

Folly 711

Chapter 711: Old Mrs. Mu Wants to Cut in Line (Part 1)

"Fengzi, that Zhang Family, did you find out about Luo Xiu'er?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

The matter with my uncle, gossip aside, isn't the most urgent thing right now.

Mu Shuangshuang just wants to help Yu Liulang resolve the situation with Luo Xiu'er.

"Shuangshuang, that's exactly what I want to discuss. I asked the Zhang Family's neighbors and servants, that Luo Xiu'er, she was never dismissed.

She's still a concubine of the Zhang Family, and this time she's back to visit her family."

Lu Yuanfeng's words made Mu Shuangshuang gasp.

She thought Luo Xiu'er was just insidious.

Who knew she was so shameless, not even obtaining a dismissal letter yet wanting to ruin her uncle's wedding!

What is this woman's heart made of, to be so vicious?

"I also heard that Luo Xiu'er hasn't been doing well in the Zhang Family. She was pregnant, but the Zhang Family's madam forced her to abort, and she recuperated for a long time."

Lu Yuanfeng tried his best to tell Mu Shuangshuang everything he heard from the county gossip.

By the end, Mu Shuangshuang was at the point of gritting her teeth at Luo Xiu'er.

Luckily, she sent Fengzi to investigate, or else she'd be deceived by this woman.

"This woman really doesn't know remorse. Instead of seeking justice from the Zhang Family, she comes to trouble my uncle. Mu Shuangshuang is very angry.

Lu Yuanfeng said, "Shuangshuang, since Luo Xiu'er is this way, we don't need to be polite. I think it's necessary to ask the Zhang Family to take her back since she is their concubine."

Lu Yuanfeng's plan was approved by Mu Shuangshuang.

A concubine of the Zhang Family should be handled by them.

But that's not the fundamental solution.

Asking the Zhang Family to the village might lead to Luo Xiu'er being taken away, but her uncle's unclear affairs with Luo Xiu'er remain.

The villagers will still gossip.

"Fengzi, we should implement your plan, but first, Luo Xiu'er needs to suffer.

At the same time, we need to clear my uncle's suspicions so that villagers won't gossip anymore."

Mu Shuangshuang knows deep down that sometimes, village gossip can drive a person to death.

Feng Xiaohua is sensitive; being bullied like that might lead to rash actions.

"Let's stick to the previous plan but have the Zhang Family involved. Once everything is cleared here, the Zhang Family can step in. What do you think, Shuangshuang?" Lu Yuanfeng asked.

"Great, that sounds like a good plan!"

After speaking, Lu Yuanfeng took out two taels of silver from his pocket and handed it to Mu Shuangshuang.

"This is what you gave me during the day, now take it back."

Mu Shuangshuang was stunned to see two taels of silver intact.

"Didn't you eat?"

Lu Yuanfeng sheepishly nodded.

"Are you stupid? I feared you'd be reluctant to eat, that's why I forced it on you. Skipping lunch and dinner, do you want to starve yourself? You big fool!"

Mu Shuangshuang was almost furious.

Her eyes reddened as she stared at Lu Yuanfeng.

Lu Yuanfeng hurriedly explained.

"Shuangshuang, it's not what you think. I didn't skip meals on purpose, I was just too busy and forgot..."

With that, Mu Shuangshuang wasn't angry anymore.

She felt pity.

Pity for Lu Yuanfeng being out all day without eating.

She regretted not going with him - she'd have ensured he didn't go hungry.

"Shuangshuang, please don't be mad, alright?"

Lu Yuanfeng saw Mu Shuangshuang silent, assuming she was still upset.

He anxiously explained to Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang was never angry; Lu Yuanfeng considered her matters as his own.

And kept it in his heart; if she stayed upset, she'd be unreasonable.

But she couldn't let it slide, otherwise he'd never cherish himself.

"Now hurry and eat. If you skip a meal again, I won't talk to you."

The hotpot was steaming, Mu Shuangshuang added meat, veggies, and mushrooms. The meat quickly cooked.

Mu Shuangshuang placed all the meat in Lu Yuanfeng's bowl.

Worried Lu Yuanfeng wouldn't eat enough.

Only after Lu Yuanfeng had two bowls of rice did Mu Shuangshuang bring up the evening's issue.

Lu Yuanfeng sighed too.

"Your second aunt doesn't consider consequences. If your little aunt died, it'd be terrible abuse."

"Indeed, my second aunt lacks some sense. But my grandparents are truly ironic. Not to mention others, did either visit when my fourth aunt was sick?"

Mu Shuangshuang still can't accept Mr. Mu's actions.

"Forget it, don't hold grudges with your grandparents; their thoughts can't be swayed.

As long as we live well, now your fourth uncle and aunt plan to split from the family, it's time for better days."

Mu Shuangshuang nodded firmly.

"That's right, I'm not planning to check on my little aunt anymore. With grandparents around, why should I care?"

Mu Shuangshuang went to the Old Mu Family, not out of concern for Mr. Mu or Old Mrs. Mu.

She went because Mu Xiangxiang seemed "dead".

Now that Mu Xiangxiang isn't dead, Mu Shuangshuang has no desire to visit the Old Mu Family.

After dinner, Lu Yuanfeng helped Mu Shuangshuang wash the dishes.

Late at night, Lu Yuanfeng couldn't stay too long.

He chatted briefly with Mu Shuangshuang and then left.

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The next day, the Old Mu Family borrowed a bullock cart from the Wang Family.

Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu personally took charge, transporting Mu Xiangxiang to the town.

Mu Qingqing tagged along; last night Mrs. Lin packed Mu Xiangxiang's bedding and fled at night, fearing a beating from Old Mrs. Mu.

Since Old Mrs. Mu had no time to catch people in Lin Family Village, she grabbed Mu Qingqing and beat her.

This morning, Mu Qingqing appeared before everyone with a face swollen like a pig head, even mocked by Mu Danian.

By now, Mu Qingqing regrets the deeds done to marry into the Qin Family.

But regrets are useless; now she's forced to serve Mu Xiangxiang, pouring tea and water, dealing with waste as a mere servant.

No matter her anger or grievance, one can't fight against a stronger force, Mu Qingqing must follow Old Mrs. Mu's orders.

The bullock cart went to town, and Mr. Mu went straight to the best medical clinic — Xinglin Chun.

The clinic staff demanded twenty coins for the consultation fee upfront.

Old Mrs. Mu didn't mind the cost, she said, "I don't care how much it costs, as long as my daughter gets cured."

Old Mrs. Mu probably doesn't remember; last time Mrs. Liu from the fourth family was ill, they cursed the five-coin fee all day without paying.

"Here are twenty coins. Quickly find a doctor for my daughter, her illness is too severe to wait!"

The staff at Xinglin Chun was used to such behavior from desperate patients.

"You've paid, now wait. We have too many patients to see a doctor immediately."

Chapter 712: Gaining Power

"What? We still have to wait? Why? We paid money too." Old Mrs. Mu asked loudly.

"Ma'am, you're not the only one who paid. Look at how many people are ahead of you in line!"

The assistant pointed to a line of people at the far right of the clinic, and Mr. Mu was stunned.

"Young man, could you do us a favor? My daughter had a high fever all night, and we rushed from the countryside to the town early this morning just to seek the doctor's help.

If we delay any longer, my daughter's life might be at risk..."

Mr. Mu's deeply lined face was full of sorrow.

"Sir, it's not that we don't want to help. Just look, who here isn't seriously ill and in need of treatment? You still have to wait!"

Old Mrs. Mu's temper flared up, and she rolled up her sleeves, ready to argue with the clinic assistant.

Mr. Mu feared things would end up like with Zhang Huai Shu, who was denied treatment at the clinic.

Xiangxiang did die.

"Old woman, let it go. You can't keep arguing, or Xiangxiang's life will be gone!"

Old Mrs. Mu was seething with anger and happened to see Mu Qingqing standing by with a bruised nose and swollen face. She swung a slap at Mu Qingqing, knocking her to the ground.

The people around them gradually gathered to watch the commotion.

In the street, it's not uncommon to see people hitting others, but seeing an old woman hit a young girl was rare.

Some began pointing and talking about Old Mrs. Mu.

Old Mrs. Mu put her hands on her hips, shouting, "It's my granddaughter I'm disciplining, none of your business! Mind your own affairs."

Mu Qingqing was wearing an old silk dress which had faded to a pale color. With her swollen face, people around her gradually started to sympathize with Mu Qingqing.

"Hey, as a grandmother, this is just unacceptable.

Treating her own daughter like a treasure while treating her granddaughter like she's not human, hitting her so casually.

It's a sin, a real sin!"

Someone among the patients said.

"Such a pitiful little girl, her face is all swollen!" another person commented.

Mu Qingqing thought for a moment and felt this was her opportunity. Tears as big as beans started to roll down her eyes continuously.

Mu Qingqing pitifully looked at Old Mrs. Mu and said, "Grandma, I'm in so much pain..."

"Pain, pain, pain, is crying out in pain all you can do? If you ask me, you, little burden, should have died along with your wretched mother, such an eyesore!"

Old Mrs. Mu's rough words echoed in everyone's ears.

A kind person directly pulled Mu Qingqing aside; it was a well-dressed lady.

"Little girl, you can take my place in line. Get your injuries looked at first. For a young lady, a face is something that can't be replaced even with money."

By now, it was almost her turn, and by giving her place to Mu Qingqing, Mu Qingqing could almost go in for treatment.

"No, my aunt is still sick; my aunt is more important. Ma'am, can you give your place to my aunt?"

For the first time, Mu Qingqing pretended to be pitiful in front of others.

In the past, she had mostly stayed in the village, interacting only with the villagers.

When she made a mistake, she'd be slapped or pinched by Old Mrs. Mu with no chance to act pitiful.

This time, she dared because she saw people sympathizing with her.

"Little girl, you are so kind-hearted. Where else could someone like you be found in this world? It's a pity your grandmother doesn't appreciate it." The lady sighed.

Old Mrs. Mu was furious when she heard this.

"Darn woman, what do you mean by that? How could I not appreciate her? She's supposed to give up her place for her aunt!"

As Old Mrs. Mu spoke, she directed Mr. Mu to squeeze Mu Xiangxiang into the lady's spot, succeeding at last.

Suddenly, the people in the clinic were pointing and talking about Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu.

Old Mrs. Mu didn't care about any of it.

As long as her daughter was fine, nothing else mattered to her.

Mr. Mu blushed red, following alongside Old Mrs. Mu.

Finally, when it was Mu Xiangxiang's turn for treatment, Mu Qingqing was still crying.

But the lady was heartbroken, holding Mu Qingqing in her arms and softly comforting her, "Don't cry anymore, don't cry. I'll take you to a nearby clinic to have a look. That one's good too; you don't have to come to Xinglin Chun."

Mu Qingqing shook her head.

"No, I still have to take care of my aunt, and... I have no money..."

The lady felt deeply upset, seemingly recalling her own daughter.

"You're still a child, what do you need to take care of your aunt for? I have money. Come with me!"

The lady took Mu Qingqing to see a doctor, then bought her two sets of clean clothes.

Mu Qingqing had never worn such beautiful clothes before. The two sets together cost the lady four taels of silver.

Mu Qingqing realized that this lady was wealthy.

"Madam, I'll call you Madam, okay? Thank you for doing so much for Qingqing; Qingqing has no way to repay you but to serve you like a horse or an ox." Mu Qingqing said sweetly.

"Enough, it's just two sets of clothes, nothing expensive.

No need for you to become an animal. Just take better care of yourself in the future."

The lady stroked Mu Qingqing's head, comforting her.

Mu Qingqing had never been treated so gently before, especially by Old Mrs. Mu, who lashed out whenever in a bad mood.

Her mother, Mrs. Lin, was even more indifferent, wanting to shirk responsibilities whenever possible.

Moreover, she was always dirty, unlike this lady, who even smelled nice when she touched Mu Qingqing's head.

"Madam, you don't understand. Qingqing has never been treated this way, so I..." Saying this, Mu Qingqing started crying again.

"Poor little girl," the lady said, full of compassion.

Mu Qingqing sniffed and asked, "Madam, can Qingqing come to visit you in the future? Don't worry, Qingqing doesn't want to take advantage of you, but since you treated my illness and bought me clothes, Qingqing wants to repay you when I have money."

The lady thought for a moment and said, "My husband's family name is Liu. You can call me Mrs. Liu. If you ever have the chance, go to town and ask for the West Lane Liu Family, and people will point you in the right direction."

The lady left, leaving Mu Qingqing still in a daze.

Mu Qingqing casually asked someone by the roadside and learned that the Liu Family was a prominent family in town.

As for Mrs. Liu, she was a well-known charitable figure in town, often distributing porridge and helping the poor, and rarely put on airs when going out.

At that moment, Mu Qingqing suddenly felt that getting beaten was worthwhile.

Maybe she had clung to a tree stronger than her uncle's and the Qin Family's.

Thinking of the Qin Family, Mu Qingqing made some inquiries, and what she found out almost shocked her to death.

The Qin Family's dark history took her a whole cup of tea's time to listen to.

Afterward, Mu Qingqing thankfully patted her chest.

"With a family like the Qin's, it's good for my aunt to become part of them; when she's cursed to death by Young Master Qin, she can't blame anyone else."

Chapter 713: No Fate

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng settled the kids at home and went to Yu Family Village.

In just one night, the rumors among the villagers had surprisingly subsided quite a bit.

Upon further inquiry, Mu Shuangshuang learned that people were spreading rumors about Yu Liulang wanting to marry Luo Xiu'er.

They said that they had planned to get married earlier, and this time, it was just a little game the young couple played and got unexpectedly discovered.

Since they are an engaged couple, these things are no big deal.

"Fengzi, listen to this, how cunning that woman is. The news that my Sixth Uncle is marrying her must have been spread by herself.

This way, my Sixth Uncle has no choice but to marry her. What should I do? Fengzi, I really want to beat her up!"

Mu Shuangshuang said angrily.

Lu Yuanfeng couldn't help but smile and comforted Mu Shuangshuang, "Let's not lower ourselves to her level, it's not worth dirtying our own hands."

Mu Shuangshuang was just venting and wouldn't actually fight, just like Lu Yuanfeng said, she would dirty her hands.

"Forget it, let's go!" said Mu Shuangshuang.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng arrived at Old Yu Family's house. In the courtyard, some kids were playing with mud.

Sunshine spilled into the yard, warm and cozy, making one feel sleepy.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng headed straight to the backyard.

In the backyard, Feng Xiaohua was doing laundry, washing clothes for the whole family by herself.

Mu Shuangshuang quickly rushed forward to help Feng Xiaohua.

"Aunt Xiao Hua, why are you doing the laundry alone? Where is everyone else?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"Your big aunt is not feeling well today, resting in bed," Feng Xiaohua smiled.

Mu Shuangshuang frowned, "Where is my second aunt?"

Mrs. Li was always domineering at home, never doing laundry or cooking. She acted like a master at home all day long.

Whenever Mu Shuangshuang's big aunt didn't work, she wouldn't come out either, afraid to suffer losses herself.

"She... Shuangshuang, let's not talk about this, you and Fengzi head inside to rest. Have you had breakfast?"

"I'll make breakfast for you two. Yesterday, I brought a chicken from home, it laid an egg this morning, I can make breakfast for you and Fengzi."

As Feng Xiaohua spoke, she wiped her soap-slicked hands on her apron, and was about to make breakfast for Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng.

"Aunt Xiao Hua, there's no need to bother, Fengzi and I already ate before coming. Where is my Sixth Uncle?" Mu Shuangshuang asked again.

"He's at home discussing things with your parents, trying to come up with a solution quickly."

Seeing the anxious look on Feng Xiaohua's face, Mu Shuangshuang knew they couldn't delay this matter any longer.

The main hall in the backyard

Mu Shuangshuang's presence brought a bit more confidence to everyone.

Especially Yu Liulang, who no longer had the worried look from yesterday, probably because Feng Xiaohua had returned last night.

"Shuangshuang, you discuss with your Sixth Uncle how to handle this, I'll go outside to help your aunt wash clothes," Yu Si Niang said.

In fact, Yu Si Niang had wanted to leave early on; as a woman, she couldn't think of any solutions.

But she was concerned about her brother, so she forced herself to stay and listen.

Now that her daughter was here, Yu Si Niang knew the problem was not major anymore and felt relieved to help her sister-in-law.

Now in the room, only Mu Dashan, Yu Liulang, Mu Shuangshuang, and Lu Yuanfeng remained.

The group sat together, reiterating yesterday's plan and discussing the information Lu Yuanfeng had found.

Once the news was revealed, both men were somewhat astonished.

Especially Yu Liulang, regardless of the current situation, Luo Xiu'er had left an impression on him back in the days.

Even if she suddenly broke off the engagement, Yu Liulang had never thought poorly of Luo Xiu'er.

But now, faced with one thing after another, with him as the protagonist and Luo Xiu'er as the one who tricked him, Yu Liulang felt somewhat hurt.

"Shuangshuang, how can time turn a kind-hearted person into what they are now?"

I clearly remember Luo Xiu'er couldn't even bear to step on an ant, but now..."

Yu Liulang felt a deep melancholy, the bitterness of things changing, causing him great discomfort.

"Uncle, maybe it's not time that changed her, but excessive greed, wanting too much while giving too little."

Yu Liulang suddenly realized.

"Shuangshuang, you're right, I'll go speak those words to Luo Xiu'er now."

After saying that, Yu Liulang left Old Yu Family's house directly.

He headed toward the dilapidated house Luo Xiu'er had asked him to fix, but didn't find her there.

Instead, on the way to Old Luo's house, he encountered several people congratulating him.

"Brother Liu Lang, you're really lucky, marrying Feng Quezi's daughter."

Now this girl from Old Luo's family is also marrying you. Going in circles but you're the one benefiting in the end.

Remember to invite us for a drink!"

Yu Liulang was bewildered.

"Who told you guys I'm marrying Luo Xiu'er?" Yu Liulang asked.

"Old Luo himself, he even contacted Matchmaker Zhou, saying your family is ready for the engagement."

Yu Liulang's anger surged.

He rushed to Old Luo's house, with a stomach full of questions, each stalled by Shuangshuang's plan.

Yu Liulang feared causing trouble for Shuangshuang and also feared being tricked by Luo Xiu'er again, so he held in his anger.

Knowing Yu Liulang would come, Luo Xiu'er quickly got up from the bed, changed clothes, and tidied her hair and makeup.

During this time of recovery, Luo Xiu'er's original appearance had nearly been restored, and her skin looked much better than when she first returned.

Her complexion now carried a rosy glow.

Seeing the beauty in the copper mirror, Luo Xiu'er was more convinced she was the loveliest person in Yu Family Village.

Old Sir Luo and Old Lady Luo, in an attempt to give their daughter and Yu Liulang some alone time, excused themselves to make tea and never returned.

In the front hall, only Yu Liulang and Luo Xiu'er remained.

Luo Xiu'er suppressed her laughter, deliberately putting on a worried expression as she looked at Yu Liulang.

"Brother Liu Lang, I heard Little Flower went back, she didn't blame you, did she?"

Yu Liulang was taken aback for a moment and shook his head.

"No! Xiao Hua said she would never leave me for the rest of her life."

Luo Xiu'er's pupils tightened, her face struggling to maintain its perfect expression.

Her right index fingernail was already embedded deeply in her palm.

Luo Xiu'er felt no pain, only a piercing discomfort.

Yu Liulang continued, "Xiuer, maybe you think I'm being harsh, but what's missed is missed. We had no fate back then, and now... now I cannot let down Xiao Hua again.

She has waited for me until no one in the village dared to matchmake for her. During the time you left, I was really miserable, sometimes I didn't even want to live.

If it weren't for Xiao Hua, I feel I might have died already. She often encouraged me, telling me to wait for your return."

By this point, Luo Xiu'er's chest felt slightly aching.

Chapter 714: Make You Regret

"But why didn't you wait?" Luo Xiu'er asked.

At this moment, Luo Xiu'er was still thinking about others' mistakes, believing she herself was blameless.

She abandoned Yu Liulang, and Yu Liulang was supposed to wait foolishly for her to return.

What she doesn't want, Feng Xiaohua can't touch.

"I also asked myself why I didn't wait, and concluded, I don't like you anymore. The feelings between the two of us were from our youngest years, immature, unable to withstand storms.

But between Xiao Hua and me, we've weathered great storms together. I like Xiao Hua now; she is kind and pure."

That word "pure" once again made Luo Xiu'er feel that Yu Liulang was mocking her for being with that old man from the Zhang Family.

Luo Xiu'er was already on the verge of exploding, but with Yu Liulang present, she had to hold back.

"Brother Liu Lang, have you forgotten how we went down to the river to catch fish, got soaked in the rain, and went to the mountains to dig wild vegetables and roots?"

In rural households, some tree roots and grass roots were edible.

Especially during a famine period, villagers would go to the mountains to dig roots to eat.

Yu Liulang and Luo Xiu'er had once done these things together.

"Xiuxiu, the past is past, we... shouldn't meet again in the future!"

After saying this, Yu Liulang left without looking back.

Of course, he didn't dare to turn around; he had to make Luo Xiu'er feel that he was resolute.

Only then would Luo Xiu'er be pushed to desperation.

In fact, Yu Liulang achieved this, as soon as he left, a sound of things being smashed came from the Old Luo Family.

Tables, stools, teapots, even the doorposts, everything that could be ripped apart was dismantled by Luo Xiu'er.

When the old couple from the Luo Family returned home, they thought their house had been burglarized.

Old Lady Luo displayed it most obviously; she jumped and cursed, "Oh my, which heartless beast did this? How did our house end up like this, that bastard Wang Ba, I need to report to the authorities..."

Sitting on the ground in the middle of the hall, Luo Xiu'er heard Old Lady Luo's words and fiercely raised her head to question, "Report to the authorities? Who are you going to catch? Me?"

Old Lady Luo was frightened by Luo Xiu'er's eyes and retreated repeatedly!

"Ah Xiu, is this your doing?"

Old Lady Luo was full of surprise; she couldn't believe her daughter could do such a thing.

This was their own home, everything that was smashed belonged to them.

"Mother, how can you speak? If you hadn't despised Liu Lang for being poor back then, how could I have chosen to become a concubine to a fifty-year-old man?"

"People say better to be a poor man's wife than a rich man's concubine, are you really my mother?"

Old Lady Luo's face changed color. "Silly Xiu, if I'm not your mother, who is?"

Mother was just misled by her desire for you to live a good life and got confused; if I could choose again, I'd definitely pick Yu Liulang!"

"Daughter, what's going on? What did Yu Liulang say? He's not giving us the tea garden?" Old Sir Luo asked.

"Tea garden, tea garden, is there anything besides the tea garden in your minds? He said we will never meet again, and you still dream of the tea garden, dream on!"

Old Lady Luo and Old Sir Luo were shocked.

The duck that was almost in their mouths flew away; who could bear that?

"No way, I'll go find him, can't let him take advantage of my daughter for nothing!" Old Sir Luo said and was about to rush out.

Stopped by Luo Xiu'er.

"Where are you going, is it any use for you to go?"

"So what do you suggest? We can't just leave such a big tea garden, shouldn't we?" Old Lady Luo insisted.

"Alright, I get it! You go and call Wang Dali over for me, remember to call quietly, without anyone finding out."

Luo Xiu'er said.

"Xiuxiu, that Wang Dali is no good; he's a lazy bum in the village, you're asking for trouble by getting involved with him, have you lost your mind!"

Wang Dali isn't old; he's only twenty-six or twenty-seven, around the same age as Luo Xiu'er and Yu Liulang.

They played together when they were young.

But later Wang Dali robbed the wealthy in town, got sued, spent ten years in prison, and was recently released.

The villagers dared not provoke Wang Dali, even his own parents avoided him; Luo Xiu'er was the only one who deliberately offered herself.

"Go as I say, stop with all the nonsense! Don't want the tea garden anymore? Or do you want me not to support you in the future?"

Given the circumstances, Old Sir Luo couldn't say anything, he had to do as Luo Xiu'er instructed.

The old couple left the yard and headed toward the most western and dilapidated straw house at the village entrance.

Wang Dali had lived there for a few months; no one dared to go near that place, those with fields went back and forth together.

Old Sir Luo and Old Lady Luo ventured out together.

They were somewhat fearful.

Thinking about the future, they gathered courage and knocked on Wang Dali's door.

"Da Li, it's your Uncle Luo, I've come to see you..."

Old Sir Luo shouted at the top of his lungs.

After a moment, a dirty-looking man came out from inside, with a half-inch scar under his eye.

The scar was ugly, like a centipede, crawling across Wang Dali's face.

He looked like a fierce person.

"What do you want? Come to me!" Wang Dali shouted.

Old Sir Luo's leg shook, his pants warmed, and he peed his pants in fear.

Wet urine dripped on the ground, which amused Wang Dali.

He cast a glance at Old Lady Luo, and she immediately kneeled down in fear.

After a long while, Old Sir Luo dared to speak.

"Da Li, it's not Uncle Luo looking for you, it's Uncle Luo's daughter Xiuxiu, she wants you to come to the house."

Wang Dali grinned, revealing a mouthful of large yellow teeth.

"If Xiuxiu's looking for me, why didn't you two old fogeys say so earlier?" Wang Dali glared, causing Old Sir Luo to faint, and Old Lady Luo followed suit and pretended to faint.

The two cowards couldn't elicit a shred of concern from Wang Dali.

He swaggered toward the Luo Family, kicked open their door.

Luo Xiu'er was waiting for Wang Dali in the backyard because the things she was going to do mustn't be known by others.

Luo Xiu'er used to be the best-looking one in Yu Family Village, then Feng Xiaohua.

No matter who was better looking, if they cherished him, Wang Dali liked them most.

"Speak up, why did you call me here?" Wang Dali asked.

"I want you to help me with something..." Luo Xiu'er finished speaking, Wang Dali laughed heartily.

"You little vixen, I knew when you were young you weren't a good one, now you've grown up, you're even worse!

Isn't Yu Liulang your childhood sweetheart, and you even want me to take his wife, that's ruthless!"

"Cut the crap, are you doing it or not?" Luo Xiu'er asked impatiently.

"Do it, of course, I'll do it! The top beauty in Yu Family Village, but I'm Wang Dali, not someone who covets beauty. What else do you have for me?"

Wang Dali would kill and rob, as long as there's money.

"The tea garden, Old Yu Family's tea garden is yours, but the condition is you'll marry me into the Old Yu Family, or no deal."

Chapter 715: The Sooner the Better

The tea garden of the Old Yu Family is worth a lot of money, even Wang Dali, who just appeared recently, knows this.

"You woman, you haven't even married in yet, and you're already touching your husband's assets! But I like it, haha..."

Wang Dali laughed heartily, and because he was close to Luo Xiu'er, she could smell a sour odor from his mouth.

The disgusted Luo Xiu'er retched continuously.

Wang Dali didn't think it was because of him, instead, he mocked Luo Xiu'er.

"Wow, she hasn't married into the Yu Family yet, and already has a child. I bet it's some bastard's, right?"

Luo Xiu'er squinted her eyes and stared fiercely at Wang Dali.

"Wang Dali, mind your words. If there's nothing else, leave my house quickly!"

Wang Dali clicked his tongue twice.

"People say, 'a slut is heartless, an actor is unfaithful,' you, Luo Xiu'er, are even more heartless than a slut!"

"That has nothing to do with you. If you keep babbling, I won't give you the tea garden!" Luo Xiu'er replied coldly.

Wang Dali stared at Luo Xiu'er, looking at her delicate figure, looking at her beautiful face.

Bah, disgusting woman, once I get the tea garden, I'll make you kneel and beg for mercy.

"Hehe, Xiuxiu, let's not be so harsh. Back then, you followed me around, calling me Brother Dali. It's just been over ten years, and now you don't recognize me?"

Speaking of the past, when Wang Dali was seven or eight years old, Luo Xiu'er indeed followed him and played for a while.

Because Wang Dali had great strength and looked quite sturdy, being with him meant that no kids in the village dared to bully Luo Xiu'er.

It was later that Luo Xiu'er found someone more honest and willing to protect her, and that's when she kicked Wang Dali to the curb.

Thinking that she still needed to plead with Wang Dali, Luo Xiu'er softened her attitude.

"Brother Dali, this time, you'll be helping Xiuxiu, and also yourself.

After you get together with Feng Xiaohua, Brother Liu Lang surely won't want her anymore, and by then you can marry Feng Xiaohua.

Let her give you a son or two. Her body is clean, the kids born will definitely be yours.

By then, you'll have the tea garden, a wife, and continue the Wang Family lineage; isn't that a great thing all around?"

To be honest, Wang Dali was tempted by Luo Xiu'er's words.

He wanted the tea garden, he wanted Feng Xiaohua, and of course, he couldn't let this little girl in front of him go.

Once he ruined this woman, he'd sell her to the brothel.

Wang Dali was plotting, and Luo Xiu'er was plotting too—once Wang Dali really touched Feng Xiaohua, she'd send him to the government for another decade.

By then, the tea garden would still belong to Luo Xiu'er.

"So tell me, when do we act?" Wang Dali asked.

"The sooner the better, preferably in the next few days. But I'll let you know the exact time!" Luo Xiu'er answered.

After hearing what Luo Xiu'er said, Wang Dali went back.

Meanwhile, Luo Xiu'er was still pondering how to set a trap for Feng Xiaohua.

Finally, she thought of a plan which involved personally seeking out Feng Xiaohua and ideally arranging a meeting.

Luo Xiu'er dressed up and put on a perfect smile.

She went out and headed straight to the Old Yu Family.

Yu Si Niang and Feng Xiaohua had just finished washing a basin of clothes.

They were hanging the clothes in the yard, and when Luo Xiu'er suddenly appeared, Feng Xiaohua felt uncomfortable all over.

The woman outside the yard was her rival in love, the one who framed her man.

And also her enemy.

Yu Si Niang wasn't happy either, but she knew she couldn't cause trouble for Shuangshuang and Sixth Son.

"Xiao Hua, don't be upset. Shuangshuang and the others are already thinking of a way, we just need to do our part!"

After saying that, Yu Si Niang went to open the gate for Luo Xiu'er.

Luo Xiu'er smiled sweetly at Yu Si Niang.

"Thank you, Sister Si!"

Back then, when it came to the marriage between Luo Xiu'er and Yu Liulang, Yu Si Niang had been very supportive because Luo Xiu'er was polite and always friendly to everyone.

Now it seemed that even Yu Si Niang felt she had been mistaken.

"Little Flower sister, let me help you!" Leaving Yu Si Niang behind, Luo Xiu'er approached Feng Xiaohua.

Feng Xiaohua quickly shook her head.

"No need, it's just a bit left!"

But Luo Xiu'er insisted on helping, and it happened that Feng Xiaohua was holding an outer garment, and it belonged to Yu Liulang.

The two of them tugged back and forth, neither willing to yield.

Suddenly, there was a ripping sound, the shirt tore from the middle.

Feng Xiaohua and Luo Xiu'er each held half.

At that moment, Feng Xiaohua felt terrible, looking at the half garment in her hand.

There was a fleeting look of malice in Luo Xiu'er's eyes.

Seeing Feng Xiaohua about to cry, Luo Xiu'er quickly softened and comforted her, "I'm sorry, Little Flower sister, it's all my fault... I'll buy you another garment instead!"

Feng Xiaohua pulled a long face, shaking her head! "No need, I'll prepare Brother Liu Lang's clothes myself, without troubling outsiders!"

This word 'outsiders' infuriated Luo Xiu'er to no end.

Who said Feng Xiaohua was honest and naive? This woman clearly wasn't so easy-going!

"Little Flower sister, I know you're still blaming me for what happened between me and Sixth Son, I actually..."

Luo Xiu'er had just mentioned this matter, and Feng Xiaohua looked as if she was about to collapse.

Luo Xiu'er pressed on, "Actually, it was all a misunderstanding, nothing happened between me and Sixth Son, really, Little Flower, you have to believe me!"

Though Luo Xiu'er's words seemed to be an explanation to Feng Xiaohua.

She was actually trying to cover up.

If Feng Xiaohua hadn't already known the truth of the matter, she might have been deceived again.

"Xiuxiu, I believe you, but I believe Brother Liu Lang more. Even if something did happen between you and Brother Liu Lang, he's already promised me that he'd only marry me in this life." Feng Xiaohua replied, full of determination.

Luo Xiu'er's teeth ground tightly.

She didn't know what had happened, but Feng Xiaohua had become assertive, defending her position herself.

Luo Xiu'er suddenly thought of someone.

Mu Shuangshuang, Yu Liulang's niece, said to be a niece but her skills were higher than anyone else's.

And her sharp, penetrating gaze.

Luo Xiu'er felt a bit flustered, with a sense of defeat.

But instinct told her not to give up.

As long as Wang Dali dealt with the person in front, Yu Liulang wouldn't want her anymore.

By then, no matter how good or skilled the niece was, she couldn't restore Yu Liulang's lost face.

"Little Flower sister, it's good that you can think like this! I came today actually to say goodbye to you and Sixth Son. I'm leaving Yu Family Village.

During this time, I've thought a lot. If I hadn't returned to Yu Family Village, there wouldn't be so much drama.

Sixth Son wouldn't be misunderstood, and you wouldn't have suffered so much undeserved blame.

All the mistakes originated from me and should end because of me!"

Chapter 716: Good-for-Nothing (Part 3)

"Are you really leaving?" Feng Xiaohua was stunned.

She thought Luo Xiu'er came to show off.

She didn't know Luo Xiu'er was here to say goodbye, and for a moment, she was at a loss for words.

"My parents have agreed. I guess I'm not filial enough as a daughter." Luo Xiu'er forced a smile.

Such a smile made her look all the more sincere.

Most of the people Feng Xiaohua had met in her life were straightforward and unsuspecting.

This time, she foolishly believed what Luo Xiu'er said.

"Will you... come back?" Feng Xiaohua asked.

Her words carried a hint of sadness.

"Probably not! I'm going back to the county to find work washing clothes. Once I'm capable enough, I'll bring my parents to the county to enjoy life.

As for Sixth Son, I'll explain everything to the villagers. It's the least I can do for him."

After finishing her words, Luo Xiu'er walked out of the yard.

Feng Xiaohua watched the slender and lonely figure leave, and words unexpectedly escaped her mouth.

"Actually, you don't have to leave. You don't need to care about what others think," Feng Xiaohua said.

Luo Xiu'er turned to Feng Xiaohua and said, "No, I can't keep troubling others."

"Xiao Hua, I might never see you again after I leave this time. I plan to invite the people of Old Yu Family for a meal at my house. Would you... like to join us?"

"Sure! Whenever you say, I'll come along to help with the cooking and such." This time, Feng Xiaohua didn't hesitate.

Because Shuangshuang had mentioned, other than giving her place up for Luo Xiu'er, she should agree to any other requests from Luo Xiu'er.

Luo Xiu'er's lips curled into a smile.

Then it'll be tomorrow night; I'll go to town to buy groceries during the day.

After sending Luo Xiu'er off, Yu Si Niang finished drying all the clothes.

"Xiao Hua, what did Luo Xiu'er say?" Yu Si Niang approached to ask.

"She said she's leaving and wants to invite us from the Old Yu Family for a meal tomorrow night," Feng Xiaohua replied.

"What's this woman up to again? Xiao Hua, you must be careful."

"Sister, do you think Luo Xiu'er is lying?" Feng Xiaohua asked in surprise.

"Of course! Just think, if she really wanted to leave, wouldn't she do it quietly? Why would she deliberately tell you? If she truly didn't want to harm Sixth Son, she'd go to the village and confess everything she did."

Yu Si Niang spoke with certainty.

Suddenly, applause erupted.

Mu Shuangshuang walked out from the main room and approached Yu Si Niang and Feng Xiaohua directly.

"Mom, your analysis is spot on. That Luo Xiu'er really has bad intentions. Tomorrow night, she plans to frame Aunt Xiao Hua."

Mu Shuangshuang gave Yu Si Niang a thumbs up, her face full of admiration.

Yu Si Niang blushed and said embarrassedly, "I was just speaking casually; I don't really know about those things."

"Mom, you're right, and you deserve praise. Besides, there's another matter we need to discuss..."

The three women gathered close and discussed a lot.

Yu Si Niang and Feng Xiaohua both blushed.

Especially Feng Xiaohua, who almost got deceived again.

"That's basically how it went. When Sixth Uncle went to find Luo Xiu'er, I asked Fengzi to follow him. After he spoke at Luo Xiu'er's house, Fengzi didn't leave. He heard everything himself."

Mu Shuangshuang could only think of one phrase: If you want to keep it unknown to others, you have to not do it yourself.

"This matter is too serious; we must tell the village chief."

Usually, every village's major affairs are handled by the village chief.

If the matter is even bigger, then it might require going to the town mayor, or even the County Magistrate.

So Yu Si Niang's first reaction was to find the village chief.

"Mom, don't get anxious. The fewer people know about this, the better."

Apart from Sixth Uncle and Aunt Xiao Hua, only you and dad know about it at home, and just me and Fengzi. We even have to keep it from grandpa and grandma."

Mu Shuangshuang mostly wanted to keep it from that Aunt Li Juhua.

That woman is greedy and gossipy. If she knew the truth, she might run to Luo Xiu'er and start gossiping.

Mu Shuangshuang was indeed right in her guess.

The first thing Mrs. Li did when she woke up late in the morning was to send her husband, Yu Erlang, to ask about the Luo Xiu'er matter.

Yu Erlang had been chopping firewood all morning and was naturally displeased to be questioned as soon as he came back for a drink of water.

"Why do you care about their business? Whether or not we marry Luo Xiu'er has nothing to do with our family."

Mrs. Li immediately got furious, "You're such a coward; you still won't admit it when I say you're spineless. Back when Old Yu Family's tea garden was started, you and Lao Liu worked on it together.

Now, all of a sudden, Lao Liu has become the owner, and what are you? A mere servant, chopping wood. Can you do something a man should do?"

Mrs. Li became more and more furious and started cursing again.

"I must have been blind back then to choose such a spineless husband. If I knew, I would have married into the Old Zheng Family at the village head and at least gotten two acres of land."

"You wretched woman, what nonsense are you spouting? You're my wife; how dare you mention other men in front of me," Yu Erlang raged. The last thing a man can endure is his woman talking about another man, especially in his presence.

The metaphorical hat was raised high, and Yu Erlang found it grating to the ears.

"Why can't I mention it? If it weren't for me, Li Juhua, do you think you'd be living well now, Yu Erlang? I've given you children and taken care of you; how dare you shout at me?"

Let me tell you, Yu Erlang, do you know why your parents still let you loiter around Old Yu Family's tea garden like a stray dog now?

It's because Feng Xiaohua hasn't had a child yet. Once she does, you won't even have the right to stand in Old Yu Family, let alone be a stray dog.

I curse you, useless, spineless man. If I relied on you, I'd starve all my life."

Mrs. Li spat in Yu Erlang's face, looking at him with disdain.

She increasingly resented the heavens for their unfairness, for marrying her to such a useless man.

Weren't they from the same lineage? How come Yu Liulang could run a business and find a wife to manage the tea garden?

Listening to Mrs. Li's curses, Yu Erlang suddenly felt a bit scared.

If Mrs. Li's words were true, and one day he was no longer needed at the tea garden, would he really end up thrown out?

Yu Erlang softened, glancing at his domineering wife.

The woman in front of him, in her thirties, already had wrinkles on her face, not a beautiful woman.

But her eyes were full of pride and unwillingness.

Yu Erlang suddenly spoke awkwardly, "Juhua, how about we just forget about it? Sixth Son and Xiao Hua are our siblings. If they live well, we will also..."

Chapter 717: Awkward Incident (Part 1)

"Bah! You useless wretch, if Yu Liulang is doing well, what benefit do you get? Will he take care of your son or your wife? When you get old, won't it be me bringing you tea and water, you fool!" Mrs. Li scolded Yu Erlang.

"All you know is to scold me, what else can you do? The tea garden belongs to mom and dad. Whoever they want to give it to, they will.

You yourself said mom and dad said, once Lao Liu's wife has a baby, the tea garden will be given to her.

If they want to have a baby, can you stop it? Can you control who mom and dad want to give the tea garden to?" Yu Erlang retorted, his neck flushed with anger.

"Who says there's no way?" Mrs. Li snorted coldly, continuing, "In this house, as long as I'm here, Yu Liulang can forget about getting the tea garden. I have ways to deal with him, make sure he can't have a baby."

"Juhua, what did you just say? You didn't do something bad, did you?"

Yu Erlang was stunned. He knew very well what his wife was like.

When she goes crazy, there's nothing she won't do.

"Don't mind what I've done, just remember that Yu Liulang is not qualified to inherit our tea garden." Mrs. Li said confidently and got up from the kang bed.

Noon had come, and it was time for her to try the meal made by her sister-in-law.

The lunchtime at the Old Yu Family gathered everyone around the table.

The dishes were prepared by Mu Shuangshuang, Yu Si Niang, and Feng Xiaohua together.

It was quite sumptuous, with Yu Dalang having dug some lotus roots from the pond in the morning, adding pork ribs stewed with lotus roots to the lunch.

Seeing the large table of dishes, Mr. Yu and Old Mrs. Yu couldn't stop smiling.

"It's rare for Si Niang and Da Shan to come over, our Old Yu Family hasn't been this lively in a long time. Today, the men should drink some wine, the women should eat more, everyone has worked hard, let's be happy today in our Old Yu Family."

Everyone laughed along, even Mu Shuangshuang's sick aunt.

Only Mrs. Li kept a stern face, as if the whole world owed her money.

Whatever Mr. Yu said, she would roll her eyes as if she didn't agree at all.

This subtle unhappiness was noticed by Feng Xiaohua. She stood up and said to Mrs. Li, "Second sister-in-law, would you like some soup? The pork ribs and lotus root were made by Shuangshuang, the taste is really good, almost as good as the chefs in town."

"How dare I let you serve me soup? Lao Liu is a life-taker, didn't you hear what he said when you came in?"

As your second sister-in-law, I'm lazy, lying around all day, not even helping with washing clothes.

Just two pieces of clothing, if I let you serve soup, wouldn't you curse me to lose my hands and feet?" Mrs. Li's words were full of sarcasm, making everyone present uncomfortable.

Lu Yuanfeng glanced at Mu Shuangshuang, wanting to see if she was angry.

But she wasn't; Mu Shuangshuang appeared very composed. She calmly served herself a bowl of soup, then another for Lu Yuanfeng, quietly gesturing for him to taste it.

Clearly, she didn't want to get involved.

Lu Yuanfeng also stopped paying attention to the issues at the table, the two of them eating their food in harmony.

"Second sister-in-law, are you really calling that two pieces of clothing? Such a big washbasin, if it weren't for my fourth sister helping, it couldn't have been finished in a day!" Yu Liulang retorted.

"What's wrong with such a big basin? Didn't I also wash clothes when I became a daughter-in-law? When I washed clothes for your Old Yu Family in the cold winter, why didn't you feel sorry for me?"

Your wife is human, and I'm not? Let me tell you, Yu Liulang, everyone's watching with their eyes open, everyone in the village knows your dirty deeds.

You're the only one with the nerve to show off your love here; be careful, traveling at night too much might get you haunted."

Mrs. Li was utterly shameless, venting her frustrations without caring what she was saying.

The originally good atmosphere had almost been completely ruined.

Mr. Yu intervened to stop her, "Second daughter-in-law, if you have something to say, just say it directly, don't be passive-aggressive."

"Dad, I already said it very clearly. Just tell Lao Liu not to keep an eye on me all the time. I'm not a criminal that he has to watch every day." Li Juhua said.

"Enough, all of you stop. It's rare for Si Niang and Da Shan to come over for a meal; if you want to argue, go outside." Old Mrs. Yu also stopped them.

Mrs. Li's face turned red with anger.

She said, "Fine, so the whole family is ganging up on me, right? Well, I'm done with this, I'm leaving, don't regret it."

After saying that, Li Juhua threw down her chopsticks onto the table and stormed out.

Yu Tiancai, the child from the second household, glanced at Mrs. Li and was about to follow her out, but was stopped by Mr. Yu.

"Tiancai, your mom may not eat, but we will. Eat up, and Grandpa will make you a spinning top."

A spinning top is one of the few toys for rural children.

A piece of wood carved into a cone and cylinder combination, with a nail hammered into the cone end.

Then, using a hemp string to continuously whip the top, it begins to spin.

Hearing there was a toy, Yu Tiancai was in a good mood, laughing out loud.

The other children also clamored for one, and the atmosphere that Mrs. Li had destroyed was fully restored.

Everyone joyfully enjoyed their meal, chatting and eating.

The Old Yu Family is different from the Old Mu Family; adults and children eat at the same table, a large round table, where people squeeze in if it's crowded.

In the Old Yu Family, the dining atmosphere is much better than in the Old Mu Family.

The children wanted meat, and not only would Mrs. Yu not hit their hands with chopsticks, but she would also actively give them food.

There weren't so many rules at the dining table either.

"Dad, Mom, Luo Xiu'er came to find me today, asking if our whole family could go over to their place for a meal. She said she's about to leave Yu Family Village." Feng Xiaohua said.

Since Mrs. Li had just talked about Luo Xiu'er, Feng Xiaohua mentioning it again made people feel a bit awkward.

Especially the elderly couple, the family hadn't explained the events to them, but they were quite consistent.

They didn't want to harm Feng Xiaohua.

Mr. Yu and Old Mrs. Yu had discussed giving Luo Xiu'er some money, but they hadn't taken any steps yet, and now Luo Xiu'er was saying she was leaving.

Mr. Yu and Old Mrs. Yu found themselves unsure of what to say.

"Xiaohua, we... we better not go. You know our stance, your dad and mine. Since we initially chose you to be our daughter-in-law, that won't change."

Old Mrs. Yu spoke sincerely, and Feng Xiaohua felt touched.

"Dad, Mom, thank you for your kindness to Xiaohua. Xiaohua remembers everything, and I will honor you both with Liu Lang in the future."

Mr. Yu and Old Mrs. Yu smiled and said, "Good, what a good child you are. If this situation passes, you can go with your sister-in-law to manage the tea garden, learn from her how to handle things there."

Chapter 718: Internal Strife

Saying something unintentionally, hearing it with intent.

Mr. Yu and Old Mrs. Yu said these words only to encourage Feng Xiaohua to share the burden for Yu Liulang.

But in Yu Erlang's eyes, it was the Yu Family elders wanting to give the tea garden to Feng Xiaohua, making the second branch suffer.

Moreover, the words Mrs. Li said to Yu Erlang before the meal, which were patronizing, added to his feelings.

Yu Erlang now felt even more uneasy.

Over the years, Yu Erlang was quite foolish and never took Mrs. Li's words seriously.

He just did whatever his parents asked, without any plans.

Upon reflection, Yu Erlang felt the elders were biased everywhere, caring only for the Sixth Son, even along with his own younger sister.

Yu Erlang realized he should do something to get what he deserves.

After lunch, Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng returned to Er Gui Village. Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan originally wanted to go with them, but Mu Shuangshuang refused.

After all, Yu Liulang's issue hadn't been resolved yet. If all of those who cared about him went back, Yu Liulang might think too much, so only Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan could stay in Yu Family Village.

...

...

Tomorrow is the day Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng go to town to deliver goods.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng need to prepare everything well and then hurry to Yu Family Village from the town.

Back home, Mu Shuangshuang started washing clothes that had been left for two days. As soon as Lu Yuanfeng was home, he went into the mountains to chop firewood and check if any new prey had wandered into his traps.

Xue Zheng played with a rabbit in the yard, occasionally glancing at Mu Shuangshuang washing clothes.

In Old Mu Family, Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu had gone to town for most of the day and hadn't returned for lunch.

Mrs. Lin was also not there; the only one who could cook was the wife of the fourth house, Mrs. Liu. Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian together called her up from the kang, telling her to cook and wash clothes.

Mrs. Liu, who had just gotten a little better, was exhausted like a spinning top and seemed about to collapse again.

Mu Dajiang sent Mrs. Liu back to her room to rest.

This act, however, angered Mu Danian and Mu Dazhong.

The two big men spoke roughly.

"Fourth, the only woman in the house is Xiaxia's mother. Nowadays, you pamper Xiaxia's mother like she's a treasure. No food is cooked, no clothes are washed. Do you expect us big men to do these women's chores?"

Mu Dazhong sat heavily on the stone roller in the yard. It was the same stone roller that Mrs. Lin had pushed Mu Shuangshuang into at the time.

But now Mrs. Lin, avoiding responsibility, had fled to Lin Family Village and hadn't returned yet.

"Second Brother, Fifth Brother, it's not that I'm saying it, but Mom and Dad haven't come back yet. Instead of caring about whether Mom and Dad have eaten or if Xiangxiang is well, you have Xiaxia's mother doing this and that. What's your intention?" accused Mu Dajiang with a flushed face.

Nearby, not wanting Mu Dajiang to cause trouble, Mrs. Liu took the initiative and said, "Fourth, let it be. Mom and Dad are not here. As the daughter-in-law, it's my duty to take care of the house.

I'll wash the clothes; you, as a big man, shouldn't bother with these things. Let me do it."

Saying this, Mrs. Liu squatted by the wooden basin again, but Mu Dajiang helped her up.

"Xiaxia's mother, these are not our clothes, so we shouldn't wash them. The second branch has the most people and clothes, so Second Brother should wash them."

"Fifth Brother, did you hear that? You once said Fourth Brother was the most honest in our family. I think you got it wrong; Fourth Brother is actually the least honest.

At lunch, I watched him take the eggs Mom bought for Xiangxiang—three eggs. When Mom finds out, she might not know whether to flay Fourth Brother and Xiaxia's mother alive." Mu Dazhong covered his mouth, snickering.

At this moment, Mu Dazhong no longer treated Mu Dajiang as his brother, merely as someone to argue against.

Grabbing every opportunity to stomp down hard.

Mu Dajiang was shocked; his face turned a deeper shade of red from anger.

"Second Brother, you were the one who mentioned wanting to eat eggs. You were the one who said Mom's eggs were in the jar at the corner of her room. And it was you who said you would take full responsibility."

That's exactly how it was.

Old Mrs. Mu hid many good things in her room—sometimes food given by relatives, sometimes cured meat made for holidays.

Country cured meat has two types: smoked and sun-dried.

Every New Year, Old Mrs. Mu would buy more than ten pounds of meat to make cured meat, but by New Year's Day, nobody would see a trace of these things.

Because Old Mrs. Mu would hide it away, waiting until Mu Dade started school in spring before cooking it for him meal by meal.

Mu Dazhong and Mu Danian knew where Old Mrs. Mu hid things, but Mu Dajiang, being honest, never tried to investigate this matter. This time, because Mrs. Liu was still sick, and Mu Dajiang wanted to give her some nutritious food, he agreed with Mu Dazhong.

Who would have thought he'd fall into a trap?

"You believed what I said, Fourth Brother; do you realize how foolish you are!" Mu Dazhong laughed heartily.

"All the brothers, even the Third Brother has gained wisdom, but you're still dull as a pig. Anyway, there's no escaping this blame for you."

Not only couldn't he escape, but he also implicated the fourth house.

Mu Dajiang's eyes turned bright red, glaring at Mu Dazhong, who had set him up.

"What are you looking at? You can look all you want, but I won't admit it's me who sent you. See how you explain yourself in front of Mom and Dad." Mu Dazhong was still smug.

Mu Dajiang clenched his fists tightly, and in the blink of an eye, he charged at Mu Dazhong, punching him.

Mu Dazhong's face was knocked askew. Before he could cry out in pain, Mu Dajiang landed another punch.

An honest man, being honest all his life, never blushing eye to eye with anyone, nor quarreling over a single word.

But all these broke in front of his family brother, as Mu Dajiang's eyes turned red and he kept hitting.

In the yard, the cries of pain slowly spread far away...

Mu Shuangshuang had washed half a tub of clothes; hearing Mu Dazhong's cry of pain, she curiously wondered what had happened.

Mrs. Liu came charging over, crying as she spoke to Mu Shuangshuang, "Shuangshuang, this is terrible. Your Fourth Uncle and Second Uncle have started fighting. Hurry up and take a look; late could be fatal."

Mu Shuangshuang looked at Mrs. Liu, hair straggled and dazed, feeling waves of pity.

Moreover, she noticed a red palm print on Mrs. Liu's face—that was definitely a man's hand.

"Fourth Aunt, what's wrong? Who hit you on the face?"

Mrs. Liu didn't speak and merely cried.

Mu Shuangshuang also got annoyed. "Fourth Aunt, what exactly happened? Can you tell me clearly? Who hit you, and how did Fourth Uncle and Second Uncle get into a fight?"

Mrs. Liu sobbed for a long time before speaking.

First, it was because of the eggs, then because Mu Dazhong slapped Mrs. Liu in the face. Now, things had completely spiraled out of control.

"Shuangshuang, your Grandpa and Grandma... They went to town and haven't returned yet. If they were here, the fight definitely wouldn't have broken out. Shuangshuang, please, Fourth Aunt begs you, go and help..."

"Fourth Aunt, don't cry. I'll go right now to take a look!"

Chapter 719: Teaching Mu Dazhong

Mu Shuangshuang was ready even though she said she was just going to take a look.

She went to Zhao Yun's house, called Zhang Yutou, and then asked Zhao Yun to bring Zhao Gouzi to help.

Two big men fighting; it's not a big deal, but not a small matter either.

By the time Mu Shuangshuang gathered everyone and went to the backyard of the Old Mu Family,

Mu Dazhong and Mu Dajiang were still fighting.

At that moment, it was clear Mu Dajiang was at a disadvantage; a heavy wall of flesh pressed on Mu Dajiang, and both men were furious.

They even resorted to fighting like women, pulling hair and kicking stomachs.

"Uncle Yu, Uncle Gouzi, quickly separate them," Mu Shuangshuang said.

The two men pulled Mu Dazhong off Mu Dajiang.

Mrs. Liu ran up crying, hugged Mu Dajiang, and said, "Fourth, let's leave. We can't stay in this family anymore. We'll go outside, even if we have to sleep on the streets.

Bring Xiaxia and Xiao Chu back with us, okay?"

Being bullied time and again, enduring time and again, Mrs. Liu, as a woman, was also scared.

The Old Mu Family's wealth and prosperity, she dared not think about it.

She only wanted her husband's life to be intact.

"Let me go! Zhang Yutou, Zhao Gouzi, you dare to meddle in the Mu Family's affairs? Do you know who my brother is? He's a scholar! My brother is a scholar!"

Mu Dazhong, panting like a bull, cursed loudly.

Zhang Yutou and Zhao Gouzi were invited by Mu Shuangshuang to help and would only listen to Mu Shuangshuang.

"Shuangshuang, how should we deal with this?" Zhang Yutou asked.

"So it was you, little girl, who stirred up this trouble," Mu Dazhong shifted his target and insulted Mu Shuangshuang.

"Second Uncle, don't speak so harshly. It was you who were fighting my Fourth Uncle in the yard, and Shuangshuang happened to see it. She didn't want you to ruin Big Brother's reputation, so she invited two uncles to help,"

Mu Shuangshuang said a word, completely clearing Mrs. Liu and indirectly protecting her.

Mu Shuangshuang used to think that Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu didn't care about anything in the Old Mu Family. Now she felt she was wrong; if it weren't for them, the family would probably be in chaos.

Just like now, brothers turning against each other.

If her Fourth Aunt hadn't come to her, Mu Dajiang might have been beaten to death by Mu Dazhong today.

"Enough, don't go on flaunting Big Brother's name. Your third branch has already separated, and you have no say in family matters. Get out," Mu Dazhong said.

Mu Shuangshuang was irritated; no matter how much she reasoned, he wouldn't listen.

"Second Uncle, what you said is interesting. This isn't your place; the house deed and land deed belong to Grandpa and Grandma. Shuangshuang wants to be wherever she wants, and you can't control it."

Mu Shuangshuang's attitude was extremely arrogant; she was not afraid of anything in front of Mu Dazhong.

Just like Mu Dazhong said himself, the third branch has separated, and he has no say over her.

"You..." Mu Dazhong was furious.

Mu Danian, who had been watching for a long time, also came out to mediate.

"Second Brother, don't argue with a little girl. Let's just leave it at that; we owe nothing to each other," Mu Danian said with a grin, but his words were biased.

"That's not how you say it, Fifth Uncle. My Fourth Uncle was pressed down and beaten, covered in wounds. Who is responsible for these injuries?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"Oh, so you really came to help. You want me to be responsible for Fourth's injuries; who's responsible for mine?" Mu Dazhong yelled, glaring at Mu Shuangshuang.

"You brought it upon yourself; why blame me?" Mu Shuangshuang replied.

Mu Dazhong rushed at Mu Shuangshuang but was subdued by Zhang Yutou and Zhao Gouzi before he could reach her.

These two men wouldn't just stand by and watch Shuangshuang get bullied.

If Lu Yuanfeng were here now, he might have already taught Mu Shuangshuang's Second Uncle a lesson.

The men's actions were neither light nor heavy; Mu Dazhong's face was pressed into the mud in the yard, tightly against the ground, Mu Dazhong groaned.

Mu Shuangshuang picked up a wooden stick from the ground and handed it to Mu Dajiang.

"Fourth Uncle, just as Second Uncle hit you and Fourth Aunt, make him pay back tenfold, a hundredfold. Hit him hard, beat him hard; whatever comes up, Shuangshuang will cover the medical expenses!"

Mu Dajiang looked at the thick wooden stick in Mu Shuangshuang's hand, remembering how his wife received a slap from Mu Dazhong, and further how he was humiliated over three eggs by Mu Dazhong.

The stick fell like raindrops on Mu Dazhong, and Mu Shuangshuang slightly adjusted the position, targeting Mu Dazhong's buttocks.

Such wounds often hurt but heal fast.

Back then, when Mu Danian and Chen Hong were having an affair, a rake jabbed a hole in Mu Danian's butt, yet soon he recovered.

Mu Dazhong initially glared at Mu Dajiang, full of resentment, then, when beaten painfully, pleaded desperately.

"Oh my... Fourth, Second Brother's butt... Second Brother's butt..."

"Spare me, I won't dare anymore; I know I was wrong..."

"Fourth..."

The entire yard echoed only with the sound of the stick hitting the buttocks and Mu Dazhong's wails.

Mu Dajiang had never been so bold in his life. With each strike on Mu Dazhong, a feeling of empowerment surged in his heart.

By the end, Mu Dazhong's buttocks were a mass of blood and flesh, and Mu Dajiang finally stopped.

In the yard, Mu Danian was already stunned.

This time, the honest person not only resisted but also won.

Mu Dazhong, however, continued to cry, "Fourth, you beat Second Brother; may heaven strike with thunder and lightning! Oh, heavens, send a thunderbolt to kill this damned thing!"

"Fifth, help me teach Fourth a lesson, kill him, quickly..."

Mu Dajiang glanced at Mu Danian, and Mu Danian retreated in fright.

"Fourth Brother, don't listen to Second Brother's nonsense; I've always been on your side. You beat him well; I won't listen to Second Brother."

Hearing Mu Danian's words, Mu Dazhong's eyes went black, and he completely fainted.

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At sunset, Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu had not returned, nor had Mu Qingqing.

Mu Xiangxiang was seriously ill, and it took the doctor from Xinglin Chun Medical Hall a whole morning to save her; she would need to stay in town for a few more days to recover.

Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu were worried, so they decided to leave Mu Qingqing to stay for care.

Being old folks from the countryside, they didn't plan to spend money on an inn, so Mu Xianxian's home in the city became their preferred choice of refuge.

They went to Mu Xianxian's house and were treated as esteemed guests by Mu Xianxian.

Now, the Old Mu Family's status was different, with Mu Dade as a scholar, these relatives were eager for Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu to visit.

However, there were still people in Mu Xianxian's household who didn't like Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu.

Especially Mu Xianxian's mother-in-law, Old Mrs. Cao.

Chapter 720: None of Them Are Easy to Deal With (Part 1)

The Cao Family from top to bottom is stingy.

Although Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu were greeted with smiles at the Cao Family, they were given just two sweet potatoes to tide them over for the night.

The old couple hadn't eaten all day; two sweet potatoes weren't enough.

After finishing the sweet potatoes, Mr. Mu went to see Xianxian, hoping to ask for some food to bring to Xiangxiang and Qingqing.

"Xianxian, your mother and I... haven't had enough to eat. Can you ask the kitchen to make something for us? Otherwise, we can do it ourselves if you let us use the kitchen."

Just as Mu Xianxian was about to nod, Old Mrs. Cao, who had been eavesdropping outside, stormed in.

"Dear in-law, our Cao Family only eats two meals a day. At night, four sweet potatoes are what I instruct the maids to buy.

One costs a penny, the price of three ounces of meat. Our Cao Family can have a meal with three ounces of meat. How is it still not enough for you?"

Mr. Mu laughed awkwardly.

"Sorry, dear in-law, Xiangxiang's mother and I have been hungry all day. With two sweet potatoes down our stomachs, we're still a bit hungry, so I thought to come to Xianxian and ask for some food to fill up.

Actually, we don't need any big fish or meat. A bowl of leftover rice from noon and some fried rice with eggs would do."

"Oh dear, egg fried rice is nothing special. I need to ask the steward if there's any leftover rice.

You know, our Cao Family isn't just any ordinary home. Leftovers and such are thrown into the swill bucket or fed to stray dogs outside. It's nothing worth mentioning."

"Dear in-law, why not take your wife out to eat? It's not expensive to eat in town, just a few pennies, and you can have a decent meal to your heart's content."

Old Mrs. Cao just doesn't like how Mu Xianxian's family always takes advantage of their hospitality.

Last time Mu Dade came, he took several ounces of silver, and even the new shoes from the store were eyed and taken.

The eldest took all the family's shoes, no matter the size, men or women, not polite at all.

The Old Cao Family didn't get any benefits but ended up with a stink, which Old Mrs. Cao wanted to mention, but her husband often told her to shut up.

He said being in-laws and tearing each other's face wasn't good, and if she spoke too much, she'd be scolded by the old man.

Now that the old man isn't here, and there's no one in Old Cao's house to speak fairly, Old Mrs. Cao would bully Mr. Mu however she pleased.

Mr. Mu's face flushed, and he didn't want to tell Old Mrs. Cao that he came to eat to save money.

If it weren't for saving that silver, he wouldn't have bothered coming with Old Mrs. Mu.

A night at the inn costs six pennies, and going out to eat costs ten pennies. He might as well have stayed at the inn with his wife from the start, borrowing their water to fill their stomachs.

This way, he could save four pennies.

"Oh dear in-law, could you be out of money? It can't be. When Da De went for the exams, Xianxian lent you fifty taels, which were later forgiven. When Da De came back, Xianxian gave you more money. How come Da De didn't give you any?"

I heard successful scholars get some help from the court with money and rice. Didn't you know?"

Every word from Old Mrs. Cao was meant to embarrass Mr. Mu, and she spoke directly without restraint.

Mu Xianxian couldn't stand listening anymore.

She said, "Mother, my parents have always lived frugally. Besides, their hard work is for my brother.

Now that my brother has passed the exam, the old habits haven't changed yet. Let me talk to them, and they'll understand."

Mu Xianxian intentionally redirected Old Mrs. Cao's attention to Mu Dade, as after all, Mu Dade is a scholar.

But a scholar, at present, didn't matter to Old Mrs. Cao.

Yesterday, the parents of Liu Zian from Liu Family Village sent someone over, saying they're willing to marry their granddaughter Miao Miao. This matter hasn't been told to Mu Xianxian yet.

No need to say, since in Old Mrs. Cao's eyes, Mu Xianxian only knows how to support her natal family.

"Xianxian, stop excusing your father. I know your Old Mu Family always liked to take advantage. When you married my son, you asked for this and that, even took two golden hairpins.

Now, your parents come to sponge off food for a little bit of meal money. I originally didn't want to mention it.

But we Cao Family have never treated you unfairly, so don't keep siding with your natal family, don't send everything to your Old Mu Family.

Your brother might become a high official, but no matter how high, there's nothing for you to gain. You are the daughter-in-law of our Old Cao Family, not the Mu Family, understand?"

It's only right for a mother-in-law to teach her daughter-in-law, and even someone like Mu Xianxian didn't dare to refute.

Deep down, Mu Xianxian cursed Mr. Mu and Old Mrs. Mu, because they made her lose face.

But she also cursed Old Mrs. Cao because the old lady never gave her a good look.

"Xianxian, I'm going back. You... don't argue with your mother-in-law, listen to her, and take care of the house more, you've got a child now."

Finishing these words, Mr. Mu's face was burning hot.

He rushed out to Old Mrs. Mu.

Old Mrs. Mu was still waiting for Mr. Mu's sweet potatoes, seeing him come empty-handed.

She asked in surprise, "What's going on? Didn't you say you'd get some food?"

"Forget it, let's go. We won't be eating here at the Cao Family... I'll take you out to eat." Mr. Mu said.

"Old man, what nonsense are you talking about? Didn't you say to save up the money to treat Xiangxiang? The child's illness isn't minor, it'll probably cost a lot." Old Mrs. Mu said.

"But... but..." Mr. Mu stammered.

"What's with the 'but'? You're a grown man, why are you stammering like a woman? What's wrong? Did someone scold you or hit you?" Old Mrs. Mu asked.

Mr. Mu made up his mind and told Old Mrs. Mu the matter about finding Mu Xianxian.

"Well, this old hag dares to disdain us? We are the parents of a scholar, why should we fear this old lady?"

After saying this, Old Mrs. Mu walked towards Old Mrs. Cao's room. She kicked the door open and shouted, "Old hag, what shameless things did you say to my old man just now?"

Old Mrs. Cao was used to being strong, never suffered a loss.

Mu Xianxian didn't like her but didn't dare to make a fuss in front of her, what's this old lady's problem?

"What did I say? I said if you have any self-respect, stop taking advantage of our Old Cao Family." Old Mrs. Cao snorted coldly.

"Your Old Cao Family, I spit on it!" Old Mrs. Mu spat on Old Mrs. Cao's face.

Old Mrs. Cao stepped back in disgust.

"I'm telling you, we eat from Xianxian, use from Xianxian. She's from me, so she should support me. You have no right to intervene!"

"You're talking nonsense. Get out of here, this is our Old Cao Family." Old Mrs. Cao scolded while wiping the spit off her face, almost fainting from disgust.