

## Folly 65

### Chapter 65: The Trouble-making Aunt

As soon as he finished speaking, Lu Yuanfeng regretted it. He still hadn't treated that pigskin properly, and Shuangshuang, being just a young girl, surely wouldn't know how to do it. Without treated pigskin, even if she took it back, it'd be just a useless piece.

"Shuangshuang, if you're not in a hurry, how about I bring it over later?"

"Whenever you have time is fine." Mu Shuangshuang nodded in agreement.

After lunch, a group of children each found a piece of grass to nap on, while Lu Yuanfeng washed pots by the stream. Originally, this was Mu Shuangshuang's task, but Lu Yuanfeng insisted that the sun was too strong, and made Mu Shuangshuang stay under the shade of the trees. Unable to argue, Mu Shuangshuang let him do it.

With nothing to do, Mu Shuangshuang found a few palm leaves and started making grasshoppers out of grass. Her skills were advanced, and in a short time, she had crafted one.

The weather was growing hotter. Even under the shade of the trees, Mu Shuangshuang wiped her sweat several times. The scorching sun was baking the earth, and even the little grasses by the road wilted, drooping limply.

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The men of the Old Mu Family had just finished working, sitting in the kitchen pounding their feet and lamenting.

Without Mu Dashan, who usually got everyone home early for meals, they dragged until noon, and even then, more than half of the work in the fields was unfinished.

"Oh my goodness, if this continues, I'll be exhausted to death," Mu Dazhong complained while pounding his shoulder, directing his words at Mr. Mu, who was still drinking tea.

"Exactly, Dad, when will third brother be ready to work? My shoulders are aching so much I can't lift them anymore." The fifth in the Mu Family, Mu Danian, saw Mu Dazhong complaining and didn't want to miss the chance, so he started complaining too.

"Dad, why don't you let the third stop resting? If he keeps resting, the work at home will never be finished."

"Second, what heartless words are you spouting? The third only rested half the morning, he's not fully recovered, do you want him dead?"

Mr. Mu looked displeased. He knew his two sons were lazy, but he didn't expect them to be heartless enough to send their third brother to work.

He was sick only yesterday. Even if it were a cow, it would need a day or two to rest. Let alone a person.

Yu Si Niang listened to their second uncle and fifth uncle's words, her fists clenching tightly under her sleeves. Her husband was suffering, yet they wanted him to work - did these people have no conscience?

"Dad, from what I see, Dan Dan's second uncle and third uncle are not wrong. With one less man to work at home, the field work is delayed significantly. Big Brother is about to take the Autumn Examination in August, and the rice hasn't been stored yet. I'm afraid we won't even have money to travel to the county for the exam."

This made Mr. Mu worried. The eldest needed money for the exams, which was important. But the third hadn't recovered yet; if he worked and something happened, what would they do?

"Old man, what are you contemplating? Just let Dashan go do the work in the afternoon. What man doesn't get hurt a bit or peel his skin? But nobody wants to delay the harvest. Dashan doesn't look that serious to me.

At most, put a stool for him in the field to cut the rice; that way he won't tire, and it lightens the load."

When it came to matters related to Mu Dade, Old Mrs. Mu was like she was energized; anyone who objected was asking for trouble.

"Mom, Dashan can't go to the fields now. Please let him rest a few more days."

Yu Si Niang didn't want her husband to be exploited like that. They had agreed he could rest as long as needed, but now everything had changed overnight?

"Only you, the wife, know things. If Dashan doesn't work, when will the rice be stored? If it rains, everyone in the Old Mu Family will starve." Old Mrs. Mu had a stern face, obviously annoyed.

"Si Niang, don't be too worried. People don't die from exhaustion, only from laziness. When your third uncle goes to work, maybe he'll recover completely.

If you help Dade this once, and he passes as a scholar, then he'll take the Champion Scholar exam in the Capital. Even if he doesn't go to the Capital, just being a scholar means he could become an official."

Mrs. Jin saw it clearly. The old man and old lady wanted to send her husband out only to have someone in the family becoming an official, so the Old Mu Family could hold their heads high in the future.

Whenever the prospect of becoming an official arose, not just the old man but even the rest would agree.

"Exactly, third sister-in-law. Third brother is our brother; would we harm him? As I see it, we should wake third brother this afternoon, finish the field work, and set aside money for eldest brother.

If eldest brother can become an official, our whole family will benefit, and we brothers will be siblings of an official."

Mu Danian had long hoped Mu Dade would become an official and pull him up, so his persuasion to Yu Si Niang was well-reasoned.

"Enough talking. This time listen to me, old woman. In a moment, fifth, go call your third brother and tell him the old woman said this family doesn't support idlers. If he wants to eat, he must work."

"Then what if we don't eat?" Yu Si Niang boldly retorted.

If they didn't eat, maybe they wouldn't lose their lives, and perhaps her husband's life could be saved.

"Yu Si Niang, have you been bitten by a mad dog, unable to tell direction? What are you talking about?"

Whether the third works or eats, it's not your concern. Get back to your doghouse and don't appear before me again, or I'll have the third divorce you."

"Mom..." Yu Si Niang called out unwillingly. Suddenly, Old Mrs. Mu picked up a stick from the door and threatened to swing it at Yu Si Niang, forcing her out of the kitchen.

Mrs. Jin grinned at the scene. Truthfully, she had anticipated it; whenever it involved her husband, the old woman wouldn't argue against it.

"Since no one is objecting, let's settle it. Soon, I'll talk to Dan Dan's dad about this, tell him to prepare well for the exam for everyone's sake."

Mrs. Jin picked up a silk scarf, wiped the sweat off her forehead. Her scarf was beautiful, pink, embroidered with peonies.

Mrs. Lin stared enviously at the scarf because she hadn't seen it before. It must've been added recently, and judging by its quality and craftsmanship it must have cost a fortune.

Thinking of herself made Mrs. Lin feel unbalanced, and she looked at Mrs. Jin increasingly resentfully.

Married into the Old Mu Family all these years, she had two sons. No need to mention a scarf; even the dowry saved for her sons were exploited by the old woman.

This damned old woman, she's practically biased; her heart's all on the eldest's crotch.

"Second Aunt, are you staring at me like that because you have an opinion about my husband? Think it's wrong for us to have the third branch work?"