

Rise 225

Chapter 225: Borrowing Money

Looking at Jun Ge beside him, they were family, having grown up together as kids, running around without clothes. They had been classmates for several years, and he couldn't just stand by and watch his marriage have such a hidden risk. After all, this was something for the rest of their lives. Zhu Ping'an thought that he would find an opportunity later to share his thoughts with him, of course, making sure to remind him not to speak recklessly. After that, whatever Jun Ge decided would be his own choice.

Uncle, Aunt, and Grandma took turns advising Zhu Pingjun, urging him to make the right decision, their spit almost flying onto Zhu Ping'an's face. But it was all in vain, it had no effect. Zhu Pingjun was still full of confidence, thinking that a man like him had nothing to fear, and refused to agree to the marriage.

In the end, though, it was Uncle who brought out his authority as the head of the family and made the final decision: even if Zhu Pingjun didn't want to, he would still be tied into the marriage.

Mother, Chen, brewed a pot of tea and served it to Grandpa, Grandma, and Aunt. She didn't pay any attention to Uncle throughout. However, Uncle's expression remained normal, showing no signs of discomfort. He poured himself a cup of tea, took a sip, and remarked, "Good tea."

Chen, didn't even look back. This tea was the cheapest in town, hardly what one would call good tea. This person was really being hypocritical.

"Ahem, here's the thing. Your father and I have come today to discuss something with second brother and second aunt," Uncle said, setting down his teacup and speaking slowly and deliberately.

"What's the matter?" Chen, raised an eyebrow and asked.

Zhu Ping'an also turned to look at Uncle, thinking it was just about Jun Ge's marriage, but to his surprise, there was something else.

"Big brother, if you have something to say, just say it." Zhu's father spoke up after Uncle finished, earning a big eye roll from Chen.

"As the saying goes, when brothers are united, their power can break gold. Back then, big brother made a mistake in a moment of confusion. I was wrong."

Uncle spoke with a face full of regret, his voice filled with sincere emotion.

Zhu's father, a burly man, felt his eyes moisten when he heard Uncle's apology. He was deeply moved by Uncle's words. How many days had he been waiting for this?

"We're all family. Big brother, why say this?" Zhu's father sighed deeply and ended up comforting Uncle instead.

Uncle wiped away the imaginary tears from the corner of his eye and wholeheartedly agreed with Zhu's father's words. "We're family. Well said, brother. You're right. One brushstroke can't write the character Zhu. I've been thinking, back then, I was misled and did something wrong. Why should second brother carry this burden for so many years? I've been thinking, the division of the family was too hasty back then."

At this point, Uncle sighed long and deeply, then continued with emotion, "I've been thinking, our family's division back then was wrong. We can't keep making the same mistake over and over. If it was wrong, it should be corrected. I've also discussed it with our father, and here's the plan: you all should move back to the old house. Let's not be separated anymore."

Upon hearing this, Zhu's father hadn't spoken yet, but Chen had already shown some reluctance. When the family was divided, who was the one who spread all the dirty water on our family, blaming everything on my family's Shouyi? They insisted on separating us. Now, five or six years have passed, and they want to reunite? Can the water that's been poured out be gathered back? Back when the family was divided, it was hard; we had no food, no clothes, and no shelter. But now, things have improved. We've built a big house that's even better than the old one, with over a hundred acres of good land. Zhu's father makes over a hundred large coins a day from driving carts, eating well, drinking well, and having meat at every meal. We live a good life without needing to suffer. Moreover, when the family was divided, you were the one who shirked responsibility. Now that there's something to gain, you want to reunite, especially with Er Xiao having passed the imperial examination. Our family can enjoy tax exemptions and no forced labor due to the separation, but the old house can't. That's likely why you've had a change of heart. Now you want me to move back to the old house? Who does this wealth belong to if we go back? So, I'm a thousand times unwilling."

"We were already divided back then, and the whole village witnessed it. The separation agreement was stamped at the county office," Chen, didn't directly oppose but merely stated that everyone knew they were separated, and the agreement had been sealed at the county office, implying that it was too late to change things.

"The county seal is nothing. Well, Zh'er has already passed the imperial examination, so we can go to the county magistrate. This is a small matter. Our parents are getting older, and they're hoping for a full house of children and grandchildren," Uncle said, as if already prepared for Chen's objections. He glanced at Zhu Ping'an and then expressed his thoughts.

I have to say, my uncle is still as... as usual.

"Second Brother, what do you think?" Uncle raised his teacup and asked Zhu Father.

Zhu Father was slightly agitated by his uncle's words, his face turning red as if he was about to speak. But before Zhu Father could respond, his wife, Chen, stepped forward and poured Zhu Father a cup of tea. However, by coincidence, she stepped on Zhu Father's foot and subtly gestured towards Zhu Ping'an, almost making Zhu Father choke on his tea.

This step seemed to wake Zhu Father up a bit. Since the family division, it seemed his wife and children were getting more comfortable, and just like Chen had hinted earlier, he also had to consider Zhi'er's future. The family division agreement had already been stamped at the county, and it wouldn't be appropriate for Zhi'er to go to the county magistrate now. It might have an undesirable influence on Zhi'er.

"Well, elder brother, the old house isn't spacious. Da Jun is going to propose soon. Let's leave a room for him. My courtyard was just built, so it should be fine to live in for now. Later, we can bring our parents over to stay."

Zhu Father's words were impeccable. I must say, although Zhu Father seemed dull, he wasn't rigid.

"We're fine living in the old house," Grandpa puffed his pipe and shook his head.

Grandma was actually interested, but since Grandpa had already spoken, she didn't say anything more.

With Chen around, the persuasion would be much more difficult. I'll find a chance to talk to Second Brother alone later. After Zhu Father politely declined, Uncle did not continue to discuss family matters, but instead, with Zhu Father's words, he suddenly changed the topic to borrowing money.

"Speaking of Jun'er's marriage, it just occurred to me that I have a favor to ask of you. You know, recently, we've been living tightly in the old house. Jun'er's proposal needs your help as the uncle. The woman's family that Wang matchmaker introduced is really a good family. This opportunity is rare, so I was thinking, could I borrow twenty taels of silver from you to help Jun'er with the proposal? I'll repay you as soon as I'm financially able."

"Twenty taels?"

As soon as Uncle finished speaking, Chen exclaimed in surprise. For a marriage proposal, twenty taels of silver was too much; it wasn't even for bringing the bride home. Moreover, why should we pay for the proposal? Repay? That sounds nice, but you still haven't repaid the money you borrowed before!

"Dad, why borrow money from Second Uncle again? You still haven't repaid the money you borrowed before! I don't agree with the marriage, so don't bother. In the future, I'll rely on myself."

Zhu Pingjun's voice rang out loudly in the room, his voice loud enough to be heard clearly. This kid, although overly confident, still had a sense of responsibility.

After Zhu Pingjun's outburst, Zhu Ping'an watched as Uncle's face turned as red as Guan Gong's.

Then the room was filled with chaos.

In the end, Grandpa intervened to stop the confusion and spoke up, asking Zhu Father to borrow ten taels of silver from Uncle to settle the marriage proposal for Zhu Pingjun. Since Grandpa had spoken, Chen, despite her displeasure, still took out ten taels of silver and handed it to Zhu Father, who gave it to Uncle.

When sending Grandpa, Grandma, and Uncle off, Zhu Ping'an took the opportunity to call Zhu Pingjun into his room. He spoke softly to him, reminding him repeatedly to follow his instructions before sending him out the door.

He had done all he could, now he would let things unfold on their own.