

Folly 701

Chapter 701: You Were Addicted to Gambling Back Then

"I'm going to find them!"

After Yu Liulang said this, he was about to rush in the direction of the Luo family.

Lu Yuanfeng stopped him.

"Shuangshuang's uncle, if you go now, it'll just make people think you're unwilling to take responsibility.

When the Luo family pours dirt on you, not only will you be forced to marry Luo Xiu'er, but even Shuangshuang's aunt might not be able to stay."

"Uncle, Fengzi is right, you can't act impulsively in this matter," said Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang understood deep down that, since Luo Xiu'er had set up such a big trap, she was waiting for her uncle to fall in.

It's definitely not something that can be resolved in a few words.

With her, it was bound to be a tough battle.

"This doesn't work, that doesn't work, what should I do to solve this?" Yu Liulang was angry but couldn't find a way to vent.

After thinking for a while, he suddenly said, "How about I explain to the villagers that I'm not capable, so they won't suspect me, and your Aunt Xiaohua won't leave?"

The man was full of anxiety.

He had never experienced anything like this.

He didn't know how to handle it, nor did he know how to face it.

He was completely bewildered.

"Sixth Uncle, saying these things now will only make the villagers laugh at you; it won't solve the problem.

Moreover, people will believe it's an excuse you've thought up to avoid responsibility.

Listen to Shuangshuang, and let's explain clearly to Aunt Xiao Hua. Without her cooperation, this thing can't be handled."

Mu Shuangshuang vetoed Yu Liulang's idea.

At this point, no matter what Yu Liulang did, he'd become the target of everyone's attack.

Rather than that, he'd be better off staying quietly at home.

The three of them returned along the original path, and after reaching a small path in the village, they headed towards the Feng family.

This scene was just witnessed by Old Lady Luo.

She hurriedly ran toward her own home, nearly blowing her rear end apart.

Upon reaching home, she didn't bother to catch her breath and quickly said to Luo Xiu'er, who was resting on the bed, "Ah Xiu, that brat brought Yu Liulang to find Feng Xiaohua.

The two of them are probably going to make up. What should we do now?"

Luo Xiu'er was already somewhat tired and, upon hearing Old Lady Luo's words, suddenly jumped out of bed.

"What did you say? That brat brought Sixth Son to Feng Xiaohua?"

I knew it, that little bitch is no pushover," Luo Xiu'er said angrily.

While the mother and daughter were talking, Old Sir Luo also rushed in.

After just a few steps, the old man was panting heavily, almost out of breath.

"Xiuxiu, do you think the matter of us putting Yu Liulang in the haystack will be discovered?"

Our family is already having a hard time, and if the villagers find out we purposely harmed Yu Liulang, we won't have anywhere to stand," Old Sir Luo said.

Seeing Old Sir Luo, Luo Xiu'er got angry.

"Enough, chaos hasn't erupted yet, and you're already all over the place.

If it wasn't for your gambling, racking up a debt, I wouldn't have given up on Yu Liulang and followed that dead old man from the Zhang family.

Now you stopped gambling, but your son is, and the debt still has to be repaid by me."

Old Sir Luo backed up several steps, not daring to look his daughter in the eyes.

"That's right, you dead old man. If it weren't for you, who knows how well our Old Luo Family would be doing,"

Old Lady Luo scolded Old Sir Luo, not bringing up her son, Luo Dafu's matter.

"But, Xiuxiu, can you really get the Old Yu family's tea garden for us?" Old Lady Luo asked worriedly.

Yu Family Village was primarily known for tea production, with many nearby hills often shrouded in mist year-round.

So, the tea grown there was particularly good.

The Old Yu family's tea garden was on such a hill.

Others' raw tea sold for eighteen coins a pound, while the Old Yu family's could sell for twenty coins, sometimes even higher.

People of the Da Ning Dynasty mostly loved drinking tea.

Good-selling tea naturally brought in money.

Furthermore, Yu Liulang knew how to manage tea, so the Old Yu family earned more and more through their tea garden.

Which family in the village didn't envy them? Everyone hoped to get a share, any share they could.

"I said I can, so I can, as long as you follow what I say, continue to make a fuss at the Old Yu family every day.

When it's time to act, don't hold back, only then will Yu Liulang sympathize with me."

Luo Xiu'er knew Yu Liulang was kind and responsible.

If she lived poorly because of him, he would surely feel guilty.

As long as he was willing to marry her, Luo Xiu'er vowed that she had the ability to make him fall for her again.

"We're fine, we'll keep acting our parts.

But Xiuxiu, you haven't gotten the letter releasing the concubine yet, marrying like this and being discovered by the Zhang family, will it?"

Old Lady Luo was deeply worried about her daughter's matter being discovered by the Old Zhang Family.

If that happens, not to mention getting the tea garden back, they might lose the person to provide for their retirement.

The son is still young, he can't take responsibility, otherwise, he'll be ruined.

"What letter releasing the concubine! That old man let that old hag beat my child away, I'm totally done with his family!" Luo Xiu'er yelled.

"But you said the child wasn't Old Sir Zhang's, but someone else's!" Old Lady Luo said cautiously.

This time, it triggered Luo Xiu'er into a fit of rage.

"You keep saying it! I've already told you, this matter must rot in your stomach, do you want me dead?"

Let me tell you, if I, Luo Xiu'er, die, don't expect to get any money, and as for your gambling son, just wait for him to meet his end!"

Luo Xiu'er exploded, scaring Old Lady Luo into not daring to make a sound.

She also shrank into a ball, almost curling into a shrimp.

"Xiuxiu, don't be angry. Now, relatives don't want to associate with our family anymore, and your dad and I are counting on you to provide for us, so don't fall ill with anger,"

Old Lady Luo quickly consoled Luo Xiu'er obsequiously.

Luo Xiu'er glared at her, then climbed back onto the bed.

"I want braised ribs tonight, go buy some. Also, the weather's getting colder, and that broken house doesn't have a bed heater, it's freezing. I'm not going back, I'll stay here for now.

If anyone asks, just say you're afraid I'll jump into the river, and the Old Yu family won't take responsibility.

Anything else, I'll tell you when I think of it."

Luo Xiu'er said a long series of things, all instructions for the days ahead.

Old Lady Luo agreed to everything and then dragged Old Sir Luo outside.

Once the house was quiet, Luo Xiu'er's mood still didn't calm down.

She knew that all this was caused by Mu Shuangshuang.

If it weren't for that brat, by now Yu Liulang would have married her.

Since that brat likes Feng Xiaohua so much, she'll ruin Feng Xiaohua's reputation.

Let's see if Yu Liulang still dares to take Feng Xiaohua back.

Yu Liulang belonged to her, Luo Xiu'er, and the Yu family's estate and wealth were also hers.

Chapter 702: Forcing Luo Xiu'er into a Corner (Part 1)

Mu Shuangshuang led Yu Liulang to Feng Xiaohua's home.

As usual, Feng Quezi didn't make things difficult for Yu Liulang and even let him into the courtyard.

"Sixth Son, since you're here today, I won't say much. It's just that Xiao Hua, this child, is stubborn and rarely changes her mind once she's set on something.

Just like before, when you wouldn't marry, she kept waiting and wouldn't even let you know her thoughts.

This time, I see she's the same. Whatever it is, she keeps it to herself without telling me her inner thoughts.

This old man finds it painful to watch, but regarding matters between you two, I, as a father, have no place to comment. Now, I just hope you and Xiao Hua will be alright."

Feng Quezi stood in front of Yu Liulang, leaning on his crutch, his face showing not the slightest blame but a look of genuine concern.

He truly is an understanding father. From the start of the matter until now, even when the whole village was scolding Yu Liulang, he always stood by Yu Liulang's side.

Believing him, giving him a chance.

Because Feng Quezi knows that the only one who can give his daughter happiness is this Yu Liulang.

"Thank you, Dad, I... I will be good to Xiao Hua. In the future, Xiao Hua and I will take care of you together, thank you..."

Yu Liulang felt a mix of gratitude and bitterness as he talked to Feng Quezi and then entered the Feng household.

Since Mu Shuangshuang came, Feng Xiaohua has been lying on the kang resting.

Back at the Feng family for several days, Feng Xiaohua hadn't eaten a proper meal, and now she was skinny and unrecognizable.

Looking at his wife lying on the kang, Yu Liulang suddenly felt a pang of sadness and tears welled up.

"Xiao Hua, I... nothing happened between me and Luo Xiu'er, I was set up by her."

Yu Liulang's voice echoed in Feng Xiaohua's room, and she shuddered.

She grabbed the quilt beside her and started to sob.

Yu Liulang quickly went forward to comfort her. He held Feng Xiaohua and told her everything he had discussed with Shuangshuang.

Including Shuangshuang's analysis.

"Xiao Hua, you know I can't have relations with anyone, how could I mess around with Luo Xiu'er? I told you long ago, it's impossible between Luo Xiu'er and me." Yu Liulang said as he held Feng Xiaohua, crying.

A big man, crying uncontrollably.

Feng Xiaohua felt distressed seeing this.

She finally relented.

"I believe you, just... stop crying, it pains me to see you like this!"

"Xiao Hua..." Yu Liulang cried even harder, and no matter how Feng Xiaohua tried to console him, he wouldn't stop.

At that moment, both of them suddenly felt how fortunate it was that they could still be together.

As for those hardships, they only served to deepen their trust in each other, nothing more.

"Xiao Hua, let's stop crying now. There are still things we need to resolve; let's go find Shuangshuang and discuss a plan!" Yu Liulang carefully wiped away Feng Xiaohua's tears.

"Okay!" Feng Xiaohua nodded.

The couple appeared hand in hand in the Feng family's main room, and Mu Shuangshuang knew everything was fine now.

"Shuangshuang, Xiao Hua and I will listen to you. Whatever you ask us to do, as long as it can resolve this matter, we'll do it," Yu Liulang said.

"Me too!" Feng Xiaohua chimed in.

Mu Shuangshuang nodded and began to analyze.

"Regarding this matter, Luo Xiu'er's goal is to drive away Aunt Xiao Hua and then become the wife of the uncle?"

Since she thinks this way, we'll do exactly the opposite of what she wants. Uncle, you need to tell her you can't let down Aunt Xiao Hua.

Aunt Xiao Hua, go back and tell your family that you've forgiven Uncle. I suspect Luo Xiu'er will then target Aunt Xiao Hua."

As soon as Mu Shuangshuang finished speaking, Yu Liulang stood up to refute.

"Shuangshuang, we can't drag your Aunt Xiao Hua into this. This mess is my doing, no matter the beatings or the scoldings, I'll bear them alone!"

"Sixth Uncle, things aren't as you wish now. Since Luo Xiu'er dared to target you, Aunt Xiao Hua is her next target.

Instead of waiting for her to find ways and means to strike, we should create opportunities to force her hand.

A clear gun is easy to dodge, but a hidden arrow is hard to guard against. Knowing what she's planning helps us devise a counter-strategy," Mu Shuangshuang said.

Lu Yuanfeng said, "Shuangshuang's uncle, you have no retreat now; you have to follow Shuangshuang's plan to resolve this matter as soon as possible.

Don't worry. With Shuangshuang around, nothing will go wrong."

Yu Liulang sighed deeply in agreement with Mu Shuangshuang's plan.

Feng Xiaohua began to pack, preparing to return with Yu Liulang.

Mu Shuangshuang pulled Yu Liulang aside and asked him which businessman in the county Luo Xiu'er had married.

Yu Liulang wasn't sure either.

"Shuangshuang, this is the Old Luo family's matter, but I heard the family name is Zhang, and they're in the cloth and jewelry business."

After speaking, Yu Liulang looked puzzled. "Shuangshuang, aren't we dealing with Luo Xiu'er? Why bother with whom she married? She's divorced now, so knowing it doesn't help, right?"

Mu Shuangshuang shook her head, "Not necessarily, sometimes, it's the details that can help solve problems.

Besides, there's an old saying: know yourself and your enemy, and you'll never lose a battle.

Luo Xiu'er knows your nature very well, and Old Lady Luo probably told her everything about you over the years.

But we're unfamiliar with her experiences over the years, and if we truly end up in a fight, this lack of knowledge puts us at a disadvantage."

Yu Liulang initially didn't think knowing Luo Xiu'er's past was important, but now he saw the intricacies involved.

"Shuangshuang, how does a young girl like you know so much? Even I, as an uncle, feel ashamed in comparison.

Uncle reckons you're not like a child anymore, no different from adults."

Yu Liulang laughed humbly and scratched his head, looking sincerely at Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang laughed too. "Uncle, I'm really not a child. Others my age are already married, and some might even have children."

Yu Liulang figured she was right and didn't dwell on the issue.

"Shuangshuang, my wife and I will head back directly, so when should I go talk to Luo Xiu'er and say those things you taught me?" Yu Liulang, eager to resolve the matter, asked.

"Uncle, don't rush. We need to wait.

Once Luo Xiu'er learns Aunt Xiao Hua has returned, she'll come looking for you, and you should tell her exactly what I taught you. The rest is up to Fengzi and me."

"Alright, I'll take Xiao Hua back to the Old Yu Family now."

Over there, Feng Xiaohua packed her clothes, and Yu Liulang helped carry them as they headed to the Old Yu Family together.

On the way, they encountered quite a few villagers who, upon seeing Yu Liulang, would point and talk about him.

Chapter 703: The Good Deeds Done by Second Aunt (Part 2)

Yu Liulang couldn't bear the thought of Feng Xiaohua being scolded alongside him, so he quickened his pace.

Yet they were still followed and scolded right up to the gate of the Old Yu Family's courtyard.

There was a village woman who went too far, pointing at Yu Liulang and cursing loudly, "Pfft, doing such shameless things and still daring to show your face in the village.

And you, Feng Xiaohua, are you saying all the men in the world are dead, and you still choose a man who crawled out of a dung pit?"

Feng Xiaohua and Yu Liulang were scolded harshly and relentlessly.

Just then, worried about Yu Liulang, Yu Si Niang came out to check if her brother had returned. Hearing those words scolding her brother, she rolled up her sleeves without a second thought, jumped up, and pointed at the woman, cursing.

"Wu Meiyin, you vicious woman, what did my brother do to you that you need to curse him like this?"

Did he dig up your family's ancestral grave or steal your family's belongings? If you keep screaming in the street, be careful, I might tear your mouth apart!"

Yu Si Niang's words were full of momentum. At least, everyone around was shocked by her presence.

Back before she was married, Yu Si Niang was always running around with those kids in the village, known for being quite the fierce person.

But after getting married, she listened obediently to Old Mrs. Mu and followed the kindhearted Mu Dashan, so it had been years since she scolded anyone.

"You... you..." The woman retreated repeatedly, and in the end, because of Yu Si Niang's words, she was forced to shut her mouth.

Yu Si Niang still had a fierce look, glaring at those around who had been eager to scold Yu Liulang.

The villagers were somewhat scared, afraid of causing more trouble than it's worth. If something really stirs up, they'll be the ones to suffer.

Soon, the villagers all went back to their own homes.

This was the quietest time at the Old Yu Family lately. No one yelled curses at their door.

And nobody pointed at Yu Liulang's nose calling him shameless anymore.

The people of the Old Yu Family, each held their breath, looking at Yu Si Niang who was like a mother hen protecting her chicks.

"Shuangshuang, did you see that?" Yu Si Niang blushed as she noticed Mu Shuangshuang, who had somehow arrived outside the courtyard.

"Yes, mom, you were really amazing just now. If anyone bullies you again, just say those words to them and tear their mouth apart. Shuangshuang promises no one will dare to touch you!"

Mu Shuangshuang gave Yu Si Niang a thumbs up.

Yu Si Niang felt more and more embarrassed.

"Mom just saw them bullying your uncle and aunt, couldn't help but curse them, didn't mean to start anything."

"Shuangshuang knows, but this just proves that you are still very capable. Whenever you meet bad people or bullies in the future, just use this aura to fight back."

Yu Si Niang didn't directly respond to Mu Shuangshuang, seemingly still hesitating.

"By the way, Shuangshuang, why haven't I seen Fengzi?"

Yu Si Niang looked further outside the courtyard but still couldn't see him.

"Mom, Fengzi went back to the village. He went back to borrow Uncle Fu's horse to go to the county."
Mu Shuangshuang replied.

"That kid, he didn't even eat lunch, how can he go to town on an empty stomach?" Yu Si Niang was extremely worried.

"Mom, don't worry, I gave Fengzi the one tael of silver I had and told him to have a bowl of shredded pork noodles in town before hitting the road, so he won't starve himself."

Only then did Yu Si Niang feel somewhat relieved.

"Shuangshuang, tell me honestly, did Fengzi go to the county for something regarding your Sixth Uncle?" Yu Si Niang asked.

Yu Si Niang always felt her daughter was hiding something from her.

And the situation with Liulang, although Xiaohua has returned, isn't resolved yet.

Mu Shuangshuang didn't want to tell Yu Si Niang the truth just yet. She cared too much about Yu Liulang, and she might tell someone about it to prove Yu Liulang's innocence.

"Mom, don't ask about this. Tonight, you and Dad both stay here.

Shuangshuang will return to Er Gui Village to take care of my younger brother and sister for the night. Tomorrow I'll ask Aunt Xiao Yun to watch them for a few days."

Mu Shuangshuang didn't plan to bring the four kids over. First, the situation at the Old Yu Family isn't a good thing; she was afraid it would influence the children poorly.

Secondly, Xue Zheng wasn't very accustomed to interacting with strangers. The people from the Old Yu Family were unfamiliar to him, and Mu Shuangshuang was also afraid the speaking habits she finally helped the child develop would disappear.

After lunch, Mu Shuangshuang walked back to Er Gui Village.

Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan stayed at the Old Yu Family. Yu Si Niang wasn't comfortable going back until the matter was resolved.

Luckily, it wasn't a busy farming season, and there were no cotton crops to be processed at home.

The few acres of greens they had were already picked and sent to the county by Mu Shuangshuang's arrangement.

Mu Shuangshuang returned to Er Gui Village, and it wasn't too late. Lu Yuanfeng had returned first, asking Zhao Yun to help make lunch.

However, the four kids were still eagerly watching the entrance, and seeing Mu Shuangshuang return, they all rushed over.

Those clinging to her legs, held her legs; those hugging her waist, held her waist.

Including Little Black and Lai Mi, who followed behind.

Little Black circled around in place, and Lai Mi barked non-stop. A warm feeling slowly flowed through Mu Shuangshuang's heart.

This home was still inseparable from her.

"Alright, alright, sister is almost out of breath, step back a bit." Mu Shuangshuang said.

Only then did the little ones let go of Mu Shuangshuang.

"Sister Shuangshuang, my second brother said he would rush back tonight, will you be home tonight?"

Yuanbao probably knew why Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan had gone out, likely they wouldn't come back tonight.

He just didn't know Mu Shuangshuang's situation; his big brother left in too much of a hurry.

"Of course, I'll be home to cook something delicious for you. Tell me what you want to eat tonight, and I'll consider whether to make it or not." Mu Shuangshuang said with a smile, looking in a good mood.

"Yuanbao wants to eat hot pot; it's so cold. Also wants baked sweet potatoes."

Mu Shuangshuang nodded, "Sure, all will be fulfilled!"

"Xiao Zheng, what do you want to eat?" Mu Shuangshuang didn't forget Xue Zheng standing beside her.

"Mushrooms..."

"Alright, I'll take you up the mountain to pick mushrooms later, and some wood ears. In a while, I'll take you to pick..." Mu Shuangshuang stopped mid-sentence.

She intended to mention bamboo shoots, but by then, Xue Zheng might not be in the third branch, she'd rather not leave the child with unfulfilled expectations.

Just in case she couldn't fulfill it, the child might keep asking about it.

Mu Shuangshuang led the kids into the house, but as soon as they entered, Yuanbao tugged at her sleeve, speaking mysteriously.

"Sister Shuangshuang, I discovered something, something very important."

Mu Shuangshuang lowered her head and leaned her ear closer to Yuanbao.

"Go on, sister's listening!"

"Little Zhi's second aunt is hitting a woman in that small house over there, I heard that woman screaming.

Little Zhi's second aunt also said she's not giving that woman food, planning to starve her!"

Mu Shuangshuang's mouth dropped in shock; the woman Yuanbao mentioned must be Mu Xiangxiang?

Would Mrs. Lin actually dare to hit Mu Xiangxiang, risking her life?

Moreover, with Mrs. Jin living next door, wouldn't she intervene?

"Yuanbao, who else knows about this besides you?"

Chapter 704: Kicked off the Kang

Yuanbao shook his head like a rattle.

"I don't know, I haven't told anyone! But Sister Shuangshuang, isn't this a really serious matter?"

Yuanbao's face was full of gossip, waiting eagerly for the answer and praise.

Mu Shuangshuang stretched out her hand and lightly flicked Yuanbao's forehead.

"It is! But this matter, Yuanbao can only tell me, don't tell anyone else."

"Why?" Yuanbao asked.

"Because the room you mentioned belongs to my aunt, she can't speak now, how could she be wailing?"

Mu Shuangshuang analyzed Yuanbao's words and ultimately felt that Mrs. Lin didn't have the guts for this.

Besides, Mu Xiangxiang, even if she were screaming, Yuanbao wouldn't necessarily hear it.

It's probably not Mu Xiangxiang, maybe Mrs. Lin is torturing someone, or Mrs. Lin is being tortured by Old Mrs. Mu.

"Alright!" Yuanbao lowered his head disappointedly.

"Go play, Sister Shuangshuang will take Brother Xiao Zheng to the mountains to gather firewood and pick mushrooms!"

Mu Shuangshuang entered her room and prepared the things needed for the trip to the mountains, including Little Black and Lai Mi.

Lu Yuanfeng had said that during this season, there are more animals in the mountains, and some would roam to the shallower mid-mountain or woods.

With Little Black and Lai Mi, if anything were to happen, the two of them could easily escape.

Xue Zheng carried his little basket and followed Mu Shuangshuang toward the mountains.

On the way, Xue Zheng kept glancing at Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang, in a good mood, chatted with him.

"Xiao Zheng, what was it like in the Capital before you came to Qingshan Town? Is the Capital fun? Are there tasty candied haws?"

Previously, Mu Shuangshuang had always avoided discussing the Capital with Xue Zheng.

Because she always felt that Xue Zheng's issues didn't just appear after arriving in Qingshan Town, there must have been problems long before.

Xue Zheng frowned and stopped walking.

Mu Shuangshuang noticed something was wrong and quickly said, "It's fine if Xue Zheng doesn't want to talk! Let's not talk about it, let's head to the mountains instead!"

Xue Zheng still refused to walk. After a while, he opened his mouth.

"I don't know..."

Mu Shuangshuang listened and felt that he wasn't lying, rather, there was a strong sense of helplessness in his words.

Mu Shuangshuang suddenly thought this matter still needs discussing with Old Mrs. Xue.

The Xue Family's eldest, how exactly is he raising his child?

Having made up her mind, Mu Shuangshuang felt relieved.

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The Old Mu Family

As usual, it was the hour for Mrs. Lin to give Mu Xiangxiang water.

Mrs. Lin held a bowl of cold water scooped from the water tank, in the icy winter, a bowl of cold water was like ice shards.

Yet Mrs. Lin insisted on using this water for Mu Xiangxiang.

Starving for many days, Mu Xiangxiang lay weakly on the bed, her face pale.

Even her long black hair had turned into lifeless straw.

"Xiangxiang, your second sister-in-law is bringing you water!" Mrs. Lin's words were gentle, but her gaze at Mu Xiangxiang was terrifying.

Mu Xiangxiang looked at Mrs. Lin, retreating repeatedly.

She was curled up in a ball, her body trembling, staring fearfully at Mrs. Lin.

"Xiangxiang, why can't you do something good and have to complain? I told you, neither Father nor Mother would believe you.

I and Qingqing just put on a little act, and Father scolded you terribly. Now that you're mute, you can forget about being Young Madam Qin, just wait to die at home."

Mrs. Lin spoke while laughing.

Mu Xiangxiang, starved and tormented by Mrs. Lin for several days, finally got her chance.

While Mrs. Lin went to the outhouse, Mu Xiangxiang complained to Old Mrs. Mu with sounds.

Old Mrs. Mu immediately ran to Mr. Mu to complain.

Mr. Mu didn't believe it, feeling there was no evidence and was determined to catch them in the act.

This morning, hearing Mrs. Lin cursing in the room, talking about starving someone, Old Mrs. Mu thought it was Mu Xiangxiang.

She had her feather duster ready, rushed in, only to find it was Mu Qingqing not taking care of Mu Xiangxiang, getting cursed by Mrs. Lin.

Hence, Mr. Mu completely trusted Mrs. Lin.

Mu Xiangxiang's daily care was handed over to Mrs. Lin.

"Ahhhh..." Mu Xiangxiang glared at Mrs. Lin, questioning her.

Probably meaning why Mrs. Lin treated her like this.

Mrs. Lin laughed heartily, "Who told you to always bully old me, let me tell you, I'm Lin Xiaozao, not someone anyone can bully. You bullied me, you bear Lin Xiaozao's punishment.

Xiangxiang, let's not waste words, drink tea, or Mother will scold me again."

Mrs. Lin, wearing black shoes, stepped on Mu Xiangxiang's bed and blanket.

Finally, grabbing Mu Xiangxiang's hair, she tilted Mu Xiangxiang's head back, pouring a bowl of cold water down.

Mu Xiangxiang struggled, the cold water flowed from her mouth onto the front of her shirt and some onto the bedsheet.

Mu Xiangxiang already wore little, and now her teeth were chattering from the cold.

Mrs. Lin was also angry.

Mu Xiangxiang like this meant that she'd have to wash her clothes and bedsheet again.

"Wretch, knowing only to trouble old me, look at how many clothes you change a day, I'll beat you!"
Mrs. Lin slapped Mu Xiangxiang's face.

Instantly, a red handprint appeared on Mu Xiangxiang's face.

Mu Xiangxiang cried out again, staring at Mrs. Lin with hatred.

Mrs. Lin was furious, she cursed loudly, "You little wretch, you still think you're someone's treasured heart.

Let me tell you, in this house now it's my word, if you dare to stir trouble, I'll take your life!"

Mrs. Lin spoke while tearing Mu Xiangxiang's clothes.

Mu Xiangxiang was stripped clean, then kicked off the bed by Mrs. Lin.

Mrs. Lin also took the bedsheet, preparing to wash it.

Suddenly, she saw the unemptied chamber pot, decided to go all out, and poured the contents over the bed blanket.

Mu Xiangxiang shivered from the cold, tried climbing onto the bed several times.

Each time she was dragged down by Mrs. Lin.

Her hands hit Mu Xiangxiang mercilessly, with Mu Xiangxiang's tears and snot smeared on her face.

Only then did Mrs. Lin feel better.

"Wretched girl, old me warned you, if you dare climb the bed, tomorrow will be worse!"

With that, Mrs. Lin grabbed the clothes and bedsheet and left, making sure to close Mu Xiangxiang's door to prevent her from escaping.

Mrs. Lin left the room, glanced at the locked room of the eldest, feeling bored.

"This sister-in-law isn't nice, going back to her family, she even locked the door, clearly guarding against me Lin Xiaozao.

Just you wait, our second house will rise up soon, when our Qing marries into the Qin Family, let's see how you flaunt in front of me."

Mrs. Lin walked toward the main house of the Old Mu Family.

Before she could fetch the laundry basin, Mu Qingqing pulled Mrs. Lin aside.

"Mother, how's my aunt doing? When will she die? Do you know?" Mu Qingqing asked.

Chapter 705: Plans Cannot Keep Up with Changes

"How would your mother know! But your little aunt has a very tough life, I've done so much, yet she doesn't die, it's so strange!"

Mrs. Lin only feeds Mu Xiangxiang one meal a day, a meal of leftovers.

Within a few days, Mu Xiangxiang became as thin as a skeleton.

Yet she just wouldn't die.

"Mother, why don't we just go ahead and kill little aunt, to prevent the Qin Family from coming for the engagement on the eighteenth of the winter month."

In the corner, Yuanbao heard Mu Qingqing and Mrs. Lin's conversation and was so scared he curled up into a ball.

He was just playing hide and seek with Little Zhi when he accidentally overheard Mrs. Lin and Mu Qingqing's words.

"This..." Mrs. Lin hesitated for a moment, suddenly a sound of breaking branches came from the nearby corner.

Mrs. Lin was startled and shouted, "Who is it, who's there?"

Mu Qingqing was equally surprised, both rushed forward, but found nothing.

"Mother, do you think you're scaring yourself? There's no one here."

Mrs. Lin wiped the sweat from her forehead and nodded.

"Mother must be hallucinating from taking care of your little aunt. Let's forget what you just mentioned.

Let's play it this way, even if your little aunt is still alive by the eighteenth of the winter month, she definitely can't appear in public.

By then, I'll badmouth your little aunt in front of the Qin Family, and the engagement will surely be off!"

Mu Qingqing nodded contentedly.

"Since mother said so, I won't worry about it. But mother, you should also be careful, grandma seems to have a big problem with you, I guess she'll secretly check how you're taking care of little aunt." Mu Qingqing analyzed.

"That old woman's intentions, I know better than anyone, serving her for so many years, just by smelling the fishy smell, I can tell what kind of fish it is."

Mrs. Lin spoke with a look of complete understanding.

Only then did Mu Qingqing relax.

After the two walked away, Mu Dalang came out from under a big tree, holding Yuanbao.

The conversation of Mu Qingqing and Mrs. Lin was not only overheard by Yuanbao but also by Mu Dalang.

Mu Dalang was extremely surprised.

The ones saying those words were his own mother and sister, and the one they wanted to harm was his little aunt.

Mu Dalang hesitated; if he went directly to tell his grandma, his mother and sister would be beaten to death by her.

But if he said nothing, his little aunt would die.

What to do?

What on earth should he do?

Mu Dalang was in a mess, right now, the only one he could think of was Mu Shuangshuang.

"Yuanbao, tell Brother Dalang, where did Sister Shuangshuang go?"

Yuanbao was still in a state of panic.

The whole person was dumbfounded.

Although Yuanbao was just a child, he understood the meaning of the words 'kill'.

Which meant murder.

"Brother Dalang, I'm so scared, Little Zhi's second aunt, so scary! Wuwuwu..."

Yuanbao cried, rubbing against Mu Dalang's clothing as he wept.

Soon, Mu Dalang's clothes were all covered in tears and snot.

Mu Dalang sympathized deeply, holding Yuanbao as they returned to the third branch.

Yuanbao cried the entire afternoon, and by the time Mu Shuangshuang returned from picking mushrooms, his eyes were swollen into large walnuts.

As soon as he saw Mu Shuangshuang, he cried even harder.

"What's going on here? Why are you crying so much?"

Mu Shuangshuang quietly asked.

This question triggered even more crying.

Mu Dalang stood aside in a sorry state.

He had tried everything and still couldn't console Yuanbao.

"Yuanbao, you're a man, why are you crying? Didn't you say you would protect Sister and Little Zhi?

How are you going to protect Sister, how will you protect Little Zhi like this?"

As Mu Shuangshuang asked, Xue Zheng also approached, offering his small handkerchief to Yuanbao.

"Stop crying, it's ugly!" Xue Zheng showed disdain on his face, but his expression was actually one of concern.

Yuanbao suddenly stopped crying, asking with red eyes, "Why are you talking? Don't you not talk?"

Mu Shuangshuang, seeing the situation, feared there wouldn't be more crying.

She handed Yuanbao to Xue Zheng and took Mu Dalang outside the courtyard.

At that moment, it was supper time; the villagers were all busy at home, no one on the road.

"Cousin, what's going on here?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

Mu Dalang recounted everything he overheard to Mu Shuangshuang, including how he almost got caught with Yuanbao and how he saved him.

Mu Shuangshuang furrowed her brows.

"Cousin, second aunt is too bold, even though my little aunt is mute now, what if she recovers in the future?"

Or does second aunt really intend, as Qingqing said, to take her life?"

Mu Dalang shook his head.

"I don't know, my mother refused Qingqing's suggestion, but I guess my little aunt's good days are yet to come.

This matter, I really don't know how to handle it. If I do nothing, little aunt will die.

If I intervene, my mother and sister will be beaten to death by grandma."

Mu Dalang was extremely worried.

"Cousin, I think you can't see it that way, second aunt made a mistake first, if not given a little penalty, will she harbor ill intentions towards others later?"

Mu Shuangshuang's intention pointed towards Huang Bitao.

Before, she just thought this second aunt was lazy, didn't expect her to actually contemplate murder.

And Mu Qingqing.

She had helped her become the village weaver, thinking she was at least humane.

Now it seems, for the Qin Family, she'd even dare to kill her little aunt.

This woman is vicious.

Comparable to Luo Xiu'er.

"Cousin, you might not know, the Qin Family isn't a large household, now they're declining.

Moreover, that Young Master Qin has already had several wives die, whether it's my little aunt, or Qingqing marrying over, it's dangerous."

"Shuangshuang, that's true, but if grandma finds out it was my mother's doing, she'll kill her."

There's no such thing as faultless parents; even though Mrs. Lin was excessive, Mu Dalang still wanted to save her life.

"I know! Anyone else might keep it a secret.

Since Cousin told me, it's to think of a good solution.

This way, when second aunt feeds little aunt later, you rush in and call grandpa and grandma.

Say little aunt won't eat, there might be a problem, and a doctor needs to be called.

Once Grandpa Zhang arrives, I'll tell him about this, and have him instruct grandpa and grandma to have someone else take care of her, as second aunt's care is inadequate, how about that?"

Mu Dalang nodded repeatedly.

Inadequate care is a much lighter charge than abuse or attempting to kill.

At that point, Old Mrs. Mu might only beat Mrs. Lin, and Mu Xiangxiang also wouldn't lose her life.

Mu Dalang and Mu Shuangshuang undertook separate actions, ensuring both sides would align.

But often, plans can't keep up with changes; what you aim to do doesn't always go as planned.

Chapter 706: Unclear

Mu Dalang went back to the Old Mu Family to keep an eye on Mrs. Lin.

Mu Shuangshuang began to cook dinner.

At this time, Yuanbao had already stopped crying, with eyes swollen like walnuts, chasing Little Black around to play.

Xue Zheng was also following him, even though his actions looked silly.

But the fun between the two kids was naturally unspeakable.

In the kitchen, Mu Shuangshuang sorted the mushrooms and wood ear fungus separately.

The mushrooms were soaked in water, with a pinch of salt added for marination.

Tonight she planned to make hot pot, and the prepared two-flavor pot from before just came in handy again.

She found the two-flavor pot, washed it clean, and set it aside to dry.

The stove that hasn't been used for a while was also dug out.

Making hot pot was no big deal for Mu Shuangshuang.

After preparing these external things, she began to simmer the soup and make broth.

This time, unlike the last time, there was no beef broth, only the five-flavor pork brought by someone yesterday.

Mu Shuangshuang cleaned the five-flavor pork, cut it into pieces, and used it for clear broth.

As for the red broth, she had made red chili oil last time; there was still half a jar left, just right for use.

Soon, smoke gradually rose from the kitchen of the third branch!

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Mu Dalang went back to the Old Mu Family, and Mrs. Lin had already started cooking dinner.

These days, Old Mrs. Mu was sick, Mrs. Liu was sick, the only one capable of cooking was Mrs. Lin.

Mrs. Lin hummed songs daily while cooking.

Because she was in such a good mood.

The old lady couldn't control her, and she had secretly hidden two pieces of yellow ginger in the salt jar and ate them all by herself, savoring them.

She didn't even get scolded by the old lady.

In the evening, the Old Mu Family had an extra meal.

Braised pork and pork with white radish, these were dishes Mrs. Lin loved eating, and she cooked them with zest.

Soon, the meal was ready.

Mrs. Lin looked around, saw no one, and with her blackened hand, grabbed a few pieces of braised pork and stuffed them into her mouth.

Halfway through eating, she suddenly recalled how Mu Xiangxiang would only** eat lean meat, taking the fatty five-flavor pork, she ate the lean meat and spat the fat on the table.

Mrs. Lin suddenly had a bold idea.

She worked hard on these tasks, yet later she had to share with others.

What was she thinking?

Why not feed herself first?

Thinking of this, Mrs. Lin picked up her chopsticks, kept stuffing braised pork into her mouth, imitating Mu Xiangxiang, spitting out the fat meat.

In this way, Mrs. Lin ate the braised pork, but it seemed it had not actually decreased.

Mrs. Lin looked at a bowl of braised pork, all the lean meat gone, and suddenly admired her own ingenuity.

"Hmph, I, Lin Xiaozao, can eat whatever I want, isn't that easy?"

Mrs. Lin set up the dishes and called everyone to dinner.

Looking at the big table of dishes, everyone praised Mrs. Lin's capability.

Even Mu Danian gave Mrs. Lin a thumbs-up, flattering her.

"Second sister-in-law, second sister-in-law, you've become even more capable recently, managing such a big table of dishes single-handedly, I admire you!"

Mrs. Lin shyly smiled at Mu Danian. "Fifth, what are you talking about? Isn't cooking what I'm supposed to do? And with mother sick, should the second daughter-in-law just go home like the eldest sister-in-law?"

Speaking of Mrs. Jin, everyone's face turned sour.

Mrs. Jin not only went off to enjoy herself but also took Mu Dandan and Mu Yingying with her, more importantly, the day before she left, the village chief sent someone over with five taels of silver as a reward for Da De's passing the examination.

Old Mrs. Mu was counting on using that silver for Mu Xiangxiang's dowry.

Who would have thought, Mrs. Jin was so selfish and ran away without a sound.

"Can't even shut your mouth while eating; that woman is not one of us Mu Family. When the eldest comes back, I'll have him divorce her.

She's really rebellious, like a white-eyed wolf without a conscience!"

Old Mrs. Mu loudly cursed Mrs. Jin, and by extension, also gave Mrs. Lin a scolding.

Mrs. Lin suddenly felt a bit worried, looking at the old lady's spirit, fearing her illness might be getting better.

By then, what if she doesn't let her take care of Xiangxiang?

She hasn't tormented Xiangxiang enough yet!

Mrs. Lin quickly stood up, bestowing a fawning smile at Old Mrs. Mu.

"Mother, I'll go send the food to Xiangxiang first. In the stove, I simmered lean meat congee for her; it's all lean meat, and Xiangxiang loves to eat lean meat."

Only then did Old Mrs. Mu's expression improve slightly.

Suddenly, Mu Dalian called out loudly, "I was wondering why the five-flavor pork only had fat, no lean meat, turned out it was all boiled into congee for Xiangxiang. Second sister-in-law, you're really good to Xiangxiang."

Mrs. Lin's smile widened, non-stop declaring it was what she should do.

At the dinner table, Mu Dalang watched his mother smile insincerely, suddenly feeling no appetite.

At one time his mother was not like this.

Despite being calculative, she disdained petty knife-stabbing behind one's back.

Now she not only did it but performed it so naturally on the surface.

It was like she had mastered it.

Mu Dalang suddenly felt afraid.

He turned his gaze to Mu Dazhong, seeing him solely focused on eating, indifferent to other matters, Mu Dalang's mood grew heavier.

"Second daughter-in-law, today you eat first, get full then send to Xiangxiang, she won't starve just for this little time."

Mr. Mu grew more pleased with this second daughter-in-law; he used to think out of all daughters-in-law, the eldest was intellectual and gentle.

The third daughter-in-law was sensible and diligent.

The fourth daughter-in-law was honest and reliable.

Only this second daughter-in-law was lazy and gluttonous, never ceased gossiping.

She liked meddling in others' business, always making the house chaotic every time.

Now she seemed to have matured.

"Thank you, father!" Mrs. Lin quickly nodded, just about to sit down and eat, suddenly caught the eye from Old Mrs. Mu.

"Old man, what are you saying, our Xiangxiang starved the whole afternoon, how can she wait, but as for the second daughter-in-law, she's been growing fatter recently, she must've had a fair share, so what's wrong with letting her serve Xiangxiang?"

Old Mrs. Mu loudly said.

"What's wrong with your mouth? How much can Xiangxiang eat, don't you know?"

Or do you want Xiangxiang to eat a few more bowls and endanger her life?

You've been sick these days, if not for the second daughter-in-law, who would take care of Xiangxiang, you don't know what's good or bad!"

Mr. Mu heavily rebuked Old Mrs. Mu, his old face flushed with anger.

"How am I oblivious? Eldest daughter-in-law knows what's good and didn't say not to take the five taels silver from the village chief to aid her own family?"

Third daughter-in-law knows what's good, hasn't split from the family, hasn't sent you some silver?

Fourth daughter-in-law knows what's good, hasn't spent her days lounging on the bed, helping more with house chores?

Only you, old man, protect daughters-in-law, if known shows you're a kind father-in-law, unknown might suspect you've done unspeakable deeds." Old Mrs. Mu angrily remarked.

"You're talking nonsense!" Mr. Mu slapped heavily on the table.

Chapter 707: Second Aunt's Affair Exposed (Part 2)

The table was laden with dishes, and due to Mr. Mu's pounding, they were shaken a few times.

Nearby, on the Eight Immortals table, Gou Dan trembled in fear, his mouth quivering, ready to burst into tears.

The faces of the other members of the Old Mu Family didn't look good either; Mu Dazhong was like this, and so was Mu Dajiang.

Only Mu Danian looked indifferent, detached from the matter, and continued to eat by himself.

"Dad, Mom, I'll go get some food for Xiangxiang. You two stop arguing." Mrs. Lin stood up, trying to calm down the old couple.

This comparison only made Old Mrs. Mu seem more unreasonable.

Mr. Mu increasingly disliked Old Mrs. Mu.

"Second daughter-in-law, you've worked hard these days. When your elder brother returns, I'll have him give your branch of the family some money."

Speaking of money, Mu Dazhong's eyes lit up.

He laughed heartily, "Dad, we're all family, and Gou Dan's mother should do this work. What money are we talking about, truly."

But for the money you think Gou Dan's mother deserves for her hard work, I wouldn't refuse it, lest people say I don't appreciate the good."

"I spit, Second one, what do you have to do with this, shut up!" Old Mrs. Mu rudely scolded Mu Dazhong.

Mu Dazhong immediately felt ashamed and flushed, not daring to speak anymore.

He had to keep eating,

Mrs. Lin entered the kitchen, cursing Mu Xiangxiang to die sooner while preparing lean meat porridge for her.

Once a sea bowl of porridge was ready, Mrs. Lin unwillingly added a bit of white chili water into the porridge for Mu Xiangxiang.

Then she confidently walked off to deliver the food to Mu Xiangxiang.

Old Mu Family dining room

Mu Dalang saw Mrs. Lin exit the yard and quickly said to everyone, "I'm full, Grandpa, Grandma, Dad, Uncle, you eat slowly."

Saying this, Mu Dalang quickly followed after Mrs. Lin.

Old Mrs. Mu watched the direction Mu Dalang left for a long time.

This scene just happened to catch Mr. Mu's eye, and he thought Old Mrs. Mu was about to stir something up again.

"Xiangxiang's mother, calm yourself these days, she's ill, don't be yelling at this and that every day."

Old Mrs. Mu tightened her chopsticks and poured all the rice from Mu Dalang's bowl into her own.

The braised pork on the table was also largely moved into her bowl.

She began to eat, rare as it was not to quarrel with Mr. Mu.

Mr. Mu then couldn't be bothered to say anything to Old Mrs. Mu.

Mr. Mu didn't know, Old Mrs. Mu was bearing resentment against him.

Her own husband not helping when she needs help, instead blaming her.

And what for, just for his own wife.

Men were increasingly unreliable.

Old Mrs. Mu decided that she'd tightly grasp her silver, whether it was for a son's marriage or a grandson's marriage.

She won't take out a single cent.

Now the eldest doesn't need her support; she'll save all the money for Zhenzhen and Xiangxiang.

When Xiangxiang marries, when Zhenzhen returns, she'll give all the silver to the two sisters.

No one else will dream of touching her own blood.

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Mrs. Lin holding the sea bowl, reached the wing room, unlocked, and entered Mu Xiangxiang's room.

The moment the door opened, a stench of feces hit.

Mu Xiangxiang was still the same as when she left, lying on the floor.

Only now there was a mess on the ground, it looked like she had relieved herself after she left.

At this moment, lying on the ground, Mu Xiangxiang's face was unnaturally flushed,.

Mrs. Lin suppressed her nausea and placed her hand on Mu Xiangxiang's forehead.

An alarming heat hit her hand, Mrs. Lin withdrew instantly.

"Oh my dear, why is this hotter than a furnace?" Mrs. Lin mumbled.

Right now, Mrs. Lin panicked, she had a premonition Mu Xiangxiang would die.

Just then, Mu Dalang burst in.

Seeing the person on the ground, Mu Dalang quickly shut his eyes.

"Mom, why are you still standing there, hurry and call someone to save my little aunt!"

Seeing it was her son who came in, Mrs. Lin panicked even more inside.

She was too occupied to care about the bowl in her hand, took two steps at once, and pushed Mu Dalang out.

Still saying, "What are you doing here, get out, get out, it's filthy here."

Mrs. Lin still had no intention of calling someone to treat Mu Xiangxiang, at this moment, she even wished Mu Xiangxiang were dead.

This way, it would save a lot of trouble.

But Mu Dalang wasn't Mu Qingqing, he saw his little aunt lying there, he had to call out.

"Grandma, Grandpa, you all come quickly, my little aunt is sick, she's going to die, help!"

Mu Dalang shouted loudly.

Inside, the bowl in Mrs. Lin's hand fell to the ground with a crash, shattering into pieces.

"You brat, you dared to tell!" Mrs. Lin's eyes went blood red, she rushed over, hands flailing against Mu Dalang.

Mrs. Lin's nails scratched several cuts on Mu Dalang's face, but he kept yelling.

The voice growing louder and louder.

Finally, Old Mrs. Mu came along following the noise.

Mrs. Lin was terrified to her soul, she hurried in, knelt in front of Mu Xiangxiang, started crying out.

"Oh dear Xiangxiang, what have you done, Second sister-in-law said she'll make more food for you, yet you think so poorly, don't want to live anymore.

Xiangxiang sister, open your eyes to see Second sister-in-law, Second sister-in-law boiled so much lean meat porridge for you at night, so silly..."

Old Mrs. Mu listened to Mrs. Lin's crying tone and almost collapsed.

She rushed forward, questioned Mu Dalang.

"What happened to my Xiangxiang?"

Mu Dalang couldn't turn around, not knowing how to answer Old Mrs. Mu, so he froze in place.

Old Mrs. Mu barged into the room, seeing Mu Xiangxiang lying in the mess soaked in urine.

Her mind exploded, her whole body felt like it was struck by lightning, trembling uncontrollably.

The few men who followed in saw this scene, they all turned around.

After all, Mu Xiangxiang wasn't dressed.

"Xiangxiang ah..." Mrs. Lin saw everyone had come, cried out again.

This time, she became Old Mrs. Mu's target.

Old Mrs. Mu grabbed Mrs. Lin's head, pressed her face into the mess.

While her hand relentlessly smacked Mrs. Lin.

In the room, only Mrs. Lin's wails and pleas for mercy could be heard, along with the sound of palms slapping faces.

"You rotten woman, this is how you 'care' for Xiangxiang, what has happened to my Xiangxiang, tell me!"

"Mom, I also... don't know..." Mrs. Lin defended herself while trying to escape.

"Don't know, why don't you die, why don't you die..."

Old Mrs. Mu grabbed Mrs. Lin's hair, slamming her head heavily onto the ground.

Soon, Mrs. Lin's forehead was beaten to a bloody mess.

Mrs. Lin's cries grew increasingly tragic.

In the end, only indistinct sobbing could be heard.

"Xiangxiang's mother, if you keep beating, the second daughter-in-law will be beaten to death!" Mr. Mu shouted.

"Beat this vicious woman to death, otherwise I can't swallow this anger." Old Mrs. Mu said hatefully.

"But you're delaying Xiangxiang's treatment time, think how cold it is on the ground, delay more and Xiangxiang's life will be gone!"

Only then did Old Mrs. Mu toss Mrs. Lin aside like a dead dog.

Chapter 708: Little Aunt Is Out of Breath

Old Mrs. Mu squatted down, trying to lift the dirty Mu Xiangxiang.

But she tried several times and couldn't lift her.

Mu Xiangxiang's body was like a popsicle, icy cold.

She tightly closed her eyes, with not a trace of color on her face.

Indistinguishable from a dead person.

Old Mrs. Mu placed her hand on Mu Xiangxiang's nose.

The next moment, Old Mrs. Mu was so frightened that she knelt on the ground.

"Father Xiangxiang, Xiangxiang... has no breath left!"

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Third Branch

Mu Shuangshuang set up the dual-sided pot, filled the stove with firewood, and a few children gathered around, each holding a bowl.

Everyone stared eagerly at the bubbling broth in the dual-sided pot.

Mu Shuangshuang put the ingredients into the pot one by one, starting with sweet potato noodles.

Farmhouse sweet potato noodles always taste particularly good.

After being soaked in water, the noodles softened after cooking for a while.

Mu Xiangxiang distributed a little to each of the children.

"What else do you want? Sis will add it for you."

Yuanbao shouted that he wanted to eat meat.

Mu Shuangshuang threw in the thinly sliced meat.

As for Xue Zheng's share, no need for him to say, Mu Xiangxiang knew to throw in some mushrooms.

Mushrooms can be considered a flavor enhancer. After Mu Shuangshuang threw them in, the aroma of food in the kitchen became even more fragrant.

The children began to drool even more.

"Sister Xiangxiang, why hasn't second brother come back yet? I can't bear to eat without him." Yuanbao pouted and looked at the heaping meat in his bowl.

Having not seen his second brother for a whole day and with evening approaching, Yuanbao missed Lu Yuanfeng deeply.

"Little one, you know how to care for someone. Don't worry, I've saved a dish just for your second brother, he won't miss out," Mu Shuangshuang tapped Yuanbao's small head, smiling widely.

"Hehe, I'm just concerned about my second brother." Yuanbao touched his head, looking shy.

Without that worry, Yuanbao devoured his food as if his life depended on it.

Enjoying the meal thoroughly.

The kitchen door was suddenly kicked open.

Mu Dajiang was panting.

"It's bad, Shuangshuang, your little aunt is dead, your grandfather wants you to go over and take a look!"

"My little aunt is dead?" Mu Shuangshuang frowned deeply, throwing her bowl and chopsticks onto the table.

"Yes, your grandma is now crazy, beating your second aunt, saying she wants her to accompany your little aunt in the grave!"

Mu Shuangshuang was even more shocked.

She thought Mrs. Lin's actions were discovered by Old Mrs. Mu.

She was both surprised and felt Mrs. Lin deserved it.

Now that Mu Xiangxiang is dead, Old Mrs. Mu probably won't spare her.

"If my little aunt is dead, why am I needed?" Mu Shuangshuang was puzzled.

"I don't know, but... hey, you'll understand when you go." After saying that, Mu Dajiang ran towards the Old Mu Family.

Mu Shuangshuang hadn't come back to her senses yet.

She glanced at the four children and, feeling unsure about leaving them, called Zhao Yun to watch them for a bit.

With Zhao Yun there, Mu Shuangshuang felt reassured and headed towards Mu Dade's place.

The closer she got to Mu Dade's room, the clearer Old Mrs. Mu's wailing could be heard.

Mu Shuangshuang entered the courtyard and walked into Mu Xiangxiang's room.

The few big men outside the room didn't dare to turn around.

They were worried Mu Xiangxiang was undressed.

Mr. Mu's face was covered with tears.

"Shuang, your little aunt is gone, you... change her clothes, your grandma's gone mad, all she does is beat your second aunt and nothing else."

Mu Shuangshuang glanced into the room.

Old Mrs. Mu was mercilessly beating Mrs. Lin, who was barely breathing from the beating, not even inhaling.

"Give me back Xiangxiang, venomous woman, stinky hag..."

Old Mrs. Mu kept repeating those few words, making ears grow callouses from hearing them.

On the ground, Mu Xiangxiang lay stark naked, indeed like the Old Mu Family said, like a corpse.

Mu Shuangshuang walked in, a pungent smell wafted over.

If it were any other time, Mu Shuangshuang wouldn't put clothes on Mu Xiangxiang.

But since she's dead, nothing else matters.

Mu Shuangshuang found a thick dress from Mu Xiangxiang's cabinet, squatted down, and before dressing Mu Xiangxiang, checked her nose again.

She was indeed not breathing.

When she checked the pulse again, it was still there, though weak, but Mu Shuangshuang was sure she wasn't dead yet.

However, the body was extremely cold.

"Grandpa, Grandma, my little aunt isn't dead, she still has a pulse, get some hot water quickly," Mu Shuangshuang exclaimed.

Upon hearing this, Old Mrs. Mu stopped hitting Mrs. Lin.

She crawled over from the corner, looking at Mu Shuangshuang with excitement.

"Shuang, you say your little aunt isn't dead?"

"Grandma, listen to me, my little aunt isn't dead, but you can't beat my second aunt anymore, the most important thing now is to save her. Let's get my little aunt dressed first.

Also, prepare a bed for her, then we can put her on the kang."

Upon hearing that Mu Xiangxiang wasn't dead, Old Mrs. Mu listened to everything Mu Shuangshuang said.

Together, they lifted Mu Xiangxiang onto the kang, and as they lifted the blanket, a stench of urine emerged.

Mu Shuangshuang noticed quickly.

The blanket was dirty, but the mat on the kang was good.

In the corner, the urine bucket was neatly placed, giving Mu Shuangshuang a rough idea of what had happened.

In her heart, she suddenly felt that her second aunt was quite a character.

Ruthless, bizarre, maybe this woman might do something extraordinary in the future.

"Grandma, quickly change my little aunt's blanket, this one's dirty now."

Old Mrs. Mu yelled at Mrs. Lin.

"Lin Xiaozao, she became like this in your care, go get a blanket, if time's wasted, I'll skin you."

Beaten to this state, how could Mrs. Lin dare to resist, she rolled and crawled out of the room.

Mu Shuangshuang saw Mrs. Lin was as filthy as Mu Xiangxiang.

Perhaps Old Mrs. Mu noticed too, she reminded, "Lin Xiaozao, if you dare get that filth on the blanket, I'll take your life."

Mrs. Lin's legs went weak, she nodded repeatedly. "Mother, I understand, I understand..."

Only Old Mrs. Mu and Mu Shuangshuang were left in the room.

They finally managed to get Mu Xiangxiang dressed.

Her filthy condition didn't change.

"Grandma, have someone boil a pot of ginger water. Grandpa, ask Second Uncle to get Grandpa Zhang, we can't delay," Mu Shuangshuang turned to everyone and said.

"I'll go boil the water," Mu Dajiang volunteered.

Old Mrs. Mu kept watching Mu Xiangxiang, her hand occasionally on Mu Xiangxiang's nose, checking for breath.

"Grandma, the kang has to be heated too, once she warms up, she might recover,"

Everyone in the Old Mu Family got busy.

Once Mu Xiangxiang was dressed, everyone dared to come in.

Mr. Mu went to the main room's small stove to dig out some stove ash and started cleaning the room.

Chapter 709: Shut Up (Part 1)

The room was finally cleaned up.

The unpleasant smell had faded considerably.

With the stove burning, Mu Xiangxiang's body gradually warmed, and her breathing slightly improved.

At least, placing a hand near her nose could sense her weak breath.

Mu Shuangshuang breathed a slight sigh of relief, it seemed Mu Xiangxiang's life wouldn't be lost.

The hot tea Mu Shuangshuang requested was quickly brought over by Mu Dajiang.

He said to Mu Shuangshuang, "Shuangshuang, the ginger water is still boiling, I'll head back to the kitchen. If you need anything, call me from there."

"Okay, Shuangshuang knows!" Mu Shuangshuang nodded.

She then turned to Old Mrs. Mu and said, "Grandma, feed this water to Aunt."

Old Mrs. Mu took the water and carefully supported Mu Xiangxiang's body.

She fed Mu Xiangxiang water, mouthful by mouthful.

"Xiangxiang, my precious darling, you cannot be in trouble. I'm counting on you for my old age, don't let a white-haired person send off a black-haired one.

You like to eat, don't you? Mom won't stop you anymore. As long as you wake up, whatever you want to eat, mom will allow it, Xiangxiang..."

Old Mrs. Mu, with a mournful face, continued talking lovingly while caring for Mu Xiangxiang.

Mu Shuangshuang watched what was originally a heartwarming scene between mother and daughter but somehow found it a bit ironic.

Her own daughter was a precious darling, while daughters-in-law were treated as expendable.

They were beaten and scolded without hesitation.

She talks about relying on her daughter for her old age, then why be so harsh on her sons!

Honestly, Mu Shuangshuang couldn't understand Old Mrs. Mu's mentality.

Nor did she want to understand. Once Zhang Huai Shu came and checked on Mu Xiangxiang, she would leave.

The matters of the Old Mu Family, she didn't want to get involved at all.

Mr. Mu stood beside the stove, afraid to even blink, fearful that Mu Xiangxiang might die in the blink of an eye.

His heart was anxious, yet the second child had been sent to call Zhang Huai Shu and still hadn't returned.

Mr. Mu started to panic, restless and extremely uneasy.

Suddenly, he seemed to grasp at a final lifeline, walking up to Mu Shuangshuang, saying, "Shuang, why hasn't your second uncle come back yet? It can't be that Zhang Huai Shu is unwilling to come to treat Xiangxiang? If not, why don't you go call Zhang Huai Shu now?"

Mr. Mu was truly anxious, or he wouldn't have thoughtlessly given this task to Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang doubted her ears, Mr. Mu wanted her to call Zhang Huai Shu over?

A girl like her?

Going out in the dark to fetch someone?

Did he think she was foolish?

Wasn't it clear how Mu Xiangxiang usually treated the third branch? Mr. Mu couldn't see?

Mu Shuangshuang thought that by coming here today, regardless of helping the third branch or herself, she had already done more than enough for the Old Mu Family.

If they further expected her to call the doctor, would they next have her personally care for Mu Xiangxiang day and night?

Once Mu Xiangxiang was well again, continue to bully the third branch?

"Grandpa, it's already dark; my parents are not here; can you bear to let me go out alone at night? What if something happens? Shuangshuang is just a girl."

Upon seeing Mu Shuangshuang refuse to call Zhang Huai Shu, Mu Danian quickly made sarcastic remarks from the side:

"Hey, what's the matter with you, child, just go when your grandpa tells you to; you won't lose any flesh."

The one lying on the stove is your aunt. Look at her, she's not even conscious. Not helping now is going to get you struck by lightning!"

"Fifth uncle, shut up, when I'm speaking to Shuangshuang, where do you get to speak?" Mr. Mu loudly reprimanded Mu Danian.

Mu Danian opened his mouth, seemingly unable to believe Mr. Mu would scold him.

"Dad, you can't be serious, right? I was trying to help Xiangxiang, weren't you aware of how difficult Old Zhang is?"

Apart from Shuangshuang and that brat from the Old Lu Family, no one else can get him. Unless you want to watch Xiangxiang die with open eyes?"

"You..." Mr. Mu was furious, almost wanting to slap Mu Danian to death.

"Fifth uncle, you're a grown man; why don't you go and ask Shuangshuang?" Mu Dalang, who had just helped Mu Dajiang with the fire, entered the room carrying a basin of hot water.

He directly walked up to Mu Danian, questioning him.

"What's wrong with me being a grown man? You all know how stubborn Zhang Huai Shu is—he listens to no one but that pesky girl, Shuangshuang. If I could be of help, then fine; if not, I might as well stay here to take care of Xiangxiang."

"Taking care of aunt? I haven't seen that! My mother brought clean blankets for Xiangxiang, Fourth Uncle heated water for her, my grandma and Shuangshuang are here caring, my grandpa is directing the whole family, what did you do?"

Just standing there doing nothing—if that's taking care of aunt, then everyone in the family, including the youngest, Xiao Chu, is taking care of aunt."

Mu Dalang sharply pointed out Mu Danian's mistake.

Mu Danian's face changed; reaching out, he was about to slap Mu Dalang.

Mu Shuangshuang, with quick eyes and hands, pulled Mu Dalang to her side. Mu Danian missed and suddenly his gaze toward Mu Shuangshuang and Mu Dalang turned fierce.

Mu Shuangshuang could not be bothered with Mu Danian, nor with Mr. Mu.

She simply said, "Grandpa, there are still four kids at home, I'm worried about them, I need to go back!"

With that, Mu Shuangshuang indeed stepped out of Mu Xiangxiang's room.

"Dad, look at this sassy girl, going back at a time like this, she's simply not taking you seriously at all," Mu Danian said angrily.

"Fifth uncle, you should say less. If it weren't for Shuangshuang, everyone would have thought Aunt was dead; she'd probably still be lying on the ground.

So, Aunt's life was saved by Shuangshuang. With Third Uncle and Third Aunt not home, isn't it right for her to go and care for the kids?" Mu Dalang said again.

"Dalang, why do you as a younger generation always go against me as your fifth uncle?" Mu Danian asked angrily.

"Fifth uncle, I'm not going against you, I'm reasoning with you. And it was you who first struck at Shuangshuang." Mu Dalang looked Mu Danian straight in the eye and said.

At this moment, Mu Dalang wasn't afraid of Mu Danian at all.

He only knew that the person in front of him was speaking and acting excessively.

Mu Danian was naturally furious; not even his second brother dared talk to him like this.

Why did this one nephew act so high and mighty around him?

Mu Danian still wanted to argue with Mu Dalang.

Mu Dazhong had already brought Zhang Huai Shu over.

Unlike the time of fetching people with Lu Yuanfeng, where he helped carry the medicine box, Mu Dazhong didn't help at all, recklessly charging forward, regardless of whether the elderly Zhang Huai Shu could safely make it to the Old Mu Family.

Entering the room, Mu Dazhong started to clamor.

"Dad, I've brought the person over. How's Xiangxiang? Is she dead?"

As soon as Mu Dazhong finished speaking, Mr. Mu slapped him across the face.

"How can you talk like that? Can't you see your sister lying there? If you can't speak properly, then shut up!"

Chapter 710: People seen in the county look like your uncle

"If you won't say it, then don't say it. What's the big deal!" Mu Dazhong covered his face and stood aside.

Zhang Huai Shu was invited into the house by Mr. Mu.

As usual, he checked Mu Xiangxiang's pulse.

But this time, the expression on Zhang Huai Shu's face was worth investigating.

He furrowed his brows tightly and turned to sweep a glance at everyone in the Old Mu Family.

"How on earth have you been taking care of the patient? Why is she so thin? Didn't you give this girl anything to eat? Why is the fever so severe? And her throat—it's like she doesn't want it anymore, eating something as spicy as chili."

Zhang Huai Shu asked Mr. Mu with a dark face.

But Mr. Mu didn't know any of this.

The one taking care of Xiangxiang was Mrs. Lin.

And the one arranging the meals was also Mrs. Lin.

As for the typhoid fever, everyone was even more clueless.

"What did you say? Didn't eat? And ate chili?" Old Mrs. Mu paused her movements wiping Mu Xiangxiang's face.

"Lin Xiaozao, Lin Xiaozao, get out here..." Old Mrs. Mu yelled at the top of her lungs.

But ever since moving the blanket, Mrs. Lin hadn't shown up in Mu Xiangxiang's room.

Old Mrs. Mu shouted a few times without seeing Mrs. Lin come out, she lifted her small feet and rushed toward the second branch.

Mr. Mu still couldn't believe it.

"Old Zhang, are you serious? Did the second daughter-in-law really not feed Xiangxiang? And gave her chili?"

Upon hearing this, Zhang Huai Shu knew it was an internal family issue.

He shook his head.

"I don't know, this is your family's matter. Besides, I can't treat this girl. You'd better send her to the town!"

Zhang Huai Shu had been practicing medicine for many years, but had never seen a situation like the Old Mu Family's.

He really didn't want to treat Mu Xiangxiang, fearing future incidents he couldn't afford to get involved in.

"What? Old Zhang, are you just going to let her die?" Mr. Mu panicked and hurriedly blocked Zhang Huai Shu's path.

"I'm not letting her die, I just can't save her. This girl's illness is too severe, and I don't have enough medicine. You must send her to the town." Zhang Huai Shu said.

"But it's so late, and our Old Mu Family doesn't have an ox cart or a horse cart, how can we send her to town? Old Zhang, in the past, even if we were unfair to you, I apologize now, you must help my daughter.

Whatever the consultation fee, I'll pay it. First thing tomorrow morning, I'll send her to the clinic in town, okay?"

Mr. Mu was almost in tears, about to kneel in front of Zhang Huai Shu.

At this moment, Mr. Mu truly regretted it.

He shouldn't have offended Zhang Huai Shu, shouldn't have had a grudge with Fu Wu, those people had never wronged the Old Mu Family.

Zhang Huai Shu was still hesitating, as per the tradition of a doctor being kind-hearted, he should treat everyone.

But for the Old Mu Family, he felt nothing.

Before Zhang Huai Shu spoke, a series of crashing and banging noises came from the second branch.

Mu Qingqing's screams reached the side room.

The whole Old Mu Family was in uproar, no different from tearing down a house.

Zhang Huai Shu took a deep breath, put down his medical kit, and started administering acupuncture to Mu Xiangxiang.

"I'll finish giving her acupuncture, then you should brew a pot of ginger water to wipe her down, and finally, cook a pot of ginger soup and feed it to her after a while, the current temperature is just right.

As for the subsequent treatment, tomorrow morning, you can take her to town and see what the town clinic says."

After speaking, Zhang Huai Shu began treating Mu Xiangxiang.

The Old Mu Family's cries were like the cries of pigs being slaughtered, disturbing for most of the night.

Mu Shuangshuang heard it from the third branch.

A few children huddled together, scared by the sounds they heard.

"Sister, I'm scared..." Little Zhi opened his mouth, on the verge of tears.

"Sister Shuangshuang, Yuanbao is also scared, it sounds like pigs being slaughtered."

Mu Shuangshuang smiled, grabbing the hands of the children together.

"What are you afraid of? Sister Shuangshuang is here, and besides, Little Zhi, can't you tell this cry is from your Sister Qingqing."

Little Zhi listened carefully and realized it really was Mu Qingqing.

"Sister, why is it Sister Qingqing? Did she do something wrong? Is Grandma scolding her?"

Even a child like Little Zhi knew the Old Mu Family's fondness for hitting was from Old Mrs. Mu.

"Sort of, Sister will get you some water, after soaking your feet, you can sleep." Mu Shuangshuang said.

Tonight, Yuanbao, Xiao Han, and Xue Zheng would sleep in the room of Mu Dashan and Yu Si Niang.

Little Zhi would sleep with Mu Shuangshuang.

After settling the younger siblings, Mu Shuangshuang remembered she hadn't eaten dinner.

She had just lit the stove again, set up the pot.

Just as she was about to serve the meal, there was a loud noise from outside, followed by the sound of footsteps.

Startled, Mu Shuangshuang stood up, grabbed a stick from the crack of the door, rushed outside, and saw a shadow in the yard.

The shadow was familiar to Mu Shuangshuang because he was still leading a horse.

"Fengzi, you're back!" Mu Shuangshuang was full of excitement.

Lu Yuanfeng, covered in dust from travel, felt all his weariness vanish the moment he saw Shuangshuang.

It was very dark now, the cold wind was blowing hard in the yard.

It felt as if the next second it could blow a person away.

"Shuangshuang, I just came to see you, I still have to return the horse to Uncle Fu, you get some rest early."

"I'll go with you, then we can eat together later, I have something to tell you."

After speaking, Mu Shuangshuang returned to the kitchen, took the pot up, and placed it aside.

Then she followed Lu Yuanfeng to Fu Wu's family.

As the cold wind raged, Mu Shuangshuang, lightly dressed, stomped her feet, trying to generate some warmth.

But Lu Yuanfeng just pulled her into a tight embrace.

His broad arms enveloped Mu Shuangshuang.

The warmth from him instantly made Mu Shuangshuang feel cozy.

The two walked slowly, and all the words Mu Shuangshuang had been eager to say just wouldn't come out.

No one wanted to disturb the current atmosphere.

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After returning the horse, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng headed back to the third branch.

The fire on the stove hadn't gone out yet; Mu Shuangshuang added more and set a pot on it.

Soon enough, the aroma of the hot pot spread.

She brought out all the dishes she had prepared for Lu Yuanfeng.

"Fengzi, let's eat and talk, do you want to go first, or should I?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"I'll go first because there's something I think you should know," Lu Yuanfeng said.

"Go ahead!"

"I saw your uncle in the county today with a woman I didn't recognize. They went into an inn and hadn't come out for a long time," Lu Yuanfeng said, continuing, "They seemed quite close."

"My uncle is indeed in the county, but he told my grandpa it was to network with other scholars. It seems the networking was a cover, and he's meeting a woman instead.

My aunt has always wanted to make trouble for me. I must pass this news to her to disrupt her peace and see how she bullies me!" Mu Shuangshuang laughed.