

Reborn as a Landlord

Chapter 4: Chapter 2 To Sell or Not to Sell_1

The shadows of evening stretched westward; usually at this hour, the Lian Family would have finished their dinner, but today, the only people seated on the kang in the Upper Room East Room were Old Master Lian and his clan, with the table yet to be set.

Old Master Lian, Lian Fang, was a thin, tall elderly man with a rosy complexion. Dressed in blue coarse cloth clothing, he sat cross-legged at the head of the kang, puffing away at his dry tobacco pipe.

Directly opposite Old Master Lian, sitting with his back to the edge of the kang and legs crossed, was a fair-skinned middle-aged man—Lian Fang's eldest son, Lian Shouren. Dressed in a kudzu-colored fine silk tunic and wearing a square scarf on his head, he hung his head as if immersed in deep thought.

A few women were seated not far from the father and son. Sitting by the window was Old Lady Lian, Lady Zhou. Her hair had thinned somewhat but was combed without a hair out of place, and her face still bore the traces of her youthful charm. Sitting close beside Lady Zhou was Old Master Lian and Old Lady Lian's eldest daughter, named Lian Xiuxiu, fourteen years old this year. Lian Xiuxiu's complexion was slightly dark, and she bore a striking resemblance to Old Master Lian as if carved out of the same mold. The young girl was dressed in a brand-new silver-red floral vest, her lustrous plait coiled into a bun atop her head, adorned with a golden phoenix hairpin, and a pink velvet flower.

Lian Huahua sat leg-to-leg, intimately next to Lian Xiuxiu. She wore a semi-worn lotus root-colored floral vest, her jet-black hair pulled up into a bun on top of her head, with a few wisps of hair hanging down by her ears. Her skin was snow white, making her appear even more captivating and lovely beside Lian Xiuxiu with her almond-shaped eyes and peachy cheeks.

Lian Huahua's younger sister, Lian Duoduo, also in a freshly tailored floral vest, pouted as she leaned into the embrace of her mother, Lady Gu. Lady Gu was seated on the edge of the kang, her clothing of stone-blue satin was neither new nor old.

Because Old Master Lian did not speak, no one dared to make a sound, only Lian Xiuxiu and her niece Lian Huahua were whispering and laughing softly with their heads close together.

Lian Manman came in from outside and immediately noticed Lian Huahua. As Lian Huahua lifted her head and saw Lian Manman, the smile on her face instantly stiffened, and her conversation with Lian Xiuxiu abruptly stopped.

Lady Zhang helped Lian Shouxin put the Lian Manman he was carrying onto the kang.

Lian Manman sat there, quietly surveying the room's occupants. Old Master Lian should be fifty-seven this year; he didn't look particularly robust. Old Lady Lian must have been a beauty in her youth; the eldest of the Lian Family and Old Fourth both inherited her looks, a pity Lian Xiuxiu did not resemble her. Lian Xiuxiu was fourteen this year, the same age as Lian Zhizhi. Alas, Lian Zhizhi was too thin; it was Lian Xiuxiu who looked to be developing normally.

The one with the round, white face and thin lips must be the wife of Lian Family's eldest son, Lady Gu, and then there were the sisters Lian Huahua and Lian Duoduo, all dressed in silk and satin. Ah, Lian Manman sighed to herself inwardly.

"...The child refuses to eat, afraid of being sold by us again," Lian Shouxin and Lady Zhang stood below the kang, "Father, please say something."

Old Master Lian glanced at his eldest son and tapped his tobacco pipe in his hand.

"Shouren, what's going on? Speak," he said.

Before Lian Shouren could speak, Lady Gu, her face alight with smiles, was already speaking out.

"Father, aren't you aware of this matter? What selling and not selling? It's just the children talking nonsense; there's no truth to it. Manman is the legitimate niece of Eldest Uncle; even if Old Fourth and his wife wanted to sell her, with her uncle and me here, we couldn't possibly sell the child, could we?"

As Lady Gu spoke, she leaned over, intending to pat Lian Manman's head.

Lian Manman tilted her head and moved closer to Lady Zhang, avoiding Lady Gu's hand.

Old Master Lian lifted his eyelids and swept a glance at Old Lady Lian, Lady Zhou. He had asked his eldest son to speak, yet his daughter-in-law rushed to answer. This violated his rules, but being a father-in-law he was concerned with maintaining his status, and it was not his place to rebuke his daughter-in-law directly. Surprisingly, the typically stern mother-in-law, Lady Zhou, unexpectedly kept silent.

"Shouren, I asked you to speak," Old Master Lian said again, tapping his tobacco pipe and speaking in a grave tone.

Lady Gu looked somewhat abashed, yet her smile persisted.

"Father, haven't I told you already?" Lian Shouren finally spoke, "The other day when I went to the Prefecture City, I happened to meet an acquaintance, Yang Chengfeng. He

heard our family was short on silver, and immediately offered five hundred taels of silver, even treating me to a meal... His brother-in-law's family is the Sun Family from Qingfeng County, quite a prominent local gentry. The young master of the Sun Family is yet unmarried and of a similar age and appearance as our Manman. Besides, this marriage is really us reaching beyond our station."