

Folly 561

Chapter 561: Running Around

In the end, it's the Wang Family's foolishness that caused this mess.

Someone in the village saw her parents nearby and reported them to the authorities, leading to their wrongful arrest without any distinction by the government.

Mu Shuangshuang felt increasingly troubled as she thought about it.

"Fengzi, do you remember what Xing Beichen said when he left? He said he would repay our kindness once he was in the county, and I want him to help."

Mu Shuangshuang knew that the Da Ning Dynasty definitely wouldn't have procedures to follow or laws to trust like modern times.

If they really waited, it would be like the old couple had lost their souls.

This matter must be resolved quickly!

"But Brother Beichen didn't even tell us where he went. How are we supposed to find him?" Lu Yuanfeng asked.

That indeed posed a problem.

"We can't find Xing Beichen, so let's go to Zheng Zhi. He kind of owes me an apology from before. We don't need him to release my parents, just to ensure they're not bullied inside."

However, the problem was Zheng Zhi's location, whether he was in the county or in Qingshan Town.

At this point, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng had no other choice.

The two of them found the residence of the County Magistrate's family and waited at the gate. By dusk, as the sun was setting, a luxurious carriage finally came trotting down the street.

Mu Shuangshuang recognized the carriage as Zheng Zhi's, and Lu Yuanfeng ran forward, using his body to block it.

The driver stopped the carriage and was just about to drive Lu Yuanfeng away when Mu Shuangshuang shouted into the carriage, "Mr. Zheng, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng from Er Gui Village in Qingshan Town request to see you!"

Inside the carriage, Zheng Zhi heard the familiar names, and his smile deepened slightly.

He thought to himself: It seems they want to do business with him again!

Just as Mu Shuangshuang had guessed.

Ever since Jiu Si Xuan lost its signboard, those customers who constantly clamored for cold noodles and popcorn couldn't be satisfied and gradually stopped coming.

Additionally, a new restaurant opened across from Jiu Si Xuan recently, making its business decline miserably.

Zheng Zhi didn't want the business he established to be destroyed like this, so he had been looking for an opportunity to collaborate with Mu Shuangshuang again, to come up with some new dishes.

Unfortunately, he hadn't seen them in town these past few days.

Fortunately, they came to him today on their own.

Zheng Zhi lifted the curtain and said to Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng, "Let's find a place, have a meal, and talk. Come on up to the carriage!"

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng didn't hesitate, Lu Yuanfeng first helped Mu Shuangshuang onto the carriage and then followed himself.

On the carriage, Mu Shuangshuang hadn't brought up the issue yet, and only when they settled into a restaurant did Mu Shuangshuang speak about the matter.

She hadn't mentioned it earlier not because of the meal, but out of fear that Zheng Zhi might become displeased and directly drive them away, which would make finding someone afterward much harder.

"Miss Shuangshuang, have you thought carefully about collaborating with Jiu Si Xuan again?" Zheng Zhi asked.

"Mr. Zheng, I'm not here to discuss collaboration today. I apologize for the suddenness; I've come..."

Mu Shuangshuang explained the situation to Zheng Zhi in full detail, clearly stating that she wasn't asking him to release her parents because they were innocent in the first place.

Zheng Zhi's expression was ambiguous. Though refraining from harming someone inside was relatively easy, was he going to help for free?

Seeing Zheng Zhi's hesitation, Mu Shuangshuang added, "This matter doesn't go against your principles, Mr. Zheng. Of course, I will provide the cold noodles recipe as gratitude afterward."

Zheng Zhi thought he would be happy hearing this from Mu Shuangshuang, but he wasn't. He enjoyed making money, but not through such means.

"Forget it, you keep the cold noodles recipe. Consider this matter as your personal favor. If we cooperate in the future, presenting the cold noodles recipe will surely make it irresistible for me.

I can only guarantee your parents will be safe in jail for three days without anyone laying a finger on them.

After three days, if you don't have evidence proving their innocence, or the Wang Family still doesn't withdraw the lawsuit, there's nothing I can do about it!"

In a way, Zheng Zhi's words showed he was helping Mu Shuangshuang.

He advised Mu Shuangshuang to find evidence or persuade Old Wang's family to withdraw the lawsuit; accomplishing either would ensure Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang's safety.

Mu Shuangshuang expressed her gratitude with determination to treat Zheng Zhi to dinner.

After the meal, Zheng Zhi returned home while Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng looked for a place to rest. Mu Shuangshuang suggested a guest house, but Lu Yuanfeng mentioned knowing a friend in the county from the military, forming a bond from the battlefield, offering them a place for the night and a chance to inquire about the county's situation.

Come morning, they'd venture to Er Gui Village to apprehend Xia Guagua.

Though unfamiliar with the county, Lu Yuanfeng knew where his brother lived, leading Mu Shuangshuang through a winding path until they reached a small cozy courtyard.

Despite knocking for a while, finally, a woman in her fifties answered the door.

Before Lu Yuanfeng could speak, she said, "Are you... Fengzi?"

Though they hadn't seen each other for half a year, the woman accurately called out Lu Yuanfeng's name, and he emotionally replied, "Auntie Qian."

"Come in quickly. Our Erniu has been wondering about you. Is this lady your wife?"

How wonderful, Erniu married as well, and you gentlemen can drink together. We have imported sorghum wine..."

Auntie Qian chitter-chattered on, clearly showing her fondness for Lu Yuanfeng.

"Auntie Qian, I'm not here for drinks today; I need to ask Erniu for some urgent information..."

Lu Yuanfeng briefly explained the situation to Auntie Qian.

Auntie Qian's expression turned into worry, but quickly shifted as she said, "You've come to the right place. Erniu just happens to be working at the jail now, so he might know something."

This news excited Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng greatly.

The prison guard was the best person to see Mu Shuangshuang's parents and pass on messages to Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang.

"Auntie Qian, can you take us to see Brother Erniu?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"I'll take you in now, follow me!"

In the Sun family's kitchen, Sun Erniu, Old Sun, and Sun's wife were having dinner. Auntie Qian had been setting the table when she heard the knocking.

As soon as Lu Yuanfeng appeared at the door, Sun Erniu stood up.

"Hey, my Brother Fengzi, long time no see, missed you."

Sun Erniu was a stout man, roughly the same height as Lu Yuanfeng, about six feet, but while Lu Yuanfeng was muscle-bound, Sun Erniu was chubby, creating quite a contrast when they stood together.

"Erniu, I'm here to ask for your help today..."

Chapter 562: Night Talk Through the Wall

"We're like brothers, there's no need to ask for favors. If you have anything to say, just speak up. As long as I, Sun Erniu, can do it, I'd be willing to do anything for a brother!"

Sun Erniu patted his chest as he made this promise.

Lu Yuanfeng felt a warmth in his heart. In this life, what people lack the most is not adding flowers to embroidery, but rather offering charcoal in the snow. At your most difficult times, those who are willing to lend a hand are the ones who truly value you.

Lu Yuanfeng said, "I heard you are working as a prison guard. My relatives have been wrongly imprisoned, and the situation is unclear. I wanted to ask if you could pass on a few words. Would that be possible?"

"That's not a problem. What's their name, and which town are they from? I need to know these details to help you!" Sun Erniu said.

"Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang are from Er Gui Village in Qingshan Town, they're from the same village as me, this is their daughter."

Lu Yuanfeng brought Mu Shuangshuang to Sun Erniu.

Only then did Sun Erniu notice Mu Shuangshuang, and upon seeing her, he exclaimed, "Is this your wife?"

Mu Shuangshuang had her hair styled like a young girl, but since Lu Yuanfeng mentioned it's her parents, it's pretty certain she's his wife.

Turns out it's Fengzi's father-in-law and mother-in-law, Sun Erniu felt even more obliged to help with this matter!

Mu Shuangshuang nodded towards Sun Erniu: "This matter is troubling Brother Erniu. My parents are honest and decent people, and they're truly wronged..."

Mu Shuangshuang narrated the situation entirely to Sun Erniu.

Sun Erniu listened and frowned.

"This matter is indeed a wrongful accusation. How can someone simply passing by become a murderer?"

This matter, Fengzi, you and your wife don't need to worry. Tonight, I'll go to the prison and have a look. If you have any messages, you can tell me, and sometimes you can buy some food to bring to the old couple."

Sun Erniu's words moved Mu Shuangshuang deeply. Bringing food into prison carries the greatest risk; if something goes wrong, not only could the job be lost, but also lives.

But Sun Erniu not only suggested it voluntarily but also reassured them, which made Mu Shuangshuang feel even more grateful.

She said, "Brother Erniu, can I use your kitchen for a bit? I want to cook something for my parents myself!"

"Help yourself, there's chicken in the backyard, and vegetables in the garden. You can pick what you want, no need to be formal with us. By the way, you haven't eaten yet, have you? Sit with us for dinner, we've just started."

Mu Shuangshuang quickly shook her head: "Fengzi and I just ate, we're not hungry!"

"Even if you're not hungry, you should eat a bit. It's a long night, I bet you won't get much sleep tonight. I usually don't return from the prison until after midnight."

Sun Erniu explained to Mu Shuangshuang, and under his strong assertion, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were coerced into eating half a bowl of rice each.

After dinner, Mu Shuangshuang helped Sun Family's daughter-in-law Zhang Guifen clean the kitchen, washing dishes one by one. Mu Shuangshuang bought a chicken, a bit of flour, and two eggs from Zhang Guifen.

Sun Erniu would surely go at night, Mu Shuangshuang wanted to send some fried chicken to Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang, prepared similarly to modern KFC style.

After marinating the chicken, coat it with flour, then with egg wash, and fry it in the pot.

Who knows if Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan have eaten dinner, even though Zheng Zhi promised not to let the prison guards use private punishment, the food and clothing might not be provided, as no one is obliged to help with these.

In the kitchen, Mu Shuangshuang was busy up and down, Lu Yuanfeng and Sun Erniu were catching up in the main room, Zhang Guifen helped Mu Shuangshuang with the fire, and the two chatted a bit, all about the county's matters.

Mu Shuangshuang knew that County Magistrate Zheng is an upright person, normally anyone who hasn't committed crimes would be released by him.

Mu Shuangshuang felt an extra layer of assurance, although still worried, she believed Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang would be released.

A pot of fried chicken was done, and the aroma made Zhang Guifen's mouth water, Mu Shuangshuang generously handed her a chicken leg.

"Sister-in-law, you eat, the taste should be quite good."

While speaking, Mu Shuangshuang picked out some to give to others.

One chicken, Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan surely can't finish it; as long as they have a chicken leg and some chicken meat, it's enough.

"No, Shuangshuang, take this chicken leg to your parents, sister-in-law can just eat some chicken meat!"

Zhang Guifen still craved for more of Mu Shuangshuang's cooking.

She took a piece of small fried chicken, ate a chunk, and sucked her fingers several times.

"Shuangshuang, this stuff is really delicious, crispy outside and the chicken inside is particularly tender!"

"If sister-in-law likes it, after my parents' matter is settled, I'll teach you individually," Mu Shuangshuang said.

Fried chicken is loved by many modern people, with the combination of fried chicken and beer in snowy weather being their favorite; not to mention an ancient person who hasn't tried it before.

Once the fried chicken was packed, Mu Shuangshuang made two wraps, unsure if there's enough water in the prison, intending to take it to Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang when Zhang Guifen stopped her.

"Shuangshuang, don't worry about the water, Erniu will arrange it!"

Mu Shuangshuang took the wrapped items out to give to Sun Erniu, also handed over two taels of silver for him to treat the prison guards.

Mu Shuangshuang understood that Sun Erniu already extended such significant help, there's no reason to let him spend money treating the guards.

In these times, nothing is done for free; anything requires a cost.

Sun Erniu refused to take the two taels of silver, insisting, "Fengzi and I are like brothers, how could I take this silver from family?"

"Erniu, take the money, because we are family, all the more reason not to exploit you." Lu Yuanfeng forced the silver into Sun Erniu's hands, and the matter was settled.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng were arranged in the Sun Family's side room, just a wall apart.

Mu Shuangshuang couldn't fall asleep, her mind filled with thoughts of all that had happened since arriving in the Da Ning Dynasty.

Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan were already an indispensable part of her heart, this family wouldn't be complete without anyone.

In this moment, the prison's mud walls must be cold, not knowing if there are any rats or cockroaches...

The more she thought, the harder it was to sleep. Mu Shuangshuang tossed and turned, a few sounds came from the wall, with Lu Yuanfeng gently knocking on the other side.

"Shuangshuang, are you unable to sleep?"

Lu Yuanfeng's voice carried a bit of a hoarse tone, in the dark night, hearing his voice suddenly calmed Mu Shuangshuang's frantic heart.

"Mm! Fengzi, are you still awake too?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

Through the wall, Mu Shuangshuang wondered about Lu Yuanfeng's sleeping posture, whether he was lying down or sleeping on his side.

The quilt didn't provide much warmth, even after a long while it still didn't warm up, Mu Shuangshuang rubbed her hands together and wrapped the quilt tighter!

Chapter 563: So Tired That She Fell Asleep

"Can't sleep!"

Lu Yuanfeng lay on the kang, looking up at the beam.

It's the first time being so close to Shuangshuang. Even though there's a wall between them, he can still feel her presence.

"How about we chat like we did in Er Gui Village?" Mu Shuangshuang suggested.

"Sure, Shuangshuang, what should we talk about?"

Lu Yuanfeng couldn't think of a topic and let Mu Shuangshuang choose.

Mu Shuangshuang thought for a long while and then said, "Fengzi, what was your first impression of me?"

Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang's situation was already worrying Mu Shuangshuang. If they talked about it, neither of them would sleep tonight.

"What's wrong? Why aren't you talking? Did you fall asleep?"

On the other side of the mud wall, Lu Yuanfeng had been silent for a while, so Mu Shuangshuang thought he had fallen asleep.

"No... The first time I saw Shuangshuang was on the village path. At that time, Yuanbao and I came down from hunting and saw you lying on the ground. I thought you were just a small kid from some household because you were so skinny..."

Speaking to this point, Lu Yuanfeng felt heartache.

"Did you think I smelled bad?"

The first time Lu Yuanfeng saw Mu Shuangshuang was the day she crossed over.

Mu Shuangshuang always felt that was when her fate with Lu Yuanfeng began.

Out of so many people, only Lu Yuanfeng rescued her.

"No, I'm a man; I don't care about those external things."

Lu Yuanfeng was honest. If he cared about those things, he wouldn't have taken Shuangshuang home.

There was something else Lu Yuanfeng never dared to say.

By the stream that time, Shuangshuang was bathing, and he and Yuanbao were swimming in the water. Even though he quickly submerged below, he still saw some things he shouldn't have.

But this, Lu Yuanfeng would never tell Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang felt sweet inside. Actually, she was discontent with herself at that time, or she wouldn't have rushed to clean up.

"Then what was your impression of me?" Lu Yuanfeng asked in return.

As he asked, he climbed off the kang and put his ear against the wall, afraid to miss Shuangshuang's words.

"Well, it should be when my mother saved Yuanbao. You came to my house and brought some meat to thank my mom. Before that, I just messed with my second aunt and was struggling with how to resolve it, and you appeared right on time and even cooperated with me to tell a lie.

Back then, I felt you were really nice. As we got closer, I found you really silly, giving me everything, always helping with work, facing danger ahead of me, standing up to your elders for my sake.

Honestly, Fengzi, a man like you is every woman's dream, one you can't find even when holding a lantern."

Everything Mu Shuangshuang said was true; Lu Yuanfeng couldn't stop smiling. Listening to her praise, he imagined how Shuangshuang looked when complimenting him.

Their conversation drifted; with each sentence, Lu Yuanfeng smiled wider, until his face almost froze from smiling.

On the other side, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng chatted until weariness hit. She fell asleep without telling him.

On the mud wall side, Lu Yuanfeng continued talking alone until he realized there was no sound from the other side, almost at daybreak.

"Shuangshuang..."

Lu Yuanfeng softly called, but there was no response from the mud wall side.

"Shuangshuang..."

On his second call, Lu Yuanfeng understood Shuangshuang had fallen asleep.

"Shuangshuang, sweet dreams!"

Lu Yuanfeng whispered and lay down to sleep.

Early the next morning, Lu Yuanfeng went to find Sun Erniu to ask about the situation in the jail. He learned that although Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang were not free, no one bullied them, and with Zheng Zhi's instructions, the jail wardens were very kind to them.

However, the place was too damp and not suitable for a long stay.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng hadn't eaten breakfast and rode quickly towards Er Gui Village, reaching the village by noon.

Once back, she went to find the three kids.

The three kids were in the yard, having slept at Zhao Yun's house overnight and waiting for their parents to return without eating breakfast.

"Sister..."

All three spoke at once, running towards Mu Shuangshuang and hugging her legs.

Little Black and Lai Mi had no legs to hug and were anxiously circling around.

Lu Yuanfeng hadn't returned; he was at the village's water ditch, watering the horse and letting it graze.

No matter how urgent, the horse needed to be fed. You can't expect the horse to run fast without eating grass; it was almost impossible in these times.

"Have you eaten?" Mu Shuangshuang asked with concern.

The three kids lowered their heads, not daring to look at her.

"You all..."

Of course, Mu Shuangshuang didn't believe Aunt Zhao Yun didn't feed them. It seemed they refused to eat.

"Next time, just wait a bit. I'll make you something. In the coming days, I and Brother Yuan Feng will be very busy. You'll need to eat at Aunt Xiao Yun's place and stay there at night. Once Mom and Dad return, I'll cook something delicious for you."

"Xiao Han, you're the older brother; you must take care of Little Zhi and Yuanbao. Also, Yuanbao, you're Little Zhi's big brother. You need to care for her too. Rewards for doing well; punishment if not good when sister returns!"

"Okay, we understand!" The three kids said in unison.

Mu Shuangshuang went into the kitchen and quickly cooked some simple vegetable and shredded meat sweet potato noodles. The three kids managed to eat a big bowl of it.

While the kids were eating, Mu Shuangshuang went to Old Mu Family to find Mu Dalang.

It was lunchtime, and if she went to the main house, she could find Mu Dalang.

It was mealtime; these days, ever since Chen Hong came, she deliberately did things to provoke Old Mrs. Mu.

The dishes had just been placed on the table. Before Old Mrs. Mu started distributing them, Chen Hong had already piled food into her bowl and Mu Danyan's bowl.

"Where did you come from, you wench, daring to act recklessly on my turf?" Old Mrs. Mu said angrily.

"Mom, Danyan is getting old; it's not suitable for you to personally serve him. He's got hands and feet; it would be laughable if others saw!"

The strange tradition of serving food in Old Mu Family was something the family had long wanted to stop.

Old Mrs. Mu was too selfish; the good food and drink went first to little sister Mu Xiangxiang. After Xiangxiang ate, then Mr. Mu, herself and finally the sons...

In such a sequence, only Mu Xiangxiang really got to eat anything.

"The business of the Old Mu Family, when could it be your place to talk, you shameless wench? Before stepping in, you already call me mom; where's your thick face?"

Old Mrs. Mu rudely questioned Chen Hong.

"Mom, I should call you mom. Your son slept with me; am I not his wife? Or are you not Danyan's mom?"

Chapter 564: Counterattack

This kind of scene played out every day. Ever since Chen Hong was beaten by Old Mrs. Mu last time, she had learned her lesson.

Even if she couldn't win the fight, she wanted to anger Old Mrs. Mu to death, to show the old lady her strength.

When Mu Shuangshuang appeared at the door, Mu Dalang just finished a bowl of dry rice.

He didn't get involved in family quarrels.

To avoid being blamed later.

Moreover, he hadn't managed the task Shuangshuang assigned yesterday, which made Mu Dalang even more anxious. When he looked up, he saw Shuangshuang walking in from outside, and he stood up straightaway.

"Grandpa, Grandma, I'm full!"

Mr. Mu also saw Mu Shuangshuang and, thinking of his child still in jail, asked her, "Shuang, how's your father? What did the government say? Can he be released?"

"What else can they say? He's locked up inside, can't come out! This third son is a fool, ruined his life by marrying a woman like this. Why couldn't he find anyone else, but had to choose this jinx, this death omen!"

Old Mrs. Mu, having just been upset by Chen Hong, needed to vent her anger and happened to take it out on Shuang from the third branch who just arrived.

"My parents haven't committed any crime, and they won't stay imprisoned forever. Even if they've been falsely accused, the Old Mu Family can't escape blame. With a brother and sister-in-law in jail, Big Uncle shouldn't dream of becoming an official!"

Mu Shuangshuang said coldly.

Related to Mu Dade, Old Mrs. Mu was furious, her veins bulging, and she shouted at Mu Shuangshuang, "You rotten girl, dare to talk nonsense, I'll tear your mouth apart!"

Old Mrs. Mu rushed forward, but Mu Shuangshuang swiftly dodged and closed the upper room's door, causing Old Mrs. Mu's head to hit the door with a crisp "bang."

This was the first time Mu Shuangshuang openly confronted Old Mrs. Mu. Before, she kept things under wraps or reasoned with her, but Old Mrs. Mu's words today were extremely hurtful.

Little Zhi and Xiao Han are her grandsons. Such a big matter has happened, knowing no one is taking care of the two kids, but she didn't come to check on them.

She even hoped that the third branch would be jailed for decades!

Let's not even mention that Old Mrs. Mu is their mother; even if it were someone else, knowing the third branch was suffering, they would come to inquire.

This time, Mu Shuangshuang truly saw through the Old Mu Family. In the future, she wouldn't even give a single straw to these ingrates from the Old Mu Family.

From the upper room came Old Mrs. Mu's pig-like howls. As she screeched, she cursed Mu Shuangshuang with all sorts of nasty words.

Mu Dalang, filled with rage upon hearing this, turned to find Old Mrs. Mu to reason with her but was stopped by Mu Shuangshuang.

"Cousin, don't waste time; arguing with her is futile. She won't listen anyway, so why waste your breath!"

Mu Dalang looked apologetic. As the elder brother, he was supposed to protect Shuangshuang.

As a grandson, he was also responsible for setting a good example for his grandmother.

Thinking it over, Mu Dalang felt he was failing as a person.

On top of that, failing to find Xia Guagua yesterday, Mu Dalang increasingly felt useless.

"Shuangshuang, I'm sorry, I... I didn't find Xia Guagua!"

"Hmm, I figured. If it's Xia Guagua, maybe she's already run away."

Mu Shuangshuang still planned to find someone at the Lu Family. If they truly couldn't find anyone, she would tell the Wang Family about seeing Xia Guagua with Wang Fugui that day, to make the Wang Family withdraw their lawsuit.

After all, they had a second option.

After watering his horse, Lu Yuanfeng went straight to Old Lu Family. Before even entering, he was blocked by the imposing Gu Jiulian.

"You wicked boy, hanging out with that wicked girl who's a murderer. Did you kill our Guagua?" Gu Jiulian asked.

Yesterday morning, Gu Jiulian knew when Wang Fugui came to find Xia Guagua because she personally pushed Xia Guagua out the door.

She wasn't worried about her daughter facing any misfortune since she was going to marry into the Old Wang Family.

Moreover, marrying into Old Wang Family came with a dowry of fifty taels, unmatched in the entire Qingshan Town. So, Gu Jiulian wished for something to happen between Wang Fugui and her daughter, hoping for a child to be born into the Old Wang Family, transferring their wealth over.

But who could have expected Wang Fugui would end up half-dead and disabled, and her daughter would disappear?

"Where is Xia Guagua?" Lu Yuanfeng didn't answer Gu Jiulian's question but asked her about Xia Guagua's whereabouts instead.

"How would I know, you wicked boy, murderer, you and that wicked girl are in cahoots, give me back my daughter..."

As Gu Jiulian scolded, she attempted to scratch Lu Yuanfeng.

Mu Shuangshuang coincidentally arrived at this moment. She rushed up and slapped Gu Jiulian hard on the face, loudly demanding, "Where did Xia Guagua go?"

Stunned by the slap, Gu Jiulian didn't respond for a long time, so Mu Shuangshuang kicked her a few more times.

The two immediately started fighting. Gu Jiulian attempted to grab Mu Shuangshuang's hair, but Mu Shuangshuang dodged. Gu Jiulian then aimed kicks at Mu Shuangshuang's lower body, using every malicious trick she could think of.

Mu Dalang and Lu Yuanfeng watched with reddened eyes, fearing for Shuangshuang's safety. The two men wanted to rush forward and separate Gu Jiulian, but Mu Shuangshuang stopped them.

"It's a fight between women; don't get involved. Stay far away, so it's not blamed on you later!"

Gu Jiulian was a shrew; if she falsely accused the two men of bullying her alone, it would be hard to explain.

Regardless of how malicious Gu Jiulian's moves were, Mu Shuangshuang always managed to dodge; Gu Jiulian kept getting the short end of the stick, after all, Mu Shuangshuang was the one good at fighting.

"Slap! Slap!" The sound of slaps echoed on Gu Jiulian's face. In the courtyard, several sisters-in-law saw this and didn't dare to come out to speak, fearing they'd get hit too.

Finally, Gu Jiulian ended up with a missing tooth, not daring to pick up the bloody tooth from the ground as she cried and pleaded for mercy.

"Ouch, I... Shuangshuang I was wrong, I was wrong... I dare not again..."

Gu Jiulian's face was beaten bruised, crying with mixed tears and snot.

"Where is Xia Guagua? Did she run away?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"I'm also looking for that wretched girl. She didn't come back last night. If she does, I'll have her come find you, okay? Just treat me as a fart and release me, I'm in pain..."

Gu Jiulian said with extreme grievance, and Mu Shuangshuang felt she didn't seem to be lying.

So she released Gu Jiulian.

But she still rushed inside to look for Xia Guagua, finding no one in the end.

Mu Shuangshuang believed Xia Guagua had run away.

At once, her head felt like it was going to explode.

In such a vast area, if Xia Guagua ran away, she really wouldn't be found.

"Shuangshuang, let's go to the Old Wang Family and clarify this whole thing; let them withdraw the lawsuit!"

Lu Yuanfeng said.

Mu Shuangshuang then gathered up her spirit and went with Lu Yuanfeng to find the people from Old Wang Family.

Who would have thought, the missing Xia Guagua turned up at Old Wang Family, currently lodging a complaint against them...

Chapter 565: Ways to Clear the Charges

Xia Guagua wasn't in a good state at this moment.

Her hair was disheveled, her entire body filthy, and most importantly, she had a large gash on her head that was still bleeding profusely.

Amidst her tears, Xia Guagua accused, "It was all Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang from the Third Branch of the Old Mu Family. In the morning, when Fugui and I were together, the people from the Third Branch of the Old Mu Family still remembered the incident of tarnishing Mu Shuangshuang's reputation last time.

So they grabbed Fugui and me and gave us a thorough beating. Fugui told me to call for help, and I ran desperately, but I fell into a ditch. I just climbed out, and once I did, I came to seek help, only to find that Fugui was already..."

While talking, Xia Guagua instinctively tried to cover up below her neck, a detail so insignificant that no one from the Old Wang Family noticed it.

After hearing Xia Guagua's accusation, Old Wang was even more convinced that Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang from the Third Branch of the Old Mu Family were unforgivable.

Though deep down, something felt off, but thinking of his son lying on the kang, unable to move and not waking up, Old Wang resolved to seek justice for this matter.

"Someone, write a letter to my younger brother and ask for his help! In this matter, the Third Branch of the Old Mu Family must give this old man his justice!" Old Wang shouted to his wife.

Shen Rong stepped forward. "Uncle, why don't I make a trip? My father can find someone to navigate the connections inside. Even if we can't sentence the people from the Third Branch of the Old Mu Family to death, we can at least have them lose an arm or a leg!"

Shen Rong's father was doing well in the county town, and although Shen Rong always lived with the Old Wang Family, her father would surely listen to her.

"Fine, I'll give you the letter. With you and my letter, your father is sure to help!"

Listening to the conversation between Old Wang and Shen Rong, Xia Guagua's eyes lowered slightly. She squinted, thinking furiously: Mu Shuangshuang, you've caused me such misery, I want to see your family destroyed too!

When Mu Shuangshuang and her companions arrived at the Old Mu Family, they saw Shen Rong about to board the carriage back to the county town, with Xia Guagua by her side.

Xia Guagua had bathed in the Old Wang Family and changed into Shen Rong's clothes, no longer looking defeated but wearing an expression of confidence.

Despite the unbandaged wound on her head, it didn't affect her eager desire to see Mu Shuangshuang suffer.

Upon seeing Xia Guagua at the Wang Family, Mu Shuangshuang was initially surprised but then rushed forward to grab Xia Guagua.

"Well, Xia Guagua, how dare you show up here? Come, let's see Old Master Wang!" Mu Shuangshuang exclaimed.

"See who? Mu Shuangshuang, after your parents beat up Fugui, you have the nerve to come here? Do you really think Old Master Wang will ignore this?"

Xia Guagua straightened her back, facing Mu Shuangshuang.

Unwilling to listen to Xia Guagua's nonsense, Mu Shuangshuang pulled her towards the house, but Shen Rong blocked her path.

"Mu Shuangshuang, although we haven't had any dealings and there were no grievances before, your parents' attack on my cousin and Guagua won't be overlooked. You're not allowed to enter the doors of my Old Wang Family!"

Shen Rong was a fiercely protective woman who couldn't stand her family being trampled by others.

"You're saying my parents beat Xia Guagua?" Mu Shuangshuang asked in surprise.

"You might not know, but it's a fact. Look at the wound on Guagua's head; it was caused by your parents!" Shen Rong pointed to the gash on Xia Guagua's head.

Mu Shuangshuang realized that Xia Guagua had gotten ahead of her, accusing her first.

Now, no matter what she said, Old Master Wang wouldn't believe her!

Nevertheless, Mu Shuangshuang dragged Xia Guagua inside, only to be thrown out by Old Master Wang.

The charges couldn't be dismissed, and Xia Guagua's testimony also went against Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan.

"Xia Guagua, did you frame my parents?" Mu Shuangshuang asked loudly.

No one from the Old Wang Family was around, only Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Dalang.

Being close to Mu Shuangshuang, Xia Guagua wasn't afraid of them.

"So what if I did?" Xia Guagua asked.

"Why?"

"Because I hate you. I hate you for taking everything from me. Without you, Brother Yuanfeng would treat me well. Without you, I wouldn't have lost my most precious thing. Just wait until you see your parents die in prison!"

Xia Guagua spoke viciously to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Xia Guagua, don't celebrate too soon. Others might not know what you've done, but Wang Fugui does. If he wakes up, do you think you can still strut around?" Mu Shuangshuang squinted her eyes, glaring fiercely at Xia Guagua.

Xia Guagua shivered slightly but quickly composed herself.

"So what? Even if Fugui wakes up, he'll join me in accusing your parents. Bad people should be punished!" After saying this, Xia Guagua headed toward her home.

Mu Dalang and Lu Yuanfeng wanted to stop her, but Mu Shuangshuang called them off.

Letting Xia Guagua go like that wasn't like Mu Shuangshuang's way.

Mu Dalang scratched his head anxiously on the spot.

"Shuangshuang, why are you letting that wicked woman go? How will our uncle and aunt's names be cleared if she leaves?"

Lu Yuanfeng also watched Mu Shuangshuang, but compared to Mu Dalang's agitation, Lu Yuanfeng had more faith in Mu Shuangshuang's plan.

"We can only wait for Wang Fugui to wake up. With his testimony, we can clear my parents' names!" Mu Shuangshuang explained.

"But Uncle Zhang said that Wang Fugui was hit on the head and would probably spend his life on the kang."

Mu Dalang felt it was almost impossible to achieve what Shuangshuang said, so he couldn't help but point it out.

"Don't worry. Ordinary people may not succeed, but a miracle doctor can. No matter how serious Wang Fugui's condition, it's not difficult to cure. Let's go home!"

Mu Shuangshuang returned home, surprisingly calm, without mentioning clearing the charges against Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang, but started playing with Yuanbao and Little Zhi instead.

Seeing Mu Shuangshuang like this, Mu Dalang became even more anxious and ran back to the Old Mu Family to ask for Old Mr. Mu's help.

Lu Yuanfeng stayed with Mu Shuangshuang, watching her intently but not participating in any games.

He believed that at this moment, Shuangshuang was also not feeling at ease inside.

That night, Mu Shuangshuang made dinner at home for the three kids and only relaxed after sending them off with a carefree expression.

"Fengzi, I've thought of a way. Later, I need to visit Old Master Wang again, and then we'll go to the town. We must do this all secretly!"

After night fell, Mu Shuangshuang went to the Old Wang Family and came out with a smile on her face.

Then she and Lu Yuanfeng raced towards the town.

Finding someone at night wasn't easy, but it was different if you were looking for certain ruffians who only came out at night.

Last time at the town's entrance, Mu Shuangshuang had those ruffians jumping like frogs. She knew she'd eventually have use for them. True enough, after searching three streets, she finally found them!

Chapter 566: Counterattack in Desperation

The few small troublemakers saw it was Mu Shuangshuang and were so scared that their legs went weak.

The last frog jumps left them lying in bed for five days, and now even thinking about it makes their legs tremble.

"Auntie, why are you here again? We didn't provoke you this time."

The leading man, with a sharp chin and slender face, appeared to be the smarter one. He was the first to step forward and beg for mercy.

"Oh, nothing much. I just realized I hadn't praised your obedient frog jumps last time. I'm in a good mood today, so I came to see you guys."

"..."

The few small troublemakers knelt down in fear and begged for mercy. Seeing Mu Shuangshuang not speaking, they turned to beg Lu Yuanfeng.

Men aren't as petty as women, they thought; as long as Lu Yuanfeng let them go, they might be saved.

Unfortunately, Lu Yuanfeng and Shuangshuang were on the same side and naturally refused to speak up.

"Sir, you've got to help us out. We don't want to do frog jumps; it's too painful, our whole bodies ache..."

Mu Shuangshuang saw that the man with the sharp chin and slender face was almost in tears, and finally spoke: "Alright, what's it with a grown man crying like this? What do you look like?"

"I'm not here to cause you trouble today. If you help me act out a scene, and it's successful, I'll give you guys money for food. Of course, if it fails, you'll just have to run around the town ten times!"

The first part of the sentence gave them hope, while the latter brought despair.

Mu Shuangshuang briefly explained what she wanted them to do and then contentedly rested with Lu Yuanfeng in an inn in the town.

Zheng Zhi guaranteed three days, so Mu Shuangshuang only needed to complete the task within that time!

She didn't want to push herself too hard or those around her.

At night, as usual, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng chatted over the wall, the only time she could temporarily not think about Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang's matters.

As usual, they talked late into the night, and only when Mu Shuangshuang's side went silent did Lu Yuanfeng finally go to sleep.

The next day, early in the morning, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng set off for Er Gui Village.

The night before, Mu Shuangshuang had already instructed the few small troublemakers that today's matter still required their involvement.

...

...

At the entrance of Er Gui Village

A man in a wide robe was saving a man covered in blood.

You have to say, this miracle healer had quite a distinctive look with his sharp chin and slender face.

Early risers in the village saw the scene and spread the word. Soon, a crowd gathered to watch.

After the miracle healer cured the man covered in blood, he headed out of Er Gui Village but was stopped.

It was a worker from the Wang Family, worried about the young master lying on his bed, who briefly explained the symptoms to the miracle healer.

The miracle healer frowned and said, "This is a tough matter to handle. I've never seen the person; how can I help?"

The worker volunteered to take the miracle healer to Er Gui Village.

Meanwhile, the news that Old Wang's family had invited a miracle healer quickly spread.

At first, Xia Guagua was only worried at home. But when news came that several villagers had been healed, Huang Guagua panicked.

In these times, miraculous people weren't unheard of, and after all, Wang Fugui wasn't dead.

Previously, Xia Guagua didn't want Wang Fugui to die because it would increase her charges.

But now it's different; the accusations against Mu Shuangshuang's parents stemmed from Wang Fugui's matter. If he died, it would also bring trouble to her parents.

So Xia Guagua bravely went to the Wang Family.

At that time, all the members of Old Wang's family were anxiously waiting, and upon Xia Guagua's arrival, Old Wang had his wife show Xia Guagua a seat.

"Uncle Wang, is Fugui really getting better?" Xia Guagua kept looking inside the house.

"I don't know, but this person truly is miraculous. Mrs. Chen, who's been blind for most of her life, had her eyes cured, and the Chen Family still can't believe it.

And Father Hu Zi's leg, obviously broken, was also cured. Although Fugui's condition is severe, perhaps it can be treated too!"

Old Wang looked into the inner room with anticipation, but Xia Guagua was stunned with fear.

If Wang Fugui woke up, she'd be done for!

Thinking this, Xia Guagua started to get scared.

"Uncle Wang, can I go see Fugui? Even though I'm not married yet, I've always regarded him as my husband, otherwise..." Saying this, Xia Guagua lowered her head, looking shy.

To outsiders, it surely seemed like she loved Wang Fugui.

But only she knew how much she hated Wang Fugui.

"Go ahead, but if there's any news, remember to call us. The miracle healer doesn't want too many people approaching." Old Wang said.

"Yes, as soon as there's news, I'll come out immediately!" Xia Guagua nodded obediently and then rushed towards Wang Fugui's room in Old Wang's house.

The closer she got, the more scared Xia Guagua became, until she reached the door of Wang Fugui's room.

Suddenly, she heard noises inside.

"Mr. Wang, can you tell me what it feels like?"

"Pain..."

A barely audible moan came through, and with her head pressed against the door, fear shot up Xia Guagua's spine like a cold current. It was undoubtedly Wang Fugui's voice.

Is he awake?

Resolving herself, Xia Guagua said to the person inside: "Miracle healer, our master wants to invite you to the front hall for something very important."

The moaning inside weakened, and after a while, the door creaked open, and a man Xia Guagua hadn't seen before came out.

"Miss, your young master has already woken up. I'll go tell your master now, please take care of your young master!"

Xia Guagua nodded heavily.

As soon as the miracle healer left, Xia Guagua slipped into Wang Fugui's room. She found a pair of scissors in Wang Fugui's room and approached the kang where Wang Fugui lay, saying: "You can only blame yourself for waking up at such a wrong time!"

The scissors flew towards the person on the kang, but just as they were about to reach the person's head, he suddenly moved, catching Xia Guagua's hand.

With a clang, the scissors fell to the ground.

Xia Guagua looked at the person holding her right hand tightly, hatred surging within her.

"It's you... Mu Shuangshuang, how could it be you?" Xia Guagua even suspected she was seeing things.

"Sorry, but it is me, Xia Guagua, evil gets its retribution; today is your death day!"

After Mu Shuangshuang finished speaking, she jumped up from the kang and tightly restrained Xia Guagua's body.

The door was also slammed open at this time.

Old Wang stood angrily at the door, Lu Yuanfeng by his side, and even Shen Rong, who had already left, was back.

"You deceived me?" Xia Guagua shouted.

"It's not us deceiving you, it's your own fault. Someone, tie up this Xia Guagua and send her to the government!"

#####

Recommending my friend Ah Ru's new book, a cute farming baby story called "Abandoned Farmer's Wife: Raising a Bun in the Countryside" ~ The female protagonist is not naïve, not weak, tears white lotuses apart, slaps top-grade relatives in the face, bringing little buns to get rich and head for a well-off life ~ Welcome to take a look. Asking for recommendations, collections, comments, mwah mwah~

Chapter 567: Released

With a command from Old Wang, two laborers subdued Xia Guagua.

Xia Guagua's expression changed completely.

"Uncle Wang, it was Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng who harmed me. Don't believe them; they're the ones who hurt Fugui brother..."

Even at this point, Xia Guagua refused to admit to his own actions and continued to argue.

"Enough, Xia Guagua, your petty schemes are well-known to Old Master Wang. Wang Fugui ending up like this is also your doing. If you feel wronged, take it up with the government!"

Mu Shuangshuang disliked Xia Guagua's attitude of dragging others down even when facing doom and interrupted him.

"You... Mu Shuangshuang, you won't die a good death. You will definitely face retribution." Xia Guagua's eyes almost spewed fire; everything she suffered was thanks to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Xia Guagua, even at the end, you're still stubborn! Without you, Wang Fugui wouldn't be a vegetable lying on a bed, my parents wouldn't be jailed in the county dungeon. You're harming yourself and others and still blame others?"

If there weren't so many people watching, Mu Shuangshuang would have slapped him twice without hesitation.

"Mu Shuangshuang, it's all your fault; had it not been for you, would I be in this position? Had it not been for you framing me, would I have been caught with Wang Fugui? Would my mother have forced me to marry Wang Fugui?"

I never liked Wang Fugui; he's simply a scumbag. If he hadn't tried to do shameless things to me, would I have hit him?

And you, Old Wang, you old bastard, don't you know what kind of son you have? Raising him poorly is your fault; you're simply unfit to be a father!"

Xia Guagua criticized everyone present, leaving Old Wang almost fuming with rage. Shen Rong finally reacted, pointed at one of the laborers.

"What are you standing there for? Stuff a cloth in her mouth and take her to the woodshed. Tomorrow, I'll take her to the county to see the officials!"

The two laborers tied Xia Guagua up and took her to the woodshed, bringing some peace to the Old Wang Family.

"Shuang, I, the old man, am at fault here. I'll prepare to withdraw the lawsuit tonight, and tomorrow I'll go with you to the county to bring your parents back!"

Old Wang was nearly in tears; he always felt that Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang from the Third Branch of the Mu Family were not bad people.

But in the end, he listened to others and sent them to jail.

Regarding this matter, Mu Shuangshuang felt Old Wang was wrong but somewhat understandable.

However, whether to forgive or not wasn't up to her; it was up to her parents.

"Master, give the withdrawal notice to Shen Rong; you're too old to be traveling around, plus Wang Fugui needs care, and you can't leave him."

Speaking of Wang Fugui, it leads to mentioning that miracle doctor, who was Mu Shuangshuang's person, just played a role casually, and even those healed ailments were a collaboration with Old Wang.

It can be said that exposing Xia Guagua was aided by Old Wang, and Xia Guagua himself got confused. If someone was truly that capable, there wouldn't be any difficult illnesses in the world.

Wang Fugui might be a vegetable all his life; during this era, there's no glucose injection; everything must be forced through the throat. When Wang Fugui's bodily functions can't swallow anymore, he'll turn from a vegetable to a corpse.

Xia Guagua said one thing right, raising a son poorly is the father's fault. Old Wang, at this point, doesn't blame others!

If he educated properly, Wang Fugui would be a good person like Old Wang, and such serious consequences wouldn't happen.

After contemplating, Mu Shuangshuang exchanged a look with Lu Yuanfeng and walked to the front yard of the Old Wang Family.

They invited a few hoodlums for a meal; Mu Shuangshuang initially intended to give a tael of silver to the sharp-faced leader, but he refused.

They left Er Gui Village after noon!

Early the next morning, Mu Shuangshuang went to Old Wang Family, and upon arrival, heard Xia Guagua had escaped by opening the woodshed window the previous night.

Mu Shuangshuang was both angry and anxious, losing complete trust in Old Wang Family's efficiency.

Shen Rong kept explaining beside her, promising to find her, but at this point, what use were words?

"Miss Shen, just ask you to withdraw the lawsuit today; regarding Xia Guagua, once my parents return, I'll personally deal with her!"

Mu Shuangshuang was determined not to let that vile person go!

By noon, Mu Shuangshuang and Shen Rong's group arrived in the county.

Once the withdrawal notice was filed, the County Magistrate interrogated and confirmed Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang committed no crime and released them.

It was already dusk by then, and rushing to Er Gui Village was impossible; horse carriages should not travel at night, not only because of uneven roads but also because an unexpected bump might cause a horrible accident.

After spending three nights in jail, there were some slight changes in Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang.

Mu Dashan was disheveled, with a dirty face, and his gray clothing turned black.

Yu Si Niang's hair was loose, her skin color unrecognizable, and her apricot-colored dress became loose and bunched, like pickled vegetables taken from a jar.

However, because they had each other, mentally, they weren't really hurt.

Six eyes met, Mu Shuangshuang, Mu Dashan, and Yu Si Niang looked at each other outside the county government office, and finally, Mu Shuangshuang rushed forward.

"Parents, you've been through hardships; Shuangshuang is late..."

As she spoke, Mu Shuangshuang's eyes reddened; without the support of her parents, the bitterness in her heart was imaginable.

Yu Si Niang also began to cry, mother and daughter embraced each other, unable to control their tears.

Mu Dashan watched from the side, his eyes reddening too, but as a man, he couldn't cry.

Old Wang watched the emotional scene, feeling increasingly guilty, knowing he could not disturb their reunion for the terrible things he had done.

"Uncle, it's not your fault. Everyone in the village talked like that, and with your cousin really ending up like that, it was normal for you to feel strongly." Shen Rong consoled Old Wang.

But Old Wang did not agree.

"I had a selfish motive; initially felt that with Fugui's tragedy, it'd be hard to bear without sharing the grief..."

Old Wang was now in tears, deeply regretting his actions.

If he hadn't reported them, Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang from the Third Branch of the Mu Family wouldn't have suffered needlessly. Ultimately, it was his fault.

"Ah..." Shen Rong sighed, finally saying nothing.

Lu Yuanfeng stood not far from Mu Shuangshuang and her family, not disturbing her reunion, but close enough to see Shuangshuang's expressions.

Fortunately, this matter was finally over!

The Third Branch was safe now, and Shuangshuang shouldn't have sleepless nights out of anxiety.

They talked through the wall for two nights; they didn't talk last night because it was at his house, and he didn't know when Shuangshuang fell asleep.

Overall, it must have been difficult!

Chapter 568: Uncle Returns

"Fengzi, come here!" said Uncle Dashan.

Lu Yuanfeng stepped forward, and Mu Dashan extended his hand.

"Fengzi, you've worked hard during this time, running around with Shuangshuang. I can't repay you, I can only say thank you..."

Mu Dashan's words deeply moved Lu Yuanfeng.

"Uncle Dashan, Shuangshuang's matters are my own. You suffered the injustice of imprisonment. When Shuangshuang feels hurt, I feel hurt too!

Fortunately, everything is over now. In the coming days, take good care of yourselves. Don't worry about the household chores; I'll help Shuangshuang with them!"

Lu Yuanfeng's words greatly moved the man.

In his heart, Lu Yuanfeng had long been the same as his own son.

With Shuangshuang following Fengzi, he was relieved!

This was Shuangshuang's blessing and Fengzi's blessing too.

"Mom, it's only been three days and you've lost weight!" Mu Shuangshuang said, touching Yu Si Niang's thin cheeks.

"Shuangshuang, mom's fine, it's you who lost weight. Your dad and I are still together, we have each other, but poor you..."

Yu Si Niang began to cry again. As the sky grew darker, Mu Shuangshuang said, "Mom, it's all in the past. It's getting late; let's find an inn to stay in and clean up a bit so we can go back to the village happy and joyful tomorrow!"

"Shuangshuang, I can offer you a place to stay at my house. It's very comfortable, and there are servants. Come with us!" Shen Rong offered, taking on the responsibility of arranging accommodation.

Unexpectedly, Mu Shuangshuang directly refused!

"There's no need. I'll stay at the inn with my parents. We'll head back early tomorrow; the home can't be left unattended."

At home, there were three children, a dog, a mink, a large pig, and a bunch of chicks that needed care.

Moreover, Mu Shuangshuang really didn't want to be with the Old Wang Family.

Shen Rong, seeing Mu Shuangshuang's refusal, looked at Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang in embarrassment, hoping they would step in. But Mu Dashan agreed with Shuangshuang's words.

"Niece of the Wang Family, Shuangshuang was right. We've been away from home for too long. We won't delay in the county. We appreciate your kindness from the third branch!"

Standing in place awkwardly, Shen Rong could only look back at Old Wang.

Old Wang came over and apologized to Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang.

Unusually, this time, the man didn't play nice. He said, "In this matter, Si Niang and I were truly wronged. The people in Er Gui Village may not know our character, but you, Old Master Wang, aren't you aware?"

"When your cow went missing back then, it was Si Niang who walked three miles to help you find it!"

"Also, during the autumn harvest two years ago, when your family worker couldn't work, I helped carry the load for your family all afternoon without asking for a penny. Do these not prove my and Si Niang's character?"

It's rare for Mu Dashan to confront anyone, but what Old Wang did this time was truly disgraceful.

If only he had been taken, it'd be fine, but even Si Niang...

If it weren't for Shuangshuang running around, looking for the prison guard and the County Magistrate's son, Mu Dashan doubted what the outcome for him and Si Niang would have been.

If something happened to him and Si Niang, what would happen to the kids?

What would happen to this home?

This was the first time Mu Dashan considered the future for himself and this home.

Old Wang was left red-faced and speechless.

Leaving after these words, the four of them went to find an inn, leaving Old Wang standing there, embarrassed.

This might be retribution, Old Wang thought!

Finding an inn that looked quite nice, the four of them settled in. Mu Shuangshuang asked the innkeeper's assistant to quickly bring two buckets of hot water for Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang. As for the meals, they needed cooking promptly too.

Leaving the house, Mu Shuangshuang knew they probably wouldn't make it back tonight, so she had brought clothes for Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang.

After a hot bath, Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang felt refreshed, free of the rancid and moldy smell on their bodies.

With their hair and faces tidied up, the sky had turned completely dark.

Mu Shuangshuang booked only two rooms, with Mu Dashan and Lu Yuanfeng sharing one and herself and Yu Si Niang sharing another. The meals were placed in Mu Shuangshuang's room.

The couple went to eat. The food was already set, two meat dishes, one vegetable, and a soup.

At home, this would have been a high standard, let alone when eating outside.

Used to being thrifty, even having suffered in prison, the man wasn't willing for his daughter to spend so extravagantly outside.

Mu Dashan originally wanted Mu Shuangshuang to be easygoing, buy some meat, and make something good at home, but how could Mu Shuangshuang wait until then?

"Dad, mom, these are all your favorite dishes. Dad, what you said to Old Master Wang today was so impressive, Shuangshuang admires you!"

The happiest matter for Mu Shuangshuang now was that the family was no longer a pushover. Not only did they stand up for themselves but also dared to say no to outsiders!

Mu Dashan blushed for the first time due to such a compliment.

Forever afraid of offending others by speaking harshly, always putting others' needs first, this time, he learned the feeling of standing up for himself and his family.

"Alright, alright, let's turn the page. Let's eat quickly and go back early tomorrow," Yu Si Niang interceded, moving past the Old Wang Family matter.

Of course, her feelings were the same as her daughter's and man's: the Old Wang Family wasn't easily forgiven.

That night, lying on the bed, Yu Si Niang still felt like she was dreaming. Just days ago, upon waking, she saw snakes and insects. Suddenly, now her daughter was by her side, and the environment improved; Yu Si Niang naturally couldn't sleep.

Yu Si Niang chatted with Mu Shuangshuang, asking about the past few days.

Mu Shuangshuang couldn't sleep either, so she laid everything out in detail, from issues at home to matters concerning Xia Guagua. Gradually, Yu Si Niang felt sleepy.

However, she held on enough to say, "Shuangshuang, cherish Fengzi. He's the best person for you in the world; even your dad and I sometimes miss things, but he's wholeheartedly concerned about you!"

Lu Yuanfeng, only a few years older than Shuangshuang, felt like a friend or elder and always helped Shuangshuang.

Recalling the events of the past few days, Mu Shuangshuang knew Yu Si Niang spoke the truth.

"Mom, don't worry. Fengzi can't escape from my Five Finger Mountain!"

As the night deepened, the sound of Yu Si Niang's breathing could soon be heard.

Early the next morning, after eating breakfast at the inn, Mu Shuangshuang went to the carriage house to rent a cart and headed to Er Gui Village. Just at the village entrance, she heard villagers talking.

"The Old Mu Family's eldest has finally returned; the Old Mu Family is about to prosper."

"You didn't see it; the clothes he's wearing look so nice, probably costly!"

"Let's go and take a look..."

Mu Shuangshuang's brow instantly furrowed.

Her big brother really returned? And dressed like a fancy person?

My goodness, the Old Mu Family might be turning the world upside down!

Chapter 569: Uncle Wants to Ascend

Mu Shuangshuang sighed for a moment, but unlike others, she didn't try to ride on the coattails of Old Mu Family's eldest brother's success.

She had plenty of affairs to deal with, three little babies at home waiting to be fed, a bunch of things to handle...

"Father, Mother, let's hurry home and have a good rest!" Mu Shuang said.

"Mm!" Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang nodded in agreement.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng went on horseback. On the return trip, one horse couldn't accommodate four people, so she rented a carriage.

She and her parents rode the carriage, while Lu Yuanfeng rode the horse back.

The carriage was much slower than the horse, by now Lu Yuanfeng should already be in Er Gui Village.

It was already past noon, after resting for a while, they could start preparing dinner.

The three went straight home, and at the courtyard gate, the Zhao Yun family, Little Zhi, Xiao Han, Yuanbao, Little Black, and Lai Mi were lined up.

Everyone was waiting for the return of the third branch.

As soon as they saw the third branch arrive, Zhao Yun excitedly placed a brazier at the courtyard gate of the third branch.

"Dashan, Si Niang, once you cross this brazier, all the bad luck will be gone, and you'll have a prosperous future!" Aunt Zhao Yun said.

Yu Si Niang was moved, after being away for three days, everyone still remembered her and prepared so much for her.

Mu Dashan felt the same, as they say, true feelings are revealed in times of difficulty.

While he and Si Niang were in prison, Zhang Yutou's family helped take care of the kids.

Fengzi took Shuangshuang everywhere.

Zhao Gouzi went to Tie Dao Village to call people.

These were all people who helped the third branch during tough times, but what hurt Mu Dashan the most was his own family.

His parents, even though Little Zhi and Xiao Han were their grandchildren, the ones helping the kids were outsiders...

Thinking about this made Mu Dashan feel upset.

"Dashan, why are you standing there, cross the brazier!" Zhang Yutou urged.

Mu Dashan finally came back to his senses, and by this time, Yu Si Niang had already crossed the brazier.

He followed and crossed as well.

"That's better now, hurry up and rest, I'll help with dinner tonight!" Zhao Yun said.

Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang were shocked, but with everyone's urging, they went inside to rest.

Mu Shuangshuang didn't see Lu Yuanfeng and asked Zhao Yun.

It turned out that Lu Yuanfeng had returned half an hour earlier to explain the third branch's return, and then rode off to Tie Dao Village to continue digging the pond.

Mu Shuangshuang couldn't help but scold in her heart: Is this foolish boy really crazy, returning without resting and immediately going to work?

But she still felt deeply sorry for him.

Deciding to reward Lu Yuanfeng well in the evening.

She went for a walk in the mountains, hoping to encounter some wild chickens and rabbits, but just as she left the courtyard, she ran into Fu Xiaonan who was coming this way.

Fu Xiaonan was carrying a block of meat in one hand and a plucked chicken in the other, casually heading towards the third branch.

Seeing Mu Shuangshuang, she shrieked.

"Shuangshuang, Shuangshuang..."

Fu Xiaonan rushed over, handing the meat and chicken to Shuangshuang, saying, "These are sent by my dad to nourish Uncle Dashan and Aunt Si Niang."

"Xiaonan, I can't accept these, take them back."

Fu Wu's gesture was extremely generous. A chicken was eighteen coins per pound, two pounds of chicken meat cost almost forty coins, and the block of meat was over a pound, roughly totaling seventy to eighty coins.

No one spends such a large amount when visiting others.

"Shuangshuang, my dad said it's not for free, later when you buy land, you must give it all to him, every bit!" Fu Xiaonan said.

"When my family buys land, of course, I'll give it all to Uncle Fu Wu, but these things I still can't accept." Mu Shuangshuang refused.

"It's okay, my parents will dine here tonight, you can cook it all at once, and they can consider having eaten worth their money!"

Fu Xiaonan refused to take back the items and joked with Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang helplessly accepted the items.

Returning the items home and handing them to Aunt Zhao Yun, Mu Shuangshuang then returned to the vegetable garden to pick vegetables. With the vegetables sorted, no need to go into the mountains now.

Old Mu Family was bustling, everyone surrounding Old Mu Family's main house.

Mu Dade sat at the very center of the main room, with Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu just sitting to the side.

Mr. Mu was staring at Mu Dade as if he couldn't get enough of looking.

Mu Dade wore a purple robe, his hair was tied with a white jade hairpin, and he wore a pair of new boots.

The boots were pristine, shiny black.

This attire came from Mu Xianxian's family. Hearing about Mu Dade's success, Mu Xianxian's family went wild, announced it everywhere, and even gave Mu Dade twenty taels of silver.

Mu Dade used the silver to buy the outfit, and upon returning, found the house worn and dirty.

Even had Old Mrs. Mu wipe the chairs several times before he agreed to sit down.

"Father, Mother, your son has finally succeeded in the imperial examination, this is not in vain your years of nurturing!" Mu Dade respectfully said to Mr. Mu.

Mr. Mu's face covered in tears.

A son raised for over thirty years has finally made him proud.

"Good son, Dade, I've hoped day and night for your success in the exams, it's finally here, first we must pay respect to our ancestors, let them know of this good news."

"Father, Dade just returned and hasn't rested yet, paying respects can wait until tomorrow morning, besides, Old Mu Family's ancestors are wise, they probably already know." Mrs. Jin said.

Mrs. Jin, long unseen, had not only become fair-skinned but her attire also differed from those town women.

Mu Danian stared at Mrs. Jin's fair complexion, his eyes almost dropping to his crotch.

Beside him, Chen Hong was dissatisfied seeing Mu Danian's lack of composure.

She stood up straight, handed Mu Dade a cup of tea, then dashed over.

"Big brother, you've worked hard, please look after me and Danyan in the future!" Chen Hong said, purposely bending over, her voluptuous chest obscuring Mu Dade's face.

The entire Old Mu Family's complexion changed, including Mrs. Jin.

She used her gaze to question Mr. Mu about who this person was, Mr. Mu embarrassingly turned his head.

Mu Dalian was in good spirits; back then he succumbed to Chen Hong's busty figure, he didn't believe his big brother would have no reaction.

If his big brother succumbed, it would be easier to get benefits in the future.

"Why are folks acting out? Chen Hong is my wife, we might not be married, but since Honghong has nowhere to go, I let her stay with me, there's nothing wrong with that!"

Mu Dalian feigned ignorance and noted the odd glances from everyone.

Chen Hong also took the chance to say to Mu Dade, "Big brother, do you find Honghong's tea unpleasant? Honghong will brew another for you!"

As she spoke, she moved to pour another tea, and Old Mrs. Mu burst into anger.

"You shameless woman, go back to where you came from! Our Old Mu Family doesn't want your kind of shameless person!"

Chapter 570: Looking Down on the Old Mu Family

Old Mrs. Mu started tearing into Chen Hong as soon as she opened her mouth.

She had disliked Chen Hong for a long time, and that was tolerable when Chen Hong was just prancing around under her nose. But now, she dared to seduce her most important son in front of everyone.

Absolutely unforgivable!

"Mom, I'm Da Nian's future wife, naturally I belong in the Old Mu Family, otherwise I'd have nowhere to go. Today is a big day because my eldest brother is back; you don't want him to be upset, do you?"

As long as it didn't come to a fight, Chen Hong wasn't afraid of Old Mrs. Mu.

Old Mrs. Mu was so angry that her blood boiled. Chen Hong was clearly threatening her!

Just then, Mrs. Jin spoke up. "Mom, Da De and I will go rest first. Can you cook something good tonight? Da De said he hasn't had chicken from home in a long time. He wants some stewed and fried, preferably from laying hens, as they are more nutritious than other chickens."

Right now, the Old Mu Family had only four big chickens left. There used to be six: one was stolen by Mu Danian, and one was pricked to death by Mrs. Lin with a needle. Of the four left, only two laid eggs, and they were what Xiangxiang needed.

Mu Xiangxiang's routine of two eggs for breakfast was unshakeable. If she didn't get them one day, who knows how she'd act up.

Seeing Old Mrs. Mu looking troubled, Mrs. Jin assumed she was being stingy and added, "Mom, you don't know how hard Da De worked for the exams this time. So many scholars from the entire Qianzhou Region competed, and Da De was even ill..."

Mrs. Jin started going off on a tangent, and Mr. Mu furrowed his brows.

"Wife, quickly do as the eldest daughter-in-law says. Kill the laying hens—kill two of them!"

As soon as Mr. Mu spoke, telling Old Mrs. Mu to kill two hens, Old Mrs. Mu, of course, wasn't having it.

"Kill all of them, and what will Xiangxiang eat? Shall our Xiangxiang not eat?"

"Eat, eat, eat—that's all you know! When the eldest comes back for something so important, she doesn't even show her face, hiding away in her room all day. What's she so busy with, that she can't even meet people?" Mr. Mu yelled.

"What's wrong with my daughter being busy? She's not like some people who go out every day and never make a name for themselves." Old Mrs. Mu gave Mrs. Jin a sideways glance.

It was all because of this woman wanting to eat her chickens that her daughter wouldn't be despised by the old man.

Thinking this, Old Mrs. Mu grew even more displeased with the flashy-dressed Mrs. Jin.

"Mom, you don't have to kill the chickens. I'll just let Da De eat something light!" said Mrs. Jin.

"My son likes eating chicken. I'll slaughter them for him; it's not your place to speak. Look at what you're wearing, what have you painted on your face?

Even if you're my son's wife, when you come home, dress plainly. Otherwise, people might think our Old Mu Family's daughter-in-law is some floozy!"

Old Mrs. Mu was still miffed and couldn't hold her tongue.

Mrs. Lin, listening to Old Mrs. Mu, was nearly laughing herself silly.

No doubt about it, her mother was indeed her mother, every word she said carried such weight.

Mrs. Lin also disliked Mrs. Jin flaunting her wealth, wondering why the second household ate and dressed poorly while the first household enjoyed all the comforts.

Now that the first household had a scholar in the family, the benefits should be shared, she thought.

"Sister-in-law, that outfit must've cost quite a bit, huh?" Mrs. Lin asked.

Already upset by Old Mrs. Mu, Mrs. Jin felt that Mrs. Lin was trying to make fun of her, so she replied impulsively, "Two taels of silver!"

"What? Two taels? Oh my heavens, are you trying to kill me? What kind of gold fabric is this that it costs two taels of silver?" Old Mrs. Mu's eyes shot fire, her mouth spitting out words in a frenzy.

Mu Dade, who had remained silent, suddenly felt an aversion to this side of Old Mrs. Mu.

What's a garment for two taels? The one he's wearing cost twenty taels, and no one said a word?

"Mom, Yinyin and I are going to rest; we'll come back in the evening!"

With that, Mu Dade and Mrs. Jin took Mu Dandan and Mu Yingying back to their room.

The rest of the Old Mu Family hadn't even recovered from the shock before Mu Dade walked away.

The goodies they were hoping to get? Gone, not a thing in hand.

Mu Dazhong stood up, ready to head toward Mu Dade, but Mr. Mu stopped him.

"Second son, where do you think you're going?" Mr. Mu stopped Mu Dazhong.

"Dad, my big brother became a scholar, and I haven't even shared in the joy yet!" Mu Dazhong complained, looking aggrieved. "The clothes Sister-in-law wears cost two taels of silver each, and look at what we wear—rough cloth. Even the beggars in town probably dress better than us."

"Exactly, Daddy Gou Dan, you're right. Dad, Mom, we didn't eat or drink back then just to send the eldest to school. Now he's a scholar, and he hasn't given us any gifts. Coming back empty-handed, it's just unreasonable!"

Mrs. Lin was nearly seething with jealousy; the clothes on Mrs. Jin looked so good.

"Dad, our family still owes my eldest sister fifty taels of silver. Those haven't even been counted in yet. The eldest is just too wasteful," Mu Danian chimed in.

When they're not around, everyone heaps criticism, afraid of missing out themselves.

But with Mu Dade present, everyone's eager to flatter him, just to gain some advantage.

"Alright, the eldest has his own money; how he uses it is his own affair. Let's focus on preparing food and drinks for him. I'll go ask him about how we move forward!"

With that, Mr. Mu went out.

Mu Dade returned home, looked at his room, turned into a pigsty, and was so angry that his nostrils flared.

"Mr. Dan Dan, what happened to our room? It smells terrible, this..."

Mrs. Jin nearly fainted.

This room used to be where Mu Zhenzhen stayed. She was locked up in there, eating, drinking, and relieving herself all in one place, and having not bathed for half a month. Of course, it smelled terrible.

Old Mrs. Mu hadn't thought much of it and hadn't sent anyone to clean it.

"This is just too bullying." Mrs. Jin lamented.

Mu Dade's expression changed again and again.

He looked at the mess in the room and felt even more determined to leave the Old Mu Family as soon as possible.

"Let's leave this house quickly; it's unbearable to stay anymore!"

Mu Dade, wearing new clothes, wasn't about to step into that filthy room.

Mrs. Jin didn't want to either, and it went without saying for the two daughters. During this time, Mrs. Jin had been drilling noble family etiquette into them, even teaching them not to speak loudly. They weren't willing to do any chores either.

"Why don't we open an inn in town? This house is just too dirty!" Mrs. Jin suggested.

"Dad, my sister and I want to go to town; this place is no different from a pigsty!"

Mu Dandan's voice was loud, and Mr. Mu, who had just arrived, overheard it.

His face instantly turned beet red with anger.

"What's the matter here?" Mr. Mu stepped forward to ask.

"Dad, you're just in time. What's going on with this room, so filthy? Are you keeping pigs in here?" Mrs. Jin asked.

"No, Zhenzhen used to live here. She... later went to town to find work, so..."

Mr. Mu didn't want others to know that Mu Zhenzhen had run off with a man.

"I'll go ask the fourth daughter-in-law to come clean it up. You can stay in Dandan and Yingying's room in the meantime."

Mu Dandan and Mu Yingying had a separate room that could temporarily house people.