leaves, took Matchmaker Sun's straw fan, and once the fire started, she fanned vigorously.

This was her initial method, but having Little Black would be more convenient.

Soon enough, a rabbit indeed emerged from the hole, desperately trying to tear through the fishing net.

Mu Shuangshuang threw aside the straw fan, grabbed the rabbit by the ears, and skillfully tied it up.

Then she used this method to catch another rabbit.

On the side, Huang Bitā was watching in stunned amazement.

She had always thought Shuangshuang was amazing, but never expected she could catch two rabbits just like that.

"Sister Huang, let's hurry back. For lunch today, we'll make braised rabbit meat."

With the rabbits, they didn't need to worry about the lunch dishes anymore.

Add a spicy pepper omelet, a few greens, and it looked like a very sumptuous lunch.

Huang Bitā realized Shuangshuang was helping her and felt deeply moved, growing even fonder of this sister.

The two returned to the kitchen and cleaned up the rabbits.

Mu Shuangshuang intended to only prepare one rabbit; the other would be left for Huang Bitā's brothers to replenish their bodies, as they were working hard all year round and lacked nutrition.

Huang Bitā felt another burst of gratitude, and the two began dividing the work.

Huang Bitā made the spicy pepper omelet, cutting the bell peppers into segments first, then into fine mince, and marinating them with salt before cracking three eggs into a bowl.

The Huang Family hadn't kept chickens before due to poverty, as buying chickens is a cost, so eggs were quite rare.

Huang Bitā carefully cracked the eggs, while Mu Shuangshuang cut the rabbit into pieces, preparing to make braised rabbit meat for lunch.

The Huang Family didn't have any major spices; the only thing worth mentioning was dry peppers.

Mu Shuangshuang also had to help prepare chili oil.

However, the chili oil was quite simple since they lacked ingredients like aniseed, Sichuan peppercorns, and cinnamon.

The clever cook can't make meals without rice; Mu Shuangshuang worked for a while, marinating the rabbit meat and cleaning the vegetables, and by the time she finished, Huang Bitu had already started the fire.

In the living room, Mu Dazhong kept watching the sun, waiting for lunch.

If not satisfied, he would find an excuse to say that Huang Bitu was lazy and unfit to be a wife.

By then, even if she entered the Old Mu Family's door, he could have his son divorce her.

Mu Dazhong's plans were meticulously calculated, but gradually, the aroma wafting from the kitchen was making his mouth water.

"Big brother..." The Huang Family's second brother looked surprised.

Ah Bi had been cooking for so many years, and there had never been such a strong aroma. Plus, the smell of meat hung heavily in the air.

His family clearly didn't have money to buy meat, how come?

The Huang Family's eldest brother was also surprised, and as for the third brother, he stood up more directly and went to the kitchen to check.

In the kitchen, Mu Shuangshuang, dressed in simple rough cloth, stood by the stove, holding a spatula, stir-frying the dish in the pot.

Huang Bitu squatted by the stove mouth, occasionally adding fuel to the fire.

Mu Shuangshuang was very satisfied with the fire Huang Bitu was managing; whether big or small, as long as she asked, Huang Bitu could handle it.

"Ah Bi, how can you let the guest cook?" The third brother from the Huang Family rushed over, looking anxious.

"It's alright, I did it willingly myself, Third Brother Huang, this is just a small matter, please don't tell anyone outside."

Huang Mo was stunned, completely unprepared for Mu Shuangshuang to say this.

He was speechless with astonishment, and it was only when Huang Bitu called him that he came back to his senses.

His gaze hadn't left Mu Shuangshuang's face, making her feel odd.

She said, "Third Brother of Huang Family, I'll continue cooking, if anyone tries to come in, please stop them."

Huang Mo nodded heavily.

Before he left, he glanced several times in Mu Shuangshuang's direction.

For some reason, this time, Huang Mo found his legs hard to move.

He felt like something was grabbing his leg.

In his mind, he kept thinking about that slender figure, earnestly cooking.

Mu Shuangshuang continued stir-frying, and by now, the rabbit meat was almost done; just waiting for the final touch of color.

She added a bit of sugar to the pot and continued stir-frying, and finally completed the braised rabbit meat.

The remaining dishes were quickly finished.

"Sister Huang, I'll go invite the others to eat; you take a rest first!"

Before leaving the room, Mu Shuangshuang deliberately washed away all the oil residue on her hands.

Her hands didn't show any sign of having cooked just now.

After exiting the house, Mu Shuangshuang called out for lunch, and Mu Dazhong pursed his lips, wearing an expression of disdain, and said: "There's not even a decent snack; can any dish be made? Don't let it be all thunder and no rain!"

Chapter 524: The Courage of Mr. Mu

"Second Uncle, what dishes are being made? Let's just go and see. Besides, we're not here for luxury. Having something to eat is already good," Mu Shuangshuang retorted irritably.

"You..." Mu Dazhong was furious and was about to scold Mu Shuangshuang when Mr. Mu stopped him.

"Shut your mouth! There's food, and you're still complaining. Say one more word, and I'll send you back!"

Mu Dazhong was unreasonably scolded, his face turning a beet-red shade of anger, glaring at Mu Shuangshuang, the culprit.

Unfortunately, Mu Shuangshuang couldn't be bothered and went straight into the Huang family kitchen to help set the table.

The Huang family didn't have a designated dining area, and the kitchen was small, so everyone decided to eat in the main hall.

Dishes were brought to the table one by one.

Since the first dishes were stir-fried vegetables and green peppers with eggs, Mu Dazhong's eyes rolled back almost to the point of spasm.

The second brother of the Huang family wanted to say something, but the eldest brother stopped him with a look.

Today was his sister's engagement day; nothing could go wrong.

They absolutely couldn't make the Huang family seem uncultured.

The second brother of the Huang family held back and didn't start an argument with Mu Dazhong at the table.

When the final large bowl of braised rabbit was brought out, Mu Shuangshuang noticed that everyone's eyes lit up.

Mu Dazhong stared at the rabbit dish, reluctant even to swallow his saliva.

The three Huang brothers were also in awe, having rarely seen rabbit meat on their dining table.

Everyone tacitly remained silent until Huang Bitu emerged from the kitchen with a bowl of rice.

"Everyone, let's eat. I hope you'll forgive my poor hospitality and enjoy your meal," she said.

As soon as she finished speaking, Mu Dazhong picked up his chopsticks and started stirring the rabbit dish, worried he wouldn't get any.

He grabbed a piece of rabbit and stuffed it into his mouth hurriedly, making snorting noises like a pig.

Mu Shuangshuang signaled to Mu Dalang to greet Huang Bitu.

Mu Dalang quickly got up, "Miss Huang, let me help in the kitchen. You should sit down and eat!"

"Help with what? It's only right for women to take care of men. You're not married yet, and you already want to work for her?"

Mu Dazhong's tactless remark came through.

Mu Dalang couldn't be bothered and went to fetch a bowl from the kitchen, bringing soup back to the table.

Finally, he sat down to eat.

This scene was observed by the Huang brothers, who gained a better impression of Mu Dalang.

In this day and age, finding good in-laws isn't easy.

The Huang brothers knew they couldn't count on Mu Dazhong as a future father-in-law to be good to their sister.

However, they hoped that Bitu's chosen husband would treat her well.

Seeing Mu Dalang treat Bitu well and even stand up to his father for her, how could the Huang brothers not be satisfied?

But Mu Dazhong felt resentful towards the Huang family, thinking if his son was siding with this woman before marriage, what would it be like after?

So Mu Dazhong resolved to find a way to break off this engagement.

"Bitu worked hard today, with such a large spread of dishes. Once the date is set, and the wedding is done, Bitu will be part of our Old Mu Family. We hope she and Dalang will be happy," Mr. Mu said.

Mr. Mu had another thought, hoping his eldest son's rank could rise higher, but he didn't voice it, lest the Huang family read too much into it.

"Dad, stop talking about that. Let's eat! I'm starving!" Mu Dazhong exclaimed.

Mr. Mu felt thoroughly embarrassed but had no way to reprimand his second son in front of so many people, so he could only give him a warning look.

Matchmaker Sun saw the situation and spoke bluntly, "Dazhong, today's a big day for both families. Don't just think about eating; consider how the two children will get along and how you, as a father, can help them prosper."

"How can I help? I don't have any money."

Mu Dazhong was quick to argue, afraid he'd be asked to contribute financially.

As soon as he spoke, not only was Mr. Mu embarrassed, but even Mu Shuangshuang felt ashamed.

People say you should at least maintain your dignity in front of outsiders; Mu Dazhong didn't even care about that.

What a weirdo!

The eldest brother of the Huang family clenched his fists tightly, then slowly released them.

Everyone ate in silence, save for Mu Dazhong.

On the way back, Mr. Mu said nothing. Once they reached Er Gui Village and entered the Old Mu Family's yard, he struck Mu Dazhong's arm with his tobacco pipe.

"You disgraceful thing, all you do is eat. You've brought shame to the Old Mu Family. Today, I won't let you off easily!"

Mr. Mu's sudden action left Mu Dazhong stunned.

Mu Shuangshuang was the first to react, squeezing Mu Dazhong's arm while shouting.

"Grandpa, don't be angry. It's bad for your health. Even if Second Uncle is wrong, you shouldn't hit him," she pleaded.

"If I don't hit him today, I swear..."

Mr. Mu ferociously puffed on his pipe while Mu Dazhong howled in pain. With his arm pinched by Mu Shuangshuang, he couldn't move.

Mu Shuangshuang held Mu Dazhong in a tight grip.

If Mr. Mu weren't present, she would have acted on her own already.

Disgraceful scum!

"Dad, I know I was wrong. Please don't hit me..." Mu Dazhong shouted.

Mr. Mu didn't relent, continuing to thrash him senselessly.

Mu Dazhong tried to appeal to Mu Shuangshuang, but having been a police officer for many years in a previous life and having traveled with Lu Yuanfeng in this one, neither strength nor experience was lacking. Mu Dazhong was no match for her.

"Let go of me, you little brat. Let go..." Mu Dazhong cried out in vain.

The sound gradually diminished as Mr. Mu severely admonished Mu Dazhong and then had Mu Shuangshuang fetch some salt mixed in cold water.

Approaching September, a basin of cold water sent Mu Dazhong shivering, groaning incessantly.

Within the main hall, everyone knew Mr. Mu was disciplining Mu Dazhong, so no one went outside.

Even Mrs. Lin, who wanted to look, was stopped by Mu Xiangxiang.

"Second Sister-in-law, don't get involved. You're pregnant, and if you see something you shouldn't, it might harm our Old Mu Family's golden grandson. Mother wouldn't forgive you!"

Mentioning the pregnancy brought more worry.

Mrs. Lin's fabricated pregnancy was growing daily, originally intended to get better food. But now, seeing how the workload and food remained unchanged, she questioned its value.

She continually pondered the best excuse for losing the child.

Still undecided on that matter, the outside finally quieted as Mr. Mu released his hold and entered the main hall.

Mu Shuangshuang tossed Mu Dazhong aside like a rag, leaving him in the yard to fend for himself—

Chapter 525: Mu Dalian Disagrees

After a while, Mrs. Lin rushed out, hugging Mu Dazhong and bursting into tears.

"Oh my, Daddy Gou Dan, how did you end up getting beaten by our dad like this? Poor thing, if anything happens to you, how will I and our orphaned child survive..."

Mu Dazhong was already half-dead, and being pulled by Mrs. Lin like this, he was left with even less strength.

Old Mrs. Mu came out to spill some slops, and seeing this scene, she immediately started cursing Mrs. Lin: "You blind woman, my son's in this state, and you're still shaking him. Shouldn't you know to carry him back?"

"Mom, I don't have the strength, ask Old Fourth to carry him." said Mrs. Lin.

"No strength, no strength, what are you good for? Can't even protect your own husband, lazy and useless!"

Old Mrs. Mu's scolding scared Mrs. Lin so much she cowered to the side, almost curling into a ball.

Finally, Mu Dalang and Mu Dajiang together carried Mu Dazhong back home.

After Mr. Mu's outburst, everyone else in the Old Mu Family behaved more properly.

But this time, they didn't manage to reprimand Mu Danian, leaving Mr. Mu with a knot of discontent in his heart.

Near dinner time, the missing-for-days Mu Danian returned to the Old Mu Family feeling triumphant.

To make sure everyone noticed him, Mu Danian deliberately raised his voice and spoke loudly.

"Dad, Mom, your son is back. Where are you, why aren't you coming out to meet me?"

Mu Danian charged into the main room excitedly, expecting a welcome but instead received a hard slap from Mr. Mu.

"Dad, what are you doing? What did I do wrong to deserve this? I refuse to accept this." Mu Danian shouted.

"What did you do wrong, you tell me. Was the mess with the Old Yu Family your idea? You've made our Old Mu Family lose face, and you still have the nerve to come back."

Talking about the Old Yu Family's issue, Mr. Mu was fuming.

How could he have produced such a shameless son, losing dignity over food, it was utterly disgraceful.

Mu Danian was startled, hurriedly looking at the members of the Old Mu Family's Fourth branch, thinking this blame should be theirs, how did it get pinned on him?

Mu Dajiang stiffened his neck, facing Mu Danian directly. Normally, Mu Dajiang might have endured this quietly, but the circumstances were different now. If he didn't stand firm, the Fourth branch would be bullied until nothing was left.

"Dad, your son was bullied to the point of death out there, and you don't care, instead, you're hitting me because of outsiders. Are you my real dad?" Mu Danian said aggrievedly.

This statement, however, enraged Old Mrs. Mu.

"You little rascal, nothing good comes out of your mouth. Watch if this old lady doesn't beat you to death today."

Old Mrs. Mu rushed up and slapped him twice, making Mu Danian see stars.

Mu Danian felt that he was really unlucky today, being beaten for no reason and now being so bullied.

But Mu Danian was sharp and immediately pointed out the fact that he had been bitten by a dog, even showing his backside.

On his pale backside were two huge dog bite marks, though healing, they were still quite glaring.

Only then did Mr. Mu let Mu Danian go, telling him to roll back and reflect.

As soon as Mu Danian returned to his room, Mrs. Lin walked in.

Mrs. Lin and Mu Dazhong didn't want Huang Bitao to marry into the family, but now the engagement was already settled, only waiting for a good day to be chosen.

It was basically irreversible, but if Mu Danian opposed it, perhaps Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu might change their minds.

"Fifth, I've come to your room to discuss something with you. The wife that Dad and Mom told you about last time, that woman has now taken a liking to my son, Dalang. I don't know what she said to the two elders, but now the engagement is settled, just waiting to set the date."

"What?" Mu Danian was shocked, seeming not to hear what Mrs. Lin said.

"Hey, you're still foolishly asking here, the wife has been stolen away. That Huang Bitao looks pretty decent to me and even has a good match with you, but she's two years older than our Dalang. I don't know how Dad and Mom came up with this."

Mrs. Lin expressed her disapproval of her son being with Huang Bitao.

"You're saying Dalang and the Huang Family girl's engagement is settled?" Mu Danian shouted loudly.

"Indeed, just today, no matter how much your second brother and I objected, it was useless. Clearly she was your wife..." Mrs. Lin said in a lowered voice.

She couldn't let Old Mrs. Mu know she was stirring up trouble, or else she'd be skinned alive.

Mu Danian was indignant at heart. No matter whether he ended up with Huang Bitao or not, what his parents did was unfair.

After all, Huang Bitao was supposed to be his potential wife, his sister-in-law, and now became his niece by marriage; the relationship was a huge insult to him.

If outsiders heard about it, how would they laugh at Mu Danian?

It was as if he was being utterly disregarded.

Mu Danian got up from the bed, wanting to argue with Mr. Mu but thought better of it, feeling he wouldn't gain an advantage going like this.

If he wasn't careful, he might even get used by his second sister-in-law.

"Second sister-in-law, what are you talking about, I never got engaged to the Huang Family girl, and I didn't even look at her initially. So in that case, it has nothing to do with me."

"If you don't like this daughter-in-law, you should talk to Dad and Mom yourself; since you're Dalang's mother, who else would make the decision?"

Mu Danian put on an indifferent act.

This gave Mrs. Lin a headache.

She came to stir up a commotion, but why was Old Fifth so calm?

Disappointed, Mrs. Lin left Mu Danian's room.

Once she was gone, Mu Danian began to think about how to regain his ground; he just couldn't swallow this grievance.

The more he thought about it, the angrier he became, and the angrier he got, the more he wanted to find an explanation.

After pondering, Mu Danian got up and went to Mr. Mu, not to question him but to ask him to call off the engagement.

Mr. Mu was resting in his room, waiting for Old Mrs. Mu to bring him water for soaking his feet.

After the cold dew, the evenings got very chilly, and Mr. Mu, being old, needed to soak his feet in hot water before bed to promote blood circulation; otherwise, he couldn't get warm at night.

"Old Fifth, what brings you to my room?" Mr. Mu saw Mu Danian standing at his room door, neither speaking nor entering, so he asked.

"Dad, I disagree with Dalang and the Huang Family girl's marriage. That is clearly my wife, Mu Danian's wife. How can she be taken by my nephew?"

Mu Danian vented angrily.

Mr. Mu understood that anyone would be upset about this situation.

But since the Huang girl and Dalang were together, what could he do?

"Old Fifth, I originally planned to discuss this with you, but you've been away from home these past few days, and this matter is indeed urgent, so..."

## Chapter 526: Two Holes Poked in the Butt

"So you and mom sold my wife? Made me the laughing stock?"

Mu Danian snorted coldly, not caring about the pain in his butt and face at this moment.

These days, face was far more important than substance.

Previously, those matters embarrassed the Old Mu Family, which in other words, meant embarrassing Mr. Mu.

But now it's his own face that has been embarrassed, Mu Danian wouldn't accept it.

"Fifth, this matter is something your mother and I owe you. Later, when your older brother passes the exams, we will compensate you by finding a good family's girl for you," Mr. Mu comforted.

"Dad, don't try to coax me. It's either Miss Huang or Da Lang is not allowed to marry Miss Huang. I can't bear this disgrace," Mu Danian said.

"Enough, Fifth! This matter was decided together by your mother and me. Today, we went to Huang Family Village, and the matter is settled. Miss Huang must be Da Lang's wife, whether you agree or not; this matter has nothing to do with you."

Mr. Mu's face was full of authority.

A look of no doubt allowed.

Mu Danian became angry too, and he said angrily: "Since that's the case, you don't care what kind of person I find."

Mu Danian rushed out, intending to find Chen Hong.

Anyway, Chen Hong was not welcomed at the Wang Family, given her reputation, his parents would definitely not agree to him marrying Chen Hong, so he planned to use this matter to threaten his parents to cancel Da Lang and Huang Bitu's marriage.

Mu Danian, after thinking it over, felt this method was feasible.

Little did he know, the Old Wang Family had already prepared to sell Chen Hong.

The human traffickers came suddenly, the members of Old Wang's family had just finished dinner, and Chen Hong was eating with a mouthful of oil; she always ate late, and when Wang Tiejiang and Mrs. Zhou went out, she was put in a burlap bag.

It was pitch black in front of her, and the burlap bag smelled so foul that Chen Hong almost vomited.

"What are you doing? Grabbing women in broad daylight, aren't you afraid of death?"

Chen Hong shouted loudly.

The trafficker exerted force, punching Chen Hong.

Chen Hong cried out in pain, and when she spoke again, she was hit again.

"Old Wang, this beautiful wife of yours is now ours."

The trafficker carried Chen Hong, walked in front of Wang Tiejiang, and laughed.

At this moment, Wang Tiejiang regretted a little, he looked at his wife Mrs. Zhou, hoping she would say something.

Mrs. Zhou shook her head, signaling him not to intervene.

"Here are ten taels of silver; from now on, this daughter-in-law has nothing to do with your Old Wang Family. You can only pretend not to see her, understand?" the trafficker said.

"We understand, just that what you promised me..."

Mrs. Zhou referred to the trafficker's promise to find her a plump boy to adopt.

The trafficker naturally understood; he was a person who kept his word; otherwise, he wouldn't have been a trafficker for so many years.

"Leave it to me; isn't it just a plump boy? Within half a month, I guarantee I'll deliver him to you," the trafficker patted his chest to promise.

In the burlap bag, Chen Hong understood all these things, couldn't help but shout: "You old thing, dare to sell me? How could you be worthy of your deceased son? If Little Smith knew what you're doing, he wouldn't let you off even as a ghost."

Chen Hong's words were shaky.

Usually arrogant, knowing she was going to be sold, Chen Hong was scared, not to the point of crying, but trembling all over.

Though Chen Hong often had ambiguous relationships with men, those men were chosen by her, each good-looking.

Mu Danian was Er Gui Village's most handsome, with a good face, and unmarried; though the rest were more or less married, at least they still had looks.

What if he's old and ugly...

Chen Hong started screaming, and the trafficker knocked her out with a palm.

Finally quiet, Chen Hong was.

After saying a few words to Wang the blacksmith's house people, the trafficker left with Chen Hong.

Mu Daniaan arrived at Chen Hong's house, just missing Chen Hong; he effortlessly climbed the courtyard wall of Old Wang's house.

Just landed, there was a severe pain in his butt.

Mrs. Zhou held an iron rake, poking two holes in Mu Daniaan's butt from where blood freely flowed.

"Ow ow~" Mu Daniaan howled endlessly.

"You dog thing, that little tramp has already been kicked out of our Old Wang Family. If you ever dare come to our Old Wang Family doing shameless things again, I'll take your life."

Mu Daniaan covered his butt, climbed out of Old Wang's house, howling all the way.

First bitten by a dog, then poked by a rake, Mu Daniaan was in heartache and physical pain.

Crying, he ran back to the Old Mu Family, his howls woke Mu Shuangshuang.

She dressed, climbed out of bed, lit the lamp, and went to the front yard.

Mu Daniaan's pants were covered in blood.

The family members awake turned their heads away in fright upon seeing this.

Mu Danian acted like a madman, jumping around, the more he jumped, the faster the blood flowed.

Old Mrs. Mu panicked.

"Danian, what's wrong?"

"Mom, my butt hurts, lots of blood..."

Old Mrs. Mu, of course, knew about the blood but had what means when the Fifth kept jumping?

"Fifth, don't move; Mom will think of a way," Old Mrs. Mu said heartbrokenly.

In the face of such a major event, Old Mrs. Mu rarely wasn't looking fierce like she was going to eat someone.

Mr. Mu was anxiously beside her too.

"Fourth, go call Zhang Huai Shu to save him, old woman, let's hold down the Fifth, don't let him move."

"Dad, last time Uncle Zhang said he wouldn't treat our family..." Mu Dajiang opened his mouth to speak.

"If he said no, then it's no; standing here, do you want the Fifth to die?" Old Mrs. Mu shouted angrily.

"Mom, I didn't mean that." Mu Dajiang explained, looking pale.

"If not, then what? Get out!" Old Mrs. Mu cursed.

Mu Dajiang's head hung low, ready to go find someone, just as Mu Shuangshuang arrived.

"Fourth Uncle, where are you going?" Mu Shuangshuang asked as she saw him about to leave and stopped him.

"I'm going to find Uncle Zhang to take a look at Fifth brother's illness," Mu Dajiang said truthfully.

"But Grandpa Zhang wouldn't come to our family last time," Mu Shuangshuang truthfully informed.

Mu Dajiang nodded with a troubled look.

In fact, everyone understood Zhang Huai Shu's temperament; he said he wouldn't come, then he wouldn't.

Words were useless.

The Old Mu Family, these people were obviously bullying the Fourth House.

Mu Shuangshuang was moved by sympathy, approached Mu Danian for a look, seeing two bloody holes in his butt, particularly like a sharp object had stabbed.

Mu Shuangshuang's eyes turned, and she had an idea.

"Grandpa, Grandma, quickly hold down my Fifth Uncle, otherwise he will bleed excessively and die," Mu Shuangshuang exclaimed.

Only then did the Old Mu Family come to their senses, each one holding down hands, holding down feet...

Chapter 527: If I Don't Say It, Who Will Know

Mu Danian was tied up tightly, and Mu Shuangshuang punched him, knocking him out.

"Shuang, what are you doing?" Mr. Mu cried out in surprise.

"Grandpa, I'm doing this for my fifth uncle's good. Grandpa, Grandma, it's so late, not only will Grandpa Zhang not come, even if he does come, a trip would take a lot of time, we can't just wait like this."

Mu Shuangshuang said earnestly.

Mr. Mu agreed completely, and his attitude towards Mu Shuangshuang improved instantly.

"So, Shuang, what do you suggest we do?" Mr. Mu placed all hope on Mu Shuangshuang at this moment.

Old Mrs. Mu wanted to scold, but was stopped by her.

"Take off my fifth uncle's pants and see if the wound on his butt is round, and if there are holes?"

Mu Shuangshuang turned around and said to Mr. Mu.

Mr. Mu glanced at Old Mrs. Mu, she did as told, and it was indeed as Mu Shuangshuang said.

"Shuangshuang, you're right, it's indeed..."

Mr. Mu hadn't finished speaking when Mu Shuangshuang interrupted him.

"Clean my fifth uncle's wound, then fill both wounds with salt."

Mu Shuangshuang admitted she was a bit bad, but Mu Danian was even worse in his normal behavior.

The original owner was timid, and he used snakes, insects, mice and ants to scare the original owner.

Mu Shuangshuang can't remember, but hearing Xiao Han talk about it, she could still feel the original owner's despair.

Mu Danian deserved a lesson.

"Shuangshuang, this..." Mr. Mu was a bit hesitant.

"Grandpa, it was a metal instrument that hurt my fifth uncle's butt, it might cause tetanus. If it gets serious, no one can save him, make your own decision."

Mu Shuangshuang also didn't want to see such an exciting scene, after saying this, she headed back to her room. After a while, she heard Mu Danian, who had fainted, scream loudly.

That sound echoed throughout Er Gui Village, even the sleeping dogs of Er Gui Village were awakened, and the whole village was filled with barking dogs.

The entire village was filled with curses and foul language, Mu Shuangshuang went to sleep happily.

Next day, the sun shone brightly, Mu Shuangshuang woke up feeling refreshed, as soon as she opened her eyes, Yu Si Niang walked in.

"Shuangshuang, Fengzi is outside, he's been here for a while, asking me this morning what happened last night, if it disturbed you."

"It's hard not to be touched by this child's care, guessing he didn't sleep at all, worried about you all night."

Yu Si Niang was both feeling moved while helping Mu Shuangshuang tidy up the room.

Mu Shuangshuang nodded: "I know, I'll go check it out now!"

Lu Yuanfeng's kindness was clear to Mu Shuangshuang, and she was very grateful to have met such a good man.

At this time, the hour was indeed early, just like Yu Si Niang said, he probably hadn't slept all night, really quite silly.

After dressing and washing, Mu Shuangshuang went out to find Lu Yuanfeng.

"Don't you need to rest? You have dark circles now." Mu Shuangshuang looked full of concern.

Lu Yuanfeng smiled and shook his head, "Never mind, as long as you're okay. I wanted to come over last night but was afraid I'd scare others."

In Lu Yuanfeng's heart, he wanted to be good to Shuangshuang, but couldn't bring trouble to her.

If others saw, they might say something unpleasant.

"Then rest here, I'll make breakfast, what would you like? Noodles or buns?" Mu Shuangshuang asked standing in place.

"I'm okay, I'll go back and make it myself." Lu Yuanfeng waved his hand.

"Come on, it's much hassle making it yourself, I just want to try some new dishes, you can be my tester. If it's good, I'll continue making it, if not, I won't."

Lu Yuanfeng knew this was Shuangshuang's way to comfort him.

At this moment, she grinned, revealing a mouth of big white teeth.

Whenever she smiled, Lu Yuanfeng felt his world had gained a few more colors.

"Alright then, I'll help you start the fire!"

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng entered the kitchen one after the other, in the kitchen, it was clean, thanks to Mu Shuangshuang's efforts last night.

Pots and pans had all been washed by her, and now the lid of the pot shone silvery bright, very pretty.

Lu Yuanfeng helped knead the dough, Mu Shuangshuang began to prepare the ingredients, the wolf meat from last time had been smoked by her and hung on the kitchen beam all this while, now it's nicely dried, as she took down the wolf meat, she sliced it as cured meat to prepare the ingredients.

Once the fire was lit and the wolf meat was cooked, chili oil was added into it, then Lu Yuanfeng was done mixing the flour.

"Shuangshuang, anything else you need me to do?" Lu Yuanfeng asked as he skillfully covered the dough with cloth.

"No, you can rest, the rest is on me."

Meanwhile, Mu Shuangshuang was full of love for breakfast, but Old Mu's house was in chaos.

Mu Danian ended up like that, lying motionless on the bed, Old Mrs. Mu sent Mu Dajiang out early to buy two liang of meat, intending to replenish her son and daughter Xiangxiang.

Who knew the meat soup freshly out of the pot disappeared in a blink.

In the kitchen, Old Mrs. Mu was about to explode, pointing at the stove and cursing.

Today's breakfast was made by Old Mrs. Mu, she couldn't put the blame on Mrs. Liu, so everyone was collectively cursed.

The second household of Old Mu Family.

Mrs. Lin and her family watched the recently stolen bowl of meat soup, drooling.

The aroma of the meat soup filled the entire room.

Gou Dan reached out his hand wanting to grab the big bowl, only to have it slapped away by Mrs. Lin.

"Why are you in such a hurry, your dad hasn't eaten yet."

Mu Dazhong lay on the bed, hearing Mrs. Lin's words, feeling gratified.

Mrs. Lin's face, a yellow hag's face, now looked much better.

"You're thoughtful!" Mu Dazhong said.

"Of course, do you not know who I, Mrs. Lin, am!" Mrs. Lin said smugly.

"Mom, will Grandma find out about this and peel our skin?" Mu Qingqing was still scared.

The title of the weaver last time was a nightmare for her.

As long as her aunt and grandma saw her, they would surely give her a hard time, her arm had been pinched by the old lady until it was bruised, swollen, and bloated.

Taking it out was hideously terrifying.

"Are you stupid or not, you don't say it, I don't say it, Gou Dan doesn't say it, who knows?" Mrs. Lin said indifferently.

Then she seemed to remember something, urging the others, "Hurry up, before your grandma comes, if she comes, we won't be able to eat, and our skin will be peeled."

Mrs. Lin took out several bowls, gave the largest one to Mu Dazhong, trying to put as much minced meat in it as possible.

The second bowl was hers, not less than Mu Dazhong's.

After two bowls, the bowl Da Hai had was almost empty.

Mu Qingqing and Gou Dan were anxious, Gou Dan was more direct, holding Da Hai's bowl, he was about to drink when Mu Qingqing stopped him.

"You idiot, you finish it, then what about me?" Mu Qingqing scolded.

She took a bowl and ladled a bowl for herself, the rest at the bottom was given to Gou Dan.

Gou Dan looked at what was left in the large bowl, pouted, and suddenly shouted loudly—

Chapter 528: No Chance to Rebut

"I want to drink meat soup..."

Gou Dan shook his hand, and those black, dirty palms swayed in front of Mu Qingqing, almost killing her appetite.

"What are you yelling for? What if you wake your grandpa and grandma?" Mrs. Lin shouted.

Gou Dan got angry, grabbed the big sea bowl on the table and smashed it on the ground with a bang, shattering it instantly. This shocked not only Mrs. Lin but also frightened Mu Dazhong on the bed.

Gou Dan looked at Mrs. Lin angrily, pointing at the bowl in her hand.

"I want to eat meat soup, Gou Dan wants to eat meat soup!"

Without another word, Mrs. Lin slapped him.

With a "smack," a big handprint appeared on Gou Dan's face.

"Eat, eat, eat, are you a glutton? Or a hungry ghost reborn?"

Having done this, Mrs. Lin felt guilty. If she really called the old lady over, wouldn't she have to peel a layer of skin?

Mu Qingqing watched Gou Dan with a smug look. She disliked Gou Dan's protective and greedy nature for food, thinking a beating would resolve it.

"Wah..." Gou Dan burst into tears.

At that moment, the second room's door was kicked open with a bang, and Old Mrs. Mu stormed in with a gloomy face, giving two slaps to Mrs. Lin.

Mu Qingqing was scared to death, standing by with a pale face.

"Oh, I was wondering where my meat soup went; turns out you little brats brought it here. How daring you are!" Old Mrs. Mu cursed angrily.

Seeing this, Mu Dazhong desperately gulped down the meat soup in his hand, slurping it down in no time.

Seeing her husband do this, Mrs. Lin also tried to drink the meat soup on the table, but Old Mrs. Mu got there first.

Old Mrs. Mu grabbed Mrs. Lin by the hair, pulling hard, making Mrs. Lin scream non-stop.

Mu Xiangxiang, who came with her, picked up the bowl of meat soup, intending to pour it into her mouth, but Gou Dan had been eyeing that meat soup and wouldn't give it up easily.

He pushed Mu Xiangxiang, and with a shake of her hand, the bowl of meat soup fell from her hand, smashing on the ground with a bang.

Mu Xiangxiang showed no mercy, giving Gou Dan a slap right away.

On the bed, Mu Dazhong, seeing his son Gou Dan being hit, struggled to get up.

"You ugly thing, daring to hit my son, I'll fight you!"

During the scuffle, Mu Xiangxiang was pushed to the ground, her hand hitting a broken bowl, causing beads of blood to appear on her hand.

Mu Xiangxiang cried out, raising her bleeding hand.

"Mom, my second brother hurt my hand, Gou Dan made me lose my meat soup, their whole family is no good..."

Old Mrs. Mu dealt another slap to Mrs. Lin, then stepped forward to protect Mu Xiangxiang.

"Alright, you brat, you dare hit your sister? I'll beat you to death today!"

Old Mrs. Mu shielded Mu Xiangxiang behind her, glancing towards the door crack.

In farming families, they usually keep birch rods for children. If children misbehave, they are not coaxed; they are beaten with the rods.

The more one cries, the harsher the beating.

Swinging the birch rod mercilessly at Mu Dazhong, it caused his already injured body to cry out in pain.

"Mu Dazhong, stealing the family's meat soup and daring to hit your sister, do you have no conscience?"

"How did I bear such a creature? Aren't you human?"

Old Mrs. Mu cursed and beat at the same time.

Mu Dazhong, beaten until his tears and snot came out, still didn't forget to defend himself: "Mom, I'm injured too. Why don't you treat me better? Fifth's butt was stabbed, but I'm also badly hurt."

Mu Dazhong tried to argue that Old Mrs. Mu was being biased, and how could she not be angry?

Fuming, she swung even harder, and now Old Mrs. Mu's face was contorted, as if her sole purpose was to beat Mu Dazhong to death.

In the second room, it was filled with Old Mrs. Mu's curses, Mu Dazhong's screams, and Gou Dan's cries. The combination drove the village dogs to bark loudly.

Mu Shuangshuang finished making breakfast, served it on the table, finally ending this annual drama.

But the walls of the Old Mu Family's courtyard were now filled with onlookers. First, Mu Dade hadn't returned yet, and secondly, the Old Mu Family's affairs were indeed a spectacle, thoroughly entertaining the whole of Er Gui Village.

Mr. Mu's face was dark as iron, feeling all dignity was lost by his family, too angry to eat breakfast.

Mu Dashan, looking at the big bowl of noodles before him, lost his appetite, perhaps due to the Old Mu Family's mess.

Mu Shuangshuang couldn't be bothered to say anything, lest her father ask her to spend money on those people from the Old Mu Family.

Money isn't blown in by the wind; only those worthy of help should be helped. No matter how pitiful, those who can't be helped shouldn't be.

After breakfast, Mu Shuangshuang called Lu Yuanfeng aside for discussion.

"Fengzi, I think we shouldn't just simply look for people. We also need to ask around nearby human traffickers, as they see more people and travel more places."

Those traffickers are similar to modern illegal traffickers, though people here mostly sell their own kin, unlike modern times where others' children are kidnapped and sold.

But even so, there's no guarantee these traffickers won't do such things.

Lu Yuanfeng was full of gratitude.

These days, Shuangshuang had tried various ways to help him find his mother. They even planned to cross Niuwei Mountain to see the families on the other side, hoping to find her there.

"Shuangshuang, thank you!" Lu Yuanfeng said.

"You're being silly again. Why thank me? This is what I should do."

Whether out of responsibility or her relationship with Fengzi.

Lu Yuanfeng felt a warmness inside, wanting to say something, but Yuanbao dashed out.

He said to Lu Yuanfeng, "Second brother, I'm taking Little Zhi out for a walk. You have to save us some lunch."

With that, the two kids ran off in a flash, giving Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng no chance to object.

"These two kids are quite something, so young and daring to roam around." Mu Shuangshuang exclaimed!

"Yeah, Yuanbao's energetic, the village is boring for him!"

The two shook their heads helplessly and then got busy with their tasks!

Chapter 529: To the Taste of the Wang Family

Yuanbao took Little Zhi out of the village, walking further and further into the wilderness until the path was no longer familiar to Little Zhi.

The road was lined with tussock grass, and when the wind occasionally blew, it seemed as if someone was hiding within the sporadic tussocks.

Little Zhi was extremely scared, so he said to Yuanbao, "Brother Yuanbao, let's go back, I'm really scared..."

Yuanbao was also a bit scared at this moment, but since he was the one who brought Little Zhi out, if he admitted to being scared, Little Zhi would surely be even more frightened.

So Yuanbao puffed out his chest and assured him, "Don't worry, with Brother Yuanbao here, I guarantee you won't be harmed!"

"But...I'm still scared..." Little Zhi looked pitifully at Yuanbao, his big, grape-like eyes filled with fear.

"Well... alright, let's go back!" Yuanbao considerately took Little Zhi's hand and retraced their steps toward the village entrance.

Neither noticed the two sturdy men watching them from the nearby grass.

Finally, one of the men couldn't hold back.

"Big brother, what do you think of catching this little fat kid to sell to Wang the blacksmith's family?"

"Are you stupid? Wang the blacksmith wants a two-year-old boy. That kid looks six or seven, and he definitely knows the way home. You can't domesticate him!" the human trafficker replied displeased.

"Not necessarily. Kids love anyone who feeds them. If you offer good food and drink, they won't want to go back to being poor. If worse comes to worst, give him a beating, and he'll surely behave.

After all, Wang the blacksmith wants a chubby one, and that kid is like a meatball. Where else are you going to find such a match?"

The human trafficker thought about it and agreed, so they decided to wait by the village entrance for the next few days.

Kids are curious, and if they've been somewhere once, they are bound to come again. They'll just wait to put him in a burlap sack.

"Oh, and was Wang San satisfied with Chen Hong?"

The human trafficker recalled Chen Hong, who had been sent to Wang San's house last night, and asked.

"Satisfied, of course satisfied. That woman has a great figure, well-endowed in front and back, exactly what someone like the old bachelor Wang San loves!"

The human trafficker nodded in satisfaction.

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At the other end, Chen Hong was bundled and sent to Wang San's house. Last night, she was tied up like a hog on the bed, just waiting for Chen Hong to wake up so Wang San could have his way.

Wang San's house was not bad in town, but unfortunately, he had a lousy reputation. His family didn't want him to go to town with them, so they gave him some money to live it up in Er Gui Village.

Unfortunately, Wang San had been unable to find a wife for all these years.

No matter how much money he offered, as soon as the women heard it was for him, they'd not only return the money but also throw in a couple of rotten eggs, almost stinking Wang San to death.

Outside, Wang San guessed Chen Hong was about to wake up and sneaked quietly towards the room.

As soon as Chen Hong opened her eyes, she found herself tied to a high bed, unable to move her limbs, and even had a rag stuffed in her mouth.

Above her was a moldy, shabby mosquito net, and the whole room reeked of a strong urine smell, which was overwhelmingly unpleasant.

Remembering that two elderly members of the Wang Family had sold her to the human traffickers, Chen Hong felt distraught.

She whimpered for a long time, and just at that moment, Wang San pushed the door open and entered.

His dirty face and clothes almost made Chen Hong retch.

"My little treasure, from today you're my Wang San's wife. My, you've got such a lovely face..." Wang San said as he approached her, his dirty body pressing against Chen Hong.

Chen Hong's face turned pale from fright.

She whimpered, and Wang San removed the rag from her mouth, smiling as he revealed two rows of blackened teeth.

"Wife, you're my wife, and you'll give me, Wang San, a son..." Wang San said, placing his hand on Chen Hong's face, drooling as he spoke.

"Wait!" Chen Hong shouted.

Chen Hong remembered this person, Wang San, from what Mu Danian had mentioned before when Old Mu Family's eldest wanted to sell the third branch's daughter Mu Shuangshuang to be Wang San's wife to settle a fifty tael debt.

Because of this, the third branch had split from the family.

But now, she had become the one sold to Wang San.

"Wife, what's wrong? What do you want to eat? I'll buy it for you." Wang San's hand continued to shamelessly stroke Chen Hong's face, and Chen Hong fought back her nausea to shout.

"You say I'm your wife, yet how come you don't treat me well? Tying me up, not giving me freedom, and I'm hungry, yet you refuse to feed me. You're not my man."

Chen Hong had long known how to feign affection with men, and Chen San was no match for someone as genuine as Mu Danian. She had to escape and find Mu Danian.

"Hehe, wife, the human trafficker said not to release you, and only after you give me a son will I let you go."

Wang San wasn't foolish. Having finally gotten a wife, how could he easily let her go?

Chen Hong was infuriated and spit right in Wang San's face.

"You filthy thing, dreaming that a toad can eat swan meat. I'd rather marry a pig than you."

Wang San was stubborn, and to him, a man was a woman's sky. Chen Hong's insults were a loss of face for him, and he slapped her across the face, followed by a torrent of punches and kicks.

Chen Hong's cries of agony echoed out, even reaching Wang San's neighbors.

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Mu Danian lay in bed all morning, his posterior burning with pain. No one brought him water, and no one served him food, making him howl angrily.

Old Mrs. Mu kicked open the door, irritated, "Crying like you're mourning in broad daylight, your father and I aren't dead yet. Getting hurt and acting like you're a master now?"

Mu Danian choked on his words, nearly dying from anger.

"Mother, my butt hurts. Get that wench from the Huang Family to take care of me. If I'm not doing well, don't expect her to live happily with Da Lang either."

"Pah! You little bastard, saying such things! Let me tell you, Old Mrs. Mu, you can marry anyone but Huang Bitu. She's your nephew Da Lang's wife." Old Mrs. Mu warned.

"You said I can marry anyone, don't regret it!"

Mu Danian decided that once he recovered, he'd find Chen Hong. Not only would she take care of him, but it'd also annoy his parents.

However, in his current state, with injuries that take a hundred days to heal, it would be at least ten days to half a month before he's well.

Seeing Mu Danian quiet down, Old Mrs. Mu felt much better.

After all, it was the second branch that caused trouble, and if they hadn't done those filthy things, she might not be so angry.

Remembering the second branch still kneeling in the main hall, Old Mrs. Mu grabbed a feather duster and charged out again.

This time, she'd see who dared to slack off and act spoiled!

Chapter 530: Married Mu Xiangxiang

In the afternoon, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were busy making cold noodles for the next day.

As the weather cooled down, they could grind the flour first and then finish the last process the next morning, which meant they finally didn't have to stay up late.

Though they would still have to get up early.

But with the weather getting colder, Mu Shuangshuang estimated that customers at Jiu Si Xuan would gradually order less cold noodles.

This also meant her income would decrease.

Mu Shuangshuang hadn't figured out another way to replace cold noodles to make money, and once winter set in, she couldn't deliver cold noodles to town early in the morning because it was simply too cold.

It's said that during the winter of the Da Ning Dynasty, there's a saying of hiding away for winter, with families preparing well for winter and avoiding going out if possible.

If that's the case, winter would probably mean relying on hunting and selling game.

"Shuangshuang, what are you thinking about?"

Lu Yuanfeng asked while grinding mung beans.

"Nothing much, I was just thinking, if we don't deliver cold noodles, and popcorn doesn't bring in instant money, what should we do?"

After all, it's a big family, so Mu Shuangshuang had to consider everything.

She had indeed saved some silver, but that was meant for Xiao Han and Yuanbao's school fees and couldn't be spent lightly.

"No rush, when it gets a bit colder, I'll go to the mountains to hunt. The game caught then will be large and worth quite a lot, enough to support both our families."

Lu Yuanfeng's other identity was that of a hunter, and winter was their prime time.

Mu Shuangshuang understood this, but the beasts in the mountains weren't that easy to hunt.

"Fengzi, let's save up some silver quickly, go to town to get a shop, and start selling food. The income from that would be stable."

An idea of a snack using mung beans suddenly popped into Mu Shuangshuang's mind. It was called mung bean pancakes, the process was relatively simple, and most importantly, they were warm and suitable for winter.

"Then tomorrow let's go to town and carefully check out the shops, see how much the suitable ones cost, and set a target to earn that money."

People are like that, without a target, there's no direction. Only when a target is set, can one calculate clearly how far they are from reaching it.

"Okay!" Mu Shuangshuang fully agreed with Lu Yuanfeng, and she also felt it was time to consider making more money.

Always earning just this little, any issue and her income would shrink entirely.

After reaching a consensus, Lu Yuanfeng continued grinding mung beans, with Mu Shuangshuang helping by feeding mung beans into the stone grinder, the green paste slowly oozing out.

After much toil, the task was finally completed.

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The next day, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng got up early to start popping popcorn, the booming sound from the kettle echoed throughout Er Gui Village, even waking up Mu Xiangxiang who was still asleep.

Mu Xiangxiang climbed out of bed, followed the noise, and rushed into Mu Shuangshuang's courtyard.

"Oh my, there's popcorn to eat, Fengzi, hurry and give me some popcorn~" Mu Xiangxiang ran straight to Lu Yuanfeng, her face smiling almost to the point of a twitch.

At this moment, Mu Xiangxiang was barely dressed, wearing only a sleeping undergarment, her hair messy like she had just come out of a henhouse.

However, since she hadn't put rouge on her face, Mu Xiangxiang looked more pleasing than usual.

But regardless of how pleasing, Lu Yuanfeng didn't like it.

As Mu Xiangxiang approached, he stepped back.

Thus, the distance between Mu Xiangxiang and Lu Yuanfeng remained particularly far.

Mu Xiangxiang was unhappy, she sat on the ground with a thump, huffing, "Stinky girl, hurry and bring me something to eat, or I'll tell my mom."

In Mu Xiangxiang's heart, everyone feared Old Mrs. Mu. Once she appeared, all matters were resolved.

But who was Mu Shuangshuang? She wouldn't spoil freeloaders.

"Aunt, if you want popcorn, get it yourself, these aren't for you." Mu Shuangshuang said.

Mu Xiangxiang instantly flared up, opened her mouth, and started yelling.

"Mom, the stinky girl is bullying me, come quickly..."

These days, Old Mrs. Mu got up early because the house was piled up with cotton, coupled with occasional rains or cloudy days, the cotton bolls were almost rotten.

Old Mrs. Mu would go to different rooms daily to whip the daughters-in-law, urging them to work.

Upon hearing Mu Xiangxiang's cries, Old Mrs. Mu rushed over to Mu Shuangshuang's courtyard in no time.

"Stinky girl, bullying your aunt again, what did she do to offend you, you ungrateful thing!"

Old Mrs. Mu scolded without asking questions.

"Grandma, you should know what kind of person your daughter is. Don't say I didn't bully Aunt, even if I did, would she call you so nicely without crying and running out?" Mu Shuangshuang replied annoyed.

Being scolded early in the morning would upset anyone.

"Oh, you even dare talk back to me, you're rebelling." Old Mrs. Mu rolled up her sleeves, threatening to hit.

Yet Mu Shuangshuang was no pushover.

"Grandma, it's not new for Shuangshuang to talk back to you, don't be surprised. If Aunt wants to eat something, you should pay for it, otherwise, I can't help!"

Mu Shuangshuang made her stand clear, no freeloading.

She and Lu Yuanfeng continued popping popcorn, the sweet aroma making Mu Xiangxiang drool.

But Mu Shuangshuang wouldn't give Mu Xiangxiang any to eat.

The noise of Old Mrs. Mu's scolding traveled from the third branch's courtyard to the main house of the Old Mu Family. Mr. Mu climbed out of bed, his face turning blue with anger.

On the way to the third branch, he could discern what was going on from Old Mrs. Mu's chattering.

Upon arriving, he said to Old Mrs. Mu, "Why are you yelling? It's just a bite of food, is it necessary?"

After scolding Old Mrs. Mu, he turned to Mu Xiangxiang, "You just eat and do nothing at home, who will support you?"

"You're going to die for sure, scolding Xiangxiang like that, what did she do wrong?" Old Mrs. Mu huffed.

Mu Xiangxiang was her darling, she couldn't bear to scold her, anyone else did, she'd fight them.

Not even her husband was exempt.

"What did she do wrong? She's not young anymore, has she helped the family with anything? When the eldest son returns, I must marry her off."

Mr. Mu was fuming inside, all these trivial matters at home were made worse by the kids and Old Mrs. Mu, bullying this one today, bullying that one tomorrow, turning the Old Mu Family into a mess.

He didn't even know how people were badmouthing him behind his back.

"Dad, let me marry Fengzi, I won't marry anyone else."

Mu Xiangxiang liked those with big muscles and tall statures. Lu Yuanfeng fit that bill.

Mr. Mu's face turned green instantly.

His daughter, saying in front of so many people whom she wanted to marry, and this man was his niece's intended, wasn't this embarrassing or what?