

Reborn as a Landlord

Chapter 14: Chapter 7: The Commotion Caused by a Piece of Meat_2

Lian Manman stepped out with Lady Zhao, then moved back inside to fetch more bowls and chopsticks.

Lady Zhou was ladling eggplants out of the pot while Lady Zhang stood by to help.

"This basin is for your father's table. Make sure you remember and don't mix them up," Lady Zhou told Lady Zhang.

Lady He poked her head in from outside, "Mother, it's almost time for dinner, and your grandsons still haven't returned."

"Well then you'd better go find them quickly," Lady Zhou replied without any warmth in her voice.

Lady He hastily withdrew her head and began calling out loudly in the courtyard. In a short while, four boys came running in from the main gate.

Inside, Lady Zhao had already arranged the bowls and chopsticks for each person.

The two tables at the head of the kang were for Old Master Lian sitting with the Lian Family men, while the table at the foot of the kang was for Old Lady Lian with the Lian Family women. Except for Lian Shouren's eldest son and

daughter-in-law, who were still in town and had not returned, everyone in the Lian Family was present. Lian Manman counted them and couldn't help but sigh inwardly at how thriving the Lian Family was.

Lian Manman and Xiao Qi also sat down at the table at the foot of the kang. Although Xiao Qi was male, he was still young and thus ate at this table with Lady Zhang. Lian Yeye also came over and sat close beside Lian Manman. Next to Xiao Qi sat Lian Duoduo, followed in turn by Lady Gu, Lian Huahua, and Lian Xiuxiu, then came Lady Zhou sitting at the head of the table. Lady He was sitting next to Lady Zhou with her young daughter Lian Yaya, leaving only a narrow space for Lady Zhang, Lady Zhao, and Lian Zhizhi.

Lady Zhang, Lady Zhao, and Lian Zhizhi hustled between the inner and outer rooms, serving rice and dishes. Lian Jihong also helped out.

"Wu Lang, go sit down; this isn't your work. Let your mom and sister do it," Lady Zhou said.

"Oh," Lian Wulang replied and continued to help carry the rice before finally sitting down next to Lian Shouxin.

"Old Fourth's Wu Lang always loves doing women's work," Lady He said with a teasing smile.

"So shameful," Lian Xiuxiu snorted.

Lian Manman wanted to speak up, but Xiao Qi quickly pinched her hand under the table. She thought better of it and shut her mouth.

The Lian Family's dinner was generous with a large basin of millet rice, a basin of mixed noodles, a large basin of stir-fried potato shreds with green peppers, a large basin of stewed pork with eggplant, a dish of stir-fried green beans, accompanied by a bunch of scallions, a bowl of bean sauce, and a dish of pickles. The men's table had the same dishes, though they had twice as much.

Lady Zhang, Lady Zhao, and Lian Zhizhi finished bringing all the food and took their seats on the kang.

The rice basin and noodle basin were placed beside Lady Zhou, who picked up the rice ladle and scooped a full pointed bowl, passing it to Lian Xiuxiu. Lian Xiuxiu didn't eat it but passed it to Lian Huahua instead. Lady Zhou filled another full pointy bowl and again handed it to Lian Xiuxiu. This time, Lian Xiuxiu accepted it and placed it in front of herself. Lady Zhou then served herself and the remaining children before finally ladling rice for the daughters-in-law, Lady Gu, and Lady He, all getting just an ordinary bowl. When it came to Lady Zhao's turn, Lady Zhou suddenly glanced at the table, put down the rice ladle.

"We're short on scallions. Old Three's wife, go pick some more scallions," Lady Zhou ordered.

Lady Zhao bowed her head, agreed, and made to step down from the kang.

"Mother, let me go. It was my turn to cook today. If we're short on scallions, I should be the one to go," Lady Zhang intercepted Lady Zhao and went out to pick the scallions herself.

Lady Zhou's expression darkened, but she didn't say anything and filled nearly half a bowl for Lady Zhao. By that time, there wasn't much rice left in the basin, and the bowl for Lady Zhang only had less than half a bowl.

Having only half a bowl of rice, Lady Zhang might not be satisfied, but thankfully there were still noodles, Lian Manman thought to herself.

Lian Xiuxiu had already taken two noodles, giving one to Lian Huahua and keeping the other in her bowl. Lady Zhou started distributing noodles, giving one to each person. Finally, two were left, presumably for Lady Zhao and Lady Zhang, but Lady Zhou didn't divide them.

Lady He, sitting right next to Lady Zhou, quickly reached out and grabbed a noodle, biting off half of it in one go.

"Mother, there was so much work today, I'm starving," Lady He said with a chuckle.

Lady Zhou glared at Lady He with disgust.

"That was meant for your sister-in-law, put it back right now," she said.

Lady He held the noodle and turned to Lady Zhao with a smile.

"Old Three's wife, I've already taken a bite of this one, do you still want it?"

Lady Zhao, looking at Lady He's yellow-stained teeth showing through her smirk, bowed her head once more.

"You eat it, Second Sister-in-law, I don't want it."

"Remember, you said you don't want it. It's not me taking it from you," Lady He replied immediately.

Lady Zhou pursed her lips.

"Mother, give me another noodle," Lian Xiuxiu requested.

Lady Zhou handed the last noodle to Lian Xiuxiu.

That was supposed to be Lady Zhang's noodle, Lian Manman thought of speaking out again, but saw Lian Zhizhi and Xiao Qi shaking their heads at her. Lian Zhizhi even sneakily broke her noodle in half and hid it in her sleeve. Xiao Qi did the same. From the look of it, was this a regular occurrence? Lian Manman glanced at the noodle in her own bowl and likewise hid it away. She had just eaten a bowl of noodles, she wasn't hungry yet.

Lady Zhang returned with the scallions and saw her half bowl of rice. Without a word, she just sat down and started eating, apparently used to it.

Lady Zhao picked up a few bites of vegetables for Lian Yeye, to which Lady Zhou humped. Lady Zhao's hand trembled, and she refrained from picking more vegetables, dipping scallions in sauce and quietly eating her rice instead.

Within the stewed eggplants was pork belly, which Lady Zhou had picked out to lay on top. Out of everyone at the table, only Lian Xiuxiu ate the meat, piece by piece, savoring the aroma, occasionally offering one or two slices to Lian Hua'er. Lian Manman heard Xiao Qi swallowing his saliva and turned to see the little guy's eyes gleaming with craving, yet he dared not reach for the meat.

Lian Manman's chopsticks seemed to move on their own, picking up a piece of pork belly.

"Manman, what are you doing?" Lady Zhou slapped her chopsticks down on the table and sternly reprimanded.