

Folly 611

Chapter 611: The Second Wife Competes with the First Wife (Part 1)

"Dealing with your big aunt? Shuang, you must be joking with your second aunt, your big aunt is the wife of a scholar!"

Mrs. Lin stared at Mu Shuangshuang in shock, doubting if she heard correctly.

How could this girl say such a thing?

If she offends Mrs. Jin, how could she have good days ahead?

"Second aunt, in your current situation, if you don't blame my big aunt, who else can you blame?"

Even if you successfully pin this matter on me today, after my grandmother troubles me, she won't let you off either.

Because you also didn't protect her eldest grandson. But if the culprit is my big aunt, it's a different story.

My grandmother resents her but doesn't dare to confront her. Besides, she owes you a life, at that time it wouldn't be good to throw out your second branch!"

Mu Shuangshuang's idea was indeed mischievous, redirecting trouble so that the first branch could taste being wronged.

Mrs. Lin had a flash of insight, suddenly feeling Mu Shuangshuang's idea was a good one.

Why didn't she think to harm Mrs. Jin earlier?

If Mrs. Jin owed her a life, it would be much more useful than this brat.

Mrs. Lin's eyes rolled a few times, then quickly ran towards the main house of the Old Mu Family...

Mu Shuangshuang threw the wooden stick she was holding onto the ground, clapped the dust from her palms, and smiled slyly in the direction Mrs. Lin had left.

The second branch and the first branch are fighting, this time there's another drama to watch at the Old Mu Family!

Yu Si Niang had nearly finished washing the clothes in the wooden basin, just needed to take them to the creek at the village head to rinse.

After tidying up the last piece of clothing, Yu Si Niang stood up, holding the wooden bucket.

Mu Shuangshuang came over just as Yu Si Niang was about to go out with the clothes, Mu Shuangshuang caught up and lent a hand.

"Mom, let Shuangshuang escort you there."

"No need, I told you to rest. There aren't many clothes here, it's not like mom can't carry them."

Mu Shuangshuang thought it over, knowing there would be chaos at the Old Mu Family soon, Yu Si Niang being absent would be safer, so she let go and allowed Yu Si Niang to go to the river to wash clothes.

Standing in the courtyard for a while, Mu Shuangshuang estimated that it should be about time, but no shouting had come from the Old Mu Family yet.

Old Mu Family

Mrs. Lin held her belly, looking everywhere for Mrs. Jin, and finally found her near the main room.

Mrs. Jin was holding a basin of clear water, who knows what she was planning to do with it.

Mrs. Lin quickly approached.

"Big sister-in-law, big sister-in-law, carrying water must be tiring, let me help you."

Seeing someone offering to do labor, Mrs. Jin didn't hesitate and handed the basin to Mrs. Lin.

Unexpectedly, as soon as Mrs. Lin touched the basin, her hand slipped, the basin fell to the ground, landing on Mrs. Jin's foot, causing Mrs. Jin to jump up with a start and, in chaos, knock over Mrs. Lin.

At the moment her body hit the floor, Mrs. Lin felt heaven was on her side.

Mrs. Lin yelled loudly: "Oh my, my heavens, the child, my child..."

Inside the main room, Old Mrs. Mu was supervising Mu Qingqing doing needlework; ever since Mrs. Lin was with child, the household needlework income stopped nearly completely. Old Mrs. Mu certainly wasn't happy, so the daughter must repay the mother's debt, dragging Mu Qingqing to do needlework daily and not allowing her to eat if she didn't complete it.

Hearing the shouting from the yard, Old Mrs. Mu, with a poisonous glare, stomped out.

In the yard, Mrs. Lin was clutching her stomach and moaning loudly; that bit of chicken blood had already soaked through her pants, visible as a red stain from afar.

Mrs. Jin hadn't regained her composure yet, hearing Mrs. Lin's screams, she panicked.

"Second daughter-in-law, I didn't knock you down, get up quickly, you can't blame this child's accident on me." Mrs. Jin shouted beside her.

"Big sister-in-law, what... what are you saying? You clearly knocked me over... Mom... mom, come quickly, your eldest grandson is gone..."

"You two women yelling in the yard, Mrs. Lin, you troublemaker are up to mischief again!" Old Mrs. Mu cursed as she rushed over.

Hearing those harsh words, Mrs. Lin was relieved she chose to harm Mrs. Jin; if she had targeted the third branch's brat at this moment, she'd probably be skinned.

"Mom! Big sister-in-law knocked me, my belly hurts... it hurts..." Mrs. Lin accused while crying loudly.

Old Mrs. Mu saw the large red stain in Mrs. Lin's pants, Mrs. Jin standing by, looking helplessly at Mrs. Lin, and Old Mrs. Mu felt blood rush to her head.

"Oh my, you damned woman, my eldest grandson, my grandson..."

Old Mrs. Mu cursed while shouting at Mrs. Jin: "You damned woman, dare to harm my grandson, you eggless old hen, now you're jealous of other people's sons, heavens, what a disaster the Old Mu Family married such a scourge."

Mrs. Jin was stunned. The old woman used to scold her as an eggless hen; now that she was a scholar's wife and soon her husband would take the county registrar position, she'd be a dignified official's wife in the county. Yet she still dared to scold her?

"Mom, it's not my fault, the second daughter-in-law insisted on carrying water for me, she fell by herself and blames me?" Mrs. Jin refused to back down.

Old Mrs. Mu's fury reached its peak, she slapped Mrs. Jin's face, causing her to see stars.

In the yard, chaos ensued; Mrs. Lin's pig-like cries, Mrs. Jin's sobbing, Old Mrs. Mu's street-scolding echoed.

Mr. Mu dashed into the yard, seeing the uproar, especially Mrs. Lin, he anxiously shouted: "Why are you all yelling? Hurry and call the doctor, call Zhang Huai Shu, what kind of sins has the Old Mu Family committed!"

"Dad, Zhang Huai Shu doesn't take our family's cases anymore, last time mom drove him away, he still resents our family." Mu Dazhong rushed over.

Though he didn't know how his wife pinned the matter on the first branch, things were as they were, and he had to follow along with it.

"It's come to this point, a matter of life and death, you still yelling here, get lost!" Mr. Mu shoved Mu Dazhong aside.

He directed others to help Mrs. Lin inside to rest.

Mu Shuangshuang ran into the Old Mu Family courtyard upon hearing the commotion, the situation was worse than she imagined, the Old Mu Family was in chaos, Mr. Mu was furious, seemingly taking the matter seriously.

Hearing Mr. Mu instruct Mu Dazhong to call Zhang Huai Shu, Mu Shuangshuang's eyes sparked with a sharp glint.

She followed Mu Dazhong out of the Old Mu Family courtyard.

On the road, Mu Dazhong walked like a snail, not wanting to go to Zhang Huai Shu's house and get unlucky, yet he couldn't report back empty-handed to his father.

Thinking it over, Mu Dazhong decided to dawdle along the road, avoiding going to ask Zhang Huai Shu.

After all, he said earlier that Gou Dan's mother was pregnant; if he went again, there would certainly be trouble.

Mu Shuangshuang realized Mu Dazhong didn't intend to call anyone, and felt that his mind wasn't slow, but Zhang Huai Shu had to come, otherwise Mr. Mu would surely spread word of this matter.

Understanding the situation, Mu Shuangshuang went to Zhang Huai Shu's house by herself.

Chapter 612: Solving Problems with 3 Taels of Silver (Second Update)

After Mrs. Lin was carried into the house, she screamed in agony for quite a while.

Old Mrs. Mu found it ominous and refused to enter, leaving only the fourth branch's Mrs. Liu and Mu Qingqing to attend her inside the house.

Mrs. Liu was dismissed with just a few words, and Mrs. Lin asked her daughter to fetch water; she had to wash herself, the chicken blood was unbearable.

After cleaning the bloodstains and changing into fresh clothes, Mrs. Lin lay on the heated bed and instructed Mu Qingqing to throw the chicken blood-stained garments to Mrs. Jin and reason with her.

Mrs. Jin was still arguing with Old Mrs. Mu, but the more she defended herself, the more she recalled the events—it seemed she really did run into Mrs. Lin.

But she couldn't say this out loud.

She hadn't admitted it before, and if she confessed now, the old lady wouldn't let her off!

Mrs. Jin felt she had to hold on until her husband returned to resolve this matter.

"Ah, what sin has the Old Mu Family committed, that this child, only months from being born, is now gone."

Mr. Mu's face was marked by waves of sorrow.

"Isn't it all because of that woman? Relying on the fact that the eldest became a scholar, she refuses to do this or that, and now she's caused the second daughter-in-law's child to be lost. I want the eldest to divorce this woman."

Usually, Old Mrs. Mu, despite her dislike for Mrs. Lin, still considered the child in Mrs. Lin's womb a descendant of the Old Mu Family.

It's her eldest grandson; no one dares to touch her eldest grandson, and if they do, they'll face her wrath.

"Mother, it really wasn't me, she fell on her own, it's not my fault!"

Hearing Old Mrs. Mu suggesting that Mu Dade divorce her, Mrs. Jin panicked and, disregarding everything, hurried to clear her name.

Initially, Mr. Mu didn't believe it was Mrs. Jin who had run into her, but her words chilled his heart.

Who in the entire Old Mu Family doesn't know that Mrs. Lin, for the sake of that child, refused to do this or that, hardly like someone who'd intentionally hurt herself and blame it on the first branch.

"Eldest daughter-in-law, I've never said much to you because I thought you understood propriety and when to advance and retreat.

But this matter today, for the sake of the eldest, we won't pursue it with you.

However, your refusal to acknowledge it makes it a bit hard to justify."

"The second daughter-in-law's pregnancy doesn't come easy, just look at her, she hasn't bathed for many days.

The fact she endures so much shows she loves this child, and contradicts what you said about her intentionally hurting her own child!"

Mr. Mu spoke from the heart, and Mrs. Jin was beyond saving, even if she jumped into the Yellow River.

"Father, I'm wronged, it really wasn't me, if you don't believe me, let Lin Xiaozao confront me.

I don't believe she'd dare lie with her eyes wide open." Mrs. Jin argued, unwilling to concede.

"Enough, things are as they are now, what's the point of talking about it, let's wait for Zhang Huai Shu to come."

Just as Zhang Huai Shu was mentioned, he rushed in with his medicine box on his back, followed by a sweaty Mu Shuangshuang.

"Grandfather, Grandmother, I've brought someone, quickly take him to see Second Aunt."

Mr. Mu was touched; at such a time, it was Shuang from the third branch who brought the doctor. The second branch was likely hiding, afraid of being scolded by Zhang Huai Shu.

Mr. Mu understood his son well.

In the room, upon hearing that Zhang Huai Shu had arrived, Mrs. Lin broke out in a cold sweat.

She wasn't pregnant at all, and if this was exposed, not just her sister-in-law wouldn't be able to cover for her, even she herself would be doomed.

"Mother, I'll go call them in," Mu Qingqing said.

Mrs. Lin's fake pregnancy was a secret to everyone but Mu Dazhong, including Mu Qingqing and Mu Dalang.

"No, don't let them in, tell your grandma we're not getting treatment, let's not waste that money," Mrs. Lin said, her voice trembling.

Just as she finished speaking, Mu Shuangshuang brought in Zhang Huai Shu.

Seeing Mu Shuangshuang was both a surprise and a relief for Mrs. Lin, as the idea was originally hers.

"Shuang, are you here to help Second Aunt?" Mrs. Lin asked innocently.

"Second Aunt, what are you saying? Shuang isn't a doctor, today Grandpa Zhang is going to examine you.

Grandpa Zhang, please make sure to thoroughly check on Second Aunt, see if my cousin is still fine!" Mu Shuangshuang said while raising her eyebrows at Mrs. Lin.

Alarm bells went off in Mrs. Lin's mind; she thought Mu Shuangshuang was about to double-cross her.

After using her to frame the first branch, now she's coming for her – such a clever girl, so sly!

"Qingqing, what are you doing standing here? Go get a basin of water for Second Aunt," Mu Shuangshuang said to Mu Qingqing.

"You little brat, this is our second branch, since when is it your place to speak? Get out," Mrs. Lin instructed.

"Qingqing, you should leave. Shuangshuang Sister is here, it'll be fine," Mrs. Lin, understanding the situation hadn't been resolved, knew offending Mu Shuangshuang wasn't wise.

Mu Qingqing cast a glare at Mu Shuangshuang before leaving the room angrily.

Inside the room, it was just the three of them; Zhang Huai Shu didn't actually diagnose Mrs. Lin. He'd been informed by Mu Shuangshuang to just stand for a while and then shake his head when he left.

"Second Aunt, after all the help I've given you, shouldn't you offer something in return?"

Mu Shuangshuang began exploiting the second branch; she knew they had some spare money, cobbled together from relatives after Mu Dade became a scholar.

At least two or three taels.

If Mrs. Lin dared to extort her, she should be prepared to suffer consequences.

"Shuangshuang, what nonsense are you talking? Second Aunt doesn't have money; it's all with your grandma. You knew that when there was no division at home, right?"

Mrs. Lin replied pitifully.

"Second Aunt, stop pretending. I'm very aware of whether you have money, especially since Grandpa Zhang is also here.

Once he checks your pulse, your lies will unravel, and on top of framing the scholar's wife, it's a crime, you'd face punishment."

Mu Shuangshuang had laid a trap for the second branch.

Have the second branch topple the first branch's Mrs. Jin first, and then bleed Mrs. Lin a bit.

She figured this way, Mrs. Lin would learn her lesson.

"You... you..." Mrs. Lin was desperate enough to wish she were dead; she had been outsmarted by a little brat.

"Grandpa Zhang, you've been in here quite a while, it's time to take her pulse, don't keep my Second Aunt waiting!"

Seeing Mrs. Lin's hesitation, Mu Shuangshuang urged Zhang Huai Shu.

"Alright!" Zhang Huai Shu began opening his medicine box.

Mrs. Lin panicked, held up five fingers, and said to Mu Shuangshuang, "Shuang, Second Aunt will give you fifty copper coins, can we settle it with that?"

"No way, when Second Aunt harmed me, she probably wanted fifty taels, right?"

Mrs. Lin's plot was exposed, her face turned alternately red and white.

She had originally planned with her husband to demand fifty taels from the third branch.

Without payment, they wouldn't let the third branch off the hook.

"Then how much do you want?" Mrs. Lin asked.

"Three taels of silver, not a cent less. You falsely accused Eldest Aunt today.

Eldest Uncle holds grudges; if he finds out, he'll surely cast you out, and your life won't be easy. Your second branch will remain paupers forever!"

Mu Shuangshuang spoke slowly and deliberately.

But three taels of silver was the entirety of the second branch's savings; giving it to Shuangshuang would leave them penniless!

Chapter 613: Dismissing the Great Aunt (Third Update)

Mrs. Lin was hesitating at this moment.

Should she keep the three taels of silver, or ignore this matter and brace herself to tough it out?

But the more she thought about it, the more she felt the temptation from the big house.

As long as she follows the big house to the county, good days will come; why should she care about these three taels of silver?

"Are you really going to keep Zhang Huai Shu quiet?" Mrs. Lin cast a suspicious gaze at Mu Shuangshuang's face.

This girl, no matter how you look at her, she doesn't seem like a good person.

"Second Aunt, you don't have much time to think. Make your decision now, do you trust me or not?" Mu Shuangshuang said impatiently.

This Mrs. Lin, when causing trouble for others, she never hesitated this much. Now that she's facing her own medicine, suddenly she has so many thoughts. Where were they before?

Mrs. Lin was both angry and anxious. She climbed up from the bed, turned her back on Mu Shuangshuang, and dug in the corner of the wall for a long time, finally unearthing three mud-covered pieces of broken silver.

The money-taking business was not something Mrs. Lin dared hide from Mu Shuangshuang, and after this, the second branch was left empty and without money to stash for some time.

Holding the three pieces of broken silver, Mrs. Lin cursed Mu Shuangshuang thoroughly, wishing she would die.

She hated the third branch even more, always taking advantage of her.

"Here, take the money and hurry up to deal with this matter. I don't want to see your filthy face at all." Mrs. Lin threw the silver at Mu Shuangshuang, gritting her yellowed teeth.

Mu Shuangshuang took the silver without courtesy and left with Zhang Huai Shu.

Outside, Zhang Huai Shu naturally kept everything as agreed with Mu Shuangshuang, saying nothing but shaking his head.

Even so, it was enough for the Old Mu Family to imagine that Mrs. Lin's child was lost.

Mu Shuangshuang's plan did not violate the agreement that Zhang Huai Shu would only treat people from the Mu Family's Third Branch.

Old Mrs. Mu saw Zhang Huai Shu shaking his head repeatedly, looking like she had been deeply provoked. She jumped up, grabbed Mrs. Jin's clothes beside her, and swung a slap.

"You wretched woman, useless hen, how did my Old Mu Family raise such a thankless wolf like you? Give me back my grandson!"

With a "slap," a fresh red handprint appeared on the right side of Mrs. Jin's face.

Earlier, Mrs. Jin had been slapped by Old Mrs. Mu once; now two symmetrical slap marks adorned her face.

The entire Old Mu Family stared in shock.

The person hit was the family's scholar's wife; this old lady was really fierce, wasn't she?

She's not caring about anything when she loses her temper.

Additionally, Old Mrs. Mu spotted a golden hairpin on Mrs. Jin's head and reached out to yank it off forcefully.

In pulling off the golden hairpin, she also pulled away a lock of Mrs. Jin's hair.

Mrs. Jin realized what Old Mrs. Mu was doing; she tried to protect the hairpin on her head but was too late. Not only was the item snatched by Old Mrs. Mu, but a piece of her hair was pulled out, causing Mrs. Jin to cry out in pain.

"This thing belongs to my son; from today, you are no longer a daughter-in-law of my Old Mu Family. Get out!"

The conflict between Old Mrs. Mu and Mrs. Jin wasn't just a matter of a day or two.

Originally, Mrs. Jin was married into the Old Mu Family, yet even after entering the household, the money from the big house never went to Old Mrs. Mu.

Added to that over the years, Mrs. Jin only bore two daughters.

Old Mrs. Mu didn't want her favorite son to have no descendants and had long considered divorcing Mrs. Jin.

Taking advantage of Mu Dade becoming a scholar, the big house no longer needing Mrs. Jin, Old Mrs. Mu made a firm decision to divorce Mrs. Jin and find a better-suited daughter-in-law.

Someone who could support her son and also bear him a son.

"Father, even if I did wrong, haven't I served Dade all these years, managing the affairs of the big house neatly? Can't my efforts offset my mistakes?" Mrs. Jin's voice carried a sobbing tone; in this household, she could only turn to Mr. Mu for support.

Mr. Mu was still upset about Mrs. Jin's lies and remained silent.

Mrs. Jin completely despaired; with Mu Dade absent, the old woman was bullying her alone.

"Mom, I'm not leaving; Dade isn't back. I'll wait for him to return before saying anything!"

Mrs. Jin wasn't a pushover; if she couldn't beat Old Mrs. Mu, she'd wait for her backup to return.

Would Old Mrs. Mu give her that chance?

"Alright, you wretched woman, dare to use my son to threaten me; if I don't properly teach you today, you won't know the old woman's strength."

Old Mrs. Mu made as if to hit Mrs. Jin again, and Mr. Mu, worried it would cause trouble, tried to intervene.

"Enough, don't quarrel. Right now, focus on the second branch.

Old woman, go borrow an old hen from Old Wang's next door, to make broth for the second daughter-in-law tonight.

You from the big house, go apologize to the second branch; let's resolve it this way."

Everyone present could tell Mr. Mu was still favoring Mrs. Jin.

Mu Danian nudged Chen Hong's arm.

Chen Hong caught on immediately and stood up.

"Dad, you're being partial. What my sister-in-law did is not a mere trivial matter, it's murder and harm.

She's scholar's wife; because of this, she should set a good example for our family.

If people hear about my sister-in-law harming her sister-in-law, how will they view my brother?

In my opinion, she should be divorced to prevent her from harming my brother's career ambitions!"

"You are full of crap, Chen Hong, you're not even a wife of my Old Mu Family, what right do you have to speak?"

Mrs. Jin was so angered she said whatever came out of her mouth.

Mr. Mu's brows furrowed, his expression somewhat displeased.

"Dad, look at my sister-in-law, I've been in the Old Mu Family for so long, and Mu Dalian said he's going to marry me; how am I not a daughter-in-law here?"

"Enough, don't jump around. My old lady is in a bad mood today, mind your words!" Old Mrs. Mu snapped at Chen Hong.

Chen Hong then backed down.

"Shuang, what do you think about this?" Mr. Mu directed his gaze onto Mu Shuangshuang, who was watching the commotion beside them.

Mu Shuangshuang was surprised, even though knowing Mr. Mu might not heed her words.

Still, his willingness to inquire about her opinion showed her he was treating her better than before.

Mu Shuangshuang did not rush to respond but cast a glance at Mrs. Jin.

Mrs. Jin already disliked Mu Shuangshuang; being stared down, she thought Mu Shuangshuang would persuade Mu Dade to divorce her.

"Father, the third branch has long been separated, with no authority to interfere in our Old Mu Family affairs, let alone Shuangshuang being just a little girl whose words hold no weight!"

"Enough, big house, it's you who did wrong, it's you who refuses to acknowledge it, are you expecting this old man to apologize for you to the second branch?" Mr. Mu scolded.

Chapter 614: Settling Debts with Clothes (Four Updates)

"Dad, I didn't mean that, I..." Mrs. Jin's voice began to quiver with tears after being shouted at.

She felt that the entire Old Mu Family was targeting her, even the fair old man seemed to have been bewitched by someone.

"Shuangshuang, what do you think, how should your aunt's situation be handled?"

Mr. Mu had lost patience with Mrs. Jin, when such a big incident happened at home today, the eldest daughter-in-law was only thinking about herself.

He pitied his unborn grandson...

Mu Shuangshuang saw the faint sadness in Mr. Mu's eyes. He truly seemed to care about the fake piece of flesh in Mrs. Lin's belly, but what was the use of caring?

Xiao Chu from the fourth family is only three years old and also a grandson, yet Mu Laoye never once picked him up or gave him something good to eat.

Xiao Han and Gou Dan, weren't they also grandsons? Yet they didn't receive any good treatment either.

"Grandpa, it doesn't matter how Shuangshuang says we handle this, it still depends on my second aunt, as she's the one who has suffered.

As a mother, she feels the pain more than anyone, and like my aunt said, Shuangshuang is just a child, and has no right to intervene in this matter."

Mu Shuangshuang didn't want to get involved in this mess at all. If Mrs. Lin ever brought it up in the future, it would have nothing to do with her.

"From the first house, you should go in and apologize now, let's see what the second house says!"

Mr. Mu urged Mrs. Jin to enter the second family's room.

Mrs. Lin lay on the bed, and upon hearing her daughter say that Mrs. Jin had arrived, she put her hand under the quilt, pinching her own thigh hard, forcing out a few crocodile tears.

By the time Mrs. Jin entered the room, Mrs. Lin's eyes were already red from crying.

"Sister-in-law, how cruel you are, you owe me my son..."

Indeed, Mrs. Lin's acting was quite convincing. When she cried, her facial veins bulged, and her expression of sorrow was just right.

The only thing that was off was her gaze, which occasionally lingered on the two-tael silver clothes Mrs. Jin was wearing.

"Sister-in-law, today I accidentally bumped into you, and I didn't know it would cause you to lose your child. It's my fault, I'm sorry, tell me what you want to eat and I'll get it for you from town."

Mrs. Jin humbled herself in front of Mrs. Lin, eager to resolve the matter quickly.

Knowing Mrs. Lin's penchant for small gains, giving her a bit of money should resolve the issue.

When Mrs. Jin mentioned food, a trace of unidentified liquid gathered at the corner of Mrs. Lin's mouth, and the cravings in her stomach were being teased incessantly.

She knew, with the eldest brother having passed the imperial exam, there must have been a haul of silver.

Otherwise, her sister-in-law wouldn't be so generous.

Since her sister-in-law had mentioned it, how could she not partake in this good will?

"Sister-in-law, I've been weakened now, and my health isn't good, so I need significant nourishment. How about you buy me a hen to stew each day, and we'll decide how to proceed once I recover?" Mrs. Lin made an exorbitant demand.

Mrs. Jin's expression changed immediately.

One old hen a day, that was the standard set for when her husband, Mu Dade, returned. Why should Mrs. Lin, who was nothing, eat so well?

Seeing Mrs. Jin hesitate, Mrs. Lin felt uncomfortable inside.

Stingy is stingy, can't even spare a chicken!

"Sister-in-law, leave, I don't want to see you. Every time I see you, I think of my son who became a pool of blood. My son, I have wronged you..."

Mrs. Lin became agitated again, while Mu Qingqing gave Mrs. Jin a fierce glare.

"Aunt, today you're wronging my mother. My mother asked you for a chicken, and you're unwilling. So, did my brother die for nothing?"

"Is your mother asking for just a chicken? Qingqing, speak for yourself, what did your mother say! She said to replenish energy, one hen a day.

A hen costs at least eighteen coins a pound, and each is at least two pounds. That's 30 to 40 coins a day.

Go ask around the village, which woman after childbirth would eat so well, even if your grandma came, she wouldn't agree."

Mrs. Jin had the money, but couldn't withstand such extravagant demands from Mrs. Lin.

If Mrs. Lin had asked directly for five hundred coins, she would have gritted her teeth and given it.

Seeing Mrs. Jin talk like this, Mrs. Lin knew this would be a tough bone to chew and became worried inside.

Just as she was contemplating how to handle the situation, her bedroom door was suddenly flung open.

Mu Dazhong stormed in, pointing at Mrs. Jin's nose, cursing, "Get out! My wife was harmed like this, and you still want to save that bit of money."

Whether frightened by Mu Dazhong or genuinely worried about being divorced, Mrs. Jin gritted her teeth and handed a tael of silver to Mrs. Lin from her pocket.

"Second sister-in-law, this is a small gesture from me. You should know what to say to Dad, right?"

Clutching the silver, the heartache Mrs. Lin felt vanished in an instant, yet it wasn't enough.

That wretched girl had swindled three taels from her.

"Sister-in-law, a tael of silver won't settle this. You need to give me five taels, or I'll make a fuss to Dad."

Mrs. Lin gathered her courage, directly reaching out for money from Mrs. Jin.

It was mainly because her husband had returned.

She now had someone to rely on.

Mrs. Jin was furious, she had seen shameless people but none like this.

How dare she ask for five taels, why not just rob?

"Second sister-in-law, it's not that I don't want to give it, but I simply don't have five taels of silver on me.

When your eldest brother took the imperial exam, most of the silver was spent on his medical treatments when he fell ill.

This tael of silver was pinched out little by little from food expenses, there's truly nothing left now." Mrs. Jin's face stiffened as she forced a smile.

"Aren't the clothes you're wearing worth two taels of silver? You can give them to me, and add a few more nice outfits!" Mrs. Lin shouted, pointing at Mrs. Jin's clothes.

She had longed for Mrs. Jin's clothes for a while, they were attractive and from the city.

Seeing his wife ask for clothes, Mu Dazhong also spoke up. "The leftover silver can be offset with my brother's clothes. Sister-in-law's clothes aren't cheap, my brother's surely aren't either."

Mu Dazhong thought, since he'll be heading to the county soon, how could he not have a good set of clothes, especially since the outfit his brother wore upon returning looked like what an official would wear.

"You..." Mrs. Jin choked on a mouthful of blood, nearly dying from anger.

To even ask for the clothes, how low can they go?

"Sister-in-law, it's your call in this matter. Either compensate me for my son, or hand over the clothes, otherwise..." Mu Dazhong menacingly glanced at Mrs. Jin.

Rather than just a glance, it was more like a presumptuous stare.

Especially at her face and chest, Mrs. Jin was fair-skinned and pretty, her chest still voluptuous compared to Mrs. Lin, who had borne many children and whose breasts had long sagged.

Mrs. Jin still looked full and exceptionally beautiful to this day.

In front of Mu Dazhong, Mrs. Jin felt as if she weren't wearing clothes, and the kind of gaze that suggested something might happen between them made her feel extremely uncomfortable and disgusted.

"Sister-in-law..." Mu Dazhong called Mrs. Jin's name again, this time with a spring-like inflection.

Mrs. Jin couldn't endure it any longer, rushing out to vomit violently outside the Old Mu Family's courtyard.

Chapter 615: Can Only Be Assigned to Wang San (Part 1)

In the afternoon, the struggling Mrs. Jin pointed out the clothes that the second wife Mrs. Lin and Mu Dazhong wanted, and had Mu Dandan send them over.

Mu Dandan only learned about the incident after she came back, so her attitude was not good when she delivered the clothes.

She entered the second house, threw the clothes on the ground, and said angrily, "Beggar is beggar, even the clothes are picked from what others don't want."

"You girl, why do you speak so unpleasantly? It was your mother who was at fault; it's your mother who didn't have the money to compensate your second aunt, so she voluntarily replaced it with clothes.

Don't think our second house desires your mother's old clothes, still don't know if they're diseased!"

Mu Dazhong picked up the clothes from the ground, and in front of Mu Dandan, squeezed the clothes of Mrs. Jin forcibly several times.

As if the clothes were the fair and tender body of Mrs. Jin.

Mu Dandan, being young, didn't understand Mu Dazhong's intention.

She only thought he was dusting off the dirt from the clothes.

"Hmph, country folk are just country folk, will remain country folk all their lives!" Mu Dandan sneered.

"You girl have such a nasty mouth; look at what you are yourself, seventeen and still not married. Just someone like you, even if given to Wang San for free, he'd still refuse, saying you're old."

Mrs. Lin, who had been silent, finally spoke, her words making Mu Dandan furious enough to spit blood.

"Second aunt, your words are too harsh. Just wait, one day I'll make you see how powerful I am!"

Mu Dandan stormed out in anger.

Mrs. Lin also got up from the bed.

"This vile girl is just like her stingy mother, nothing good." Mrs. Lin said while snatching the clothes, worth two silver taels, from Mu Dazhong's hand.

This was a two-tael clothes piece, feeling like silk smooth as water, making Mrs. Lin's heart almost jump out.

Rich people's lives are indeed good, they wear such comfortable clothes.

Mrs. Lin couldn't wait to take off her own clothes, revealing the already yellowed undergarment inside.

Mrs. Lin rummaged around, discovered Mrs. Jin's undergarment hadn't been sent over, and got instantly a bit angry.

"I knew this woman was stingy, sent the skirt but didn't send the undergarment along, leaving me to wear such worthless things, what rubbish!"

Mu Dazhong, sharp-eyed, scanned around and indeed found no undergarment, feeling somewhat disappointed.

"Forget it, she's stingy in her way, we got what we wanted, let me try my brother's clothes and see how they look!"

With that, Mu Dazhong picked up Mu Dade's clothes and tried them on himself, without even taking off the clothes he was already wearing.

Only after Mrs. Lin reminded him did Mu Dazhong stop and remove the inner clothes before wearing Mu Dade's.

Almost at the same time, Mrs. Lin was also putting on Mrs. Jin's clothes.

"Rip," the sound of fabric tearing resonated.

Mrs. Jin's clothes split at the stomach area on Mrs. Lin. Mrs. Lin had three children and didn't pay attention to keeping fit, so her belly was the fattest and largest.

Plus, her usual indulgence pushed the fat together, resulting in a so-called pear-shaped figure.

Mu Dazhong, needless to say, Mu Dade's clothes on his body turned into several pieces of fabric.

Mu Dazhong was the fattest in the Old Mu Family, round face, round belly, even the arms and thighs were round.

Mu Dade was thin; his clothes were simply not suitable for Mu Dazhong, but to look like an official, Mu Dazhong forced himself to try, and the result was not pleasing.

Looking at the fragments all over the ground, Mu Dazhong cursed Mrs. Jin.

"Turns out she's a stingy woman, miserly to the extreme!"

But the feud with the main house had already been established.

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Time flew by, and several days passed, reaching the harvest period; the two mu of land unique to Shuangshuang's house, and the three mu shared with Fengzi, all needed to be harvested.

However, the autumn harvest is the last harvest of the year. After it's completed, pick a time to sow some red flower grass seeds; there will be no need to care for the land this year.

Mu Shuangshuang got up early to make breakfast for the family; this time, everyone except Mu Dashan had to go to the field to harvest rice.

For breakfast, Mu Shuangshuang took some sun-dried rice noodles, soaked them for a few minutes in water, then started boiling water in the big iron pot.

Sun-dried rice noodles, even when cooked, are not as soft as freshly made ones, but they do have more chewiness.

Cooked rice noodles, paired with homemade meat sauce, make breakfast something of an enjoyment.

She also brought out a bowl of pickled hot sauce, serving to whet the appetite of everyone, and with that, Mu Shuangshuang's breakfast was ready.

Mu Shuangshuang went inside to call Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan, as well as Little Zhi and Xiao Han, who were on her bed. The three had been chatting the night away about unimportant topics, yet the two little ones quite liked listening.

Mu Shuangshuang simply began telling modern fairy tales, and it turned out they were so noisy that they couldn't sleep, Xiao Han even urged her to tell more.

Because of that, the two little ones also woke up late.

Mu Shuangshuang looked out from the courtyard gate but didn't see Lu Yuanfeng, who had promised to come for breakfast.

She waited a while, the kids finished washing up and sat at the table for breakfast, but Lu Yuanfeng still hadn't come.

In the kitchen, Yu Si Niang came out to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Shuangshuang, hurry in and eat, if you delay, it'll all get cold!"

"Mom, I'm not hungry, Yuan Feng said he'd have breakfast here this morning and join us in the fields later; I'm waiting for him so we can go together."

Yu Si Niang chuckled, knowing she was waiting for Lu Yuanfeng, and didn't rush her daughter to eat anymore.

In the kitchen, Mu Dashan also seemed eager.

In principle, he's rested long enough, and should be helping the family with their work.

But once he suggested this, everyone at the table opposed it together.

Even Little Zhi shook his head.

"Dad, please don't go, you're not well yet; if big sister finds out, she'll be upset!" Little Zhi said in a childish voice.

"Shuangshuang's dad, you've rested for so long already, take a few more months to rest; we'll work again when spring comes, won't we?" Yu Si Niang began to persuade Mu Dashan.

Actually, for a long time, Mu Dashan had been wanting to go back to work in the fields.

Yet a tiny bit at a critical place could cave in; what seems simple could have serious consequences if overlooked.

Mu Dashan sighed deeply.

He was anxious inside; the heavy work at home was done by his daughter and wife, and then there's Fengzi. He, a man, as a father, resting at home all day, what does that amount to?

"Fine, I won't say anything anymore, I'll talk to Shuangshuang and have her persuade you; you don't like listening to me, but you'll listen to her anyway."

Yu Si Niang understood her husband's intentions, silent as they were, it meant he still insisted on acting.

Chapter 616: I Will Kill You (Second Update)

Mu Shuangshuang finally waited for Lu Yuanfeng, and trailing behind him, Yuanbao.

Lu Yuanfeng was drenched all over, holding a fish in one hand.

Seeing Mu Shuangshuang peering at the gate, Lu Yuanfeng quickened his pace.

Yuanbao behind him ran so fast he almost burst, but still couldn't catch up.

"Breakfast is ready, hurry up and eat, remember to change your clothes afterwards."

Mu Shuangshuang reminded him.

Lu Yuanfeng nodded heavily and followed Mu Shuangshuang into the yard.

Two fish were hung by Mu Shuangshuang on the bamboo pole used for clothes drying, waiting to be gutted and scaled after breakfast.

The droplets on Lu Yuanfeng's body caught the attention of Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang as he entered the kitchen.

"Fengzi, what's wrong with you? Did you go swimming early in the morning?" Yu Si Niang asked while getting up to hand Lu Yuanfeng a face towel from the kitchen.

Finally caught up, Yuanbao didn't bother to catch his breath, gasping, "My brother went... early this morning... to the creek to catch fish, saying everyone worked hard today and needs nourishment!"

It took half a day to finish the sentence, and Yuanbao sat down afterwards.

"Good boy, it's so cold, yet you went into the water," Yu Si Niang said with a pang of sympathy.

Mu Dashan was quite envious of Lu Yuanfeng.

Back when the Old Mu Family was struggling, the third branch was struggling, everyone only thought about Old Mrs. Mu getting something nice to improve life.

Unlike Fengzi, who proactively went seeking food in the fields, the creek, the mountains.

Yet this was why Mu Dashan felt more assured about entrusting his daughter to Lu Yuanfeng.

When crops have poor yields, when jobs are lost, only by truly relying on the mountains and waters can one avoid starvation.

"Fengzi, once I'm better, bring me along with you to the water, your third uncle wants to learn what you know."

"Mm!" Lu Yuanfeng nodded.

Two big bowls of rice noodles were placed in front of Lu Yuanfeng and Yuanbao by Mu Shuangshuang. Yuanbao sniffed and his mouth watered at the aroma.

He said to those in the room, "Third Uncle, Aunt, I'm starting to eat!"

Yuanbao ate more deliciously than anyone else, shoveling big bites, never stopping until finished.

"Brother Xiao Han, let's race with Brother Yuanbao to see who finishes first."

The three kids kept shoveling food, having a jolly time.

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Meanwhile, chaos broke out at the Old Mu Family.

Fourth branch's Mrs. Liu went to her maiden home last night, so no one made breakfast this morning. Old Mrs. Mu threw a fit outside the fourth branch's door, cursing Mrs. Liu roundly before leaving.

No one to cook in the fourth branch, so she sought the second branch.

Mrs. Lin, relying on her fetus loss blamed on Mrs. Jin, refused to go. She hadn't worked in the fields for days, living comfortably, eating heartily without lifting a finger.

Old Mrs. Mu vented her rage, calling Mrs. Lin a lazy woman, saying she'd face retribution someday.

Despite this, Mrs. Lin lay there unmoving, like a corpse, and Old Mrs. Mu calmed down after venting.

No matter the words, the stomach still growled, so Old Mrs. Mu finally turned to Mu Danian, originally intending to have Chen Hong cook. Yet, sounds of their passion emerged from the room...

Old Mrs. Mu knew what they were doing inside. Instead of leaving, she forcefully knocked on the door.

"Open the door, Chen Hong! You shameless woman, dragging my son into that at the crack of dawn! Trying to drain him dry? You hussy, harlot..."

Old Mrs. Mu's voice sounded like slicing tough tree bark.

Mu Danian's door was about to be battered down, but most importantly, Mu Danian hadn't finished.

He angrily climbed up, opened the door, yet before he could speak, Old Mrs. Mu lunged at Chen Hong, jerking her from the bed with a slap.

Chen Hong was naked, so the fighting noises were loud and chaotic.

Old Mrs. Mu cursed, "You wicked girl, discontent at home, a widow from someone else's house, daring to seduce my son! I'll show you what happens when you cross this old woman."

Old Mrs. Mu slapped Chen Hong's chest, nearly flattening her buxom chest.

Next were her wrists, waist, face, slapping recklessly at Chen Hong.

Several locks of Chen Hong's hair were torn off.

Pig-like screams erupted in Mu Danian's room at the Old Mu House.

Mr. Mu was scrubbing straw in the yard, pulled over by the noise.

He entered and saw bare skin, angrily hurried back out.

Seeing this, Old Mrs. Mu's actions grew even more reckless.

"You wanton hussy, even seducing my husband! I'll beat you to death."

Mu Danian stepped in to mediate but was brushed aside by Old Mrs. Mu.

Chen Hong cried for help, so loudly that even the third branch heard.

Mu Shuangshuang was just assigning gloves and tasks to everyone.

Lu Yuanfeng was charged with carrying rice to the roadside, Yu Si Niang with harvesting, Mu Shuangshuang with guiding the three kids to gather rice stalks into baskets.

Discussing plans, the cries persisted.

Mu Shuangshuang recognized Chen Hong's voice, puzzled.

Chen Hong, so capable usually, unable to handle Old Mrs. Mu.

As she thought, the noise quieted from that end.

Chen Hong was battered severely by Old Mrs. Mu, black-eyed and bruised, suddenly finding strength from somewhere to shove Old Mrs. Mu.

Old Mrs. Mu staggered back, finally hitting the fifth branch's table corner, cracking her back of the head, blood oozing out.

This time, it was Old Mrs. Mu screaming pig-like.

Chen Hong summoned energy from who knows where, slapping Old Mrs. Mu violently.

The situation spiraled out of control, with nausea-inducing fury almost making Old Mrs. Mu spit blood, curses continually streaming.

"Nasty hag, you dare hit me, you dare hit me..."

Old Mrs. Mu, having never been slapped in her life, had deep-seated hatred for Chen Hong.

Mu Dalian intervened, holding Old Mrs. Mu back from Chen Hong, saying, "Honghong, dress up and find Father. Mother has gone mad!"

Mu Dalian, fortunately, retained some conscience.

Knowing to restrain Old Mrs. Mu, Chen Hong dressed and grabbed Mr. Mu's hand outside.

"Father, save me... save me... Mother wants to kill me."

Rushing out, Old Mrs. Mu's eyes were bloodshot, hair disheveled, looking utterly deranged.

Especially when she saw Chen Hong clutching Mr. Mu's hand, she went completely insane.

The Old Mu Family was a chaotic mess.

The planned cooking and fieldwork were also disrupted.

Mr. Mu, tired of the chaos, yelled at those in the yard.

"Argue one more time, and get out immediately. All this fighting, the family is coming apart because of it. Doing nothing? All of you just get to work in the fields!"

Chapter 617: The Drama Queen Qian Shi (Third Update)

Old Mrs. Mu stopped under Mr. Mu's roar, but she still glared at Chen Hong with eyes that could eat her alive.

It was as if she wanted to eat Chen Hong raw.

Chen Hong was extremely embarrassed at this moment, her hair was loose, her face was swollen, and her clothes were torn.

Both of them, after this fight, neither gained any advantage, but after a while, Old Mrs. Mu started clutching her head and cried out in pain.

Previously, she hadn't noticed the bleeding from hitting the cabinet because she was eager to fight Chen Hong, but now that she was idle, the pain became much more noticeable.

She wiped the back of her head with her hand, and finding it full of blood, the anger that Mr. Mu had suppressed in her surged up again.

"Fifth, your old mother gives you two choices today: either get rid of this slut, this whore quickly, or you leave the Old Mu Family with this woman. I'll consider I never had you as a son!"

This time, Old Mrs. Mu had laid down a firm order: if Chen Hong doesn't leave, she won't want her son either.

Chen Hong's face turned pale instantly, not because she valued the Old Mu Family.

But she hadn't found another place yet; leaving like this, without a house or shelter, how could she survive?

She didn't want to go back to Wang the blacksmith's house; she didn't want to be sold off a second time.

No, she couldn't leave. If she left, she'd have nothing.

"Dad, Mom, I'm the only daughter-in-law Danyan wants to marry, you can't drive me away, I... I... I beg you!"

Chen Hong pitifully pleaded with Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu.

"Not driving you away, who said that? This is my old lady's house, I decide who can live here.

If I don't let you live here, you have to get out, and take Fifth with you.

You shameless woman, our Old Mu Family is a respectable family, and because of you, this shameless widow, the whole Er Gui Village is laughing at us. Whether you leave today or not, you're leaving!"

Old Mrs. Mu threw out these words and hurriedly went to call the fourth branch, Mu Dajiang, to find some herbs for herself.

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The third branch of the family and Lu Yuanfeng, Yuanbao, and a few others, stepped out into the fields with the first ray of morning sunshine, everyone chatting and laughing as they went to work.

Walking along the road, the late autumn wind blew, making the rice ears full of grains sway in the breeze.

That was the color farmers loved the most.

This time, after Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng discussed, they decided the first thing to harvest was the acre of fertile land Shuangshuang originally tricked away from the Old Mu Family.

That piece of land had the plumpest grains of rice among the five plots, and it was also the most fruitful acre of land.

If they didn't get it home first, nobody could feel at ease.

However, the six or seven people from the Third Branch of the Old Mu Family going to work in the fields drew the attention of the passing villagers.

Everyone was talking, some envious, some jealous.

After all, Lu Yuanfeng's strength was evident, and when it came to work, he was unbeatable; perhaps two or three of the village's laborers couldn't match his strength alone.

"Hey, what do you say, what does Lu Family's Fengzi always do for the Old Mu Family's third branch without pay?" the Zhang Family's daughter-in-law, Qian, asked the person next to her in the village east.

"Pay? Are you stupid? Don't you know the relationship between Feng and Shuang? They're preparing to get married, why talk about that stuff?"

Now almost everyone in Er Gui Village knew that Lu Yuanfeng, the oldest grandson of the Old Lu Family, would marry Mu Shuangshuang from the Old Mu Family's Third Branch in the future.

Talking about money between these two families was basically nonsense.

"You're the silly one. These two aren't married or engaged, and they're not a family yet.

Besides, it's said that even brothers settle accounts clearly. Don't think that since the two families are good now, when someone gets wings, who knows who will kick whom!"

Auntie Qian spoke with a hint of sarcasm, glaring at Mu Shuangshuang.

She just wanted others to know that Mu Shuangshuang was restless and would eventually leave Lu Yuanfeng for profit.

Afraid that the villagers didn't understand, she made her words even more straightforward: "Maybe this Shuang is just coaxing Fengzi to work for her for nothing, and once her family's field rice is all in the barn or she cheats all of Fengzi's money, she'll kick him to the curb."

The villagers' reactions to Qian's words ranged from belief to disbelief, but most held a skeptical attitude.

Because Qian, usually, had a loose tongue and liked to gossip about other people's family affairs,

essentially being the type who couldn't bear to see others doing well, always speaking poorly of anyone else's good fortune, waiting for trouble to ensue.

If it were someone else, they would have ignored her, letting her ramble on.

But Mu Shuangshuang was not an ordinary person, she pulled out the long carrying pole in her hand, blocking Qian's path.

"What did you say? Who's coaxing who to work for nothing?" Mu Shuangshuang asked irritably.

Qian, with years of gossip under her belt, was being questioned for the first time, so her attitude wasn't great.

"I'm saying you're coaxing Fengzi to work for you for nothing, and you'll kick him away one day. What? Want to hit me? Come on, hit me on the head, I just don't believe a little girl can do anything to me!"

Qian's words were particularly infuriating; if it wasn't for Mu Shuangshuang being in a good mood today, she would have waved the pole a long time ago.

But she still glared back at Qian, just about to speak, when Yu Si Niang tugged at her sleeve.

"Shuangshuang, let it go, let's go to work!"

Yu Si Niang clearly trying to be a peacemaker, often told Mu Shuangshuang not to argue with others, since they all lived in the same village, tolerating would let things pass.

The ancient thought of valuing harmony was well reflected in Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan.

Basically, whatever the issue, they always took the initiative to admit fault.

But Mu Shuangshuang was not of that nature, she was the kind who, if you didn't mess with her, all was well, but if provoked, she'd find a way to get even.

Call her combative or unsympathetic.

She simply wouldn't stand being wronged.

"Auntie Qian, it's not your place to talk about other people's matters, so don't. The relationship between me and Shuang, and with Uncle Third and Aunt Si, isn't as sordid as you think.

I have three acres of land myself, while Shuangshuang's family only has two; we combine the work in the fields, and if anything, it's Shuangshuang's family who's losing out.

Moreover, whenever I work for Shuangshuang's family, it's voluntary on my part, something any man should do, and no one has the right to interfere!"

Lu Yuanfeng put down the carrying pole in his hand, reasoning with Qian.

Qian felt Lu Yuanfeng was crazy.

"Idiot, really an idiot, I'm speaking up for you, yet you're siding with this girl, no wonder your grandmother told me that you're so bewitched by this girl that you don't even want your own father anymore, really pitiful!"

This drama queen Qian deliberately put on an act of deep sorrow, just wanting the villagers to join her in disliking Mu Shuangshuang.

Chapter 618: Fengzi is in High Demand (Four Updates)

Whenever Lu Xiao was mentioned, the father of Lu Yuanfeng, the chill around Lu Yuanfeng grew even colder.

Everyone in the village with a brain knew what kind of person Lu Xiao was. Mrs. Jin was definitely here to stir up trouble today.

Mu Shuangshuang decided not to tolerate it. Damn it, for someone who doesn't appreciate kindness, you have to slap her hard.

"What's it got to do with you, Auntie Qian, meddling in other people's family affairs? If you want to gossip, move Granny Zhang out of your cowshed first."

As soon as Mu Shuangshuang mentioned the cowshed, Mrs. Jin's expression changed.

Mrs. Jin, in the village, not only liked to gossip but was also mean-spirited. Plus, her husband listened to her every word, so she started abusing her mother-in-law not long after entering the household.

Saying nothing about driving her mother-in-law to live in a cowshed and not feeding her, the village chief visited several times but couldn't resolve the issue.

"What nonsense are you talking? What cowshed? My mother eats well and lives well at home, don't pour dirty water on me!"

Mrs. Jin refused to admit it, especially in front of so many villagers.

Mu Shuangshuang snorted coldly and continued, "It doesn't matter if you don't admit it. After all, everyone knows the truth!"

Next time, before you talk about others, clean the shit off your own ass first. As for Fengzi and me, we'll sort it out ourselves. Didn't you say I would kick Fengzi to the curb?

I'm telling you today, Fengzi is mine, Mu Shuangshuang's. Besides me, no one else will become his wife.

You want your ugly daughter to be Fengzi's backup wife? Don't even think about it for a lifetime!"

What Mu Shuangshuang said wasn't just rumors; Mrs. Jin's precious daughter did like Lu Yuanfeng and blocked him at the village entrance several times.

Sometimes she brought little gifts, sometimes little embroidered bags. Although Lu Yuanfeng never acknowledged it, he wasn't stupid about her intentions.

And Mu Shuangshuang was also scolded by the precious daughter of the Zhang family several times, so this time, she demanded payback with interest.

"You... you..." Mrs. Jin's mind games were all exposed by Mu Shuangshuang, making her so angry she could crack her teeth.

"What do you mean 'me'? If you don't like me, come and hit me, go ahead and aim for my head. Let's see if you dare, Auntie Qian!"

Mu Shuangshuang threw Mrs. Jin's previous audacious words back at her, watching Mrs. Jin turn red with embarrassment, wanting to hit her but not daring to.

Mu Shuangshuang spat out a breath full of indignation.

Finally, she felt relieved!

"Mom, Fengzi, kids, let's go do some work!"

With one command from Mu Shuangshuang, the group went off enthusiastically to work again.

The villagers were all wide-eyed, staring in the direction Mu Shuangshuang left, feeling like there's something they wanted to say but didn't know what.

Yuanbao was the one enjoying the show the most, he jumped forward and gave Mu Shuangshuang a big thumbs up: "Sister Shuangshuang, you're awesome, I wish my second brother could talk like that!"

"You silly boy, your second brother is great! He's a man, there are things he can't say, only your Sister Shuangshuang can!"

Today, Lu Yuanfeng already showed his support in attitude, without fearing Mrs. Jin at all, and that was enough.

But this guy is really popular; there's more than just one young girl wanting her to step down gracefully.

At this rate, constantly driving them away is no solution either.

Seems like she needs to think of a way to assert her dominance so those women stop coming!

Lu Yuanfeng agreed with Mu Shuangshuang's thoughts; he felt it was time to give Shuangshuang a legitimate status. It was precisely because he hadn't formally engaged with Shuangshuang that people clung to distasteful words to attack her.

As a man, it didn't matter for him, but Shuangshuang, as a girl, shouldn't be slandered for no reason.

Thinking of this, Lu Yuanfeng suddenly spoke up: "Shuangshuang, wait for me a moment, I'll head back quickly!"

Lu Yuanfeng bolted off, disappearing instantly.

Mu Shuangshuang looked puzzled in the direction Lu Yuanfeng left, not coming to her senses for a while.

"Shuangshuang, maybe Fengzi had something to do, let's go do some work first!"

Already at the edge of the field, Mu Shuangshuang put on her gloves and took out her sickle.

"Mom, let's begin!"

Because of proper field drying, the paddy fields for autumn harvest were not muddy at all, there was no water in the fields, and Mu Shuangshuang and Yu Si Niang started cutting the rice side by side.

On the field ridges, there were many doing the same work, it was almost the full family mobilized.

Everyone had one purpose: harvest the rice quickly, pay the taxes, and put the rest in the barn; it was each household's income for the year.

But there were exceptions, at least at the Mu Family's ridge, until now, not a single person came out to work.

Even Mu Dajiang's fourth house, often ordered to do the work, hadn't come out.

If Mu Shuangshuang guessed correctly, Mu Dade had passed the scholar exams, and the Mu Family likely didn't want to work anymore.

Probably still at home, saying "you go, I go."

Without having to see it, Mu Shuangshuang could imagine what the scene was like.

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In the courtyard of the Old Mu Family

After Old Mrs. Mu threw some harsh words at Chen Hong, she went to the kitchen herself to cook because she was waiting for the family's men to go to work.

Unexpectedly, after eating, when talking about going to do the autumn harvest, everyone started pushing.

"Mom, we in the second house can't work, Gou Dan's mother just had a miscarriage a couple of days ago, I have to be there to take care of her, dealing with the mess," said Mu Dazhong.

"What? You're serving that woman? Does she not have hands or feet, needing a big man like you to serve her? She thinks she's an official's wife, does she want to put on airs?" Old Mrs. Mu shouted angrily.

Mu Dazhong shrank a bit, he knew his parents wouldn't agree to this matter.

But now the first house was full of scholars; if he went out to work, wouldn't people think he wasn't valued in the family?

This would affect his daughter's marriage prospects, with no one coming to propose.

"Mom, that's not how it is, if it weren't for Sister-in-law bumping into my son, would I be serving Mrs. Lin? This is Sister-in-law's fault!"

Mrs. Jin, being pointed out, had a face flush red and felt a bit unhappy inside.

Back then, she got money and clothes, and the second house is indeed an ungrateful wolf.

"Dad, I can't work either. Chen Hong is about to leave, I don't have anyone to serve, and the injury on my ass isn't healed yet, I can't go!" Mu Danian also said.

Mr. Mu's expression turned unsightly, he shifted his gaze to Mu Dajiang, originally thinking that Mu Dajiang would take the lead, but Mu Dajiang shook his head too.

"Dad, everything must be fair. If the second house and fifth house work, I'll go too, otherwise I won't!"

Old Mrs. Mu was furious, jumping up and cursing them one by one.

"Alright, you're all lazy, we have so much land at home, if you don't work, I don't work, do you expect me, an old woman, to tiptoe to the fields to work and feed you all?"

"Mom, we didn't force you to work, anyway, big brother is a scholar now, and there's money, why don't you have Sister-in-law bring out some silver to hire a few sturdy men, finish the job in a few days!" Mu Dazhong suggested.

Chapter 619: Unwilling to Support the First Household (Part 1)

"Bah!"

Old Mrs. Mu spat right on Mu Dazhong's face and then started cursing.

"You really think you've got a dog's tail wagged up to the sky, thinking you're some Golden Noble, eh? Don't want to do any work at home and still want to hire someone else? Why don't you just fly up to the heavens?"

Let me tell you, old woman here says, you'll do it whether you want to or not!"

Old Mrs. Mu's words carried some weight, at least those who previously refused to work fell silent.

Everyone looked at each other, unsure of what to do.

Mu Dalian gritted his teeth and took a stand, "Fourth brother has a point, the work should be done by everyone together; that's fair!

If we're working, then Xiangxiang should too, and so should the eldest sister-in-law and the nieces; no one should be left out.

We didn't let the first branch work before so that big brother could focus on his exams, and sister-in-law and Dan Dan, Yingying could take good care of him.

Now that big brother has succeeded as a scholar, there's still the question of whether he'll continue with the exams, but it won't affect his future endeavors. Sister-in-law and the nieces should also help out."

Mu Dalian's words spoke directly to everyone's feelings.

In the Old Mu Family, work had always been like this. Those liked by the old man and the old woman stayed home with nothing to do, while those they didn't like had to do the heaviest work, leaving early and returning late.

That's how it was for the third of the third branch back then. Now that the third has been separated and can't work, they don't want to be the next fools who get exploited.

"Mom, I think Fifth has a point. During the summer harvest, our second branch was fully mobilized, even Gou Dan, just a few years old, had to come along.

At that time, Xiangxiang hadn't returned, but Zhenzhen was there, she'd just eat and sleep every day, not once lending a hand in the fields, it made us feel really cold-hearted.

If this time, the entire second branch goes out while the first branch and Xiangxiang rest at home, we might not be able to work." Mu Dazhong boldly shouted.

Previously, in the Old Mu Family, the different branches would shirk work onto one another.

Now that Mu Dade has become a scholar, everyone feels that their status has risen.

They're no longer mere mud-legged peasants of Er Gui Village.

They are unwilling to do dirty and tiring work.

But Mu Dazhong made a grave mistake by suggesting Mu Xiangxiang should work.

"You heartless dog, trying to kill Xiangxiang, a young girl who's never done fieldwork, how come the heavens don't strike you down with lightning!"

Old Mrs. Mu opened her mouth and spat a thick wad of phlegm onto Mu Dazhong's face.

Mu Dazhong retreated several steps, disgusted, wiping his face continuously.

"Mom, since you say so, we're not working either." Mu Danian plopped down on a stool.

He thought: Worst case, I'd get a beating. Even if that happens, Xiangxiang must go work.

"You... you ungrateful wretches, Xiangxiang is your sister, what's wrong with taking care of her?..."

Old Mrs. Mu was so angry that her mouth was crooked, looking at each son wanting to make Mu Xiangxiang work, wanting to skin them alive.

Beside her, Mrs. Jin also looked displeased, even angry, especially as Old Mrs. Mu only defended Mu Xiangxiang and not the first branch.

All these people, when times are good, they want the first branch to lead. Now that work's needed, they want to drag the first branch down, no way.

"Dad, Mom, it's not that I don't want to work, but now I'm a Scholar's wife. In the future, I'll have to deal with those officials and landlords in the county.

If others see me dirty and filthy, it's not just my own face that's lost, but also that of Dade's.

You wouldn't want Dade's official position to be unstable because people look down on his wife as an old and ugly black woman, right?"

Having seen the world, Mrs. Jin's words swayed even Mr. Mu.

The first branch daughter-in-law was the only one presentable in the entire family. If they did go to the county, only she resembled city folk, only she could maintain an appearance.

"The eldest sister-in-law doesn't have to go out, she can cook at home, but Dan and Ying have to go work. It's not like those young girls need to meet those officials, right? I haven't heard of young girls going to see officials." Mu Dazhong rolled his eyes.

The first branch is the best at maneuvering, and also the laziest.

This time, the group was united against the first branch.

At this point, Mr. Mu was put in a difficult spot too.

Work in the Old Mu Family had already become a tradition of sorts: the third was honest, worked fast, and was willing to endure hardship, so the dirtier and more tiring jobs were his.

The fourth was reclusive, worked slowly but never complained, so plowing and harrowing the fields were his tasks.

The second and fifth were lazy, but with the third and fourth as backup, house work would generally get done on time.

"Since everyone feels this way, today's work will be done by the whole family. The eldest daughter-in-law and your mother will cook at home, Xiangxiang will go to the fields, and the eldest's two daughters as well; anyone who slacks off won't have lunch!"

This decision only came after Mr. Mu thought it over a long time.

The Old Mu Family must remain fair and just, otherwise, this family would fall apart.

"No way, Mrs. Lin can't just lie on the brick bed either; Second, go get your wife up. If she won't come, give her a divorce paper, let her return to the Lin Family Village!"

"Mom, Gou Dan's mother isn't fully recovered yet, if something happens to her, what then?"

At least Mu Dazhong had a little conscience, understanding not to drag Mrs. Lin down.

"Something happens? What could happen? The lazy die, not the working. If she really dies in the fields, I'll spend money to get you a young, pretty wife, now off you go!"

Old Mrs. Mu's words were harsh but aligned with Mu Dazhong's desires.

Mrs. Lin didn't have a miscarriage; if she really worked to death, his mom would find him a young and pretty one.

"Mom, I'll go get that lazy woman Lin up right now. If she doesn't get up, I'll whack her with a hoe!"

Mu Dazhong rushed towards the second branch, with everyone watching him call the recuperating Mrs. Lin up, the words they wanted to say choked in their throats.

Fine, we'll just slack off in the fields then!

After a while, the second branch of the Old Mu Family let out cries like slaughtering pigs.

Mu Dazhong urged Mrs. Lin to scream while pretending to beat her with something.

"Gou Dan's mother, scream louder, it'll help you slack off later!"

Mrs. Lin, unsuspecting, cried louder while cursing.

A while later, Mu Dazhong came out dragging a disheveled Mrs. Lin.

The entire Mu Family set off grandly towards the field ridges.

The scene was nothing short of spectacular!

Chapter 620: Settling the Marriage (Second Update)

Mu Shuangshuang cut a row of rice on the ridge and returned to where she started, when she saw Lu Yuanfeng running, out of breath.

His hands were empty, he wasn't holding anything.

Mu Shuangshuang put down the sickle in her hand, picked up a jug of water from the ridge, and walked over.

"What were you doing? Why are you so out of breath?"

Without bothering to wipe the sweat off his forehead, Lu Yuanfeng said, "I went back to count, I only have two taels of silver at home, three sets of bows and arrows, four mud houses, about an acre and a half of farmland, a fish pond that's an acre, and then there's the vegetable garden..."

Lu Yuanfeng listed his family's possessions clearly for Mu Shuangshuang, who was puzzled, then saw Lu Yuanfeng say, "Shuangshuang, this is all the property my family has, it's not enough, but I want to get engaged with you first. Once I've earned enough, I'll ask your third uncle and aunt to marry you to me!"

Lu Yuanfeng spoke slowly, but very sincerely.

Mu Shuangshuang sighed. This kid must have been goaded by Mrs. Qian's words.

"Do you really want to marry me?" Mu Shuangshuang asked seriously.

Lu Yuanfeng nodded heavily: "Yes! No matter the cost, no matter what Shuangshuang asks me to do!"

In this life, Lu Yuanfeng had decided on the girl in front of him, no matter what.

"If I were a heartless woman, just out to cheat your money, lazy and seeking pleasure, would you still want to marry me?" Mu Shuangshuang asked again.

"Yes!" Lu Yuanfeng nodded solemnly and then explained, "Shuangshuang is not that kind of person!"

"Alright then, we'll set the engagement in December. When we're older, we'll fix a day for the wedding!" Mu Shuangshuang said.

At this moment, Lu Yuanfeng realized what it meant to have all the luck in a lifetime fall on one day.

He looked at Shuangshuang in amazement, full of disbelief.

A feeling of happiness and sweetness welled up in his heart.

"Shuangshuang, are you serious? You're not lying to me? I'm not dreaming?"

The three consecutive questions were enough to prove Lu Yuanfeng's excitement.

"Of course, I'm not joking. But to be my man, you must listen to me. In the future... in the future, you cannot be with other women, you cannot look at women more beautiful than me, and you must not quarrel with me over other women."

Mu Shuangshuang hadn't thought of marrying Lu Yuanfeng just for a day or two.

Though she had no romantic experience, she knew that in her previous life she dealt with many men, but none made her feel as good as Fengzi.

In short, she had decided on Fengzi.

Since Fengzi would be hers sooner or later, she would protect her man well and not let him get entangled with other women.

"I agree to everything!" Lu Yuanfeng burst into laughter, looking like a fool.

On the ridge, everyone only saw Lu Yuanfeng and Mu Shuangshuang talking, but no one knew what they were saying.

However, Yu Si Niang, being Shuangshuang's mother, could tell from the happiness in her daughter's eyes.

It seemed there would be a happy event in the third branch soon.

Once this matter was settled, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng still had to work. The two discussed, and at lunch, Yu Si Niang would find Matchmaker Sun to set the engagement date.

When the time came, invite a few acquaintances, have a meal, set off some firecrackers, and when they actually got married, they would celebrate grandly.

Mu Shuangshuang continued cutting rice with her sickle, and Lu Yuanfeng used a shoulder pole to carry the rice to the ridge and then used a cart to transport it to their yard or the village's common threshing ground when night fell.

Not to mention, although there were not many people working in the third branch, their work efficiency was unmatched.

It's like the people of the Old Mu Family, all crowded into an acre of land, but everyone worked at the pace of a snail.

Mu Xiangxiang stood on the ridge, looking disdainful, refusing to go down.

But with Old Mrs. Mu not around, who would feel sorry for her?

"Dad, my little sister still isn't going to the field. If she doesn't work, neither will we!" Mu Dazhong and Mrs. Lin stood side by side, and after a long time, they hadn't cut an inch of land together.

One sweep of the sickle, and they need to rest for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, longer than the time it takes to relieve constipation.

The rest of the branches weren't much better.

Mu Danian was still sitting on the ridge, not even the sun touched him.

The fourth branch, Mu Dajiang, although not slower than others, had saved his strength compared to before.

The two girls in the main branch, not worth mentioning, had never cut rice; even their grip on the sickle was wrong.

Mr. Mu stood on the ridge, almost steaming with anger.

He thought calling people out would solve the problem, but it ended up being a game in the field.

Especially when Mr. Mu looked up and saw his former fertile land, where Yu Si Niang and Shuangshuang were working diligently, he felt even more uncomfortable.

From Mr. Mu's direction, that land had already been cut several rows, and the speed of Shuangshuang and Si Niang was incredibly fast, a row of rice was gone in no time.

On the ridge, the stacks of cut rice were like small hills, gradually piling up.

Mr. Mu suddenly felt a sense of sadness, his three sons couldn't even match the work done by children in the third branch.

Sadness indeed!

Mr. Mu himself didn't want to admit it, but without the mainstay of the Old Mu Family, the third branch was thriving, building houses, buying land, starting vegetable gardens, and Shuang making money from business.

Their income was something the Old Mu Family couldn't match up to.

And the Old Mu Family, lacking the laborious beam, was gradually tilting...

"Dad, what are you looking at? Still not working?" Mu Dazhong saw Mr. Mu standing in the field, fearing he himself would have to work later, so he reminded Mr. Mu.

That reminder sparked Mr. Mu's anger.

"Old Dazhong, you have the nerve to talk, look at how much rice you've cut in front of you? And look at the work the third branch has done?"

Mu Dazhong retorted unhappily after being scolded: "If you like the third branch so much, call them back.

Let them help our family with work, we can go home and rest, and sleep the day away!"

"You beast, if you want to die, you get out of the Old Mu Family. You're not my son!" Mr. Mu cursed angrily.

Mu Dazhong then softened his tone. "Dad, I'm just joking, we don't want to be this slow either, but we truly don't know how. We weren't the ones cutting rice before. Why don't you ask the third branch to come over and teach us?

Their speed must have a method. If we learn it, wouldn't we be the same as them, finishing a few acres easily?"

Mu Dazhong's suggestion made Mr. Mu somewhat tempted.

Indeed, it didn't make sense for the third branch to work so quickly, there must be some secret.

"You wait here, I'll call Si Niang over to demonstrate for you!"