

## Folly 93

### Chapter 93 Married to Shuang

"What? Fifty taels?" Mr. Mu's eyes were as wide as brass bells. He looked at his son in astonishment, still not fully registering the sum Mu Dade had mentioned.

Mu Dade already anticipated this reaction from Mr. Mu. In fact, he deliberately understated the amount.

This trip, if he really sought out that teacher to discuss questions related to the Autumn Examination, it would require at least a hundred or eighty taels.

"If Father feels that the Old Mu Family cannot afford such silver, I won't seek out this teacher. Anyway, it won't be a big deal; with just my own effort, I should be able to pass the examination."

Mu Dade feigned understanding, but he had already grasped Mr. Mu's temperament deep down.

Such a golden opportunity, Mr. Mu wouldn't let it slip by. Having spent his life toiling in the fields, he finally spent silver to nurture a scholar son, so how could he let go now?

Back then, who in the surrounding villages wasn't envious of him for having a good son who passed the scholar exam on his first try?

It was only when they couldn't pass the scholar exam that the Old Mu Family became a joke in others' eyes. But even so, his son was the first scholar in Er Gui Village.

This time, he insisted on bringing his son out, making those who looked down on the Old Mu Family shut their mouths.

"Da De, say no more. Father will think of a way to get this silver."

But where would the old man get an idea?

The family's total savings did not exceed ten taels. With fifteen mu of paddy field and six mu of dry land, on the surface, it looked like the Old Mu Family had plenty of land that could yield some silver.

But half of that land had poor soil, and those poor fields yielded less than two hundred catties per mu each season.

Poorer ones yielded only about a hundred catties per mu. And a hundred catties of rice could produce at most sixty to seventy catties of rice.

Although rice in town sold for seven to eight wen per catty, for these farmers, selling it at five wen per catty was enough to secretly laugh themselves to sleep.

So the actual silver in hand wasn't much. After deducting for labor, materials, fertilizers, and taxes, an acre of land might not even break even, perhaps even posting losses.

However, these lands of the Old Mu Family were Mr. Mu's achievements. Back when the war started, many in the village feared the conflict would reach Er Gui Village, so they hurriedly sold their land.

Mr. Mu, with his boldness, bought those lands at a low price, which gave him the confidence to send Mu Dade to school.

"Old man, what are you thinking? Our family doesn't have that much silver. Why not ask each family to figure something out and gather some for Da De."

Old Mrs. Mu deliberately raised her voice, wanting her daughters-in-law present to obediently go back to their families for money.

"Mother is right. Dad, don't be stubborn. We all know the family's situation better. Let's hear everyone's opinion."

Mu Danian echoed Old Mrs. Mu. His thoughts were entirely different from Old Mrs. Mu's—he remembered his elder brother was preparing to marry off the daughters of the second branch, third branch, and fourth branch.

It seemed there should be quite a bit of silver. His elder brother only needed fifty taels here, and the surplus could be used for his marriage.

"Alright, since everyone's here, discuss how we gather this money."

Mr. Mu glanced around the room. From the first branch to the fifth, only the third branch was missing, as the third had previously left with Shuang back home.

Only now did Mr. Mu realize someone from the Old Mu Family was absent. He sighed and directly asked Mu Dazhong.

"Old two, any ideas?"

"Dad, what ideas would I have? You know our family's money is all managed by Mother. Every penny would be taken away."

Mu Dazhong looked aggrieved. Of course, when he said this, it was to remind about Old Mrs. Mu taking the last half tael of silver from their family.

"What about the fourth?"

"No..."

"Fifth?" Mr. Mu focused his gaze on Mu Danian.

"What can I do? Why not hear what our eldest brother and sister-in-law have to say? Eldest brother is a scholar, and sister-in-law's family also has a scholar. Asking them couldn't be more appropriate." Mu Danian tossed the issue back to the first branch.

At this point, after exchanging a look with Mu Dade, Mrs. Jin said.

"Father, Mother, I might have a way to gather Da De's tuition."

"What way? Tell us quickly." Old Mrs. Mu's eyes lit up green, any means to solve her son's problem was valuable.

"My method might not be much. I fear you might scold me." Mrs. Jin said to herself. Before Old Mrs. Mu could respond, she continued.

"We have so many daughters. We could marry one off, use her dowry for Da De's tuition. Once Da De's passed, the first branch will take care of her, ensuring she has a good life."

Mrs. Jin's words clearly exempted the first branch.

The remaining sharp-minded daughter was only Mu Dazhong's. Smacking his thigh, he spoke, "Our Qing acts like a wild girl. Afraid, upon marrying, she'd cause trouble and ruin the Old Mu Family's reputation, bringing heaven's wrath."

"Exclude Qing." Mr. Mu knew Mu Qingqing's nature. Waving his hand, he gave Mu Qingqing a pass.

By the side, Mrs. Lin admired her husband greatly—his mind was sharp. The moment the first branch mentioned a marriage, her husband dismissed it.

She wasn't foolish; Mrs. Jin's suggestion clearly aimed to sell off daughters from other branches to gather her husband's tuition. Only the third and fourth branches might not realize this.

Fourth branch's Mrs. Liu wanted to refuse, but Old Mrs. Mu's terrifying gaze made her shrink into the corner.

"Then it's only the third branch's Shuang and fourth branch's Xiaxia. Xiaxia is a year younger than Shuangshuang. I suggest marrying Shuang."

Old Mrs. Mu laid out her proposition. Since no one from the third branch was present, no one objected.

"Since no objections, it's decided. Marry off that troublesome girl. Tomorrow I'll find Matchmaker Zhang to discuss a match in the nearby village. We should get ten taels without issue."

Old Mrs. Mu understood the nuances well, having personally navigated the marriages of her daughters-in-law.

"But ten taels aren't enough!" Someone mentioned, tossing a wrench into the Old Mu Family's glimmer of hope.

"I heard village Wang San's conditions are good. His brother is a steward for a wealthy town family, and his sister owns her own cloth shop. If Shuangshuang marries there, her future might even surpass Da De's as an official."

According to the prior arrangement with her husband, Mrs. Jin informed the few people of the Old Mu Family.

"Wang San? Eldest sister-in-law, you talking about that lame, blind, fifty-year-old bachelor Wang San from the village?"