

Fat Wife 1391

Chapter 1391 How Kind Can One Be

Shao Yin panicked. She only meant it as a casual remark and did not expect Qiao Mei to take her seriously. She quickly said, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to say that!"

Qiao Mei was not in the mood to make things difficult for Shao Yin. She waved her hand and said, "Just say what you are here to say. I was just joking with you just now. You don't have to take it too seriously."

Shao Yin swallowed nervously and whispered, "It's like this... Xia Xing and I are getting married soon, but we haven't confirmed the venue yet. As you know, my house is small and can't accommodate so many people. So I'm wondering if we can hold the banquet at your house..."

Qiao Mei already knew that such a day would come. During this time, wedding banquets were usually held at the couple's house, just like Qiao Mei's wedding in Foshan Village. If the couple held it in a restaurant, it would attract too much attention and may even lead to trouble.

At a wedding banquet, there would usually be five to six people from the bride's maternal family, usually the bride's closest relatives. At most, there would be a dozen people from her side of the family. This was also the gauge which Xia Wen used when he rented a house for Xia Xing.

No one expected more than 40 people from the Shao family to be here. Xu Lan definitely would not agree to let Shao Yin and Xia Xing hold their wedding banquet at her place. It was not possible to do it at Grandfather's place either.

Even the largest restaurant in the capital did not have the capacity to accommodate so many people. After all, on that day, there would also be many of the Xia family's relatives and friends coming to congratulate the couple. This was a matter that was closely tied to the Xia family's reputation. In the eyes of the Xia family, it was just the third son's family getting a new daughter-in-law, but in the eyes of outsiders, it was the Xia family gaining a new daughter-in-law. It was a huge difference in perception!

For the sake of the Xia family's reputation and given that it was just a one-day banquet, she decided to lend her place to the Shao family as a show of respect for Grandfather. Other than her house, there was no other place that could accommodate so many people at the same time.

"Alright, I agree," Qiao Mei said after thinking for a moment.

"What?" Shao Yin did not really hear what Qiao Mei said and thought that she was hallucinating.

"I said I agree to your request," Qiao Mei repeated.

Shao Yin did not expect Qiao Mei to agree so readily, but since she had agreed to this request, then she should not mind holding another banquet here.

"Um... there's one more thing. My family and Xia Xing's family haven't formally met one another yet. Can we organize a dinner for that at your place as well?" Shao Yin said. I think you should take a look at

"What? Another banquet?" Qiao Mei looked at Shao Yin in shock. These 40-odd people from the Shao family were not satisfied with only the wedding banquet, but wanted an engagement banquet as well?

"No, no! It's just my parents and elder sister attending! Only them! Not the rest!" Shao Yin quickly explained.

"You can't even fit such a small group in your house? I don't see why you need to hold it at my place," Qiao Mei questioned.

"Well... we don't have enough crockery and cutlery at home, nor do we know anyone who can cook well. Besides, our house is so far away from Grandfather's house..." Shao Yin listed all the reasons she could think of. She was just short of saying that the air in her house was not as fresh as the air in Qiao Mei's house.

Qiao Mei thought that since she had already agreed to help, she would go the extra mile. After all, it concerned the Xia family's reputation. It did not really matter to her if it was one banquet or two. She would just treat it as... as... as a show of respect for the Xia family!

Qiao Mei hoped that Shao Yin would not make any more requests. If Shao Yin were to continue, Qiao Mei did not know what other excuse she could use to convince herself. Fortunately, Shao Yin knew her own place and did not ask for anything else.

Following that, Qiao Mei sat there and listened to Shao Yin ramble on for more than half an hour. If Qiao Mei had to put a subject title to the monologue, it would probably be "Describing how kind Qiao Mei can be". If Shao Yin wrote down everything she said, she would definitely win the Most Outstanding Essay Award.

"Alright, alright. I have other things to do. If there's nothing else, you can go back. We'll talk another day," Qiao Mei said impatiently.

"Oh, there's one last thing! Third Cousin-in-law, can you give Grandfather and the rest of the family a call? It would be best if everyone can attend the dinner," Shao Yin said tentatively.

"Do my mother-in-law and father-in-law have to come too?" Qiao Mei asked.

"Yes, yes! It's best if your two siblings-in-law can come too! This will also show my parents that the Xia family really thinks highly of me and they will feel much more at ease. Third Cousin-in-law, am I making things too difficult for you?" Shao Yin said.

Shao Yin was simply asking to make use of Qiao Mei's courtyard, money and favors to make herself look good. Qiao Mei almost wanted to curse out loud at her.

Chapter 1392 Who Will Pay For The Expenses

Qiao Mei could not possibly serve mediocre food if the banquet was held at her place, so she would have to make an application to get some seafood and fruits from the Xia family's special supply. The family had used up a lot of their entitlement during the Spring Festival, so they probably did not have much left now. At the end of the day, she might even need to spend a fair bit of money to obtain the ingredients from the black market.

It was not an issue for Qiao Mei to pay for the engagement banquet, but the wedding banquet was on a much bigger scale. If this was Xia He's wedding banquet, it would not matter to her even if she had to spend all her money. However, if it was for Shao Yin, it was out of the question.

"Since you want to use my house as the venue to hold the wedding banquet, then what about the expenses?" Qiao Mei asked with a smile.

"Expenses... What expenses?" Shao Yin pretended not to understand the question.

"Don't tell me you want to hold your wedding banquet at my house and also want me to pay for everything? Then in the first place, you might as well come right out and say you want me to sponsor your wedding banquet." Qiao Mei almost blurted out something disrespectful about Xia Guang, but she managed to hold herself back. Under normal circumstances, these were things that the groom's mother should take care of. Based on the family hierarchy, she would never need to be involved at all.

"Third Cousin-in-law, we've only just arrived in the capital and don't have much money... The Xia family is the one paying for my family's accommodation at the guest houses, so perhaps the wedding banquet..." Shao Yin said greedily.

By right, the Xia family should be the one forking the bill for the wedding, but even then, the bill should not just go to anyone from the family. Why should the eldest son or second son pay for the wedding for the third son's son?

"Go back and discuss the issue of the wedding banquet with Brother Xing. If you have no money, there's nothing I can do for you. My own humble little family depends on my husband's salary to support us and my in-laws also give me some support along the way. Let me know when you manage to get the money," Qiao Mei said.

Shao Yin panicked. She did not expect to be presented with an actual problem. Qiao Mei said that she could only help with the wedding banquet if Shao Yin could pay for it. Shao Yin wondered if that meant that she did not need to pay for the engagement banquet herself.

Qiao Mei could tell what she was thinking at a glance. This woman really would not give up until she could take advantage of Qiao Mei, so Qiao Mei said resignedly, "I can help you plan something for the engagement banquet the day after tomorrow. I don't know if the invitees will come or not though."

Shao Yin was glad to have settled at least one issue. After thanking Qiao Mei, she quickly left Qiao Mei's house, worried that Qiao Mei would go back on her word if she got into a bad mood. Shao Yin was sure that if she mentioned this issue at the engagement banquet, someone from the Xia family would naturally step forward to foot the bill for the wedding banquet.

Qiao Mei frowned slightly as she sat in the living room, feeling worried. She did not know what Xia Xing saw in Shao Yin. Even if Zhou Hua did not take good care of Xia Xing from when he was young, Xia Xing's life was not that tough either. At most, he just lacked some familial care and concern. Could it be that Shao Yin was able to shower Xia Xing with the care and concern that he lacked? I think you should take a look at

She did not look like that kind of person though. It was already good enough if she did not go around causing trouble for Xia Xing!

If Qiao Mei was the one who informed the other Xia family members about the upcoming event, they would attend the banquet even if they had to reschedule important appointments. She decided to wait for Xia He to come back before doing anything.

Xia He only returned in the evening when it was almost time for dinner. Qiao Mei had thought that Xia He would be spending the night out.

"How is it? Are the two of you as good as new?" Qiao Mei stood at the door curiously and looked around. Deng Fan stood at the entrance of the alley far away and watched Xia He walking back to Qiao Mei's house.

"What's so good about that! I'm back to settle scores with you! You spout so much nonsense earlier in the day and you don't even want to give me anything to eat from Auntie Xu's kitchen. You just want to make me go out with Deng Fan," Xia He pulled Qiao Mei's ear and said in exasperation.

"My good sister~ I did that so that the two of you can go back to being lovey dovey as soon as possible. I put in a lot of effort! You can't misunderstand me like this!" Qiao Mei pouted and said aggrievedly.

"Fine, fine, fine! You've succeeded! We have reconciled," Xia He said as she let go.

"That's great! I just know that Brother-in-law can definitely get it done!" Qiao Mei said proudly.

"You still address him as Brother-in-law? We're not married yet. Don't spout nonsense! It'll be terrible if others hear us!" Xia He said as she looked around warily.

As long as a couple was not married, they were not a real couple in the eyes of other people. Before marriage, a man and a woman could not get too close to each other. Otherwise, if others saw them, they would be criticized for being indecent!

"Alright, alright, come in quickly. I still have something to tell you!" Qiao Mei pulled Xia He into the study and told her in detail about what happened with Shao Yin this afternoon. Xia He was instantly hopping mad.

Chapter 1393 The Host Paying The Bill

"This family is just too shameless! They're too much! What does Xia Xing's wedding have to do with us! Why must we host this event!" Xia He said furiously.

"I have no choice. She came all the way here to look for me. For the sake of our family's reputation, I have no choice but to agree. You also know how much Grandfather and the others dote on me. If I ask them to attend, they will definitely find a way to come to the banquet. I need your help with this matter," Qiao Mei said helplessly.

Within the family, Qiao Mei's words carry a lot more weight than Xia He's. Although Xia He was Xia Jun's favorite granddaughter, Qiao Mei was exceptionally precious to the entire Xia family. Both the Qiao family's grandfather and granddaughter were the Xia family's saviors. Even if Qiao Mei said that she wanted Xia Jun's life today, Xia Jun would give it up without batting an eyelid.

At this point in time, Qiao Mei was the most loved person in the Xia family, at least among the families of the eldest and second sons.

Xia He took her little phone book and went to the convenience store outside to make the phone calls. Of course, she did not just inform them of the event. She even told all of them the story of how Shao Yin

bullied Qiao Mei, embellished with her own details, and also about how Shao Yin made the two babies cry.

Xia Jun was very upset. He directly rejected the invitation to Shao Yin's engagement banquet the day after tomorrow. On one hand, he did not like these people from the Shao family. On the other hand, he had to attend a very important meeting and could not be absent. This meeting could not have been scheduled at a more opportune time.

However, Xia Mao was not so lucky. During this period of time, other than a few phone calls with the military committee and being in charge of some minor arrangements, he did not have any other meetings, so he had to attend the banquet.

As for the second son's family, only Liu Fen would be attending the banquet. She was a full-time housewife, so what kind of urgent matters would she have? She had no choice but to come with Xu Lan to face the Shao family. Even Xia Fang would be attending this banquet. Ever since the two babies were born, she had not come around to visit much. She had been very busy at the hospital and did not have much free time. This time round, she could finally make some time to come and take a look.

Xia Mao asked Xia Wen to go to the guest house early in the morning the next day to send the invite to the Shao family members. Sending Xia Wen there was a show of respect to the Shao family. He was the future head of the Xia family and also the eldest grandson. This was something that he needed to do, being in this position.

The next morning, Shao Zhuang and Bian Duo could not take their eyes off Xia Wen when they saw him. He was thousands of times better-looking than how Shao Yin had described him. One look at his distinguished demeanor and they could tell that he was an exceptionally capable man. This made them even more determined to bring Shao Yin and Xia Wen together.

"You must be Uncle and Auntie Shao. I'm Xia Xing's eldest cousin. My name is Xia Wen. I'm here today to specially invite you to our house to be our guests. I hope you'll do us the honor." Xia Wen spoke formally, making Bian Duo so mesmerized that she almost did not want to let go of Xia Wen's hand!! think you should take a look at

"Of course! Of course! We'll definitely be there!" Shao Zhuang said immediately.

"We'll arrange for a car to pick you up then." Xia Wen left after giving them the details, leaving Shao Yin's parents standing on the spot, still reminiscing about what had just happened.

Bian Duo nudged Shao Zhuang and said, "Do you see that? This is what a young master should look like. Xia Xing is really nothing!"

"He seems good enough for our Shao Yin, but maybe a little too old. Our Shao Yin is only in her early 20s. Since he says he's older than Xia Xing, then he must already be in his 30s," Shao Zhuang said with a frown.

"So what if he's in his 30s? I was only 18 years old when I married you! You were already 28 years old then!" Bian Duo said.

"It's fine! Ask Shao Yin to quickly think of a way to marry Xia Wen. Don't just count on Xia Xing!" Shao Zhuang quickly changed the topic, otherwise he would be the one to suffer later.

Xia Xing's workplace unit had given their staff two days off. Xia Xing was at home when Shao Yin told him the news and he thought that he was just dreaming at first.

"You're saying that Eldest Uncle's family wants to treat us to a meal? And it's at Third Cousin-in-law's house?" Xia Xing asked in disbelief.

In the past, Zhou Luo was not even allowed to go to Qiao Mei's place to take a look. Xia Jun and the eldest son's family treated Qiao Mei like a treasure. In the beginning, Xia Xing did not like Qiao Mei and also did not know how much she had done for the Xia family. He only heard that Qiao Mei was a village woman who had done something to trick Xia Zhe and then married into the Xia family.

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Chapter 1394 She Still Got Her Way

After Xia Xing arrived in the capital, he heard many different versions of the story. He also heard about how Qiao Mei had used the Qiao family's heirloom to save Xia Mao and was a benefactor to the Xia family. Xia Xing's opinion of Qiao Mei changed drastically after that. He felt that if he was from Eldest Uncle's family, he would also want to treat Qiao Mei well.

"Yes! It's set for tomorrow! Qiao Mei told me herself!" Shao Yin said.

"Alright. Don't allow too many people from your family to attend! Just your parents and elder sister should be good enough," Xia Xing reminded her.

Xia Xing still found this whole matter to be very strange. After he came to the capital, he just wanted to work hard and let Xia Jun see his hard work and effort. He did not want to live a muddled life like before.

Zhou Luo had always told him to take good care of Xia Lu and Xia Yan and to think more for the Zhou family. He was not a silly person nor a child who did not know anything. Between the Zhou and Xia families, did he not know who he should be closer to?

When Xia Zhe married Qiao Mei, they did not hold a wedding ceremony. Therefore, Xia Xing also wanted to keep a low profile. In the past, when he was still in that small county city, he only represented himself. However, in the capital, he also represented the Xia family. If he held a flashy wedding banquet, people would definitely gossip about him. However, he did not know that Shao Yin had already told Qiao Mei that they wanted to have a grand wedding.

He did not expect Xia Mao's family to treat him so warmly. This was probably because they valued him as part of the family. He definitely would not let them down!

Shao Yin did not tell Xia Xing the truth. If Xia Xing knew the truth about what had happened during this period of time, who knew what kind of fight he would pick with Shao Yin!

After Xia Wen left the guest house, he went to buy a truckload of vegetables and fruits before heading to Qiao Mei's house. By bringing along these things with him, he was truly Qiao Mei's lifesaver!

"Eldest Brother, you're simply my savior! You don't know how vexed Elder Sister and I are about how to get these things," Qiao Mei said with a sigh.

Her household register was in the countryside, so she did not get any meat and vegetable coupons in the capital. Xia He's coupons were not enough to buy so many things. The two of them were still in the room earlier, counting the total number of coupons they had!

"Don't be so glib-tongued with me. Explain yourself and about why you agree to take on this matter in such a muddle-headed manner. Don't you think you're busy enough?" Xia Wen reprimanded her. Although his words were reproachful, his tone of voice was very gentle. He just felt sorry for Qiao Mei.

"I agree! Eldest Brother, you have to give her a proper lecture! I wasn't at home that day and she was tricked in agreeing to this just like that. By the time I came back, it was already too late!" Xia He said angrily.

"I also... also agreed to let Shao Yin and Xia Xing hold their wedding banquet here," Qiao Mei lowered her head and muttered softly.

"What! Say that again!" Xia He looked at Qiao Mei in disbelief. She could not believe that the person in front of her was the Qiao Mei she knew, the one who would never allow herself to suffer any loss.

"Lower your voice. The children are still sleeping in the room," Xia Wen said reproachfully with a frown.

"I'm doing this for the sake of the Xia family's reputation. Besides, I'm not holding the banquet here. It'll be at the corn courtyard house over there so that it won't affect the children. If I don't agree, she'll go and ask Grandfather. Grandfather is already so old, do you still want him to worry about such things?" Qiao Mei said.

Xia Wen and Xia Mao had been so insistently guarded against those people, but Shao Yin still managed to take advantage of them in the end. Actually, they could not blame Qiao Mei at all. Xia Jun was getting much older and he preferred peace and quiet over hustle and bustle. If Xia Xing's place could not fit so many people, then the event would end up being held at Xia Jun's place. Qiao Mei was only doing this because she cared for Xia Jun.

If it were Xia Wen and Xia He, they would have made the same choice as Qiao Mei. Xia Wen and Xia He were concerned for Qiao Mei, while Qiao Mei was concerned for the Xia family. There was nothing wrong with both sides' perspectives and they really just cared very much for one another.

"We're not blaming you. We just can't bear to see you suffer. Don't let Mother and Aunt know about this for now, otherwise they'll surely kick up a fuss!" Xia Wen said with a sigh.

These two women had long had a bone to pick with the third son's family, especially Xu Lan. The last time Zhou Luo came over, she had offended Xu Lan and Xu Lan was someone who bore grudges. If there was a chance to take revenge, Xu Lan definitely would not let it go to waste.

Chapter 1395 Preparing for the Engagement Banquet

Xu Kang moved all the vegetables down from the truck and sorted them out for use the next day. Some vegetables could not be washed in advance, otherwise they would spoil quickly.

Qiao Mei also called Mao Hang to come over. Mao Hang used to work in the army cookhouse, so he was definitely adept in the kitchen. This way, she had enough help.

Suddenly, there was the sound of the children crying in the room. They were probably feeling a little hungry after waking up. Xia Wen immediately dropped everything and rushed into the room.

"Look at Eldest Brother..." Qiao Mei pointed at Xia Wen and said with a smile.

"It's just a pity that Eldest Brother doesn't have any children of his own. If Eldest Brother didn't marry that person back then, his child would probably be the same age as you now!" Xia He said regretfully.

"Alright, let's not think about those unhappy things. Eldest Brother's good fortune lies ahead! Let's focus on what we need to do tomorrow. Nothing must go wrong," Qiao Mei said.

No matter who was the one throwing the banquet, it was still a Xia family affair at the end of the day. Qiao Mei had to be fully attentive and focused. If anything happened, it would be embarrassing for the Xia family.

Xia Wen seemed to have thought of something. He came out with the milk bottle and looked at Qiao Mei as he said, "Is everything you said just now all you want to tell me? Didn't Shao Yin say anything else?"

"Anything else? I don't think so... Oh right! She even wanted me to pick up the tab for the wedding banquet, but I rejected her straightaway. If she doesn't have money to pay for the wedding banquet, then I won't lend her the venue," Qiao Mei said smugly.

"Not bad, little girl. You're always quick when it comes to money. But you must be careful. My feeling is that the Shao family is after something big given that they are making such a fuss this round," Xia Wen said.

"Yes, I understand. I won't let them take advantage of me," Qiao Mei said as she nodded earnestly.

"You still say that you won't be taken advantage of. Shao Yin has already made you pay for two meals," Xia He said as she rolled her eyes.

Qiao Mei laughed and went to tickle Xia He. The two of them ran around in the courtyard and had a lot of fun.

The day of the engagement banquet arrived quickly. Qiao Mei started to make preparations early in the morning. Feng Hua brought the two children over to Li Gui's house so that the commotion in the main house would not frighten them.

"Third Cousin-in-law! Second Cousin! I'm here to help!" Xia Xing stood at the door and said excitedly.

"Why are you here so early? I don't see Shao Yin," Xia He asked curiously.

"I'm just thinking that since there will be many people coming today, Third Cousin-in-law must be very busy here. So I'm here to help," Xia Xing said.

Qiao Mei and Xia He looked at each other with a tacit understanding. Qiao Mei looked around but there was nothing else that needed Xia Xing's help. They were already using gas in this house, so there was no need to have someone chop wood for fire. In the end, Qiao Mei's gaze landed on the pile of crockery and cutlery.

"Xiao Xing, can you help me wash the dishes? Those crockery were last used during the new year and there's still a layer of dust on them!" Qiao Mei said.

"No problem! Leave it to me!" After saying that, Xia Xing started to get busy. He looked very serious and did not seem to be just fooling around.

In this house, they washed the dishes with warm water. Qiao Mei had installed a large water heater in the house so that she was prepared for days like this.

"It's such a pity about Xia Xing. I originally thought that he's just an immature child, but I never expected that he's forced to do all this by the Zhou family..." Xia He muttered softly.

"How can any kid in our family be too lousy? It's all because of that Zhou family. I don't even know if Third Uncle will come by tomorrow! Third Uncle hasn't given me any reply," Qiao Mei said worriedly.

"It's Xia Xing's wedding, so how can it be appropriate if Third Uncle doesn't come? It can't be that he's not coming," Xia He said with a frown. Now that Xia Guang and Zhou Hua were divorced, if Xia Guang did not turn up, then who else could take his place? If that was the case, Xia Xing would definitely feel sad.

Recently, Xia Guang had missed out on many training sessions at work due to all the issues with the Shao family. He could not take any more days off. His work was still the most important thing to him. Besides, he had already met all of them at the police post back then and he felt that there was no need to meet them again. Anyway, he would see them again at the wedding banquet.

In that case, the person attending as Xia Xing's elder would be Zhou Luo. She would definitely be sarcastic and pick on Qiao Mei. Who knew what kind of trouble she could cause!

Not long after, Mao Hang arrived at Qiao Mei's house on time. Even though Qiao Mei did not tell Chi Ze and the rest, they came with Mao Hang out of their own accord.

Chapter 1396 Behind the Glamor

"Brother Chi! Sisters-in-law! Why are all of you here?" Qiao Mei said as she looked at them in surprise.

"We hear that you're very busy today, so we're all here to help out! Anyway, we have nothing to do at home. We just can't stay idle! If there's anything you need us to do, just tell us. We can do anything!" Wang Fang said with a smile.

With so many additional pairs of hands, Qiao Mei was able to cook a lot faster. The entire courtyard was filled with people chatting and laughing. For a moment, Qiao Mei felt like she had returned to Foshan Village!

In the past, there was also always a courtyard full of people chatting with her and everyone was very nice to her. She wondered how Auntie Dong and the others were doing now. With the seeds business, their lives must be very comfortable. Once her children were older, she wanted to go back and visit the villagers. It was time to give them a new batch of seeds.

Everyone dressed up nicely for the occasion today and put on their most beautiful clothes. Xu Lan wore a dress which Qiao Mei had made for her, but she kept a lower profile this round. She did not choose to wear the red dress with the phoenix embroidered with golden thread, but the royal blue dress with lilies embroidered at the bottom.

"Where's Qiao Mei? Why don't I see Qiao Mei?" Xu Lan asked as she looked around.

When Qiao Mei heard that, she immediately stuck her head out of the kitchen and yelled out happily, "Mother! I'm here! I'll chat with you later. I don't have much time now."

Xu Lan's face fell immediately. Everyone else looked glamorous and beautiful, but Qiao Mei was the only one with disheveled hair and still wearing a greasy apron. There was even some coal dust on her face!

When Xia He saw that something was not right, she quickly brought Xu Lan and Liu Fen to her room. As soon as the women entered, Xu Lan pointed angrily towards the door and shouted, "How can the third son's family bully us like this! They actually ask Qiao Mei to cook! How shameless of them! It's one thing for them to eye our house, but now they even make use of Qiao Mei like this!"

Even Liu Fen, who usually maintained a neutral stance, had an unhappy expression on her face. Liu Fen always kept in mind the kindness Qiao Mei showed to her and her children. Even a block of ice would be moved by Qiao Mei's sincerity.

"They are really too much. We have to tell Father about this matter. What is Third Brother so busy with every day? If he can't take care of so many children, then I can adopt them! They'll still be the Xia family's grandchildren! It's better than them being ordered around like livestock by those people from the Zhou family!" Liu Fen said.

"Alright, alright, don't be angry." Xia He tried to calm them down, but how would these two women listen to her?

"Don't you and Xia Wen help Qiao Mei at all? Go and get Xia Wen here! Is it because I haven't kept my eyes on you two for too long and you've all forgotten how siblings should get along!" Xu Lan questioned.

"Eldest Brother is at the door, getting ready to welcome the guests... Mother, if you're angry, then scold me. It's all my fault. When Shao Yin came that day, I wasn't at home. If I was at home, I wouldn't have let Qiao Mei agree to all these," Xia He said self-reproachfully.

Xu Lan sighed. She was happy that Qiao Mei was a capable person. When everyone knew that Xia Zhe married such a capable wife, many people told Xu Lan that she was very lucky and that they were envious of her. However, she would rather Qiao Mei be more of an ordinary person.

The Qiao Mei now was like Xia Mao in his glory days. At that time, many people told Xu Lan that she had married into a good family, that her husband was so capable and her sons were all doing so well. She was the only one who knew how heart-wrenching it was behind all the glamor.

"Go out and give Qiao Mei some support and help out your eldest brother. Your Second Aunt-in-law and I will sit here for a while," Xu Lan said resignedly.

Before Xia He left, she even brought them some pastries and tea. She was worried that Xu Lan and Liu Fang would get agitated and rush out to argue with the Shao family, which would in turn damage the Xia family's reputation. However, she did not think that Xu Lan would be so irrational.

Not long after, Xia Fang arrived at Qiao Mei's house with a gift in her hands. As soon as she entered, she felt that the atmosphere was a little strange. It did not feel like a joyous occasion, but more like a funeral.

Xia Fang put down the gift and went to look for Xu Lan and Liu Fen. Before she entered the room, she thought she heard Xu Lan and Liu Fen arguing fiercely. Xia Fang quickly pushed open the door and said, "Sisters-in-law, why are the two of you arguing on such a happy occasion?"

"We're not arguing..." Xu Lan said after being stunned for a moment.

"Huh? But I heard you talking very loudly from the outside. Aren't you arguing?" Xia Fang asked.

Chapter 1397 Cause Trouble

"You have come at the right time! Quickly talk some sense into Eldest Sister-in-law. She's about to die of anger because of those people from the Shao family," Liu Fen said with a sigh.

Xu Lan told Xia Fang about everything that happened, not missing out on any detail. In the end, Xia Fang was even more worked up than Xu Lan. She looked around, picked up the shoe horn by the door and wanted to go out and pick a fight with the Shao family.

"Hey! What are you doing! What nonsense is this!" Liu Fen said as she quickly used her body to block the door.

"I think they're tired of living! It's good that the Shao family is here today! I'll deal with them one by one! I'll make sure they dare not bully Qiao Mei again! I'll get them to get lost and go back to that small county city! Are they bullying the Xia family because they think we're weak!" Xia Fang said angrily.

"Alright, alright! After all, we're still at Qiao Mei's house today. Even if we're angry, we have to endure it. If we provoke them, I don't know how badly these people can gossip about us," Liu Fang said helplessly.

"What's the big deal about reputation! Is it more important than the children's happiness? We can't even bear to ask Qiao Mei to do such things for us. How dare the Shao family ask for this! These are things that Qiao Mei's mother-in-law and father-in-law don't even ask for!" Xia Fang opened the window and shouted towards the outside, as if the Shao family could hear her if she did that.

Fortunately, the Shao family members had not arrived yet. Otherwise, the two families would definitely get into a fight.

Xia Wen looked towards the back part of the house and said, "Why don't you go and take a look? Don't let anything happen."

"You should be glad that Eldest Aunt is busy today and doesn't have time to attend the banquet. Aunt is already so angry after hearing about the Shao family. Don't you think Eldest Aunt will just bring her team and rush to confront the Shao family straightaway?" As Xia He thought about such a scene, she felt that it would be quite exciting.

Xia Wen flicked Xia He's head forcefully and said, "Wake up! Do you feel that there's not enough trouble? Let's observe the Shao family's attitude later. It's true that our Xia family can't keep getting bullied."

Yesterday afternoon, he had already made arrangements for two cars to pick up the Shao family members. He did not expect to see a familiar car following behind the two cars. The driver of that car was Zou Ming.

Xia Wen frowned slightly. The Shao family really did not seem to know their place at all.

"Oh my~ So this is Xia Xing's house! It's really imposing! Shao Yin, why didn't you let us stay here directly? Such a big house is definitely big enough for all our relatives to stay in!" Bian Duo said proudly.

"This is my third brother's house and has nothing to do with your family. Our family members are already here and we're just waiting for all of you. Come on in," Xia He said with a forced smile. I think you should take a look at

Zhou Luo followed behind this group of people and said disdainfully, "It's all because the eldest son's family occupied Xia Xing's house. You still have the cheek to say that this house belongs to your third brother. What a joke!"

Xia He wanted to go forward and teach Zhou Luo a lesson, but Xia Wen quickly pulled Xia He behind him and said, "We must respect Grandmother's wishes when it comes to the ownership of this house. My younger brother was the only one who waited on her before she died. It's hard on Auntie Zhou to have to know so much about our family matters. Let's go in, otherwise the food will get cold."

Zhou Luo was so angry that her face flushed red. Xia Wen was effectively saying that she was a nosy parker. She stepped into the courtyard on her high heels and almost sprained her ankle. The people who got out of the last car were also from the Shao family.

Shao Yin had originally said that there would only be four people, but nearly 10 people had turned up in such a grandiose manner. As expected, Shao Yin could not be trusted. Fortunately, Qiao Mei was already prepared for it.

"Why are you free today? Come in and have a drink," Xia Wen said to Zou Ming.

"These people kicked up a fuss and came to the police station to ask to borrow a car. They said that they are the Xia family's relatives and that the police need to show them respect. They were causing too much trouble, so I use my own car to send them here. It's fortunate that they came and caused trouble at the station where I'm at. There's no need for a drink today, but you can treat me to a meal next time," Zou Ming said with a smile.

"Thank you," Xia Wen said as he patted Zou Ming's shoulder.

"There's no need to be so polite. We're brothers. I won't stay and chat anymore. I still have something on at the police station, so I'll get going first." Zou Ming left the alley without looking back. Xia Wen had a solemn expression on his face. He really did not expect the Shao family to go so overboard.

It looked like it was not a coincidence that the Shao family ended up at the police post in the train station on the first day they came to the capital.

Xia He was so angry that she kicked the pillar at the door, as if she did not feel any pain at all.

"I'm so upset! Why must Xia Xing insist on marrying the Shao family's daughter? Can't he find a girl from another family? There are so many nice girls in the world! Why must he waste his life on such a person!" Xia He said in a low voice.

"If you're done venting, then let's go in. There's no better punching bag than the pillar." Xia Wen looked at Xia He and gave her a meaningful smile.

Chapter 1398 What Are You Looking For

Bian Duo hurriedly pulled Shao Yin to one side and asked, "Didn't you say that the house we're using today is yours? Why did they say that it's their brother's house? Are they already bullying you? Everyone in our family is here now and we can definitely seek justice for you!"

"It... it belongs to someone else. My house is still under repair! It'll probably take a long time. You'll know how big it is when you go in and take a look," Shao Yin whispered.

Shao Zhuang walked at the front arrogantly, strutting like a peacock with its tail feathers up, just short of doing a dance for everyone to liven things up.

"Look at this big courtyard! My daughter will also have such a big courtyard in the future!" Shao Zhuang waved his hand and said in a rude manner.

Xia Wen and Xia He walked at the back and held back their laughter. With Xia Xing's current ability, he probably would not be able to have a house of his own in the capital within the next five years. Even if he did, he would at most be able to live in an old low-rise apartment building, the kind where one shared the compound with many neighbors.

"Elder Brother! I've never seen such a big courtyard before! Your Shao Yin is really capable!" Shao Tu said enviously.

Shao Xian also felt a little shocked to see all this. Although he had worked in different places for a few years and had amassed all kinds of experiences, he had never seen, or even imagined, the kind of grandeur that existed in the capital.

"Of course!" Shao Zhuang said proudly.

Xia Fang and the other women could vaguely hear the commotion caused by the Shao family. Liu Fen hurriedly grabbed Xu Lan and Xia Fang by the hands and said, "You must be calm! Don't let your emotions get the better of you!"

"That depends on whether they're easy to get along with. If they have a sense of propriety, then we also won't take the initiative to cause trouble. If they speak without thinking, then don't blame me for giving them a hard time!" Xia Fang said with a sneer.

Xia Fang was the youngest child in the family. Xia Jun and Wu Min doted on her in particular. She also had three older brothers and an older sister who took care of her since she was young. It could be said that Xia Fang grew up being showered with all the love of the Xia family. After she got married, Xiang Jin also gave in to her with regard to everything. As long as it was something which Xia Fang liked, Xiang Jin would do his best to help her get it.

She had never been afraid of anyone. With her powerful maternal family and the backing of her husband's family which doted on her, she was not scared of having a showdown with anyone. Even Xia Guang had to show her some respect! She was Xia Guang's only younger sister. I think you should take a look at

"Youngest Sister-in-law is right. We're no pushovers!" Xu Lan said firmly.

Seeing that the two of them had already made up their minds and could not be persuaded no matter what, Liu Fen simply let them be.

Zhou Luo carefully sized up the entire house. She pushed open the doors of every room and went inside to take a look. She walked around like she was in her own house and did not behave politely at all.

She had only been to this house once and that was when Zhou Hua and Xia Guang got married. At that time, the house was still quite shabby and the furnishings in the house were all scruffy. In Zhou Luo's eyes, the vintage stuff left behind by the ancestors were just trash and it was always better to have modern furniture.

"Auntie Zhou, what are you looking for? If you can't find it, you can tell me! I'm most familiar with this place! I'll definitely be able to help you find it!" Xia He stood behind Zhou Luo and said loudly, so that everyone turned to look at Zhou Luo.

"I... I'm looking for the toilet!" Zhou Luo said guiltily.

Xia Fang and the other women happened to be in the room right next door to them. When they heard the voices, they quickly came out to take a look. Xia Fang leaned against the door and said with a smile, "Isn't this the elder sister of the Zhou family? I hope you've been well. I certainly don't expect to see you here today. Oh? Haven't you been here before? Why can't you even remember where the toilet is?"

Most of the Xia family members were still upset over the fact that Zhou Luo had brought up Xia Lu and Xia Yan. However, at that time, most of them could barely support themselves and had no way of bringing Xia Lu and Xia Yan back. At that time, Xia Fang wanted to fight the Zhou family to the end. With her salary, she could definitely support two more children.

Unexpectedly, Zhou Luo did not allow these two children to meet anyone at all. Xia Jun had to advise Xia Fang to drop the idea before she was willing to give up. For many years after that, the two women were not on good terms. The rest of the Xia family members would still give in to Zhou Luo, but Xia Fang only wished she could rip out Zhou Luo's tendons and bones.

To explore the reason why Zhou Luo got so close to the Xia family, one had to start when Xia Guang wanted to marry Zhou Hua. At that time, the Zhou family was doing very well, very much better than the Xia family. After all, they had been tomb raiders for generations. They were always able to sell their stolen goods on the black market and they lived their lives much more comfortably than most people.

Chapter 1399 Dishonest

Due to their background, the Zhou family needed to be related to a family with connections in the political and military world, so they targeted the Xia family. The Zhou family made Zhou Luo and Zhou Hua hang around the Xia family residence often. By chance, Zhou Hua met Xia Guang at the roller rink and the two of them quickly fell in love and decided to get married.

Zhou Luo felt very resentful about this. She felt that she was more deserving to be the Xia family's daughter-in-law. How could Zhou Hua be the one instead? This was especially since she felt that Zhou Hua was inferior to her in every way.

At some point, Zhou Luo probably had a part to play in the eventual breakdown of the marital relationship between Xia Guang and Zhou Hua. Given that Zhou Luo now had two grandsons of the Xia family in her hands, she was just waiting to get her share of the Xia family's assets!

"Hasn't this place been renovated? I'm just worried that the position of the toilet might have changed," Zhou Luo explained.

"There are so many people at home to help you. Xiao He, please bring Sister Zhou to the toilet. Don't let her enter the wrong room. She might not be able to explain herself if something goes missing," Xia Fang said.

Zhou Luo glared at Xia Fang and walked to the toilet with Xia He. Xia Fang looked at Zhou Luo's departing figure and muttered softly, "Who does she think she is! What a dishonest beastly thing. Later, let's remind Qiao Mei to lock up all the valuable things in the house. Don't give her a chance to steal anything! Every time she comes to our house, there will always be something missing after that!"

During the Spring Festival, Zhou Luo had stolen a pair of earrings from Xu Lan's place. No one knew when and how she managed to enter Xu Lan's room. One must say that her inherited skills were quite impressive. It was just a pair of earrings, so it was not a big deal and Xu Lan did not make any fuss about it.

"Qiao Mei is a smart girl. She must have put away her jewelry and other things long ago, but... this one is a professional. Even if all the things are all hidden away, she can still find them," Xu Lan said with a frown.

"Look at every room in Qiao Mei's house. There are valuable items everywhere. Even if she just takes one random item and sells it, she can make enough money for the Zhou family to spend for a few years," Liu Fen said as she pointed at the rooms outside.

In the past, the old folks used to say that it was better to let the thief steal once than to let the thief have designs on you. So long as the thief kept thinking about something, he would steal everything sooner or later.

Xu Lan summoned all the guards who were nearby and asked them to keep an eye on Qiao Mei's study and bedroom. If they saw anyone entering the rooms, they must inform the Xia family members immediately.

Qiao Mei finally finished cooking the last dish. There were a total of three big tables with 18 dishes on each table. Every table held the same dishes. The banquet this time round was much more luxurious than the one during the Spring Festival.

Among these dishes, only the fish was a seafood item from the Xia family's special supply. The rest were all bought by Xia Wen from the market and were not very extravagant items. They were not inclined to serve the Shao family members any rare fruits and vegetables. I think you should take a look at

"Look! These dishes are so exquisite!" Bian Duo said in shock.

The Shao family members sat around the tables and sang praises of Qiao Mei for a long time. Everyone said all kinds of wondrous statements. No wonder Shao Yin was so eloquent. It turned out that it was an inherited skill.

The tables were set out in such a way that there was one for the menfolk, one for the womenfolk, and one for the people who came to help out. All the Shao family members looked very gleeful and only Shao Yin did not look too happy. She was a guest at the Xia family residence during the Spring Festival and already knew that Qiao Mei knew how to make all kinds of delicacies.

At that time, she had never seen all those different kinds of food in her life, especially that plate of prawns. It was the first time she had eaten prawns in her life! The dishes today were far inferior to the ones served during the Spring Festival! Qiao Mei clearly did not care enough about the Shao family!

Shao Yin did not know that those foodstuffs were available only because the Xia family had a special supply of vegetables and seafood. She thought that everything could be bought with money. Since Qiao Mei did not make the prawn dish today, it only meant that Qiao Mei was unwilling to buy it for them!

"Shao Yin, what's wrong? Why do you look so unhappy?" Shao Chun asked.

"It's nothing," Shao Yin said coldly.

Xia Fang sized up Shao Yin carefully for a long time before saying, "Are you Xia Xing's girlfriend? I didn't have time to make it home during the last Spring Festival. I'm Xia Xing's aunt."

"Hello, Aunt. I'm Xia Xing's wife. My name is Shao Yin." Shao Yin stood up politely to greet Xia Fang and even emphasized the word "wife".

All the women from the Xia family lowered their heads and held back their laughter. Shao Yin had yet to register her marriage with Xia Xing but she was already so keen to be part of the Xia family. No one knew what she was up to. By now, everyone knew that Xia Xing and Shao Yin did not have any emotional attachment and were matchmade by their parents.

If the Xia family did not allow Shao Yin to marry into their family, there was nothing that the Shao family could say. At most, they could only grumble that the Xia family had gone back on their word.

Chapter 1400 Light Drinker

Then again, the Xia family and the Shao family did not owe each other anything and their ancestors also never had any interactions. The Zhou family should be considered the one who had betrayed the Shao family!

"Sit down. There's no need to be so restrained," Xia Fang said with a smile.

"These dishes look so good that I can't bear to eat them!" Bian Duo looked at Qiao Mei and praised her.

Shao Yin immediately said, "I think Third Cousin-in-law had made nicer dishes at the Xia family residence during the Spring Festival. We even had prawns and abalones that day."

Hearing this, the expressions of everyone in the Xia family darkened. Only Qiao Mei was still smiling away and did not look angry at all.

Prawns! Abalones! The Shao family had never even heard of such things before. Bian Duo looked at the 18 dishes in front of her. Although there was a lot of meat, who had never eaten meat before? They all knew what meat tasted like, but they had never tasted seafood before!

"Third Cousin-in-law, why didn't you show off your skills today?" Shao Yin said meaningfully.

"You don't like the dishes I made? Then we can remove them." Qiao Mei turned to the table behind her and said, "Auntie Xu! Please go to the state-owned restaurant at the entrance of the alley and ask them to send over a few dishes. Do it quickly. Let's not starve Shao Yin and her mother."

"No need, no need! These dishes are already good enough! There's no need to go and buy more!" Bian Duo said immediately.

"How can I allow that? We must be hospitable today. Don't stand on ceremony with us. The food will arrive in a while," Qiao Mei said nonchalantly, as if she was just trying her best to be a good host.

The Shao family members really thought that the Xia family respected them a lot! They were all overjoyed and Qiao Mei immediately arranged for Chi Ze and Mao Hang to bring out another big table so that the women from the Shao family and Zhou Luo could sit there separately.

"Oh my, we've made you spend so much money," Bian Duo said hypocritically. I think you should take a look at

"It's fine! Xia Xing is a member of the Xia family. Getting married is a big thing, so of course we can't be careless about it! Just wait patiently. The people from the restaurant will send the food over soon," Qiao Mei said.

Xu Kang had worked for Qiao Mei for so long and she was also Xu Lan's relative. She had long felt annoyed with the Shao family's attitude. The two women had been employer and employee for so long that they could read each other's mind. Xu Kang ordered a table full of vegetarian dishes without any meat at all. There were still 18 dishes served, but in the end, the dishes were not as nice as what Qiao Mei made!

Xia Mao rushed over immediately after dealing with the outstanding matters in the army. The Shao family was sensible enough not to pursue the matter of Xia Mao being late, but Zhou Luo did not intend to let Xia Mao off easily.

"Eldest Brother Xia, you're here early! You only arrive when we are almost done eating," Zhou Luo mocked sarcastically.

"I wonder who's talking, so it's you. Why are you here today?" Xia Mao asked as he looked at Zhou Luo with a sincere expression on his face. Xia Wen and Xia He turned away and snickered. Xia Mao was very adept at mocking people. This simple sentence from him made Zhou Luo blush and she could not even refute it.

Zhou Luo was neither the daughter-in-law of the Xia family nor the daughter-in-law of the Shao family. Xia Xing had been brought up by Xia Guang and Zhou Hua. The event today could be said to have nothing to do with her. The Shao family did not invite her here either. She was the one who invited herself and insisted on tagging along.

Qiao Mei originally thought that Zhou Luo would behave as unreasonably as the last time they met, but she was very well-behaved today. Qiao Mei even thought that it was another person who had come today!

Xia Fang took the opportunity to stand up and raise her glass as she said, "Since everyone is here, let's have a toast together! Let's celebrate this day! Let's celebrate the upcoming marriage between Xia Xing and Shao Yin!"

Everyone drank a toast together. The Xia family had long heard that everyone in the Shao family was a very good drinker, be it the men or the women. Shao Yin took advantage of the chaotic moment during the toast to move to the table where the Xia family's womenfolk were seated. She did not want to eat those dishes full of only vegetables!

Not long after, Xia Fang and the rest all became a little tipsy and Xu Lan's vision became a little blurry. Qiao Mei had been drinking with Qiao Qiang since she was young, so she had built up a capacity for alcohol. However, she told everyone that she was still breastfeeding and that it would not be good for the children if she drank, so she managed to avoid the whole shenanigan. Xia He had encountered many such drinking sessions when she used to go around to perform, so her capacity for alcohol was also slightly better than the rest.

If even the women had already drunk so much, then let alone the men. Shao Tu and his son kept toasting Xia Xing. Soon, Xia Xing was so drunk that he fell asleep with his head on the table.