

## Folly 71

### Chapter 71: Mu Dashan's Transformation

Mu Shuangshuang felt that she had already adapted to life here. Although her current days weren't entirely satisfactory, with the survival skills she possessed, earning a living for her family was only a matter of time.

After a while, when she became stronger, she would go hunting in the mountains, learn from that silly boy Lu Yuanfeng, hunt to make money, and then do some small business.

Mu Shuangshuang made a loud mental calculation, and the people from the third branch also began to deal with the peaches in their hands because of what she had said earlier.

It must be said that the peaches in their hands were indeed rare things. Not only was the peach flesh red and tender, but once held, the juice would start to overflow, and the peach's fragrance was strong. Little Zhi took a gentle bite of the peach, didn't have time to chew, and immediately brought it to Mu Shuangshuang's lips.

"Sister, have another bite. It's so delicious, so sweet and soft."

Seeing this, Xiao Han also prepared to give the one in his hand to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Hey, I said you two little kids, you're already so skinny, and you're still thinking of giving the fruit to your sister. If you keep doing this, sister will get mad."

When Mu Shuangshuang really put on an angry face, Xiao Han and Little Zhi stopped.

After each had a piece of peach flesh, they both, somewhat unsatisfied, licked their lips, as if this could preserve the peach's flavor a bit longer. Shuangshuang saw this and her desire to separate from the family grew stronger. Thinking for a moment, she suddenly spoke up.

"Xiao Han, Little Zhi, quickly change into clothes that can cover you properly. Grandpa and grandma want us to go to the field to carry grain stalks."

These words from Mu Shuangshuang were meant for Mu Dashan to hear. Mu Dashan valued the words of Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu too much, and she could only slowly undermine this unhealthy filial piety.

Sure enough, upon hearing this, Mu Dashan became agitated. "What's going on, Shuangshuang? Didn't we agree that Dad would go? Why are you being sent instead? I'll go find your grandma."

"Dad, don't struggle. We only have one life. If you push yourself to work so hard now, even if uncle succeeds in the exam later, it won't be our act of kindness that he remembers.

Nothing else matters in our family right now except for your health. Normally, you do the work of two or three people alone. Now that you're ill, are you still planning to use your life for the work of even one person?"

Mu Shuangshuang's words left Mu Dashan speechless. His health had indeed not recovered, and, as his own daughter said, if he went back to work in the fields, something bad might really happen.

"Shuangshuang's father, I think Shuangshuang is right. Over the years, how much have we done for the family? No matter if it was windy or rainy, have you had a day's rest? Now that you're ill, our parents won't even let you rest for half a day, clearly pushing you and our family down a path of despair."

As Yu Si Niang spoke, tears fell. Her heart was sour. When the old master and old lady said those things, her man wasn't there, but she was.

"With our family like this, we might as well split up. You have hands and feet, and I can still work in town. No matter how hard and tiring life gets, we won't lose our lives!"

Yu Si Niang's words resonated with Mu Shuangshuang. She quietly gave a thumbs-up in her heart. Who said ancient women were too traditional? Her mother was, without a doubt, an unconventional and exceptional woman.

"Dad, you can consider what Mom said. Our third branch is the one that works the most but is in the worst condition of any branch. Just to mention, the only piece of furniture we have, a table, was one that Grandma threw away and you picked up."

"It's said that lazy people have a hard life. Why is it that despite our diligence we can't even fill our own stomachs? Look at Little Zhi and Xiao Han, their arms are as thin as sticks."

As she spoke, Mu Shuangshuang pulled Xiao Han and Little Zhi, lifting their clothes to reveal their thin arms, which indeed were not much different from bamboo poles as she had said.

"Dad, think about Uncle's daughters—Sister Dan Dan and Sister Yingying. Their faces are rosy, and everything they eat and use is the best."

Mu Dashan's eyes gradually filled with tears; his daughter's words made sense. His elder brother never suffered nor did any work, and even his sister-in-law, Mrs. Jin, didn't do a single chore. Yet Si Niang, regardless of the season, almost daily, had to go to town to work for others.

Mu Shuangshuang felt that it was enough, but still not quite enough. She took Xiao Han's hand and approached Mu Dashan. "Xiao Han, tell Dad, do you want to study? Do you want to succeed in the future?"

Xiao Han suddenly felt a tickle in his throat. He understood the meaning behind his sister's words. Their third branch was indeed the poorest.

"I do. Xiao Han wants to go to school, wants to take the exam. Xiao Han doesn't want anything else, just a single opportunity..."

Mu Xiaohan wanted to study, but in the Old Mu Family, not to mention a single opportunity, even half a chance was nonexistent because all the silver was destined to support Mu Dade. Even if Mu Dade weren't there, given the extent of favoritism from the old master and old lady, the silver would be used on Mu Xiangxiang, the youngest daughter who hadn't even returned yet.

"Let Dad think again... think again..."

Mu Dashan's expression indicated to Mu Shuangshuang that the balance in his heart had already tilted. In the future, as long as he is occasionally reminded of the biased actions of Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu, the matter of separating the family would be just around the corner.

"Dad, take your time to think about it, I and Xiao Han, Little Zhi will go to work first."

After saying that, the three of them changed their clothes and walked towards the door. They hadn't even reached the doorway when Mu Dashan spoke up. "Work as you see fit, and if you're tired, call your second uncle and fifth uncle. They usually do the least work, now it's their turn to do it."

"Okay, Dad, take care and rest while we go." Mu Shuangshuang's face lit up. Mu Dashan's attitude in that sentence gave her the signal that he was already contemplating past events in his mind and had developed a sense of unfairness.

Upon further analysis, it means that this Mu Dashan, even when taking on the most difficult and exhausting work for the family, never complained because he saw it as a matter of course, without any other thoughts. Now, under her hints and guidance, he began to abandon this viewpoint and would soon have thoughts about splitting from the family.

Truly, it was heaven's help. She would wait and see how those peculiar relatives would react when an honest man fights back.

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Leaving the house, the three of them followed Mr. Mu to the Old Mu Family's field. Even though it was past the hottest time of noon, the sun was still shining down heavily, almost like a sauna in summer. As soon as they picked up the bamboo baskets, their backs were soaked through.

Mr. Mu assigned tasks that were roughly similar to each child. They were to place the cut rice stalks in bamboo baskets, and then Mu Danian would carry and neatly arrange them on the field slope using a shoulder pole.

Of course, this was the work for the slightly younger children. For Mu Shuangshuang, Mu Qingqing, and the two daughters from the main branch, they had to use rectangular bamboo baskets to transport some rice stalks each time to the place where Mu Danian had arranged the rice stalks.