

Reborn as a Landlord

Chapter 20: Chapter 12 Lady Zhou Instructs Her Daughter-in-law_2

"Mother, you're going to wear your daughter-in-law to the bone," Lady Gu immediately fell to her knees with a thump, clutching Lady Zhou's legs, "I served the eldest master in town only on your orders, Mother. I've never forgotten your teachings, and I've kowtowed in the direction of this old house every day. Now that I've returned, I was just about to properly show my filial piety to you..."

Lady Gu knocked her forehead on the ground several times, while Lian Xiuxiu, Lian Huahua, and others gently persuaded Lady Zhou, who then stopped the motion of slapping her own face.

"I don't need your filial piety. Now that you're back, you should take turns doing household chores just like your sisters-in-law," Lady Zhou said.

"Yes, Mother," Lady Gu quickly nodded, stood up, and felt indescribably bitter inside.

In her teenage years, she was also a sought-after maiden. Not setting her sights too high nor too low, she eventually chose Lian Shouren, even as a consort, and once she entered the household, she had to take care of the children left by the first wife. What was she aiming for? True, she was drawn to Lian Shouren's good looks. But had it not been for his Scholar title, she would never have agreed to the marriage.

She had hoped Lian Shouren would pass the imperial examinations quickly, become an official, and she would become a lady. But Lian Shouren failed repeatedly and remained a Scholar. Despite all this, these years in town, she

had hired a cook and a servant to do the cooking and chores (naturally, all this was done without the old house knowing), and both Lian Huahua and Lian Duoduo were raised delicately, not needing to lift a finger. Now, she was expected to cook, feed chickens, and pigs in this rural place!

Lady Gu truly felt dizzy now.

"Those are the chores you've done in the past years, go and cook first. Be quick about it, your father and the others will be back soon," Lady Zhou gestured to Lady Gu to go and do her work.

Lian Manman pulled Lady Zhang out of the Upper Room, but when they reached the courtyard, Lady Zhang stopped in her tracks.

"Manman, you go back first. I'll help your eldest uncle's wife with the cooking," Lady Zhang said.

It seemed that Lady Zhang really was as the rumors described, incredibly diligent and never idle.

Lian Manman held onto Lady Zhang's hand, not letting go. Lady Zhou wanted to put Lady Gu in her place, and if Lady Zhang was smart, she should stay away at a time like this. Moreover, with Lady Gu's cleverness, she should be able to handle the situation well; there was no need for Lady Zhang to step in and become cannon fodder.

But these were not things that could be said openly, at least not now.

"Mother, in your heart, who is more important to be filial to, your husband or your eldest brother's wife?" Lian Manman asked Lady Zhang.

"Of course, it is more important to be filial to the elders," Lady Zhang explained earnestly to Lian Manman, "Your eldest uncle's wife and I are of the same generation. She is the eldest, and I usually show her respect, but there's no talk of being filial to her."

"That's just it. If Grandma wants to eat the food cooked by the eldest uncle's wife, then whatever she cooks, it is her act of filial piety. Grandma feels comfortable eating it. If Mother goes to cook, wouldn't that be taking away the chance for the eldest uncle's wife to show her filial piety? Neither Grandma nor the eldest uncle's wife would be happy," Lian Manman said.

Lady Zhang felt that what Lian Manman said seemed reasonable, but she also felt something was off.

"Don't you and your third sister-in-law help each other all the time? Grandma has never said anything?" Lady Zhang said.

"But the eldest uncle's wife has just come back, and it's her first day doing chores, which of course is different," Lian Manman said, "The eldest uncle's wife has Sister Huahua and Duoduo at home who are both so capable, there is no need for you to help... When the eldest uncle's wife needs help, she will ask for it herself."

Lian Manman spoke thus, but her heart did not agree. What she was really thinking was why she should help Lady Gu. Lady Gu was planning to trade her for money to ensure her own daughter's good marriage prospects. Naturally, Manman shouldn't go help her.

Lady Zhang guessed at some of Lian Manman's thoughts and hesitated, just as Lian Xiuxiu came out from the Upper Room.

"Sister-in-law number four, Sister-in-law number three, why haven't you come inside to help the elder sister-in-law with her work? Although mother said that, we should be clear in our hearts that the elder sister-in-law is the Scholar's wife, not just any ordinary peasant woman. Huahua is about to leave the house, and Duoduo is young; how could they possibly do farm work? Sister-in-law number four, this bit of work is nothing to you. Even if you take it all on, it won't tire you too much," Lian Xiuxiu chattered on.

What was Lian Xiuxiu thinking, ordering Lady Zhang around as if she were a servant? Lian Manman was almost amused to anger. What was this? Even if she had intended to help, she didn't want to go now.

"Can't granny eat the food cooked by the Scholar's wife?" Lian Manman walked to the window of the east room, intentionally raising her voice, "The future lady and granny's daughter-in-law, as well as Sisters Huahua and Duoduo who are granny's grandchildren, how could granny not eat the rice they cook?"

Lady Zhou, inside the house, nodded silently upon hearing Lian Manman's words.

"Xiuxiu, come inside, let your elder sister-in-law do the work," Lady Zhou said to the outside.

Lian Xiuxiu was out of options; she gave Lian Manman a glare and had to go back inside.

Lady Gu circled the stove, unable to even light the fire, let alone cook. Lian Huahua and Lian Duoduo, considering the task dirty, both hid inside the room. Moreover, Huahua had even persuaded Lian Xiuxiu to ask Lady Zhang and

Lady Zhao to cook instead. But now Xiuxiu had made a mess of things, and Lady Gu beside the stove was stamping her feet in frustration.

She really couldn't and didn't want to do these tasks, but she had no choice since they were assigned by Lady Zhou.

"Sister-in-law number three, sister-in-law number four," Lady Gu came out from behind the door curtain, coaxing Lady Zhao and Lady Zhang with a smile, "I haven't been back in so long, my hands have gone clumsy, and the two children are of no help either. You both are capable people, can you lend me a hand?"

Lady Zhang was about to agree when Lian Manman hastily tugged at her sleeve.

"Elder sister-in-law, just wait a moment, I'll be over soon," Lady Zhang said to Lady Gu, taking Lian Manman back to the West Wing Room.

Lady Gu stood at the door, her face darkening.

"Manman, I know you pity your mother," Lady Zhang seriously said to Lian Manman within the West Wing Room, "but there's something you have to understand. A family can't be so distinctly divided or measured so precisely. Someone in the family has to suffer for the rest to get by. You must remember, hard work doesn't kill. I'm healthy, if I work more, I eat better and with dignity."

Lian Manman was momentarily at a loss for words. What Lady Zhang said was undoubtedly the principle that could be recorded in any book of righteousness, but failing to recognize the environment around you is simply too naive. To give away so much for nothing, not even getting basic respect in return.

"Mother, you are right. But it also depends on who the other person is..." said Lian Manman. If your kindness, generosity, and forbearance are selectively ignored by the other party, taking advantage of your supposed weakness, what should you do then? Furthermore, if your "weakness" affects the people you love the most, say your children, making others bold enough to harm them, what then? Do you continue to suffer without complaint?

Lady Zhang was struck as if by lightning at Lian Manman's words, and she began to weep silently.

"Manman... I..."