

Fat Wife 1131

Chapter 1131 - 1131 Follow Closely

1131 Follow Closely

Qiao Mei could not manage to convince Xu Lan. Even Xia He, who was usually on her side, chose to listen to Xu Lan this time. Qiao Mei stood rooted to the spot dejectedly. At this moment, she was like a child going to kindergarten. Her family was waiting here for the teacher to pick her up and bring her in. To play the character well, the next thing for her to do should be to cry a little and whine that she did not want to go to school!

“Why are all of you here today? I’m not prepared at all! You’re scaring me!” Xia Fang said as she ran out of the hospital anxiously.

“Everything happened too suddenly. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have to call you so urgently. I’m here to deal with Xia He’s issue but Qiao Mei insisted on coming along, so I have no choice but to hand her over to you,” Xu Lan said apologetically.

“Alright, then I’ll bring her with me now! I still have patients to see!” Xia Fang did not have time to ask Xia He about what happened. She had even brought along a wheelchair to save time. Today was the day when she held her clinic and she had many patients lined up along the corridor. She could not be away for too long.

Xia Fang rushed towards the private elevator reserved for chief physicians and went straight to the top floor. She pushed Qiao Mei into her private office and placed a lot of delicious food and drinks in front of her. After setting everything out, she said to Qiao Mei, “Be good and wait for me here! My break time is in an hour and I’ll come back to accompany you straightaway!”

“Aunt, please go ahead. Don’t worry about me. I’ll take good care of myself,” Qiao Mei said with a sweet smile.

Seeing Qiao Mei’s good attitude, Xia Fang trusted that she would not cause any trouble within an hour. Xia Fang asked a security officer to guard the door and watch over Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei waited quietly in the room for 15 minutes. After confirming that there was no more sound outside, she slowly stood up and moved to the door. She opened the door happily before her face instantly fell when she saw the fierce-looking security officer.

“Do you need something? Chief Xia says that you can’t walk around casually. If you need anything, just tell me and I’ll do my best to help you,” the security officer said sternly.

“I... I’m going to the toilet. Big brother, if you can let me pass, I’ll be back after using the toilet.” After saying that, Qiao Mei turned her body sideways to move past him and quickly walked out.

The security officer stared towards the direction that Qiao Mei had left and pondered for a while. Then, he quickly moved forward and followed closely behind her. No matter how Qiao Mei tried to chase him away, he would not leave. He gestured that he would stick with her no matter what.

Qiao Mei stopped in her tracks helplessly and said, “Big brother, I’m going to the female toilet. Why are you following me?”

“Chief Xia said that I can’t allow you to leave my line of sight and that I have to follow you at all times,” the security officer said earnestly.

“But I’m going to the female toilet. How are you going to follow me? Are you going to barge in as well?” Qiao Mei asked with a frown.

“I’ll wait for you outside the toilet. After you come out, I’ll send you back to Chief Xia’s office. Miss Qiao, don’t make things difficult for me. I’m just a security officer. If I lose sight of you today, I might even lose my job. Please be more understanding,” the security officer said aggrievedly.

Qiao Mei did not believe what the security officer said! Xia Fang was not that strict. How could she fire a staff member for losing sight of a patient? If that was the case, she would need to fire many staff.

Uncle Liu Yang also would not do such a thing. Unless there was a major mistake committed, staff members would not be punished so severely.

However... Even if it was a slight punishment, like deduction of salary, reduction of the number of monthly food stamps or other punishments, it would still be unbearable for the security officer's family. Surely he had family members to feed!

"Then wait for me near the toilet door. I'll be out soon," Qiao Mei said with a sigh.

The security officer smiled and said, "No problem!"

Qiao Mei went into the female toilet and took a look around, but she did not manage to find any other way out. In the end, she could only walk out dejectedly to see if she could negotiate with the security officer. She wanted to find a solution where she could go and look for Xia He and Xu Lan and yet protect the security officer from being punished.

"What did you say Chief Xia's instructions to you were?" Qiao Mei asked.

"To keep an eye on you and not to let you encounter any danger or harm," the security officer said.

"Then... Can you wheel me to look for my mother and sister? This way, I can meet my family and you also manage to follow her instructions. That will make everyone happy!" Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Chapter 1132 - 1132 Single Ward

1132 Single Ward

The security officer was about to nod when he immediately shook his head and said, "No! Chief Xia instructed me not to let you leave her office. Letting you come out to use the toilet is already pushing it to the limit. I can't make any other exception for you!"

Qiao Mei blinked and suddenly held onto her stomach, pretending to be in pain as she said, "Ow~ Ow~ My stomach~"

"What's wrong with you! I'll go get the doctor! Wait for me! I'll be back soon! Hang in there!" The security officer was so frightened that he could not remember which way to go and stumbled as he set off to look for a doctor.

Qiao Mei hurriedly stopped the security officer and said, "No need... Can you go and get the wheelchair? I just want to go and see my mother. Please..."

The security officer followed Qiao Mei's instructions and hurriedly returned to Xia Fang's office to push out the wheelchair. At this moment, he could not care less about "Chief Xia's instructions". The most important thing was to protect Qiao Mei!

After Qiao Mei sat on the wheelchair, she immediately looked relaxed. She pointed ahead and said, "I want to go to the orthopedic department. Do you know where it is?"

The security officer did not listen to Qiao Mei. He turned around and pushed Qiao Mei towards Xia Fang's office. Qiao Mei immediately started groaning again and held her stomach as she moaned in pain. It seemed so real and it did not look like she was pretending.

"Ah! My stomach! My stomach hurts! I want to see my mother! I want to look for my elder sister!" Qiao Mei yelled out as she stole looks at the security officer's expression.

The security officer really could not tell if Qiao Mei was pretending to be unwell or not, so he could only agree to send her to the orthopedic department. He decided to explain everything clearly to Xia Fang when she returned.

Xu Lan brought Xia He to the ward where Bian Ding had directed her. It was rare that the Bian family was willing to spend money to let Yang Xin stay in a single ward!

"Wait for me outside the door. Come in only when I call for you. Do you understand?" Xu Lan said to Xia He.

Xia He shook her head and quickly held Xu Lan back. "No, Mother. I'll go with you. I can't let you deal with Yang Xin's family alone!"

Yang Xin was a promiscuous woman, but Bian Zhuo did not care at all. In any case, he had many women outside as well. As long as the two of them remained on good terms and there was no news of any illegitimate children, everything looked good on the outside.

Bian Ding was not a good person either. No one knew how he got his position as the art troupe leader!

The entire family found themselves powerful protectors and then bullied others based on that. The Bian family had previously worked for the He family and even swore to He Ning that they would always be loyal to the He family. In the end, the moment He Ning got into trouble, they immediately distanced themselves from the He family.

The He family had so many supporters who pledged loyalty to them that He Ning could not remember all of them and it seemed that he might have forgotten about this ungrateful family. However, if someone reminded him of them... perhaps He Ning would finally be able to remember? It was hard to say.

“Don’t go in and add fuel to the fire. Listen to me and wait for me here,” Xu Lan said.

She was not afraid that Xia He would be at a disadvantage after going in, but she was more afraid that Xia He would beat Yang Xin further and cripple her in a fit of anger. She knew her daughter better than anyone else. This was a girl who could not swallow any grievances. If anyone bullied Xia He or a member of the Xia family, Xia He would send that person directly to the ICU! That person could very well be paralyzed in bed for good.

Xia He could not dissuade Xu Lan, so she could only sit gloomily on the hard bench in the long corridor and watched Xu Lan enter Yang Xin’s ward.

“Oh my! Who is this! What a rare guest! I never expect you to really come here,” Bian Ding said mockingly.

“Since you asked me to come, then I have to come and take a look no matter what. After all, she’s also from our art troupe. How can I not come to pay a visit?” Xu Lan sized up Yang Xin. Her complexion was rosy and she certainly did not look like she had a fracture. It looked more like she was here for a holiday stay in the hospital.

Bian Zhuo looked at Xu Lan’s empty hands and asked unhappily, “You come to visit a patient without bringing anything? Do you even look like you’re here to visit a patient?”

“You don’t even bother to greet an elder. Is this part of your Bian family’s upbringing?” Xu Lan gave Bian Zhuo a side eye look.

Bian Zhuo stood up indignantly and wanted to say something more, but Bian Ding stopped him and pushed him to the side. The main issue at hand was more important.

Chapter 1133 - 1133 Confrontation

1133 Confrontation

“I originally planned to bring a gift, but then again, I don’t think you lack anything here. I’m just here to take a look at Yang Xin. If you insist that I must bring a fruit basket to enter this ward, then I’ll ask my friends to send over two baskets now. As long as it makes you happy,” Xu Lan said with a cold smile.

Looking at Xu Lan’s expression, she did not look like she was talking about giving a fruit basket at all. It sounded more like she was talking about getting prayer items delivered! If she also asked a couple of funeral musicians to come by, it would be like giving Yang Xin a sendoff! The next step would be to hold the funeral procession!

“Look at you, that’s not what we meant! Chief Xu, you’re thinking too much,” Bian Ding said.

“This child looks quite well to me. I supposed she has almost fully recovered?” Xu Lan walked to the foot of the bed and picked up the doctor’s notes. It clearly stated that the patient had an ankle sprain, slightly ligament strains and soft tissue contusions.

Even though these phrases made her condition sound quite serious, in layman’s terms, it meant that Yang Xin had sprained her ankle. It was nothing serious at all and she did not even need to be confined to the bed in the hospital. The Bian family’s uncle and nephew duo had asked Xu Lan to come over purely because they wanted to demand a sum of money from her for the medical fees.

“Still far from it! The doctor says that if the injury is not treated well, her foot might not heal properly and she won’t be able to dance anymore,” Bian Ding said with a tinge of regret. As he spoke, he even wiped away his tears and put on a hypocritical act for Xu Lan!

“Alright, I’ve already seen what I need to see. Yang Xin is unable to go on stage in her condition. I’m afraid that Yang Xin will have to miss this performance. I’ll go back and tell the rest in the troupe to

practice well so that we don't delay the progress of the performance." After saying that, Xu Lan prepared to leave.

Bian Zhuo hurriedly blocked Xu Lan's path and said fiercely, "You want to leave? No way! You must get Xia He to come and apologize to my wife! Otherwise, don't even think about walking out of this door! You also have to compensate our family. Do you think that the medical, hospitalization and nutrition fees for the past few days don't cost money!"

"I wonder what mistake my daughter has made to have to come and apologize personally? You can go and ask for money from whoever caused this to happen," Xu Lan asked evenly, in a manner that was neither servile nor overbearing.

"Xia He injured my wife. You have to apologize and compensate us," Bian Zhuo said stubbornly with his arms crossed.

Xu Lan pointed at Yang Xin, who was on the bed, and said, "You were the one who attacked my daughter first and now you want my daughter to apologize to you. There's no such logic. Besides, Yang Xin's injury is a sprain, not wounds from a beating. There's no way I'm going to let you push the blame on my family!"

"So many people saw your daughter pressing my wife to the ground and yet you still want to quibble?" Bian Zhuo said.

"Then surely there must be people who saw that Yang Xin hit Xia He first. We can't just listen to your one-sided argument," Xu Lan said.

"Don't spout nonsense here! Zhou Ling already said that Xia He was the provocateur!" Bian Zhuo said.

Xu Lan looked at Yang Xin, who had been cowering on the bed and not daring to make a sound. Then she looked at the arrogant Bian Zhuo and then at Bian Ding, who was watching the show at the side. She turned around and sat on the sofa opposite Yang Xin.

“You know very well whether everything you’re saying is true.” Xu Lan looked at Bian Ding and said, “Regarding the extra money you paid to my daughter, I’ve already repaid it to the troupe out of my own pocket. Don’t think that I don’t know about those sneaky things that you have done.”

“You’re mistaken. I just feel that since we’re friends, I should take good care of Xia He,” Bian Ding said guiltily.

It was Yang Xin who asked him to pay Xia He a full month’s salary. Her goal was to make it difficult for Xia He to defend herself. She wanted to get Xia He expelled from the military art troupe. As long as Xia He had such a stain on her reputation, she would never be able to succeed in anything for the rest of her life.

None of them expected Xu Lan to see through this plan. If the plan had succeeded, not only would Xia He be affected, but the entire Xia family as well. At that time, the Bian family would be able to go to the He family to claim credit.

“My daughter’s behavior is always aboveboard and she doesn’t need anyone to take special care of her. You know very well how you managed to become the troupe leader. I’m not considered very old yet. I can still stay active in the troupe for another five to six years,” Xu Lan said politely.

“Aye, aye... I understand...” Bian Ding said fearfully.

Bian Zhuo spat at Bian Ding. What a timid thing! This person was a lousy relative to have. It was so embarrassing that he surrendered after just a few words from someone else!

Chapter 1134 - 1134 Motherhood Makes a Woman Strong

1134 Motherhood Makes a Woman Strong

“You say that my daughter hit you first? Then let’s talk about evidence. We must set aside those people who are on good terms with Yang Xin and Xia He respectively and only hear from those who are not familiar with the two of them. So you can forget about that Zhou Ling you’re talking about,” Xu Lan said.

“How can we just ignore what Zhou Ling said!” Bian Zhuo said angrily.

“If you really don’t believe me, then let’s make a police report and let the police deal with this matter. At the end of it, we’ll accept the police’s conclusion, be it paying compensation or issuing an apology,” Xu Lan said nonchalantly with her hands spread out.

“Aren’t you worried that the Xia family’s reputation will be damaged! I’ll go to the streets and kick up a fuss! I’ll ruin your Xia family’s reputation!” Bian Zhuo said as he pointed at Xu Lan.

Xu Lan looked at Bian Zhuo coldly. The Xia family had always been open and aboveboard and was not afraid of being investigated at all. The Xia family’s money was all earned by the Xia family’s menfolk through honest and hard work.

Back when Xu Lan first took over the reins of the household, whenever something happened to the Xia family, she valued the Xia family’s reputation more than anything else. If she could settle the matter quickly, she definitely would not overly pursue it. She felt that it was not a big deal to lose some money and she did not want to waste time on unimportant people. Time was the most precious thing to her.

However, it was precisely because of what she did that made many people misunderstand them. They said that the Xia family was timid and only knew how to use money to smooth things over. Initially, Xu Lan just thought that by losing some money, she could also make these less well-off people feel better, but she did not expect to get such an outcome. From then on, Xu Lan changed completely.

Did these people really think that the Xia family, who had been established in the capital for so many years, was a family to be trifled with?

“Go ahead. You can publicize it for my family. Our family did not do this. When word gets out, everyone will know that our family brings up our children well. Go quickly!” Xu Lan said.

“You’re really not worried that others will misunderstand your family?” Bian Ding asked curiously.

“Hmph. What’s there for me to worry about? In our family, the couples get along harmoniously and we are a happy family. No one does anything sneaky, not like some couples who have so many lovers outside and even have two or three illegitimate children. Some people are still being kept in the dark!” Xu Lan said loudly and purposefully towards the bed.

Bian Zhuo's face instantly turned pale. How did Xu Lan know about all these? He had clearly kept it a closely guarded secret and made sure that no one would find out!

Xu Lan did not come to confront the Bian family without any background information. Otherwise, she would be in a disadvantaged position. The Xia family's investigators usually dealt with work-related matters. It would still be quite difficult for them to find out about such private matters. Only women knew women the best.

The Bian family was not prominent but also not unknown. There were many wives of rich families in the capital who stayed at home full-time. Xu Lan only needed to ask around to find out about the Bian family's shameful doings. These women were usually very free and their only hobby was to find out about the various prominent families' deep and dark secrets.

Actually, these rich women were no different from the women who gossiped at the village entrance. The only difference was that one group wore tattered clothes and sat at the village entrance, while the other group wore expensive clothes and sat inside luxurious houses.

"Hurry up and get lost! Get lost!" Bian Zhuo said as he pointed at the door.

Xu Lan laughed as she walked out of the ward. As soon as she left, she could hear Yang Xin kicking up a fuss in the room and her mood improved greatly.

Xia He sat at the side and gave Xu Lan a thumbs up. This was the first time she had seen Xu Lan go into battle with full force. In the past, Xia Wen was always the one who handled these things. She had almost forgotten that Xu Lan was the one who handled all these household issues, big and small, before Xia Wen reached adulthood.

Their mother, who was usually gentle to them, was actually a very strong woman. Motherhood served to make a woman strong. Xu Lan would fight to the death with anyone who bullied her daughter, even if it meant risking her own life.

By the time Qiao Mei arrived, Xu Lan had already left the battlefield.

"Mother! Are you alright?" Qiao Mei looked at Xu Lan and Xia He worriedly.

"Oh you. You're still so disobedient. What can happen to us two?" Xu Lan said as she tapped the tip of Qiao Mei's nose dotingly.

"I... Aren't I just worried about Mother?" Qiao Mei said as she scratched the back of her head in embarrassment.

Xia He quickly came over to Qiao Mei and said, "You didn't see how fantastic Mother was just now. She's even more impressive than our father!"

Chapter 1135 The Xu Lan Of The Past

"I'm going to kill you! Bian Zhuo, you're inhumane! I'm going to kill you! Ah!!!"

Just as Xia He and Qiao Mei were about to whisper to each other, Yang Xin's sharp scream could be heard from inside the room, followed by the sound of many things falling to the ground. It immediately alarmed the surrounding nurses.

The security officer hurriedly stood in front of Qiao Mei's group to protect them. Even if someone rushed out of the ward later, they would not get hurt.

"Let's go quickly and not get involved with a lunatic. What if she really throws all caution to the wind? She may hurt someone if she rushes out," Xia He said worriedly.

"Let's go, let's go quickly!" Xu Lan called out to the security officer and asked him to wheel Qiao Mei away quickly. The three of them returned to Xia Fang's office in a panic. By then, it was already Xia Fang's lunch break.

The security officer did not follow them in. Instead, he stood at the door and continued to stand guard. Xu Lan and Xia He quickly sat down on the chairs to take a breather. Qiao Mei sat in the wheelchair and looked at Xia Fang obediently, worried that Xia Fang would get angry with her for disobeying instructions.

"Did you get chased by a dog? What happened to all of you?" Xia Fang asked curiously as she drank water.

"Something like that, and it's a rabid dog at that!" Xia He said.

"She's probably agitated by what I said. I didn't do it on purpose. It's their fault for forcing us to the edge," Xu Lan said innocently.

Although the couple both had lovers outside, Yang Xin never knew that Bian Zhuo already had two children. Moreover, Bian Ding also knew about this matter and had bought houses for Bian Zhuo's two mistresses. The two women did not want to take over Yang Xin's position. They just wanted money.

Yang Xin had her suspicions about this in the past, but she let it remain as just suspicions. As long as she did not investigate the matter, then it was not true. Everything remained fine as long as she chose not to believe it. However, hearing it from someone else's mouth was such a great humiliation! This was even worse than killing her.

It was Xu Lan who shattered her fantasy about her current life and forced her to face reality.pandas
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"Aunt! You didn't see how suave my mother is today! She's simply too cool! I've never seen my mother like this!" Xia He bragged excitedly.

Xia Fang glanced at Xu Lan and said, "Your mother even got into fights when she was young. What hasn't she done before? Back then, she brought me with her everywhere."

"Ah? Really? Aunt, tell us the story quickly!" Qiao Mei widened her eyes and looked at Xu Lan. She did not expect Xu Lan to have such a side to her!

She had always thought that Xu Lan was quiet and dignified. Today was really an eye-opener for her!

"Alright, alright. Don't tell the children about those impulsive matters from my youth. Come and examine Qiao Mei to check if there's anything unusual. I've been feeling concerned for the past two days!" Xu Lan said worriedly.

Xia Fang did a simple examination and did not find anything unusual. Seeing that it was almost time for Qiao Mei to give birth, she still wanted to persuade Qiao Mei to come in earlier and stay in the ward. However, her previous attempts to persuade Qiao Mei were all ineffective. She decided not to say anything now, afraid that Qiao Mei would get annoyed. Qiao Mei probably already knew what to do and would naturally come in once she was ready.

"She's fine. Just don't eat too much greasy food these few days. Is there any news from Xia Zhe? Do we know when he will be back?" Xia Fang asked.

The other three women did not look too good. Ever since Xia Zhe left on his last mission, he had not sent any news to the family. Qiao Mei had no idea at all. Based on the original owner of the body's memories, Xia Zhe should have died in that massive earthquake. However, now that she had changed Xia Zhe's fate, she did not know if Xia Zhe was alive or dead this time.

Yet, Xia Mao kept telling her that Xia Zhe was fine. It was just that the mission was confidential and it was inconvenient for him to talk to his family over the phone or to send items to his family. Therefore, Xia Mao could only ask around within the army for more information. He had the idea that Qiao Mei's 1,000-year-old ginseng juice was with Xia Zhe, so Xia Zhe would be able to cope even if there were any accidents.

"Don't worry, he'll be back. Isn't it good enough as long as he's fine?" Qiao Mei said gently.

"It's good that you think that way. It's just that the wife of a military man is destined to have a harder time than ordinary women. Even if Xia Zhe is not back, there's still us! We'll all accompany you and won't leave you," Xia Fang said.

Chapter 1136 - 1136 Which Kid

1136 Which Kid

"Yes, yes! With Aunt by my side, I'm not afraid of anything!" Qiao Mei said.

"Your Uncle Liu Yang keeps urging me every day to bring him to look for you. He wants to check on your constitution so that he knows which are the most suitable traditional Chinese medicines to nourish your essence and vitality during confinement. I haven't allowed him to go yet. Who knows if his intention is just to ask you for a ginseng!" Xia Fang said jokingly.

“Liu Yang only knows how to do academic research. He can go and check on other people. There’s no need to check on our Qiao Mei!” Xu Lan covered her face as she said with a smile.

Qiao Mei was so amused that she laughed out loud. So what if Liu Yang was only after the ginseng? In the end, he was still concerned about her health. As long as it was a person who was really concerned about her, she could not thank him enough!

As they chatted, it was soon time for Xia Fang to go back to work again. Xu Lan went home with the two younger women. It had not been easy for her to convince Qiao Mei to stay at her place for the night. She could not miss such a good opportunity!

“Mei Mei, I found a necklace at the antique market two days ago. It suits you a lot. Come and take a look!” As soon as Xu Lan entered the house, she ran to get the gift for Qiao Mei.

It was a gold necklace with a ruby the size of a fingernail hanging in the middle. It was obvious that it was worth a lot of money. The purity and cut were both top-grade!

Even if Qiao Mei did not know anything about jewelry, she was also shocked by what she saw. This could even become a family heirloom in the future!

“Wow! It’s so beautiful!” Xia He said enviously.

“I’ve had my eye on it for a long time! Previously, this shopkeeper refused to sell this necklace as he said he wanted to keep it as part of the dowry for his daughter’s wedding. Then he suddenly put it up for sale. Later on, I asked around and found out that the groom-to-be was a heartless man! That’s why the wedding was canceled. So I quickly bought the necklace!” Xu Lan said excitedly.

Qiao Mei did not care for taboos and did not dwell on the auspiciousness of such a nice item. No matter what, it was a token of Xu Lan’s feelings for her!

“I like it very much! Thank you, Mother!” Qiao Mei happily accepted the gift.

Xia He pouted and said, "What about mine? You only know how to dote on your daughter-in-law, but not on your own daughter!"

Back then, she did not even have any dowry! Xu Lan was so piqued that she almost did not attend Xia He's wedding. Xia Wen had to persuade Xu Lan for three days and three nights before he managed to convince her. Otherwise, Xia He would definitely have already cut ties with Xu Lan!

Actually, Xu Lan had already prepared Xia He's dowry. Although it was not as grand as those rich families' dowry in ancient times, it would still be enough for Xia He to gain a foothold in her in-laws' family.

Xia He was actually quite glad that she had quarreled with Xu Lan and did not bring a single cent with her to the Kong family. Otherwise, her dowry would have been taken by Old Madam Kong!

"You! I'll definitely give it to you when you get married! Don't worry!" Xu Lan said disdainfully.

"Hmph! I'll marry if I have to! Who's afraid of you!" Xia He said stubbornly.

"Hehe, Elder Sister has many suitors~ And there's this handsome young man! Two days ago, he even sent Elder Sister home!" Qiao Mei whispered into Xu Lan's ear.

Xia He immediately blushed and pointed at Qiao Mei angrily. "Qiao Mei! Why are you such a snitch! The two of us are colleagues! Don't spread rumors!"

"What colleagues? Qiao Mei, tell me quickly!" Xu Lan's interest for gossip was immediately piqued. She knew all those kids from the art troupe very well, but she never knew that there was anyone who was fond of Xia He.

"I can't say. If I say it, Elder Sister will get angry," Qiao Mei said as she looked at Xia He with a grin.

Xu Lan did not continue asking about it. At the end of the day, Deng Fan was the only person there who knew Xia He and had been colleagues with her from the beginning.

She was definitely very satisfied with Deng Fan. Although he was not very talented, he was diligent and did not slack off even after so many years. If not for the fact that she was no longer a key personnel in the troupe, Deng Fan would probably be the principal dancer by now. It was a pity that the previous troupe leader had been suppressing Deng Fan because he did not have a prominent background.

"Alright, let's go and eat. Let your elder sister continue to feel shy here!" Xu Lan held Qiao Mei's hand and brought her to the dining table. Qiao Mei put the necklace into her bag for the time being, scared that she might lose it if she was too careless with it.

Chapter 1137 Contented

Qiao Mei took advantage of Xia He's absence and asked quietly, "Mother, are you particular about who Elder Sister chooses to be her next partner?"

Xu Lan really had not given much thought to this matter. She felt that as long as it was someone whom Xia He liked, she could accept it. However, Xia He had already met someone like Kong Lu previously. What if she ran into such a person again?

This was also the reason why she had been arranging blind dates for Xia He. The men whom she wanted to introduce to Xia He mainly came from families which were close friends with the Xia family and the Xu family. Since these people were already old friends of so many years, she knew best what kind of character these men had. Xia He might not love the person she met from such blind dates, but she would at least have a stable life.

Love could be nurtured slowly, but a life without happiness was totally unsalvageable.

"I think I will mind. Are you helping Xia He to sound me out?" Xu Lan asked with a smile.

"No, I just want to know how you feel about Elder Sister deciding on her own marriage," Qiao Mei said earnestly.

Qiao Mei did not want Xu Lan and Xia He to fall out again because of this matter. Now that Xu Lan and Xia Mao were older, she was worried that Xu Lan would have regrets if Xia He became estranged from them and could not be filial to them.

"I know who that kid you mentioned is. That kid is not bad. He hasn't gotten married all these years, so I reckon he's waiting for Xia He. As long as it's a sensible person, I can accept it," Xu Lan said.

Qiao Mei nodded happily. It was almost done!

As the saying went, the onlooker would be able to see the bigger picture. Qiao Mei could finally see through Xia He's heart. The truth was that Xia He liked Deng Fan and might have liked him since she was young, but she did not understand her own feelings at that time. Fortunately, the heavens had blessed them and Deng Fan had also been waiting for her.

What happened next would depend on how Xia He and Deng Fan communicated their feelings to each other!

A few more days passed by peacefully. After staying a few days at Xu Lan's house, Qiao Mei even gained a few pounds. She counted the days and realized that the corn at home was about to run out. She had to hurry back to replenish the stocks.

If she was too weak after giving birth, she might not have enough energy to produce corn! Then the truth would be exposed!

It had also been a long time since she had a good chat with Li Gui. She did not know how the children were doing and how far they had progressed in their learning journey.

"Elder sister, you're back!" Zhang Wei said excitedly.

"Where's mom? Why don't I see her?" Qiao Mei asked.

"Mom has been busy for the past two days! I don't know what she's busy with. Elder sister, why are you looking for Mom? I'll tell her when I see her," Zhang Wei said.

"It's fine, I'll go and look around." After saying that, Qiao Mei walked towards the backyard. Li Gui was actually counting money in her room!

Li Gui's bed was full of money and she sorted them out by denominations before tying them up in bundles. She hugged the money and smiled happily. Qiao Mei had never seen such a smile on her face before!

It was one filled with satisfaction, happiness, steadfastness and even a sense of relief. Qiao Mei was a little puzzled. She did not know why Li Gui would have such an expression on her face.

"Mom, what are you doing here?" Qiao Mei asked as she walked into the room.

"Quick, sit down! Why are you here to look for me! The floor is slippery, be careful that you don't fall." Li Gui hurriedly helped Qiao Mei towards the brick bed and sat her down.

"What do you intend to do with so much money?" Qiao Mei said.

Li Gui scratched her head and laughed in embarrassment. She handed the bundles of money to Qiao Mei and said with a smile, "This... this is 10,000 dollars. I want to buy that small house."

Li Gui originally thought that Qiao Mei would be angry or reject her money, but when Qiao Mei looked at the bundles of money, her eyes welled up with tears. This was Li Gui's hard-earned money and also a representation of her hopes and wishes. In the past, Li Gui would never have dared to imagine that there would come such a day!

"Alright, then I'll go and get you the title deed and draw up an agreement to state that the house belongs to you!" Qiao Mei said happily.

"Sure, sure, sure. But I'm not in a hurry. You can do it when you're free. I haven't been able to take care of you during this period of time. I've been busy with the business and even managed to save an additional 2,000 dollars! I'm thinking that after you give birth, the money would come in handy," Li Gui said.

Chapter 1138 - 1138 Choose One of Two

1138 Choose One of Two

Qiao Mei looked at Li Gui quietly. She thought back to how Old Madam Li skimmed off the money Li Gui wanted to give Qiao Mei. If Old Madam Li had been honest enough to return everything that Li Gui had given Qiao Mei, the misunderstanding between her and Li Gui would not have been so deep.

Actually, Li Gui was also a victim. If she had not been forced by Old Madam Li to remarry, Qiao Mei could have had a very blissful childhood. Fortunately, she still had her grandfather and he took very good care of her. Her childhood could be considered a happy one. Now that she was married to Xia Zhe, she would also be blissful for the rest of her life.

Fate could be considered to have been kind to her.

“You’ve been so focused on me, then have you thought of saving up some school fees for my younger siblings? What if the children have to go to school from next month onwards?” Qiao Mei asked with a laugh.

Li Gui was stunned for a moment. She really had not considered this at all. Now that these children had enough food and were living in such a good environment, Li Gui had forgotten about the matter of them going to school. However, she had many ways to earn money now and she could earn money quickly too. There was enough time for her to make money to cover any kind of expenses.

The children’s school fees and the school bags and stationery they needed for school should total less than 200 dollars. Li Gui would be able to earn this amount of money within two to three days.

“There’s no hurry. They’re still young and there’s no need to send them to school so early! But there’s something which I can’t decide and I want to discuss it with you. Two days ago, Xia He came to chat with me and she asked me if I wanted to send Zhang Miao to learn dancing. I’m feeling a little jittery. No one in our village has ever learnt such a thing. Do you think there’s a future for her in this?” Li Gui said hesitantly.

Li Gui had only known Foshan Village all her life. Even after she married and moved to the city, her living conditions there were not even as good as what she was used to in the countryside!

It was already very impressive when the children could go to school. The school there did not have such specialties like art, piano, dance, violin, and so on. They did not know how it could be useful to learn all these.

Even in the capital, there were not many families who were able to let their children be schooled in these specialties. During this era, there were still very few families which wanted their children to go to school. Many families simply waited for their children to grow up and go to work in the factory to earn more money to supplement their family's income. They did not have the spare cash to let their children go to school. Only rich families would pay attention to their children's education.

Zhang Miao was now one year older after the new year. This was a good age to start dancing. Moreover, Xia He realized that Zhang Miao had a talent for it as well as great perseverance. If she could be taught well and nurtured from a young age, she would definitely have a bright future!

However, even in such a good place like the capital, there was no school that allowed one to study and practice dance at the same time. Zhang Miao could only choose one of the two. If she chose dance, she might fall behind in terms of culture and knowledge in the future. Other than dancing, she would have no other employment options.

Xia He only started dancing when she was in her teens. She knew very well how much effort she had put in. Every night, she would cry secretly. She only hoped that Zhang Miao would have it easier if she chose this path and would not have to put in so much effort like her.

"If Zhang Miao really likes dancing, then let her do it. But once she makes a choice, she has to persevere. She can't come home crying every day when she can't endure the hardship! We can't possibly be soft-hearted and then send her back to school when that happens. Mom, if you've really thought it through, then send her wherever she wants," Qiao Mei said.

For their family, money was not a concern. Qiao Mei was just worried that the children would give up halfway. Once the children developed a habit of giving up halfway, they would never be able to drop the habit. In the future, they would never succeed in whatever they did. Qiao Mei wanted to teach them to be responsible for all the decisions they made.

Even if they did not manage to achieve anything and came back to run the business with Qiao Mei, they must still have good morals. Running a business was not as easy as studying!

"Alright, then I'll ask Zhang Miao for her opinion first before I talk to Xia He again," Li Gui said.

Li Gui looked at Qiao Mei's stomach and could not help but feel emotional. The two of them chatted for a long time in the room about their thoughts about the future and Li Gui shared her experiences from when she gave birth. Unknown to them, the sky had already darkened.

Qiao Mei had some free time after dinner, so she sat in the rocking chair in the main hall. Recently, she had asked Feng Hua to move the rocking chair from the inner part to a spot near the window.

Chapter 1139 You Have No Sense Of Urgency

At this spot, she could lean back and look at the moon. When it rained, she could also listen to the sounds of the rain. After all, there was a heater in the house, so it was not a big deal even if she fell asleep in the rocking chair.

At most, her back would ache the next day and she would not feel rested.

Qiao Mei stared at the crescent moon outside and rocked the chair as she gradually fell asleep...

Feng Hua had her own routine to follow. Before going to bed, she had to patrol every room to confirm if the taps and switches were turned off properly and if there were any hidden dangers. She also had to check if the furniture in each room was neatly arranged and if the lights needed to be switched off.

The same routine could not be applied to every family. She had to be very clear about which rooms she could enter to check, which rooms she could not wander around in and had an idea about when each room would be empty. This was not something that could be done overnight, but once she managed to find out all the details, she would not make any mistakes no matter which family she worked for.

Wei Hao memorized all these things. She was still lacking in many areas and wanted to learn more from Feng Hua so that she could earn the same amount as Feng Hua as soon as possible.

βανδασ ηθνε | Feng Hua was not a stingy or petty person. She openly shared with Wei Hao all her experiences over the years. She was very confident that even if Wei Hao learned everything from her, Wei Hao still might not be able to do better than her. In this industry, one's reputation went around by way of word of mouth. As long as one had a good reputation, there would be an endless stream of job offers with high pay.

"Qiao Mei... Qiao Mei, wake up..." Feng Hua came to the main hall and patted Qiao Mei gently. Qiao Mei woke up in a daze.

"It's late and the air is very damp here. Come, go back to the room and sleep," Feng Hua said with a smile.

Qiao Mei nodded obediently and slowly made her way to the room to sleep. Feng Hua stopped to look at the rocking chair. After staring at it for a long time, she bent down and did some measurements with her hand before going in.

After a few days, Qiao Mei suddenly realized that there was an additional soft cushion on each rocking chair in the house. The length of the soft cushion covered the entire rocking chair. It could not have been bought from the store. It must have been made by someone in the house who was skilled with needlework.

The thickness of each cushion was different. The cushion in the study was harder and not as thick as the one in the bedroom, nor was the material as delicate as the one in the bedroom. Furthermore, each cushion had its location's name sewed on it so that it would be easier to identify them after laundering.

"Look at this pattern. It's really pretty and the material is so comfortable!" Xia He could not help herself from trying it before Qiao Mei. It felt really good to sit on.

"It's probably Sister Feng who made these. I fell asleep in the rocking chair that day and she asked me to go back to my room to sleep. I can't think of anyone else but her," Qiao Mei said as she slowly took a sip of tea.

"Then... where did the materials come from? Did she buy them out of her own pocket?" Xia He said in shock.

Qiao Mei had no idea at all. She had not gone to the storeroom for a long time and did not know what was kept inside. She did not even know half as much as Feng Hua when it came to the items in this house.

"We'll know when we ask her during payday. Her food and accommodation are all provided for and she probably doesn't spend much. It's likely they don't have any urgent need for money at the moment, so let's wait and see," Qiao Mei said patiently.

"I must earn more money. When the time comes, I'll offer a higher pay to poach Sister Feng! Who doesn't want such a good helper!" Xia He said.

Qiao Mei smiled and said playfully, "There's no need for you to poach her. When you're pregnant, I'll ask Sister Feng to go and take care of you. As long as Sister Feng is willing to do it, I'm most willing to let Sister Feng go! I have no problem paying her too."

Xia He exasperatedly threw the wool pompom in her hand at Qiao Mei's feet and said out of frustration, "Qiao Mei, have you been itching for a beating recently! I haven't dealt with you for such a long time that you dare to joke about me now!"

"I'm just anxious! Zheng Peng and Qian'e are already a couple. They might get married in another year! You still don't have any sense of urgency!" Qiao Mei said.

"What? When did this happen? How do the two of them progress so quickly! Why is it that I don't know anything! Quick, tell me!" Xia He said in surprise.

It was a natural progression of events. When Qian'e was sick some time ago, Zheng Peng went to her house to take care of her. Of course, he only took good care of her every day and never stayed over.

Chapter 1140 Gardener

After a while, the conflict between them naturally disappeared. Zheng Peng saw how gentle and vulnerable Qian'e could be, just as Qian'e also saw how thoughtful and gentle Zheng Peng could be. The two of them got together just like that.

They were only dating now. Zheng Peng was still thinking of a way for them to get married. It was not that Zheng Peng could not persuade his father, but that Qian'e did not want to get married to him. She had too many concerns weighing on her mind.

Zheng Peng had received a more open type of education from a young age and he was much more open-minded than most people. He did not mind what happened to Qian'e in the past at all. Zheng Peng had come to look for Qiao Mei regarding this matter.

Zheng Peng indicated that if Qian'e liked children, they could go to the orphanage to adopt a child who bore a resemblance to Qian'e. The two of them would then bring up this child together and then nurture the child into an artist. If Qian'e did not like children, then they would roam the world and travel to many different places.

"Aren't you going to hold on tighter? I think Deng Fan is quite good. Aren't you going to consider giving it a try?" Qiao Mei asked tentatively.

"We'll see. It's only been a few days. Do you want me to jump into another fire pit right after I get out of one? I have to make plans for myself first! I'm still eyeing your house. I won't get married until I earn enough money!" Xia He pouted and said stubbornly.

"Then what about I just sell it to you for 10 dollars?" Qiao Mei said.

"Shoo, shoo, shoo! Don't joke with me! You should add another three zeros behind this number!" Xia He said disdainfully.

Today was also the day when the gardener would report for work. If he did not show up soon, Qiao Mei would have forgotten about him. No one had not cleaned up the weeds in this courtyard for a few days and they had grown out again. With Qiao Mei's current condition, they definitely could not get rid of the weeds by spraying chemicals.

"It's going to be hard work for you. You need to clean up all the grass by yourself. There are also many withered branches and the like in the backyard, so you need to trim the branches properly. Didn't you say that the shape of the asparagus fern in my study is not nice enough? You can help me trim it too," Qiao Mei instructed.

Shen Gui noted everything down and did not say anything. He rolled up his sleeves to get to work without any complaints. By the end of the afternoon, Qiao Mei had a whole new level of respect for this young man.

"The people whom Sister Fan found are really quite good. They're all very capable people. Seeing that he's young, I expect him to be careless in his work. I don't expect him to be so patient and composed," Qiao Mei lamented.

It had been almost four hours since Shen Gui started working but he did not take any breaks and only took a few sips of water halfway through. The ground in the front yard was clean and there was not a single weed to be seen. The fruit trees and short bushes in the backyard were all beautifully trimmed. As it was currently winter, there were no new leaves and the branches were all withered. However, even if there were only withered branches left, it looked very unattractive if the branches were left to grow in a mess.

Qiao Mei had always allowed these flowers and plants to grow freely as they were like her good friends. Even though she knew that moderate pruning was good for the flowers and plants, she still could not bear to do it.

"Those fruit trees of yours should have been trimmed a long time ago. Fortunately, both the front and back courtyards belong to our family. Otherwise, we would have received complaints long ago. Also, the color of your grape rack has already faded. Ask this kid to change a new one for you," Xia He said.

"What do you know! This is called art! It's so beautiful! I want to keep this rack!" Qiao Mei said.

"It's already attracting ants! You still want to keep it! Our house is mainly made of wood. If this thing attracts ants, won't this house be a gone case in the future?" Xia He said as she pointed at the house beams.

Qiao Mei had forgotten about this matter. When spring came, she would hire someone to paint all her houses with a layer of varnish that could guard against pests like rats and ants.

After Shen Gui finished cleaning up all the dead branches and rotten leaves, the sky was starting to darken. Qiao Mei was not a harsh employer. There would definitely be a lot of work on the first day, but it would get easier later on.

"Brother Shen, you can stop work now. Come back tomorrow morning to clean up the rest. Anyway, you won't be able to see clearly once it's dark," Qiao Mei said as she stood at the door.

Shen Gui followed Qiao Mei's instructions and came back in after taking the trash out. According to their agreement, Qiao Mei would pay him his salary on a daily basis. However, it was really strange that there was no trace of joy on Shen Gui's face.