

Folly 801

Chapter 801: Mrs. Lin's Little Scheme (Part 2)

Aunt Song was slapped several times, her face swollen like a bun, and she swore she wouldn't let Mu Shuangshuang have it easy.

"Little bitch, seducing my son, I won't let you off easily!"

Aunt Song cursed for a long time, and just as she was about to leave the Old Mu Family's courtyard, someone rushed out.

It was Mrs. Lin, who had heard everything that had happened earlier.

She even knew Aunt Song's identity clearly.

"Oh, little sister-in-law, don't leave, why not come to my house for a bit?" Mrs. Lin said with a grin, her face ingratiating, as she spoke to Aunt Song.

"Who are you? Someone from the Old Mu Family?" Aunt Song replied coldly.

Aunt Song's son was a scholar, something Mrs. Lin was most concerned about.

If she could marry her own Qing to Aunt Song's son, she'd become the mother-in-law of a scholar.

Having a son-in-law who's an official is much better than one's own brother being an official.

By that time, not only the third branch, but even the main branch would have to bow to the second branch!

"Little sister-in-law, don't look at me like this. Although I'm from the Old Mu Family, the third branch is not. When the third branch made some Silver, they refused to live with our Old Mu Family and forcibly took land from us.

That's one thing, but now that my elder brother's passed the scholar exam, the third branch wants to come back! I saw you in front of the third branch's courtyard. Could it be their bratty girl hit you?

That girl is ruthless, hitting many people! Little sister-in-law, you better come back with me, apply some medicine, so the wound heals faster!"

At Mrs. Lin's opening remarks, she demeaned Mu Shuangshuang mercilessly.

Previously, Aunt Song was a bit skeptical, but after listening to Mrs. Lin's words, she had another idea.

Her son An always says that the little fox spirit is kind, but if the family all says she's bad, whose fault is it then?

"Then I'll trouble you to lead the way, sister!"

Mrs. Lin was so happy her mouth split open, revealing a set of big yellow teeth.

Aunt Song found it extremely awkward. Mrs. Lin, wearing such shabby clothes, was completely different from her usual demeanor and habits.

Ordinarily, Aunt Song wouldn't even dare to get close!

Mrs. Lin led Aunt Song into her own home, and as soon as they entered, she pulled over Mu Qingqing for an introduction. "Little sister-in-law, this is my eldest daughter, Mu Qingqing. You can call her Qing."

"Raised since childhood by her father and me as a rich lady, not only is she good-looking and filial, but most importantly, she can take care of people. The younger brother in the family was raised by Qing. If you have a baby in the future, she's sure to take good care of it!"

Mrs. Lin complimented Mu Qingqing both overtly and subtly. Aunt Song, being a shrewd person, naturally saw through Mrs. Lin's intentions.

She turned her gaze to Mu Qingqing.

Mu Qingqing had an oval face with delicate features, and having converted the clothing Mrs. Liu gave her into Silver, she now had some spare money to dress herself up.

So Mu Qingqing looked no different from a lady of a wealthy family.

But a peasant is, after all, a peasant!

She couldn't just push aside the little fox spirit Mu Shuangshuang and bring another peasant into her home, even as a concubine!

"Hello, Aunt!" Mu Qingqing said obediently to Aunt Song.

Mu Qingqing didn't know what was happening, but she understood that anyone her mother brought home was certainly a big man.

Otherwise, she wouldn't sneak out to meet this woman behind her grandma's back.

"Qingqing, my surname is Song and my husband's surname is Liu. Your mother is a good person, knowing I was hit by Mu Shuangshuang, she brought me over to apply some medicine. I don't have much to give you.

"When my son achieves success and becomes a high official in the Capital, I'll surely repay you well!"

"Little sister-in-law, no need for repayment talk, consider this your own home! Qing, you should go make some tea and bring out the medicinal ointment to apply to your Aunt Song's wounds!"

Mrs. Lin, being rare in her gentle demeanor, made Mu Qingqing all the more certain that Aunt Song's identity wasn't simple.

Their family indeed had some medicinal ointment, as her mother was often beaten by her grandma. However, for tea leaves, she'd likely need to go to her uncle's place to obtain them.

Mu Qingqing went out, heading directly to the Old Mu Family's wing. Passing by Mu Xiangxiang's room, she couldn't resist but went in to check.

As soon as she entered, Mu Xiangxiang rushed over, carrying a long bench in her hand, aiming to hit her head. Mu Qingqing swiftly dodged and exited the room.

In truth, Mu Xiangxiang couldn't even touch Mu Xiangxiang, but Mu Qingqing was simply scared.

Mu Dade had someone make a pair of shackles for Mu Xiangxiang, which reached just a tad to the door. But she couldn't reach the door.

"Aunt, you're like this, why are you still charging? I heard that uncle and grandpa have scraped together fifty taels for your dowry!"

Mu Qingqing felt somewhat aggrieved. Her own elder brother's marriage was so desolate, yet a married-off aunt was treated with such grandeur.

It's unfair!

"Aunt, whenever you agree to marry, that's when grandma will let you out! Otherwise, you'll never get out in this lifetime. If you don't marry the Qin Family, uncle's face will be lost."

"You're talking nonsense, you little bitch, come in if you dare. I'll tell mother about all the terrible things you and your mother did and have her skin you alive!"

From inside, Mu Xiangxiang's furious shouting could be heard. It seemed she could talk now, but her voice was as hoarse as anticipated by the doctor, like scraping old tree bark.

"Enough. Aunt, you're like this, still thinking of tattling? Grandma already punished my mother before, she won't care about you anymore, otherwise do you think you'd be marrying into the Qin Family?"

Grandma favors uncle's family. As for you, aunt... why don't you go cool off somewhere?"

Inside, suddenly there was a barrage of sounds of things being smashed.

It seemed Mu Xiangxiang was venting her anger by throwing things.

Mu Qingqing couldn't be happier.

The messier the Old Mu Family gets, the better.

Anyway, she could just go to Mrs. Liu!

Mu Qingqing headed to Mu Dade's house, borrowed some tea leaves, and hadn't yet left Mu Dade's house when Mu Dandan said sarcastically, "Qingqing, you should find some time to tell aunt too, if this family needs something, it should be bought. How much is a can of tea worth?"

Two or three taels of silver at most, if you keep asking from others, they might resent it, maybe even curse behind your back! But Qingqing, we're family, our main branch certainly won't mind," said Mu Dandan.

Mrs. Jin said nothing, seeming to acquiesce to this behavior.

Mu Yingying covered her mouth, snickering, "Qingqing, don't listen to your sister's nonsense. No matter how valuable this tea is, it's for drinking, using it to entertain guests is perfect.

But if you're reluctant to drink it yourself, find some time to come to the main branch, I'll make tea for you. Making tea is an art, after all. Not just a pot of hot water and a handful of tea leaves!"

Mu Dandan and Mu Yingying's back-and-forth left Mu Qingqing red in the face with anger.

She took the tiny bit of tea, no bigger than a thumb, and dashed out of the main branch.

Behind her, the laughter of Mu Dandan and Mu Yingying echoed far away!

Hearing it, Mu Qingqing felt the people of the main branch were mocking her!

Chapter 802: Strive to Become a Scholar's Wife

"Mom, I always said, these country bumpkins aren't good people. They even want to borrow tea leaves from us!"

Mu Yingying complained to Mrs. Jin.

"Exactly, Mom, look at Mu Qingqing with those sly eyes, acting like our home is hers. And I noticed she's been dressing up lately; who knows who she plans to seduce!" Mu Dandan chimed in.

"Alright, you two don't need to worry about these things. Just remember the lady-like manners I taught you. I've got my eye on that little wretch; she won't cause any trouble!"

These days, I've been asking around to find you good matches, landlords or scholars, for marriage. You girls are in your teens; it's time to get married."

Back then, Mrs. Jin believed strongly that her husband would pass the exams, so she kept her daughters unmarried till now.

But a girl's prime is only in her teens; once over twenty, she's no different from old cabbage.

"Mom, sister and I won't marry. We want to take care of you and dad all our lives." Mu Yingying said shyly, twisting her handkerchief while speaking.

Mrs. Jin looked at her daughter, who performed the shy gesture so endearingly, and suddenly felt that all effort spent on her daughter hadn't been in vain.

"Oh, it's a pity that I haven't given your dad a son all these years. Otherwise, your grandmother wouldn't keep calling me a hen that doesn't lay eggs!"

Mrs. Jin lamented, feeling uncomfortable at the thought.

"Mom, this kind of thing depends on fate! Besides, what's so great about having a son? The second branch has two sons, my older cousin and that brat. But look, none of them live better than us.

They're all just country folks, and that wife my cousin married was originally arranged for Uncle Five.

You know what kind of person Uncle Five is, don't you? He's worse than a stinking bug. Anyone proposed to him wouldn't be of good quality!"

Mu Dandan's comforting words immediately lifted Mrs. Jin's spirits.

She looked at her daughters, who seldom worked out in the fields or did house chores, their faces radiantly fair, obviously the daughters of an official family.

Unlike that Mu Qingqing, Mu Shuangshuang, and Mu Xiaxia, they were far superior!

"But it's strange; I heard at first my grandmother opposed my cousin marrying that girl who was almost linked with Uncle Five. Then Matchmaker Sun came, said something, and it all went through!

Despite how much my second uncle and aunt argued, grandmother wouldn't change her mind!"

Mu Dandan shared what she knew with Mrs. Jin and her sister Mu Yingying.

Mrs. Jin found it odd too, but Mu Yingying thought differently: "Sister, don't overthink. Grandma just likes our dad; she wouldn't care about cousin's marriage.

I bet that girl didn't ask for a dowry, maybe even offered something for cousin. That's why they agreed."

Old Mrs. Mu had a knack for greed, and this does explain things.

"Alright, don't dwell on this matter. It's unrelated to us. We're just waiting to go to the Capital with your dad for the imperial exams after the new year."

With the exams looming, Mrs. Jin planned to go to the Capital with Mu Dade, but plans never catch up with changes...

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Mu Qingqing returned to the second branch, where Mrs. Lin and Song Family had been chatting for quite a while, though mostly Mrs. Lin talking with Song Family nodding along.

Song Family thought, "If not to learn about Mu Shuangshuang the little vixen from Mrs. Lin, I'd have left already!"

"Haha, sister-in-law, my Qing is indeed wonderful. Once I get started, I can't stop. Sorry for pouring my heart out to you for so long."

Mrs. Lin apologized, but her face showed no sign of remorse.

Song Family could only nod along, "Not at all, Miss Qingqing is really good. My son can't compare to her."

As Song Family spoke of her son, Mrs. Lin said, "Oh, I've been talking, haven't heard you mention your son! Did that little witch Shuangshuang swindle him?"

You haven't seen how skilled my niece is at deceiving men. Today a man who liked Qing's aunt ended up with that witch.

Who knows what sorcery she used to make the fool treasure her, and most absurdly, the fool even broke ties with his family for that witch."

Mrs. Lin's lies left Song Family stunned.

Especially hearing that Lu Yuanfeng broke ties with his family for Mu Shuangshuang, Song Family became even more fearful.

She had only one son in her life; if he truly broke ties for that witch, it would be disastrous!

"To be honest, my son passed the scholar exams this year, topped the entire Qianzhou Prefecture, and was even invited to dinner by Lord Governor.

But the child has been reading since young, inexperienced in the world, and now takes Mu Shuangshuang the little vixen as a good person, even told me he wants to marry her!"

Song Family poured out her concerns to Mrs. Lin.

Mrs. Lin almost cursed in her heart upon hearing it.

A scholar actually interested in the third branch's witch! Was his eyes covered in dung?

"Sister-in-law, you mustn't soften your heart; that witch is nothing good. Take my word, make your son leave that witch, beware she might swindle money and disrupt your family harmony!" Mrs. Lin said, excitedly.

"Rest assured, neither her family background nor her character impresses me. Marriage is directed by parents and matchmakers. I won't agree; she can forget entering my home!" Song Family said, filled with righteous indignation.

Outside, Mu Qingqing overheard Song Family and Mrs. Lin's words.

She finally understood why her mother brought people directly to the Old Mu Family, avoiding the main hall.

It turns out she wanted her to make an effort and become a scholar's wife.

Realizing all this, Mu Qingqing coldly sneered toward the direction of the first branch, thinking: What's so impressive about uncle being a scholar? Is he any more formidable than my man being a scholar?

Doesn't my uncle just love his reputation? I won't let you succeed; I'll ruin your reputation in the first branch and watch you suffer!

Mu Qingqing donned a smile again and knocked on her home's door.

Mrs. Lin quickly stood up and rushed to the door.

"Qing, why are you just arriving? We were just talking about how sensible you've become!" Mrs. Lin said to Mu Qingqing, winking at her.

Mu Qingqing knew what's going on; she approached them.

She greeted Song Family, "Auntie..."

Chapter 803: Infighting

"Auntie, actually what my mother said isn't right. I don't understand anything! If I were sensible, I would have thought of a way to help my little aunt.

She's so pitiful. Just now, when I went to see her, I heard her desperately banging on the door inside the room, looking like she really wanted to come out!

I've had a good relationship with my little aunt since childhood, and I really can't bear to see her suffering!" Mu Qingqing said, and even started to wipe her tears.

Song Family originally had a good impression of Mu Qingqing, so when Mu Qingqing cried in front of her, she felt a bit heartbroken.

"Miss Qingqing, if you have anything, you can tell me. Although I may not be able to help you find a solution, more heads are better than one." said Song Family.

"Really? Auntie! Can I really tell you?" Mu Qingqing looked up, tear-filled eyes looking at Song Family.

"Of course. I just heard your mother say that the young man in Mu Shuangshuang's vixen courtyard who wanted to beat me up used to like your little aunt.

But later he was bewitched by Mu Shuangshuang and abandoned your little aunt. Is this what you're worried about?" Song Family asked.

This matter, Mrs. Lin mentioned casually, but Song Family remembered it in her heart.

Because she felt that Mu Shuangshuang also used the same trick to deceive her son, she felt very sympathetic towards Mu Qingqing's little aunt.

Song Family made up her mind that she would tell her son all about this, including that she was beaten!

"Auntie, it's not about that. It's about my little aunt being harmed by Mu Shuangshuang, being forced to marry a man who lost both legs and is knee-deep in debt!" Mu Qingqing said while wiping her tears.

To those who don't understand, it might seem like Mu Qingqing has a great relationship with Mu Xiangxiang, enough for her to stick up for Mu Xiangxiang.

In fact, that's not the case.

Mu Qingqing finished speaking, Mrs. Lin was dumbfounded: "Qing, what did you say? The marriage of your little aunt is already decided by your grandparents and your uncle, no one can change it." Mrs. Lin shouted sharply.

Mrs. Lin couldn't wait for Mu Xiangxiang to get out of Old Mu Family.

This way, Old Mu Family would have one less person eating for free.

She didn't want to support the little aunt anymore; marrying Mu Xiangxiang off this time would let her die at the Qin Family, wouldn't it be great? In the future, nobody would curse her, and nobody would hog all the braised pork, eating a whole bowl themselves without sharing with others anymore.

"Mom, you also know that little aunt is not willing! It's a pity I don't have the ability, otherwise I would definitely help little aunt!" Mu Qingqing said.

At this moment, Mrs. Lin was already cursing Mu Qingqing in her heart.

This silly girl, how could she be so dumb, siding with outsiders?

Mu Xiangxiang that little wench, not getting married, doesn't do any good for her!

Even so, Mrs. Lin didn't dare to blame Mu Qingqing in front of Song Family, just kept winking at Mu Qingqing, hoping she would understand her meaning and stop talking about this matter.

"Little sister-in-law, this matter, Qing is just joking with you. Old Mu Family matters aren't for wives to interfere, even more for granddaughters!" Mrs. Lin said fiercely, with flickering eyes, to Mu Qingqing.

Song Family discreetly frowned at Mrs. Lin, took Mu Qingqing's hand, and quietly asked: "Miss Qingqing, what exactly happened, can you tell me?"

Mu Qingqing wiped her tears dry and half-truthfully recounted Mu Xiangxiang's situation to Song Family.

Of course, she mainly shifted the blame onto Mu Shuangshuang and Mu Dade. The first branch caused her, Mu Qingqing, to suffer humiliation; she must find a way to make the first branch taste some hardship.

"Auntie, do you have any good ideas? My little aunt really is pitiful, she's become mute now!" Mu Qingqing said.

Song Family thought for a while and suddenly said: "I have a way to stop your little aunt from marrying into the Qin Family!"

"What way?" Mu Qingqing asked excitedly.

"Pretend to be crazy! This matter, in essence, was your uncle's family's decision for face, sacrificing your little aunt, and your grandparents have no power to change it.

So normal solutions won't work, only unusual methods can be used. Once pretending to be crazy, your little aunt's situation would draw sympathy. In such dire straits, if Old Mu Family still forces her to marry, your uncle's reputation spreading wouldn't be pleasant!

However, this matter, must be at an occasion where everyone is present, the more people witness it, the more sympathy your little aunt will receive!"

Song Family's words gave Mu Qingqing a feeling of sudden enlightenment. She used to think helping her little aunt wasn't easy, but now it seems, it's a simple matter.

Most importantly, once her little aunt pretends to be crazy, she will have to remain crazy for her entire life; that kind of life is worse than a dog's, and a mad person's words aren't trusted, she can do whatever she wants!

"Auntie's meaning is for my little aunt to pretend to be crazy at my brother's wedding feast?"

Mu Dalang's wedding day is the most lively time for Old Mu Family.

Mu Dalang is Old Mu Family's eldest grandson, anyone wanting to curry favor with Old Mu Family would choose to come at that time.

By then, not only the whole village will know, but probably all relatives of Old Mu Family will too.

One tells ten, ten tells a hundred, by then even if her grandmother wants to salvage it, she won't be able to!

"Thank you, Auntie! I know what to do!"

After seeing Song Family off, Mrs. Lin's face immediately fell.

She pointed at Mu Qingqing's nose and scolded: "You damn girl, has your brain been kicked by a donkey? You're actually thinking of helping that damn wench!"

Old mother's life was almost lost because of her, you dare to help her? If it weren't for Song Family being here just now, watch me tear your mouth apart!"

"Mom, why are you yelling at me here? If you have the guts, go yell at Aunt Mrs.! Aunt Mrs. lives well now, have you thought about how we live?"

"Aunt Mrs. has food, drink, good clothes, respect when going out, and we, we're like bugs in the gutter, disliked by everyone!"

"Why do we have to follow behind uncle picking up scraps all the time, can't we be ahead? That Liu Zian, I must marry him!"

Mu Qingqing retaliated fiercely against Mrs. Lin.

"You damn girl, you dare to talk back to the old mother, you've rebelled, watch me beat you to death!" Mrs. Lin was so angry, she raised her hand, and seemed about to hit Mu Qingqing's face.

"Hit me, if you kill me, you'll still be trampled under Aunt Mrs.'s foot, looked down by the third branch, disliked by everyone, bullied by my grandmother!"

Mu Qingqing defiantly stretched her face towards Mrs. Lin.

Mrs. Lin was so angry she was shaking all over, but the slap, ultimately, didn't come down.

Because Mu Qingqing was right.

She, Lin Xiaozao, definitely didn't want to be suppressed by Mrs. Jin that vixen for life.

"Qing, then tell me, what should we do about this?" Mrs. Lin asked.

"Simple, on the surface, we listen to uncle's family, but secretly, we do whatever displeases uncle. Besides, whenever we're free, we go to Liu Family Village to see Liu Zian!"

Chapter 804: Apologize to My Mother

"I believe, as long as I work hard, that Liu Zian will be mine sooner or later!"

The last sentence Mu Qingqing said was full of confidence.

Mrs. Lin was also influenced.

She smiled again: "Our Qing girl, really has a clever head, just like me, Lin Xiaozao! Before, I thought you were foolish, helping that little brat Mu Xiangxiang.

Now it seems, you wanted your uncle to suffer a bit, indeed, if it weren't for us poor relatives back then, could your uncle have risen so high?

It's only been a short while, and now that he's living a good life, he no longer cares about us. Yes, it's about time your uncle experiences some hardships!"

"However, we won't personally handle this, let Grandma do it! The other day, I overheard her discussing with Grandpa about breaking the engagement with the Qin Family, but Grandpa scolded her.

Now, we'll sell this favor to Grandma and get something out of her, only then can our second branch gradually have the right to speak!"

Mu Qingqing had calculated every step and was just waiting for her uncle's family to fall into the trap.

"Qing girl, what about the third branch? Are we not going to deal with them?" Mrs. Lin asked with a slight curl of her lips.

"Mom, why are you in a hurry? Uncle's family dislikes the third branch even more than we do. If anyone is going against them, it'll be them first. We'll just sit back and watch!"

Mrs. Lin looked at her daughter, who seemed to have wisdom beyond her years, and suddenly felt a bit scared.

When did Qing girl start having such ideas?

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When Mrs. Song returned to Liu Family Village, the first thing she did was find Liu Zian to complain.

In Liu Zian's room, Mrs. Song's hair was disheveled, her face bore several large handprints, and even her clothes were torn.

"Mom, what happened? Are you in pain? Who hit you?"

Liu Zian put down the book in his hand, filled with pity, and rushed forward.

"Zian, Mom... Mom was wrong. I went to Er Gui Village in the morning to find Mu Shuangshuang..."

Just as Mrs. Song finished speaking, Liu Zian asked, "Mom, why did you go looking for Mu Shuangshuang? I've already told you, my liking for Mu Shuangshuang is my own business, and she doesn't even know!"

Liu Zian had never dared to directly tell Mu Muxiangxiang about his feelings, fearing that doing so would make them unable to even be friends.

Seeing her son blame her in an attempt to defend Mu Shuangshuang, a flash of anger crossed Mrs. Song's face.

But she quickly adjusted herself and played the pitiful card: "Zian, Mom's heart hurts. Why did I go to Er Gui Village, don't you know?"

Look at yourself, what have you become? Just look! My son Liu Zian, was once so positive and spent how much time aiming for success.

And now, what have you been doing every day? How many days has it been since you've picked up a book? Mom knows you like Mu Shuangshuang, but do you know how outrageous she is?"

Pointing to her own face, Mrs. Song continued, "Do you see this? This was done by Mu Shuangshuang, and she even threatened to hit me every time she sees me!"

"Mom, what did you say? Shuangshuang isn't that kind of person, she wouldn't hit you." Liu Zian didn't believe it.

Shuangshuang, although not ordinary, Liu Zian didn't believe she would hit someone.

"Son, ask yourself, have you ever seen me lie in your whole life? I only went to see what the girl you speak so highly of is like, and if her character was good, I would have broken off the engagement with the Cao Family and let you marry her, but..."

Tears trickled down from Mrs. Song's eyes.

Liu Zian's mind was in turmoil.

"Mom, do you really not object to me liking Shuangshuang?" Liu Zian asked.

"Silly child, I never objected, only afraid you'd delay your studies because of it! But now, I won't agree to this anymore!

That Shuangshuang, she's rude, attacking me just like that. I've never been treated like this in my life, and if you really want her, then you're not my son anymore!"

"Mom, there must be some misunderstanding, Shuangshuang wouldn't hit anyone, even if she did, it wasn't intentional. I'll have her apologize to you, how about that?" Liu Zian suggested.

"No way, hitting is hitting. Can an apology solve it? I don't like that girl, if you don't fancy a girl from the Cui Family, I'll find you someone else, but it can't be the one who hit me!"

Leaving those harsh words, Mrs. Song left Liu Zian's room, leaving the place suddenly silent.

The feeling of falling from heaven to hell seeped in all at once.

Liu Zian stood up and quickly ran outside. He needed to find Shuangshuang and clarify things.

By the time Liu Zian reached Er Gui Village, it was already an hour later, and Mu Shuangshuang was in the courtyard drying cured meat.

The cured meat, neatly strung on hemp strings, was being hung on bamboo poles, its aroma spreading far, so much so that even in the courtyard, Mu Shuangshuang found it irresistible.

As the year-end approached, the third branch still had many things left to prepare; perhaps tomorrow, they would go to town to get some New Year's goods.

Though her mind was occupied, Mu Shuangshuang did not leave the courtyard, her eyes fixed on the cured meat on the bamboo poles.

Since the Old Mu Family had a history, Mu Shuangshuang had to stay in the courtyard all day, just to ensure that what she had prepared wouldn't become someone else's meal.

Liu Zian entered the courtyard and directly grabbed Mu Shuangshuang's hand and said, "Shuangshuang, come with me to Liu Family Village, and explain to my mom that you didn't mean to hit her, seek her forgiveness!"

Mu Shuangshuang was startled, quickly withdrawing her hand from Liu Zian's grasp.

"Liu Zian, what are you panting and sweating for, what have you been doing? Why are you grabbing my hand?" Mu Shuangshuang stepped back several times.

This era was unlike the modern days, as she was already engaged to Fengzi, no other man could hold her hand.

If someone saw that, there would be no way to clear her name, even if she jumped into the Yellow River.

"Shuangshuang, my mom said you hit her!" Liu Zian exclaimed.

"What? I hit your mom? Your mom really knows how to spread rumors, got what she deserved in Er Gui Village, and then wrongs me!" Mu Shuangshuang, displeased, kept a stern face.

"Shuangshuang, no matter if you hit her or not, let's go apologize first, alright?" Liu Zian pleaded with a face full of sincerity.

He felt this was the only chance. Even if Shuangshuang didn't like him, he couldn't let a misunderstanding exist between Shuangshuang and his mom.

Many times, although he knew it was impossible with Shuangshuang, he still feared what if...

What if Shuangshuang liked him too...

"Liu Zian, what exactly are you here for? To ask me to apologize to your mom? Why don't you ask what your mom did?" Mu Shuangshuang questioned.

"I know!" Liu Zian replied.

"You know, and yet you still ask me to apologize?" Mu Shuangshuang was furious.

Out of nowhere, Liu Zian reached out again, trying to drag Mu Shuangshuang outside.

Lu Yuanfeng was coming in with a bundle of firewood from outside the courtyard and happened to see this scene.

He rushed over immediately and forcefully pulled Liu Zian's hand away: "Liu Zian, are you crazy? Why are you dragging Shuangshuang?"

Chapter 805: Not Wasting Time

"Fengzi, don't intervene in this matter. I want Shuangshuang to apologize to my mother!"

Liu Zian spoke with conviction.

He didn't want to press charges against Shuangshuang for hitting his mother, he just wanted an apology.

"Apologize? Apologize for what? It's your mother who should be apologizing." Lu Yuanfeng's face was full of anger.

In the morning, Mrs. Song came to cause trouble, and then in the afternoon, Liu Zian came to make trouble. Is there no justice in this world?

"Shuangshuang, listen to me, my mother was beaten like that, if you don't go to apologize..."

"What if I don't apologize? Will your mother not like me, or will you hate me?"

"Shuangshuang, I..." Liu Zian was stunned for a moment, having been guessed correctly.

Mu Shuangshuang rolled her eyes.

She seemed to understand Liu Zian's logic; whether she hit anyone or not, she first had to make his mother happy.

She wasn't Liu Zian's wife, so why should she help him please his mother?

Mu Shuangshuang was not foolish. Mrs. Song's trouble-making this time was understandable; there was only one possibility!

Liu Zian might have praised her in front of his mother, or used her as a shield during matchmaking.

Or he might like her, and his mother found out!

Between these two possibilities, Mu Shuangshuang leaned towards the latter.

No wonder Liu Zian asked her that day if she was willing to go to the county!

He even emphasized that Fengzi couldn't provide her a good life, dismissing him as a mere laborer.

Some things are better left unthought of. The more she thought about it, the more angered Mu Shuangshuang felt.

Liu Zian knew she liked Fengzi, yet he tried such foolish schemes, showing blatant disrespect for her and Fengzi.

"Liu Zian, even if I hit your mother, I won't apologize! And I didn't hit her, so there's nothing to apologize for!"

If you think I'm unreasonable, kindly take the exit to your right! I don't have the time or energy to waste on you!"

Mu Shuangshuang's words carried some sense of misplaced anger, but it was understandable.

She was the one who felt wronged, and not only was she not comforted, now she was expected to comfort Liu Zian!

"You... Shuangshuang, how did you become like this? The Shuangshuang I know wasn't such an unreasonable girl, I..." Liu Zian was rendered speechless by Mu Shuangshuang's remarks.

Mu Shuangshuang, on the other hand, acted nonchalant and said, "It's never too late to know! I am petty, violent, unreasonable, and I'll hit whoever I want! If I can't stand you, I'll hit even you!"

Liu Zian was infuriated, he rushed out of the third branch's courtyard and ran back to Liu Family Village.

Lu Yuanfeng, who stood by, frowned and asked, "Shuangshuang, it seems Liu Zian misunderstood you!"

"Let him be mistaken, a scholar is useless anyway! He demands an apology without discerning right from wrong; it's unfair to me.

With this kind of attitude, if he becomes an official later, he'd just be someone to be manipulated, I'm simply teaching him the ways of the world!"

Mu Shuangshuang, though worked in a small place in her past life, had seen much of the world.

Liu Zian's impulsiveness and heavy personal emotions were far too predominant.

If he doesn't change this attitude, he might not have an easy life in the future.

Lu Yuanfeng listened to Shuangshuang's words, feeling touched, as he knew Shuangshuang was still considering Liu Zian's wellbeing.

"Shuangshuang, actually, you didn't need to say those things to Liu Zian. He surely doesn't realize you meant well, he might even be resenting you right now!"

"Let him resent me, who cares!" Mu Shuangshuang replied.

Mu Shuangshuang never cared about Liu Zian's opinions. The way she approached life and things was open and honest. To those who believed in her and wanted to be friends, she would treat them with sincerity!

"Fengzi, once you're done, take a rest. We have more than enough firewood for the winter!"

Lu Yuanfeng every while went to the mountains to cut wood for the third branch, and they already had enough for the winter; now they even have enough for next spring!

"There's usually a lot of rain in spring, making it hard to chop wood, so I prepared more." Lu Yuanfeng grinned, making Mu Shuangshuang laugh.

The matter with Liu Zian was left unresolved, and Mu Shuangshuang didn't have time to care, because time quickly passed, and it was the day before Mu Dalang's wedding.

On the morning of December 17, the Old Mu Family courtyard, inside and out, was already bustling.

After Mu Dade became a scholar, this was the first celebratory event in the Old Mu Family, so several relatives who hadn't been in touch for decades came a day early.

All of them came with their families, wanting to gain some benefits from the Old Mu Family; the most important objective was to win Mu Dade's favor for their younger generation.

So that after Mu Dade became an official, he'd remember them and help them rise to success.

Due to this, the main branch was almost bursting, as everyone wanted to partake in the joyous atmosphere.

Mu Dandan and Mu Yingying complained all morning, expressing disdain for these people.

The tea leaves, which she priced at two silver per jin, quickly ran out.

In the side hall of the main branch, Mu Dandan was preparing tea and spat on the ground in frustration.

"Pshaw! Yingying, I can't take it anymore, why should our main branch bleed for the second branch's son's wedding?"

Look at how much of the good tea leaves are left. Two silver!" Mu Dandan lamented with a pained expression.

"Yes, sister, what should we do about this? We can't just kick them out, can we?" Mu Yingying was also extremely annoyed.

These relatives, whom they never saw before, suddenly appeared in droves, eating, drinking, and taking things for free, treating them as if the main branch were some charity.

"Should we call grandpa and grandma to deal with these people?" Mu Yingying asked.

"No, most of these people are relatives by blood, even if grandpa and grandma don't like them, they won't say anything in front of them, as it concerns the Old Mu Family's reputation."

Mu Dandan, though angry, was still somewhat sensible.

Kicking these people out wasn't practical.

"Then what should we do? Our tea leaves are almost gone, what if they want other things from our house later?" Mu Yingying said.

"Here's what we'll do: go find Gou Dan from the second branch and some other kids from the family, grab some fruits and snacks and let them chase away the people.

At that point, if anyone gets beaten, it'll be them, and it can annoy these absurd relatives, plus it has nothing to do with us."

Mu Dandan's plan was to borrow others to do the dirty work.

Her mother wanted to raise her and her sister to be ladies and didn't allow them to engage in these things. Mu Dandan didn't want to disappoint her mother, nor did she want any trouble!

"Sister, that's a good idea, I'll go do it right now! If Little Zhi from the third branch could join them, that would be perfect. I have a grudge against the third branch that's hard to swallow." Mu Yingying said.

"Okay, you go find Gou Dan, I'll find Little Zhi, we'll act separately!"

Mu Dandan and Mu Yingying finished speaking and went their separate ways, one heading to the second branch, the other to the third branch.

Dealing with the second branch was easy; Gou Dan, lazy by nature, barely needed a word to follow Mu Yingying eagerly.

Chapter 806: Looked Down Upon (Part 1)

Mu Dandan went straight to the third branch's courtyard.

Due to Mu Dalang's upcoming wedding, the third branch was also bustling. The wedding attire was checked by Yu Si Niang and then personally delivered by Mu Dalang to Huang Bitu's home.

Tonight, it's the main event at Huang Bitu's house, and tomorrow night, it'll be at the Old Mu Family's place.

The biggest difference between weddings in the Da Ning Dynasty and modern times is that the wedding banquets are mostly held at night.

There are advantages, but also inconveniences.

Once the celebration starts, and guests finish dinner, it gets dark, making it inconvenient to return home.

In ancient times, houses weren't built as large as they are today, so if there were many relatives, they might not have enough space. Everything had to be arranged carefully, and nearby relatives needed to be sent back home, preferably with ox carts arranged for them.

In the courtyard, Mu Shuangshuang listened to Mu Dalang discussing the next day's arrangements, occasionally chiming in with her own opinions.

The three kids were left to play on their own by Mu Shuangshuang.

Xue Zheng had been sent back by Mu Shuangshuang a few days ago. Old Mrs. Xue's plan was to send Xue Zheng back to the Capital after New Year since children ultimately need their parents' care!

Mu Dandan secretly staked out outside the courtyard, her eyes fixed on Little Zhi, who was facing her with his rear in the air.

But the three kids were too inseparable, constantly huddled together, making it impossible for her to do anything.

Moreover, Mu Dandan had to be wary of Mu Shuangshuang inside, talking to Mu Dalang.

Whether due to some post-traumatic effect, since being beaten by Mu Shuangshuang, Mu Dandan hated her, but dared not appear in front of her easily.

Finally, when Xiao Han and Yuanbao temporarily got busy, Mu Dandan seized the opportunity, but Little Zhi just wouldn't turn around.

Mu Dandan picked up a stone from the ground and threw it at Little Zhi's bottom. Naturally, when hit, Little Zhi turned around.

As soon as he turned, he saw Mu Dandan.

"Big..." Cousin!

"Shh!" Mu Dandan made a silencing gesture at Little Zhi, then waved him over.

Little Zhi looked at Mu Dandan with doubt, then at himself. Out of courtesy, he followed her outside the courtyard.

"Little Zhi, can you do something for Sister Dandan?" Mu Dandan asked.

"I'll ask my sister and then get back to you!" Little Zhi turned and walked away.

Mu Dandan, naturally unwilling, grabbed Little Zhi. "Little Zhi, I'll give you candy and other snacks. Brother Gou Dan is also here, just help me with this little favor!"

"No, I want to find my sister!"

Little Zhi remembered how Mu Dandan used to bully him and his sister.

"You little brat, why so stingy? Just help me. What's wrong?" Mu Dandan scolded.

Scolded, Little Zhi's mouth quivered, and he was on the verge of tears.

Mu Dandan added, "What's there to cry about? I didn't say anything bad. Keep crying, and I'll throw you into the mountains to feed the wolves!"

"Who are you? Why are you grabbing Little Zhi!" Yuanbao glared at Mu Dandan, shouting.

Hearing the commotion, Mu Shuangshuang, who was talking with Mu Dalang, dashed out and saw Mu Dandan still holding Little Zhi.

Without a word, Mu Shuangshuang pushed Mu Dandan aside.

Little Zhi's eyes were red, tears welling up but not falling.

Mu Shuangshuang held Little Zhi, comforting him softly, ignoring Mu Dandan.

Stabilizing herself, Mu Dandan shouted at Mu Shuangshuang, "You brat! Why did you push me?"

"I pushed you? Who saw?" Mu Shuangshuang asked.

"They all saw!"

Mu Shuangshuang turned to Yuanbao and Mu Dalang, both shaking their heads, "We didn't see anything!"

Fuming, Mu Dandan charged forward to fight Mu Shuangshuang, only to have her wrist grabbed by Mu Shuangshuang.

"Big Cousin, remember this is the third branch's place, not your big house. If I catch you bothering Little Zhi or anyone else again, don't blame me for tearing your face apart!"

Saying that, Mu Shuangshuang gave another shove, making Mu Dandan fall to the ground.

Mu Shuangshuang took Little Zhi inside and said to him, "Why cry when I'm here? Be good! Don't cry. Sister and Brother Yuan Feng will take over the restaurant in town. Once it opens in spring, you won't have to worry about the big uncle's family bullying us anymore!"

Still crying, Little Zhi said, "Little Zhi is useless. If I didn't listen to Big Cousin, I wouldn't have been caught!"

"It's not that. Big Cousin is the bad one, not your fault. Besides, didn't Sister teach her a lesson for you? Don't be scared, as long as Sister is here, I'll protect you."

"And me!" Yuanbao added.

"And me!" Mu Dalang and Xiao Han echoed.

Only then did Little Zhi stop crying.

"Alright, there's still a lot to handle outside. Little Zhi, if you want to nap, go ahead. I'll chat with Big Cousin."

Mr. Mu put Mu Shuangshuang in charge of all meals tomorrow.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner were priced differently.

Breakfast and lunch were cheaper since they were for close relatives, while dinner included the whole village, requiring more effort. Mu Shuangshuang asked for 25 wen per table, more expensive than Granny Chen's previous rate.

Despite feeling the pinch, Mr. Mu had to agree obediently.

Still in the courtyard, Mu Dalang finalized the last matter with Mu Shuangshuang, setting everything in place!

Mu Shuangshuang also did some calculations, estimating she'd earn at least one tael of silver from the Old Mu Family tomorrow.

That doesn't include the potential spike in price if late-night snacks were needed.

Mr. Mu only considered the day's costs, not the inevitable late-night snacks for the relatives staying over.

At that time, entertainment for villagers was scarce.

Television and such high-tech devices didn't exist, after all.

Even games like mahjong hadn't become popular, leaving people's only entertainment being family time and warmth.

Once night fell, they stayed by the stove, which explains why every household had lots of children, lacking better ways to pass the time!

"Shuangshuang, the wedding is tomorrow, but I'm so nervous, feeling like something might happen!" Mu Dalang suddenly said.

A few days ago, he was thrilled, but the closer the wedding got, the more anxious he felt.

"Haha, could it be that Big Cousin has pre-wedding jitters?" Mu Shuangshuang laughed.

"Pre-wedding jitters? What is that?" Mu Dalang looked confused.

"It means you're struggling to accept your sudden change of status! Before the wedding, you're just a son, needing only to honor your parents.

But after marriage, you'll have a wife and eventually children to care for, naturally feeling apprehensive!"

Listening to Mu Shuangshuang, Mu Dalang found it quite reasonable.

"So how do I stop feeling anxious?" Mu Dalang asked.

"Just don't think about it, and you won't be anxious. While marriage is a big deal, in simpler terms, isn't it just about eating, pooping, and sleeping?"

Chapter 807: Killing Chickens and Gutting Fish

Mu Shuangshuang speaks harshly but with reason.

Mu Dalang, who was under pressure before, immediately felt much more relaxed.

"Shuangshuang, I'll head back first. Once the wedding matters settle down, I'll bring Bitao to express our gratitude!"

After Mu Dalang finished speaking, he left.

As soon as Mu Dalang left, Mu Shuangshuang followed suit, but she headed to the main branch.

Mu Dandan suddenly visiting the third branch definitely meant something was up.

In the main branch, it was already a chaotic scene of chickens flying and dogs jumping.

Gou Dan, lured to the main branch by Mu Yingying, started chasing away relatives and even smashing things.

The Old Mu Family's relatives dared not lay hands on Gou Dan, as he was the precious grandson. Beating him would incite the family's wrath.

Thus, through a series of events, Gou Dan became more arrogant, pointing at the main branch's relatives and shouting, "Get out! Stop freeloading here!"

Mu Dade and Mrs. Jin were furious.

In front of everyone, they couldn't scold or hit him, so they went to fetch Old Mrs. Mu.

By the time Old Mrs. Mu arrived, most of the relatives had been offended.

Mr. Mu apologized to each of them with a smile, but no one seemed to buy it.

"Old Mu, if you don't want us relatives here, just say outright, don't use kids to chase us away! We may not be as grand as your family, but our ancestors are still from our lineage."

The speaker was Mr. Mu's elder cousin, an elderly man.

Over the years, he'd always claimed to be the rightful Old Mu Family, with the others being side branches.

Because of this, Mr. Mu had ceased contact with them. This time, because Mu Dade passed the exam, Old Mrs. Mu wanted to show off, so Mr. Mu invited them over.

But rather than showing off, he nearly lost all his face.

"Elder Cousin, the child is young and ignorant. Besides, we haven't been in touch for so long that Gou Dan doesn't recognize you..." Mr. Mu continued to smile.

But the person in front wasn't swayed.

"These words are useless; I only know that your Old Mu Family doesn't respect people."

Old Mrs. Mu, enraged, dragged Gou Dan for a harsh beating; outside the main branch, Mu Shuangshuang could hear Gou Dan's screams.

"Elder Cousin, we've already punished Gou Dan, is that okay now?"

The relatives, seeing this situation, although silent on the surface, still harbored grievances inside.

Gou Dan cried loudly outside, but no one called him in.

Mu Shuangshuang, feeling unusually merciful, approached Gou Dan.

"Why are you crying? A man shouldn't whine just because his granny spanked him!" Mu Shuangshuang said nonchalantly.

Seeing Mu Shuangshuang, Gou Dan spat at her.

Had Mu Shuangshuang not dodged quickly, she would have been hit, so she retaliated by giving Gou Dan another beating.

The originally planned things had to be scrapped.

She intended to inquire about the main branch's situation, but it seemed her concern was wasted.

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On the eighteenth of the twelfth lunar month, Mu Dalang's wedding day.

The trumpet, suona, and drums clanged and clattered, without a pause since morning.

Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng busied themselves in the kitchen, cooking, while the rest of the Old Mu Family handled serving dishes and entertaining guests.

Breakfast was simple. Including the Old Mu Family, Mu Shuangshuang prepared a pot of porridge and three baskets of steamed buns.

Mu Shuangshuang didn't spend much effort on it.

Lunch involved four tables; just the Old Mu Family filled two tables, not to mention the relatives and village folks eager to drink wine early.

By evening, Mu Shuangshuang roughly estimated at least twenty tables, and it wasn't just one person from each household; the entire village, regardless of age or gender, came out.

Yu Si Niang helped Mu Shuangshuang in the kitchen, constantly worried about running out of time.

"Shuangshuang, it's my fault. If I'd gotten up earlier, you wouldn't be so busy now."

Generally, people would prepare banquet dishes the day before.

But not Mu Shuangshuang; she kept fish alive in a tank and hadn't slaughtered a single chicken.

"No rush, Mom. Fresh tastes much better, and I've got helpers too!"

Just as she mentioned helpers, the Huang Brothers stepped into the kitchen, each holding a bun, chewing.

Mu Shuangshuang placed breakfast on the courtyard table, available to anyone passing by.

This time was probably the most generous the Old Mu Family's ever been; last night, Old Mrs. Mu personally instructed Mu Shuangshuang not to cut corners and ensure the portions were the finest in all of Er Gui Village.

After investigating such a surprising gesture, Mu Shuangshuang learned that the old couple, having been chastised by their so-called relatives, sought to restore their reputation.

"Miss Shuangshuang, Fengzi, after we finish breakfast, we brothers can start working!" Huang Dao said.

Mu Shuangshuang smiled, taking a large sea bowl from the cupboard, half-filled with meat broth.

"You two can drink up!"

Mu Shuangshuang, taking advantage of her culinary duties, made the meat broth. She served Lu Yuanfeng a big bowl, while Yu Si Niang dared not drink for fear of being caught.

No matter how much Mu Shuangshuang persuaded, Yu Si Niang wouldn't budge, so she drank it herself and saved some for the Huang Brothers.

"Miss Shuangshuang, you're so good to us brothers! We've worked countless jobs, never met an owner better than you," Huang Er said.

"Enough flattery. Finish the feed and work hard. There'll be plenty chickens to kill and fish to gut for you brothers today!"

This time, Mu Shuangshuang used almost the same ingredients as when Yu Liulang got married.

The hot pot allowed Mu Shuangshuang to save a lot of time.

The only thing was the quantity of rice was large, somewhat tiring!

The Huang Brothers, including Lu Yuanfeng, followed Mu Shuangshuang's instructions, slaughtering chickens and bloodletting. Mu Shuangshuang herself wielded two cleavers, chopping meat.

The meat was supposed to be prepared earlier, but Lu Yuanfeng hunted the deer just last night, and it was slaughtered without time to chop.

Everything proceeded in an orderly manner.

Upfront, Mu Dashan and his brothers were busy welcoming guests, exchanging pleasantries, setting off firecrackers, enhancing the Old Mu Family's celebratory atmosphere.

The entire Old Mu Family was immersed in joy.

Only one place was quiet, Mu Xiangxiang's room.

Mu Dade went to the courtyard, basking in the adoration; Mrs. Jin went to enjoy the limelight; meanwhile Mu Dandan and Mu Yingying donned their finest clothes, ready to make the rural relatives envy them.

"Xiangxiang, remember everything I told you?" asked Old Mrs. Mu.

"Yes, Mom, beat... Lin Xiaozao!" Mu Xiangxiang shouted, ignoring her sore throat.

"Xiangxiang, I'll take care of that sooner or later. You just need to recover, and when the Qin Family arrives, make sure they notice you!"

Chapter 808: Hardships of a Divorced Woman

Old Mrs. Mu tirelessly instructed Mu Xiangxiang on what she needed to do next, fearing that Mu Xiangxiang might make even the slightest mistake.

"Mother will not close the door later, remember, when the firecrackers sound before dinner, go outside, our banquet is in the courtyard."

As she spoke, Old Mrs. Mu helped Mu Xiangxiang mess up the hair on top of her head.

Since she had to pretend to be crazy, she couldn't be dressed clean and neat, or she would definitely be suspected.

After Old Mrs. Mu finished Mu Xiangxiang's disguise, Mu Xiangxiang had already turned into a madwoman with disheveled hair and tattered clothes.

Old Mrs. Mu nodded in satisfaction at her daughter!

The sunless days had made Mu Xiangxiang look particularly dispirited, and with this attire and her current state of mind, no one would suspect that her daughter was pretending to be insane.

"Then I'll go out first!"

After she finished speaking, Old Mrs. Mu helped close the door for Mu Xiangxiang, but the lock outside wasn't timely locked according to the rules of the Old Mu Family.

As soon as Old Mrs. Mu left, Mu Xiangxiang found a pair of scissors in the room to carry with her.

Back when she was sick, Mrs. Lin took advantage of it and bullied her in numerous ways, denying her food and even forcing her to drink chili water—Mu Xiangxiang couldn't swallow this grievance!

Today, she not only wanted Mrs. Lin to receive punishment, but also to give that impudent little girl from the second branch, Mu Qingqing, a good scare!

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In the rear courtyard kitchen, Mu Shuangshuang sliced all the meat into small pieces to be used, while Lu Yuanfeng and Huang Da and Huang Er had already killed the chicken and scaled the fish clean.

The preparation of scallions, ginger, garlic, various seasonings, and washing of vegetables were left to Yu Si Niang.

But killing the chicken was just the beginning; its feathers still needed to be removed. A pot of boiling water was needed to quickly pluck the feathers off.

Lu Yuanfeng crouched at the stove door, plucking chicken feathers alone, while Huang Da beside him found a spot to chop the large bones, since there would be a bone soup tonight that should be put on the stove to simmer soon.

Huang Er was working at the stove but occasionally glanced outside.

Outside, the music and fanfare were lively indeed, making his heart itch with curiosity, always wanting to go out and see what was happening.

Huang Er thought to himself, it wasn't even evening's main meal yet, and it was already so lively. What would it be like at night?

"Ah, watching others get married one after the other, I wonder when my brother and I will finally marry!"

Huang Er couldn't help but express his thoughts.

"Soon, the saying goes, when fate comes you can't stop it!" Mu Shuangshuang, busy making meatballs, paused and replied earnestly.

Huang Er had only spoken casually, but Mu Shuangshuang's active response turned his face bright red.

However, Huang Er still shamelessly continued, "Miss Shuangshuang, why don't you introduce someone to each of us, me and my brother? We aren't looking for beauties, just someone willing to work hard with both of us!"

The Huang Brothers lost their parents at an early age, growing up relying on scams, hunting, and the kindness of various households—truly not easy.

Finally meeting Mu Shuangshuang and Lu Yuanfeng, they found the right path, realizing they needed to marry and continue their lineage.

Only in this way could they live a stable life.

"Haha, I really can't do that. When Matchmaker Sun arrives, ask her for introductions; she has many connections." Mu Shuangshuang laughed and shook her head, as matchmaking wasn't her forte.

If she did it well, it would be fine, but if not, the couple would blame her for life.

"Aunt Si, could you also help us brothers find someone? We currently have a total of five taels of silver as family assets. Although it's a bit shabby, we'll continue working hard; we won't break the village custom of providing three taels for the bride price.

If there's a girl willing, regardless of height, weight, or appearance, we brothers won't mind." Huang Er shamelessly requested Yu Si Niang, who was washing vegetables.

Suddenly being addressed, Yu Si Niang was startled, but soon cracked a smile.

"In Yu Family Village, there's a girl who lives not far from Shuangshuang's grandparents! She looks good and, more importantly, is diligent. With her, you won't worry about household chores! But..."

Yu Si Niang's condition made Huang Da and Huang Er somewhat interested.

Yu Si Niang had a good character, and if she recommended a girl, she must be good!

"But what, Aunt Si? Please tell us!" Huang Er urged.

"The girl was married once before but was recently abandoned at the beginning of the year. It's not because of any fault of hers; her husband got involved with other women outside, and a concubine replaced her as the official wife!

If you don't mind, I can ask tomorrow if there's been a matchmaker visiting her."

"Oh..." Hearing she was an abandoned woman, Huang Da and Huang Er were like wilting eggplants, instantly losing spirit.

The two were unwed newcomers with the sole requirement of marrying a young virgin. If they married an abandoned woman, people would surely mock them.

They didn't mind being laughed at, but if they had children and others gossiped about it, what would happen to the children?

Mu Shuangshuang observed the Huang Brothers' reaction carefully!

It was clear they weren't particularly willing, at least internally refusing at this moment.

Ultimately, the customs of the Da Ning Dynasty weren't liberal enough.

Older women struggled finding husbands, and those who were previously married or abandoned shared the same difficulty.

Even those with nothing like Huang Da and Huang Er would avoid a woman labeled as 'discarded.'

In this Da Ning Dynasty, looks were secondary; reputation was the most crucial thing.

"Mother, just leave this to Matchmaker Sun; she's experienced and knows which young man and which girl are suitable together," said Mu Shuangshuang.

Yu Si Niang hadn't gathered her thoughts for a while, but when she did, she quickly said:

"Huang Da, Huang Er, don't take this matter to heart! The girl's parents told me to be clear that she's been married once since they don't want to find an unsuitable match and wrong their girl!"

Thus, the matter was left unresolved, and Yu Si Niang decided not to mention it again in the future.

Huang Da and Huang Er felt extremely awkward, especially Huang Er, as he had brought up the situation and later rejected it.

"Alright, focus on your work, earn more money, and when you're good enough, a wife will naturally come!" Mu Shuangshuang interjected to ease the mood.

And so the Huang Brothers returned to their tasks at hand.

A while later, Mu Dashan came into the kitchen from outside, his face brimming with joy.

He went straight to Yu Si Niang and said: "Si Niang, our parents have come with Sixth Son's family. I've taken them to the third branch; hurry and go see them!"

Chapter 809: The Final Push

Mu Dashan's 'our father, our mother' naturally doesn't refer to Old Mrs. Mu and Mr. Mu.

It's Mu Shuangshuang's maternal grandparents.

Mu Dalang is the eldest grandson of the Old Mu Family. According to the customs of the Da Ning Dynasty, relatives from Yu Si Niang's side would come over, and how many would come depended on how much the Old Yu Family valued their daughter.

Like the second branch, Lin Xiaozao's family, only Lin Xiaozao's mother—Mrs. Qian came.

The fourth branch, Mrs. Liu's family, brought Mu Xiaxia's maternal grandparents, which showed that the Old Yu Family gave face by having a lot of people come.

Yu Si Niang was so excited that she could barely hold the kitchen knife in her hand.

"Shuangshuang, your father and I will go see your maternal grandparents first. I'll come back to tidy things up later, alright?" Yu Si Niang said.

"Mom, don't worry, I'll take care of it here!" Mu Shuangshuang replied.

All day, Mu Shuangshuang needed to stay in the kitchen to prepare. Only after dinner was ready could she take a break.

Yu Si Niang and Mu Dashan headed to the third branch, and after a while, Feng Xiaohua came to the kitchen.

Without saying much, she rolled up her sleeves to assist Mu Shuangshuang.

Feng Xiaohua still remembered Mu Shuangshuang's help with the last incident; if she hadn't driven Luo Xiu'er away, she and Yu Liulang would probably still be treated like fools by Luo Xiu'er.

Subsequently, she even helped Yu Liulang find a doctor, so Mu Shuangshuang held a special place in Feng Xiaohua's eyes.

Feng Xiaohua wore a new pink outfit today, looked vibrant, and even her smile was exceptionally sweet.

"Shuangshuang, let's go see the bride later and catch some of that good fortune!" Feng Xiaohua said.

"That might have to wait until the evening. I can't leave now. There aren't many relatives coming for lunch, but dinner is the main meal, and I have to prepare all afternoon!"

Mu Shuangshuang could only feel relieved that the wedding ceremony would start in the evening.

Otherwise, being busy with all those things would mean she couldn't even watch the ceremony.

"Then I'll stay with you!"

In the kitchen, everything proceeded smoothly.

The front yard was the same; lunch was served just in time according to Mu Shuangshuang's arrangement.

The few relatives from the Old Mu Family couldn't stop talking when they saw the spread on the table.

"This Old Mu Family really has become wealthy; it's not even the main meal, yet there's so much meat!"

The man who had argued with Mr. Mu expressed his awe.

A few people beside him immediately chimed in.

"Of course, after all, he's a scholar. I heard from Da De that this time, it's going to be a grand occasion!"

It was one thing to say, but hearing it made everyone even more envious.

The Old Mu Family had money and people, taking all the good things; there seemed to be no justice.

At this time, Old Mrs. Mu pulled Mr. Mu over to show off.

"Cousin, this lunch is just a little something, but tonight's dinner will be even more lavish. If you wish to stay a few days at the Old Mu Family, feel free. We are not stingy people and will not serve you pot water!"

The old man mentioned felt embarrassed; he remarked earlier in the day that the Old Mu Family's feast wouldn't be good, probably just pot water, because the Old Mu Family was too frugal.

"Well... Sis-in-law, if you're not busy, we'll start eating. Previously, we won't hold a grudge for what Gou Dan did. If you continue to be like this, it'll be easier for us relatives to visit and connect with you!"

Mr. Mu felt uncomfortable hearing this.

After hesitating for a while, he left with Old Mrs. Mu.

The lunch temporarily eased the grievances of the family relatives and their appetite for gossip.

After lunch, Mr. Mu personally visited the kitchen to instruct Mu Shuangshuang about the evening's arrangements.

What dishes to prepare, when to serve, and the flavor preferences.

Mr. Mu repeated the instructions over and over, fearing that Mu Shuangshuang might forget.

Towards the end, the Huang Brothers grew tired.

"Old man, aren't you annoying? Don't you have a clue how much you're spending per table with all these demands?"

Back then, for Granny Chen's twenty coins per table, peeling garlic, cutting meat, killing chickens and ducks, everyone in the Old Mu Family helped.

This time, aside from not buying materials, Mu Shuangshuang had to do everything and was taking only twenty-five coins per table.

As for the Huang Brothers and Lu Yuanfeng, it was even less, eight coins per table—dozens of tables could wear people out.

Even with this, everyone accepted.

The most crucial reason was to help Mu Dalang.

"Who are you?" Old Man Mu's face was full of anger.

Getting criticized on a joyous day was something he couldn't stand.

"Grandpa, I found them here to help, they're working in the kitchen, later they need to go out and serve dishes!" Mu Shuangshuang said.

Mr. Mu thought about it and called Mu Shuangshuang out, saying directly to her, "Shuang, those two don't look like good people. Send them away and find others!"

Mr. Mu wore a new outfit today, his slightly protruding belly leaning forward.

Speaking to Mu Shuangshuang, his tone was somewhat imperious.

Mu Shuangshuang figured that the many visitors today elevated Mr. Mu's status, making him a bit disoriented.

"Alright, I also wanted to replace a few people!" Mu Shuangshuang's words had barely reached halfway when Mr. Mu was already delighted.

The granddaughter in front of him finally seemed to know to listen to him.

"Shuang, rest assured, Grandpa won't mistreat you. Once your uncle goes to the Capital for the exam, the Old Mu Family..."

"Grandpa, I wasn't done speaking. I meant to send Huang Da and Huang Er away and call eight to ten people from the village!"

The kitchen work is plenty already, and there are just a few people; you want to send some away. Don't forget how many came to help when my aunt got engaged!"

Mu Shuangshuang's meaning clearly pointed out Mr. Mu's favoritism.

Mr. Mu's old face turned red, feeling awkward under Mu Shuangshuang's gaze.

"Since Grandpa left the kitchen to me, everything should go according to what I say. I decide who to use. Others I won't use, nor do I want to use!"

Besides, tonight, Shuang only prepares dinner; snacks are not included. Either have people come early or inform the guests that we won't serve late-night snacks!"

"You..." Mr. Mu pointed at Mu Shuangshuang's forehead, about to scold her when Mu Dazhong burst in.

"Dad, the Qin Family is here, the Qin Family is here..."

It's no wonder Mu Dazhong was excited. With the Qin Family's arrival, the planned incidents could unfold.

This time, Qin Shijie must restore the Old Mu Family's reputation and, before the entire village, ask Mu Dade to marry Mu Xiangxiang to the Qin Family.

Mr. Mu's face lit up; he abandoned everything else and headed straight out of the courtyard to greet the Qin Family.

Mu Shuangshuang knew that today's marriage event involving Mu Dalang featured not just Mu Dalang and Huang Bitu, but also Mu Dade and the Qin Family who would intervene.

Just unsure what's going to happen next!

Chapter 810: Little Aunt Has Gone Mad

Mr. Mu only felt relieved after seeing the Qin Family arrive.

This time, it wouldn't be like last time, when no one showed up, bringing shame to the Old Mu Family.

However, Qin Shijie's appearance was truly unpleasant.

Ugly as it was, he lay on a small bamboo sedan chair, his clothes not particularly neat.

Carried by two porters, one at the front and one at the back, he looked like a lord, yet the sense of melancholy on his face was quite unsettling.

Aunt Qin rushed up, and the scent of heavy makeup followed.

Mr. Mu frowned, seemingly displeased with Aunt Qin's attire.

Mu Dazhong, however, was so overjoyed that he took the initiative to say, "Aunt Qin, you really look beautiful today, and Young Master Qin, hurry and have the men carry you inside!"

While instructing the two porters, Mu Dazhong couldn't stop staring at Aunt Qin, almost drooling.

"Why didn't the two elders of the Qin Family come?" Mr. Mu asked somewhat displeased.

"Oh, this matter dates back three years, when our master and mistress, to avoid debts, fled and haven't returned since.

The family only has an old lady who's too old to travel back and forth; though I'm only a concubine, our master did entrust me with managing the Qin Family." Aunt Qin explained with a smile.

Mr. Mu was still somewhat unhappy, but today was a joyous day, and time shouldn't be wasted here.

"Alright then, hurry inside, you must say those words in front of everyone in the village before dinner!"

Mr. Mu didn't want Qin Shijie's affairs to disrupt the wedding ceremony after dinner.

For everyone getting married, the hour of the ceremony is the most important, and Da Lang and Bitā's marriage concerns the fate of the family, a failure would be a great loss.

Aunt Qin followed Mu Dazhong into the courtyard of the Old Mu Family!

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An entire afternoon, Mu Shuangshuang was busy like a spinning top, without a moment's rest; the two large pots in the kitchen, plus two more in the courtyard outside, nearly exhausted her.

Lu Yuanfeng helped her with the cooking, but most of the time, it still fell on her.

At this moment Mu Shuangshuang felt that the meals for the red and white events were not easy to serve.

Especially when done according to the Old Mu Family's standards, it was even harder to serve!

As the firecrackers sounded, everyone began to take their seats, and the kitchen was ready to serve.

Just waiting for the second set of firecrackers to start serving dishes.

At this moment, Qin Shijie, carried by two porters, appeared in the front yard of the Old Mu Family.

The previously lively front yard suddenly fell silent.

Everyone stared blankly at this unexpectedly appearing man, looking utterly confused.

"Everyone, I am Qin Shijie, who was previously engaged to the Old Mu Family. Could everyone listen to a few words from me?"

Qin Shijie asked in front of the entire village.

The previously quiet yard suddenly became noisy again.

"Is this the Qin Family person from town? Why is he crippled! The Old Mu is also too careless, his son is a scholar, and his daughter is to marry a cripple, really..." someone said.

"What is going on, what trick is the Old Mu Family trying to pull!"

"Listen to me explain, last time I couldn't attend the engagement banquet because I, Qin, was attacked in town and had my legs broken.

I am not unwilling to marry Xiangxiang, such a good girl like Xiangxiang, I would marry eagerly, how would I choose not to come!

I only hope Mr. Mu will consider that I came as soon as I recovered, and give me another chance so that I may marry Xiangxiang.

I am willing to offer all the Qin Family's property, in the future, the Qin Family will have only Xiangxiang as the mistress!"

These words were taught to Qin Shijie by Mu Dade.

Once he said these words, the reputation of the Old Mu Family in the village would turn around.

At the very least, people wouldn't think that Mu Xiangxiang was abandoned for no reason.

Sure enough, after hearing Qin Shaojie's words, people were starting to soften.

"So that's how it is, the Old Mu Family's girl isn't as we thought!"

Standing aside, a smile began to appear on Mr. Mu's face, with more and more villagers understanding Mu Xiangxiang and the Old Mu Family.

"Old Mu, since it's a misunderstanding, what do you plan to do about it?" someone close to Mr. Mu in the village asked.

Everyone was now keen to know whether the Old Mu Family would honor their promise and let their daughter marry into the Qin Family or break off the engagement as Qin Shijie is crippled.

"Our Old Mu Family values promises, of course we..."

Mr. Mu had only begun to speak when commotion erupted at the farthest table in the yard.

Everyone stood up together, eyes fixed on Mu Xiangxiang rushing over.

Mu Xiangxiang's hair was disheveled, her clothes dirty, and her eyes filled with anger as she shouted, "Kill..."

The voice was grating, like the scraping of old bark.

When Mu Xiangxiang approached and slapped the nearest guest, it was only then that people reacted.

"Oh my mother, Mu Xiangxiang has gone mad..."

Someone shouted, and the villagers started to scatter.

Meanwhile, while Mu Xiangxiang beat those she encountered, she was secretly searching for Mrs. Lin.

In the chaotic yard, Mrs. Lin's frame was already engraved in Mu Xiangxiang's mind; she would recognize her even if she turned to ash.

And Mu Qingqing, that little wench was also absent!

Mrs. Lin had been in the back yard kitchen, checking if Mu Shuangshuang's dishes were ready, ready to sneak a taste if they were or scold Mu Shuangshuang if they weren't.

However, because Mu Shuangshuang was too tough, she got driven out.

Mrs. Lin ended up not tasting the fox meat and was in a bad mood, thinking of going to the front yard for some entertainment.

The Qin family's pleading for Xiangxiang, Xiangxiang's act of madness, and the eldest brother's family's troubles were the shows she expected to see.

Mrs. Lin walked with vigor.

Those shows played out countless times in her head, but when she arrived at the yard, she was completely stunned.

It was true Mu Xiangxiang had gone mad, yet she was relentlessly chasing after the guests.

Oh dear, wouldn't this embarrass her son?

It was clearly agreed, not to ruin the wedding, but at this rate, her son, Lin Xiaozao, would become the laughingstock of Er Gui Village.

"Father, second brother, third brother, what are you all standing there for? Hurry and catch Xiangxiang, this wedding is going to be ruined by her!" Mrs. Lin shouted at the top of her lungs.

This shout not only awakened Mr. Mu, Mu Dazhong, and Mu Dashan, but also exposed her own identity.

The scissors in Mu Xiangxiang's sleeve had already exposed a corner, slowly approaching Mrs. Lin.

"Second brother, third brother, quickly catch Xiangxiang, otherwise, something big will happen!"