

Fat Wife 161

Chapter 161: The Search

Qiao Zhuang's eldest daughter-in-law, Liu Ying, and third daughter-in-law, Jiang Ye, hurriedly ran to the road and started asking around for Qiao Yu's whereabouts. If they could not find Qiao Yu, the two of them would have a hard time when they returned home.

"Sister-in-law, do you think Qiao Yu really stole something from someone else and hid it away?" Jiang Ye asked.

"I can't say for sure. In any case, if she didn't do it, why would people talk so much about it? They make it sound like it's real," Liu Ying said after thinking for a long time.

The two of them made their way to the entrance of the village as they could not find Qiao Yu even after searching the entire village. Both women were so tired that they sat under the tree to rest. They still had to continue the search later and if they did not succeed, they would have to go from house to house to ask.

"Sister-in-law, if we still can't find her, we'll get a beating when we get back. What can we do?" Jiang Ye asked anxiously.

Liu Ying was anxious as well. Although she did not hate her third sister-in-law, she was a little annoyed by Jiang Ye's simple-mindedness. Although her second sister-in-law, Wang Qin, was conniving and always scheming against the rest of the family members, Wang Qin was a smart person and easy to talk to. On the other hand, although Jiang Ye was honest, she was so honest that she had become like a fool.

"Stop being so noisy! Aren't we looking for her! Even if we really can't find her, Father won't blame us. If she has already run away, who can find her?" Liu Ying frowned and glared at Jiang Ye.

Jiang Ye stopped talking and looked around silently, afraid that she would say something that would anger Liu Ying.

"Sister-in-law, do you think Qiao Yu is already at home? Or perhaps she's at someone else's house." Jiang Ye said.

“She? She wouldn’t dare to go home, but like you said, it’s not impossible for her to go to someone else’s house. That kid next door has liked Qiao Yu for a long time. Don’t tell me she is hiding at his house,” Liu Ying said as she looked at Jiang Ye in shock.

The two of them immediately went to look for Qiao Yu. If she was really at the house of the kid next door, things would get out of hand. It would not sound right if an unmarried girl went to the house of an unmarried man to eat and drink for free. If word got out, all the women in their family would be mocked and ridiculed. This matter must be handled properly.

The fact was that Qiao Yu did not go to anyone’s house, but she did not stay idle either. While going to work, she secretly slipped away and went to Qiao Mei’s house to wait for Qiao Mei to head out so that she could cause some sort of accident and make Qiao Mei fall or get injured. She thought it best if she could put some scratches on Qiao Mei’s face.

Qiao Yu waited there leisurely the entire day but did not manage to do anything and could only go home to find something to eat. Before she could enter the house, she saw her eldest and third sisters-in-law running out in a panic and heard her father cursing in the house. She got so frightened that she turned around and ran away, not daring to go home at all.

.....

Liu Ying and Jiang Ye searched the entire village but could not find Qiao Yu, and they could only go home nervously. As soon as they entered the house, Qiao Zhuang looked at the two of them.

“Where is she?” Qiao Zhuang said.

“She... Father... We didn’t... didn’t find her...” Jiang Ye stammered as she stood at the door.

Liu Ying hid behind Jiang Ye and did not dare to make a sound, afraid that she would be implicated if she moved.

Sure enough, just as Jiang Ye had said, Qiao Zhuang picked up the big tea pot beside him and threw it at them.

“What’s the point of coming back if you can’t find her! What’s the use of having you around! Useless things! You have mouths to eat but all the food is wasted on you!” Qiao Zhuang pointed at the door and berated them.

“Ah!”

“Ah!”

The two of them cowered at the door in fear. They would be faulted if they went out, but if they did not go out, they would get beaten up. It was a dilemma for them. At this moment, the eldest son, Qiao Fu, and the third son, Qiao Wang, did not dare to save their wives. Anything they did at this time would make Qiao Zhuang unhappy. It was quiet in the house and no one dared to do anything as any little noise would attract Qiao Zhuang’s attention.

Qiao Yu waited in the mountains behind her house and only returned home quietly in the middle of the night. She pushed the door open a little and saw that there was no light in the house, so she thought that everyone was asleep.

“Sigh... Fortunately, they’re all asleep...” Qiao Yu was about to close the door softly and return to the west room when the house was suddenly brightly lit with the entire family sitting near the fireplace.

Qiao Yu nervously turned around and stared at the group of people near the fireplace. She was really like a lamb entering a tiger’s den and could neither run nor walk away. She could only watch helplessly as Qiao Zhuang walked up to her with a big stick.

Chapter 162: Lamb Entering a Tiger’s Den

“Well? You still know that this is your house?” Qiao Zhuang stood in front of Qiao Yu with a big stick.

Qiao Yu kept retreating until she hit the door and there was nowhere to go. She watched helplessly as her fourth brother, Qiao Liang, and fifth brother, Qiao Gang, walked towards her and pressed her down to bend over the bench. Qiao Zhuang raised his hand and brought the stick down.

“Ah! I was wrong, Father!” Qiao Yu screamed.

The other women in the family could not bear to see Qiao Yu get beaten up and they all turned around and closed their eyes.

“How dare you go out and say that I didn’t give you food!” Qiao Zhuang hit her again.

“Ah! I didn’t say that! Father, I really didn’t say that!” Qiao Yu sobbed and struggled.

Qiao Zhuang did not listen to Qiao Yu’s explanation. After a few strikes, Qiao Yu wailed and struggled in pain. It was already past midnight and the village was quiet. Occasionally, there would be miserable yells, but the sounds eventually stopped later.

The next day, everyone was discussing which family had carried out a beating, resulting in such miserable screams in the middle of the night. The person must have been beaten half to death.

These words quickly reached Qiao Mei’s ears. It had crossed Qiao Mei’s mind that Qiao Yu would get a beating, but she did not expect Qiao Zhuang to be so angry that he actually beat her up so badly. He really did not treat Qiao Yu like his own child. From what she heard, Qiao Yu would not be able to get up for at least a month or two. Qiao Mei did not feel any pity at all and only felt that Qiao Yu deserved it.

Qiao Mei was setting off for Gushan in three days’ time. There was still one last step to the cultivation of the wild ginseng, so she had to complete it quickly. It was an important thing to save people and it was best if there were no injuries. However, it was better to be safe than sorry so she still had to be prepared.

Qiao Mei returned to the cave again. The two remaining wild ginsengs from last time had grown quite well and looked good. Through the transmission of energy, Qiao Mei could feel that the two wild ginsengs were very happy to see her. She could already communicate with the plants and they could develop feelings for one another.

...

Qiao Mei carried on with the energy exchange. This time, she continued with the results from the last time and did another 500 rounds, making it a total of 1,500 rounds. In the end, the two ginsengs could

not make it and wilted. Qiao Mei planted the small wild ginsengs she had brought into the ground which still contained the roots of all the wild ginsengs that had gone through the 1,000 rounds previously. After the flowers bloomed and withered for 1,400 rounds, there were still three wild ginsengs left.

Qiao Mei showed an excited expression and counted the three wild ginsengs one by one. She told them, "The three of you should try to make a good showing, work harder and see who can last until the end."

The few wild ginsengs seemed to understand Qiao Mei's words and rushed to grow up to compete with their own wild ginseng brothers.

Qiao Mei did another 30 rounds of energy exchange. One of the wild ginsengs could not make it and disintegrated into ashes to provide nutrients for the other two wild ginsengs.

Continue -reading on MYBO XN0 VEL. COM

"You two can do it!" Qiao Mei said and did 70 more rounds of exchange.

In the end, only one wild ginseng survived. Qiao Mei looked at the last wild ginseng happily and felt a sense of relief. She took a few ginseng roots and wrapped them in a red cloth. As for this ginseng king, Qiao Mei did not want to wrap it up. It would be too much of a shock if someone found out that there was a 1,500-year-old wild ginseng.

Ever since Qiao Mei began to grow wild ginseng by doing energy exchange, there was always a faint medicinal fragrance on her body. It was not obvious at first, but as she increased the number of times she exchanged energy with wild ginseng every day, the smell on Qiao Mei's body became purer and more obvious. By now, there was basically no smell anymore. The smell was only obvious when she was close by and the fragrance was a very restrained one.

Not only that, but Qiao Mei also realized that she seemed to have obtained the characteristics of wild ginseng and became good at hiding.

People who had picked wild ginseng before would know that they could not be in a hurry to dig it up after discovering it. They had to tie a red string around it first, or else the wild ginseng would escape. If

they did not tie a red string around it, it would be very difficult for the picker to discover it. The ginseng would diminish its presence so that no one around it could sense its existence.

These were not the only effects of the wild ginseng. Not only did Qiao Mei emit a strange fragrance and her sense of presence decreased, she also recently discovered that her body felt much better. Initially, she had a sore waist during her pregnancy, but now, her body felt good and she did not feel any discomfort at all.

Chapter 163: Vines

Recently, after dinner, Qiao Mei would go to Auntie Dong's house for a chat or follow Auntie Wang to the area under the tree at the village entrance to chat with the other women. After many experiments, she realized that she could indeed hide her sense of presence.

When she ran into Auntie Zhou on the way, Auntie Zhou seemed not to see her and she had to shout twice to get attention. She tested it a few times before confirming that it was effective and felt relieved.

Qiao Mei was playing with a watermelon seed in her courtyard when she suddenly realized that a sharp point had sprouted from the watermelon seed. Qiao Mei looked at the seed in her hand in surprise. She only knew that she could speed up the growth of seeds in the soil, but she did not expect that she was able to directly cause the seed to germinate and grow.

Qiao Mei went to the mountain behind her house and found some vine seeds. After some energy exchange, the vine seeds sprouted in Qiao Mei's hands and grew larger. She could shape them and wave them around at will.

"It's so magical!" Qiao Mei exclaimed.

The small vines could be made into all kinds of shapes in Qiao Mei's hands, but she was not so proficient in it and it all felt very unfamiliar. She tried again and again, learning to communicate with the seeds and accurately controlling how much energy to be given. Then, Qiao Mei could turn the vine into a thick whip which freely followed her commands.

Qiao Mei was amazed by the ability of the pendant, but she also began to think about how many other functions there were that she did not know about. After repeated experiments, she realized that the

vine whip could only be used once. After one use, she would have to use a new seed. This was probably the only drawback.

“I’m a person with magic now, hahaha.” Qiao Mei laughed and looked at the vine in her hand.

When Qiao Mei got home, she started experimenting with shaping the growth of the vines. After all, a small vine was useless and she needed many more vines.

During her free time, Qiao Mei would stay at home and sew clothes. She had not finished making the clothes and school bags that she promised the children the last time. In one day, Qiao Mei made four simple school bags. To put it bluntly, she just sewed up the opening of a cloth bag and attached a long rope and called it a school bag.

She sewed the children’s names on each of the bags. “Wei, Chao, Qin, Miao”, the words looked quite presentable. She did not buy a lot of fabric, so she made a dark blue top for each of the children. She then embroidered flowers on the girls’ clothes, and images of big trees on the boys’ clothes.

After Qiao Mei was done, she brought the things to Li Gui’s house. Given that she currently had the ability to hide her breath, Qiao Mei was afraid of scaring Li Gui and started shouting out from afar.

“Mom! Are you home!” Qiao Mei yelled.

.....

“Aye! Mei Mei! What happened?” Li Gui ran out to welcome Qiao Mei.

“Are the children at home?” Qiao Mei looked at the empty courtyard. It did not seem like they were at home. If they were, Zhang Miao would have rushed out upon hearing Qiao Mei’s voice and called out to her elder sister with her baby voice.

“Oh them. They went to the village entrance to play with the other children. Looking at the time, they should be back soon,” Li Gui said as she looked at the sun.

In the past, people could not afford clocks and watches. They would go out at sunrise and return to rest at sunset, they ate and slept in accordance with the colors of the sky.

“Then I’ll wait for a while. I brought them gifts,” Qiao Mei said with a smile.

“They’re still so young and yet they have gifts. You’re spoiling them too much,” Li Gui said.

“It’s fine. The children are obedient anyway.” Qiao Mei crossed her legs and lay on the recliner to bask in the sun.

Qiao Mei had asked Uncle Chen from the village, who knew how to do carpentry work, to make the recliner. It was very leisurely to sit in it and rocked away. She had two recliners made, one was at her house and she left the other one with Li Gui so that they could use it if they wanted to lie in the sun.

Not long after, the sound of children playing around traveled into the courtyard. As soon as they entered the house, they saw Qiao Mei sleeping in the sun on the recliner. The children were energetic a while ago, but now they were like kittens, afraid that they would wake Qiao Mei up.

Actually, Qiao Mei was not sleeping at all. She just wanted to give the children a little scare and add more fun in life. Qiao Mei pretended to breathe steadily as she lay on the recliner.

Chapter 164: New Clothes

The children crept up to Qiao Mei and stuck their heads out to look at her.

“Elder sister is so beautiful...” Zhang Miao whispered to Zhang Qin who was beside her.

“Shh!” Zhang Chao quickly gestured for Zhang Miao to stop talking.

Zhang Wei was about to cover Qiao Mei with a blanket when Qiao Mei suddenly sat up from the recliner and made a face.

“Wa!” Qiao Mei said scarily.

“Ah!” “Ah!” “Ah!” “Ah!”

The four children jumped back in unison and yelled out in fear. Zhang Wei stood rooted to the ground with the blanket in his hands as he looked at Qiao Mei.

“Hahahahaha, you guys are so cute!” Qiao Mei lay back on the chair and laughed loudly. Zhang Wei, Zhang Chao and Zhang Qin had yet to react when the youngest Zhang Miao started laughing for some reason. The other children also laughed along when they saw Zhang Miao’s reaction.

Li Gui looked at the children in the courtyard who were all smiling and full of vigor. She had a gratified smile on her face to finally see the children so happy.

“Alright, alright, I won’t scare you anymore. Guess what I brought you today?” Qiao Mei deliberately covered the big black cloth bag to prevent the children from seeing what was inside.

“It’s... it’s watermelon!” Zhang Miao raised her hand and said excitedly.

“You only know how to eat, fourth sister. I’m guessing it must be the latest sandbag!” Zhang Chao said.

“I guess elder sister has got some rice!” Zhang Wei said after some thought.

.....

For a long while, only Zhang Qin did not make a guess on what was in the cloth bag. Zhang Qin was usually introverted. She was a very kind girl but she did not like to talk, therefore she would often be bullied or overlooked by others.

Qiao Mei looked at Zhang Qin and asked, “Qin Qin, what do you think?”

Given that Qiao Mei had posed the question to her, Zhang Qin thought for a long time and said, “I... I guess it should be big steamed buns...”

“You’re all wrong! Open it and take a look. Everyone has a share so there is no need to fight.” Qiao Mei handed the cloth bag to Zhang Wei and let the older Zhang Wei do the distribution.

When he opened the bag, he saw four sets of clothes and four cloth bags. The children took them out lovingly and could not bear to put them down. The boys were not so particular, and Zhang Chao immediately put on his new clothes and carried his school bag before running to the water vat to check out his reflection in the water.

“Elder sister! It looks so good!” Zhang Chao grinned so widely that his smile almost reached his ears.

Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao only carried their bags and carefully rubbed the names on the bags. Zhang Wei stood at the side and looked at the clothes embroidered with the image of big trees as if it was a treasure.

“Elder sister, what is this word?” Zhang Miao asked.

“Idiot, didn’t elder sister teach you before? That’s your name, Miao!” Zhang Chao ran over and said.

“I’m not stupid! Stupid brother!” Zhang Miao frowned and shouted at Zhang Chao.

“Lalala, come and hit me then!” Zhang Chao ran around the courtyard with Zhang Miao running behind him.

The two children chased each other around, making the courtyard very lively. Among the four children, the eldest child, Zhang Wei, and the third child, Zhang Qin, had similar personalities. They were both calm and serious children. The second child, Zhang Chao, and the fourth child, Zhang Miao, both had carefree and cheerful personalities. The fourth child, Zhang Miao, was also the troublemaker at home. Although she was young, she came up with all kinds of ideas and always caused Zhang Wei to have to help the children deal with the aftermath of the trouble they caused.

“Elder sister, you made all these for us. Isn’t it tiring for you?” Zhang Wei said as he looked at Qiao Mei.

“I’m not tired. I made these for all of you to wear to school. Do you like it?” Qiao Mei said.

“I like it!” Zhang Wei nodded.

Qiao Mei turned to look at Zhang Qin and asked, “What about you, Qin Qin? Do you like it?”

Zhang Qin nodded and said, “I like it. Thank you, elder sister.”

The boisterous laughter in the courtyard made Li Gui come out to see what was going on.

“Alright, alright, it’s time to wash your hands and eat. Stop fooling around, you two! Don’t bump into your elder sister!” Li Gui said as she pointed at Zhang Chao and Zhang Miao.

When they heard that they might hurt Qiao Mei, the two children immediately stopped what they were doing and stopped rowdily chasing each other. They walked back in an orderly manner as if they had done something wrong. In their eyes, they could do anything except things that could hurt Qiao Mei. They must protect Qiao Mei well and not let her get hurt.

Chapter 165: Exhortation

Qiao Mei stood up and waved the children over, bringing them to wash their hands.

“Hey, there’s nothing wrong. Wash your hands then go and eat,” Qiao Mei said.

“Xiao Wei, go and get your Grandpa Qiao Qiang. Let’s eat together,” Li Gui said to Zhang Wei.

“Aye! Alright!” Zhang Wei folded the clothes and put them into his school bag before carrying it and running out. He did not say anything and kept everything to himself. The truth was he was overjoyed, and actually more worried that nobody would see the school bag that Qiao Mei made for him.

Qiao Qiang was sitting in the courtyard when he saw Zhang Wei rushing over.

“Grandpa! Come, let’s go to my house for dinner,” Zhang Wei said.

“Why are you in such a hurry?” Qiao Qiang smiled and stood up to walk back with Zhang Wei.

“Grandpa, look. My elder sister Mei Mei made this for me.” Zhang Wei showed off his small cloth bag.

When Qiao Qiang saw the look on Zhang Wei’s face, he grinned and said, “Aiyō, let me see. This looks really nice. Even grandfather doesn’t have one. Your elder sister Qiao Mei is really good to you.”

“Yes, and I’m not the only one who has it! We all have one!” Zhang Wei jumped around happily.

Qiao Qiang was happy to see this. He had brought Qiao Mei up from young and she had since grown up, but now there were new children who called him grandfather and hung out around him. Although they were not his biological grandchildren, having the children playing around in his courtyard brought a lot of happiness to him.

As the saying goes, “Happiness is the best cosmetic”. Ever since the children came, Qiao Qiang had been smiling more. When he had nothing to do, he would make toys for the children and bring them out to play. This in turn made up for the fact that the children previously did not have a kind elder to bring them around.

When they arrived at Li Gui’s house, it was time for dinner. Everyone gathered together happily and Qiao Mei was relieved to see such a harmonious atmosphere.

After dinner, Qiao Mei had a private conversation with Li Gui in the courtyard.

“Mom, I might go to the capital for about a month. I’m worried about my grandfather being at home alone, so I’ll have to trouble you to visit him more often.” Qiao Mei looked at Li Gui worriedly.

Please reading -on MYBO X N OVEL. COM

Although Qiao Qiang could do everything by himself and no one in the village dared to bully him, she was still worried and had to repeatedly remind everyone to help her take care of him before she could feel at ease.

“The capital? Why are you going there?” Li Gui looked puzzled.

“My husband is coming back from his mission. I want to go to the capital to visit his parents with him,” Qiao Mei said.

Li Gui thought for a moment and went into the house to take out 20 dollars and stuffed it into Qiao Mei’s hand. She looked at Qiao Mei firmly and said, “Mom is useless. This is some money that mom has recently earned. Keep it and buy something to eat on the way. Don’t go hungry and don’t think of mom as a nuisance.”

Qiao Mei did not lack money, but looking at the look on Li Gui’s face, Qiao Mei knew that it represented the love a mother had for her daughter.

“Alright, I’ll accept it,” Qiao Mei said.

“Don’t worry. During that period, I’ll get Zhang Wei to ask him over for dinner. Otherwise, if he feels too tired to come by, I’ll get Zhang Wei to send the food over. We can also go over to cook and eat with him occasionally. You can rest assured about it,” Li Gui said.

“Alright, then I shan’t worry about it anymore. You also have to take good care of yourself and don’t let anyone bully you,” Qiao Mei said.

“Aye, don’t worry.” Li Gui nodded.

Qiao Mei was going off to Gushan with all her luggage tomorrow. Once she had settled everything at home, she started to pack her luggage. Qiao Qiang sat at one side and watched her doing her packing with mixed feelings. He did not know what to say and constantly felt uneasy. He felt that it was too dangerous for Qiao Mei to go to the capital alone.

“Mei Mei, if there’s really no other way, then let your Uncle Chen Hu go with you.” Qiao Qiang frowned and looked at Qiao Mei.

As Qiao Mei kept the blanket, she said, “Grandfather, so you’re still so worried about me. Uncle Chen Hu’s soldiers might not even be as strong as me.”

Qiao Qiang thought about it and had to agree with her. Qiao Mei could indeed protect herself with her strange super-strength, but it was different now from before. Previously, her looks did not attract any attention, but now that Qiao Mei was so beautiful and outstanding, even if she was really capable, what could she do if she was targeted by villains.

Qiao Qiang still felt that it was not safe. Qiao Mei’s current appearance was more problematic than before. Previously, when she went out, he was not worried about her being targeted by others. The way that Qiao Mei looked in the past, she also did not seem like a nice person at all.

Chapter 166: Setting Off for the Capital

The way that Qiao Mei looked now, people would get ideas about her even if she just stood there. If anything were to happen to her on her way, he did not think that he, an old man with half his body already in the grave, would be able to stand it.

As Qiao Qiang had kept staring at Qiao Mei for the past few days, he did not notice that Qiao Mei actually had only a very faint sense of presence now. His mind was filled with worry and melancholy.

“Mei Mei, why not let your Uncle Chen Hu accompany you. If I ask him personally, he will definitely agree. Don’t find it troublesome,” Qiao Qiang said to Qiao Mei with a frown.

“Grandfather, don’t worry. I’ll get a ticket for the direct train from the county city to the capital. Once I reach the capital, I’ll find a phone and call you. I hope that’s fine for you,” Qiao Mei said.

Qiao Qiang thought for a moment and knew that Qiao Mei did not want to take his advice at all. He would just have to let her be. Whatever she did, she must have her own reasons. Qiao Qiang sighed and nodded, indicating that he would compromise and go along with Qiao Mei’s plans.

Qiao Mei smiled happily and was about to enter the room when she was stopped by Qiao Qiang again.

“Mei Mei, you have to put a cloth around your head and don’t let anyone see your face. Wear something tattered, or else there will be thieves targeting you,” Qiao Qiang reminded her repeatedly.

Qiao Mei giggled and saluted. “Alright! I promise to complete the mission!”

Her action made Qiao Qiang laugh out loud and caused him to recall the person he was in the past. Qiao Mei was relieved to see Qiao Qiang looking much happier and went into the room to pack the things she wanted to bring.

The fabric that Qiao Mei bought some time ago had not only been made into clothes, but also into an exquisite backpack. Qiao Mei had embroidered her favorite flowers and plants on it, and had also sewed a compartment inside the backpack to specially store the small boxes containing the wild ginsengs. She was afraid that if she carelessly opened the bag during her travels and let someone see them, it would cause trouble for her.

“Hmm... Let me think. What else should I bring?” Qiao Mei said as she looked at the stack of things on the brick bed.

Everything was laid out on the brick bed. There were three sets of new clothes, a change of shoes, a few boxes of wild ginsengs, and all kinds of food and supplies given by the other villagers. It was chock full of stuff. In the end, Qiao Mei picked out the most important things to take with her, including the 1500-year-old wild ginseng roots from the mountain and a lot of vine seeds.

Qiao Mei chose not to do what Qiao Qiang had mentioned. She felt that by covering her face with a cloth, she would attract more attention. It would be better to just look ordinary. Qiao Mei went to the hospital to buy a surgical mask to put on, as she felt that the effect would be the same as covering her face with a cloth.

After Qiao Mei arrived at the county city, she took a bus to the provincial city as the direct train to the capital departed from the provincial city. Once she arrived at the capital, she would give her grandfather a call before transferring onto a train to Gushan. Basically, all train transfers to other places were done in the capital.

Qiao Mei made sure to dress in plain black clothes. In this era, people who traveled around for business were mostly men and very few women could make their own way to someplace far away.

.....

She had already been delayed by Qiao Yu's matter for too long over the past few days and had left the village a day later than she had planned. She was not afraid that there would be criminals on the way. If there were any people who harbored any ill intentions, she would just beat them up and cripple them. It did not matter if she had to compensate them. She had plenty of money and the one thing she did not lack was money. However, money could not buy time and she was very anxious about being delayed for even a second.

"Xia Zhe, you must wait for me. You must be safe," Qiao Mei muttered to herself as she looked out of the train window.

Wearing a mask in the train saved her a lot of trouble, but Qiao Mei was not an immortal and had no choice but to eat and drink at intervals. Every mealtime, there would be people staring at her and talking about her. There were even people who tried to hit on her.

"Little girl, where are you going?" A stranger walked over and asked.

Qiao Mei pointed at her ears and then at her mouth, and then waved her hand at the stranger to indicate that she was deaf and mute and could not speak or hear what he was saying.

When the man understood what she was trying to say, he frowned and sighed as he said, "Oh, what a pity."

With that, he turned around and left. After witnessing that, everyone on the train lamented that Qiao Mei was actually deaf and mute despite being so beautiful. They felt that the heavens were really fair, that the heavens had given someone beauty but took away everything else from her. After that, no one bothered Qiao Mei anymore.

Qiao Mei was also happy to be left alone and free from all the trouble. This way, no one would disturb her.

Chapter 167: Natural Disaster

After arriving in the capital, Qiao Mei went to an outdoor phone booth to call Qiao Qiang. There was a problem with the phone line at home, so Qiao Mei called the brigade directly.

“Hello, who is this?” Wang Qin said.

Wang Qin was usually the one handling these small matters in the village while Zhao Liang was in charge of the important things. Zhao Liang would only answer the phone if Wang Qin was not around.

Qiao Mei lowered the pitch of her voice and said, “Hello, I’m looking for Zhao Liang.”

Wang Qin looked at the phone receiver in confusion and said to Zhao Liang, “Zhao Liang, it’s for you.”

Zhao Liang was also a little puzzled. He did not have any relatives out of town, so he had no idea who could be calling him.

“Who is it?” Zhao Liang said.

“I don’t know. The person didn’t say but was just looking for you.” Wang Qin put the phone receiver aside and returned to her desk.

Zhao Liang picked up the receiver and said, “Hello, who are you? I’m Zhao Liang.”

When Qiao Mei heard that it was indeed Uncle Zhao, her voice returned to normal and she said sweetly into the phone, “Uncle, it’s me, Qiao Mei. Don’t make a fuss about it, I’m just calling to ask you to tell my grandfather that I’m in the capital and to give him some reassurance.”

Zhao Liang naturally knew about the feud between Qiao Mei and Wang Qin, so he simply said, “Yes, yes, I understand. I will go, don’t worry.”

“Alright, uncle, I’m leaving.” Qiao Mei hung up after saying that.

Zhao Liang also hung up the phone. Wang Qin, who was at the side, stared at Zhao Liang a few times. She was curious about the person who called, but she did not dare to ask, afraid that her question would cause trouble. After all, the recent matter regarding Qiao Yu had already made her lose face in the village.

Zhao Liang hurriedly went out to look for Qiao Qiang and informed him about what Qiao Mei had said on the phone. Qiao Qiang finally felt relieved after hearing that. After bidding farewell to Zhao Liang, he went to Li Gui’s place to bring the children for a walk at the village entrance.

Two days later, Qiao Mei successfully arrived at Gushan. There were many people coming and going at the train station. She looked at the color of the sky and then at the expressions of the people around her. She could not bear to think about the tragedy that would happen in two days.

.....

Qiao Mei quietly got the plants around the train tracks to break the tracks so that no one would be able to enter Gushan henceforth and the number of casualties would be reduced. It would be best if Xia Zhe had not arrived at Gushan yet.

She recalled that the news had reported that the area near the train station was hit most seriously. At that time, the sky was dark as if there was going to be a storm. Everyone ran into the houses in the area to get shelter from the rain, but it took only a few minutes for all the houses to collapse and no one survived.

Now that the train tracks were broken, there would be fewer people gathered here and more people would remain alive. Qiao Mei headed straight for a village after leaving the train station. Based on the memories of the original owner of the body, Qiao Mei remembered that there was a village name on the money transfer receipt. Based on the name in her memory, Qiao Mei asked around and finally arrived at the village.

Strange things had been happening over the past few days. There were always big rocks rolling down the mountain and the animals in the forest had also started to become restless. Some of the forest

animals had even entered the village. The birds in the forest had also been chirping a lot recently and even the domestic fowls were also all very restless.

She had initially wanted to go and check out the other villages to see if they were in the same situation, but she did not even have time to do much in this village, so there was no way for her to get involved somewhere else.

After walking around for a day, Qiao Mei felt that going on foot was not a viable solution. Qiao Mei bought a bicycle at a low price in the village and rode it around. She realized that it was not just this village, but many other villages were witnessing the same phenomena.

Many villagers who lived at the foot of the mountain had suffered losses both big and small. Some people had seen their houses collapse, while others had had their courtyards destroyed. The desks of the county leaders were filled with documents about these disastrous matters and the phones in their offices had not stopped ringing.

These things did not just happen in the villages. Many roads in the city suddenly had huge holes appearing in them and there were cyclists who even fell into the holes with their bikes and got injured. It was as if the ground had collapsed due to the loss of groundwater. Some of these holes even put buildings in danger, as some old low-rise apartment buildings which had been in disrepair for a long time began to tilt to one side. The government immediately evacuated the people from these buildings which eventually saved them from the disasters that followed.

Chapter 168: Earthquake

The next day, the same issues occurred at even more low-rise apartment buildings. The government made an interim decision to evacuate everyone to an open area outside the city and set up tents for these people to stay outside for a period of time. They would arrange for people to return to their homes only after repair and restoration works were completed.

At first, there were people who did not want to cooperate and even kicked up a fuss at the ground floor of their building. There were even people who had already left the city but insisted on returning to their homes to retrieve their valuables. However, before these people could resist for too long, the building collapsed with a loud sound. It scared everyone so much that they did not dare to think of it as a minor issue anymore and they actively cooperated with the government's arrangements.

Qiao Mei had not been idle during this period of time. She sat at an empty plot of land to take a rest, feeling a little tired.

A few sinkholes in the city had indeed collapsed due to the loss of groundwater, but most of them were caused by Qiao Mei scattering a large number of plant seeds into the ground, making them reproduce and grow quickly and incessantly taking root inside the ground. Then, when Qiao Mei absorbed the energy of these plants, the instant withering of the plants would cause a hole underground, causing the ground to collapse.

There were tall buildings everywhere around the city and there were no plants providing energy for her to absorb. After making sinkholes over the span of a few days, Qiao Mei was starting to feel that she was unable to do as much as she would like. If she went back to the village to absorb natural energy before coming back, it would be too late. Right now, Qiao Mei was racing against time.

“Sigh.” Qiao Mei took a breath and lamented.

Qiao Mei looked at the pendant hanging on her chest. The originally crystal clear pendant now looked a little dull and lackluster. It seemed that the energy was indeed unable to support her in creating more sinkholes.

However, there were still many low-rise buildings and houses in the city. Many people still felt that what was happening had nothing to do with them, that only the high-rise buildings were in danger and that the low-rise houses would not be affected. Qiao Mei needed to create more sinkholes in order to save more people.

Qiao Mei opened her backpack and took out the seeds of the ginseng king from home. She sprinkled them on the ground and induced their growth, and then absorbed the energy contained inside them. These seeds were all wild ginseng that could grow to a thousand years old and their energy was not something that ordinary wildflowers and weeds could emulate.

Qiao Mei took out the vine seeds and managed to locate a water drain. She scattered the seeds into the drain and began to induce their growth. The vines quickly grew and covered the entire city’s drainage system. If she were to make more sinkholes, even though no one would think that it had anything to do with her, she would still miss out on many people. It was better to do this so that she could reach everyone.

Qiao Mei kept watch on the time and continuously urged the vines in her hand to extend further. With Qiao Mei's current ability, she could already sense plants within 20 kilometers, but for an entire city, this span meant that there were still areas that she could not manage to cover.

Qiao Mei could only stretch as far as she could feel.

.....

"Not enough... not enough... still not enough," Qiao Mei muttered to herself.

Qiao Mei induced the growth of wild ginseng and vines with one hand and used her other hand to constantly absorb the energy of the wild ginseng. Her entire body was emitting a sparkling green light and in less than 15 minutes, she was already drenched in sweat and her lips had become pale. Her hands and feet also began to tremble without her knowing. Many plants had already turned to ashes before she could absorb their energy.

Qiao Mei looked at her watch and then at the sky.

It was time.

Qiao Mei shook the vines violently and the vines kept hitting the drainage pipes all the way to the end. Soon, the remaining people in the city felt the violent tremors, each stronger than the last. Everyone ran out of the house and instinctively went to take cover in a wide open area.

When she was done, Qiao Mei reabsorbed the energy from the vines and collapsed to the ground while panting heavily. There were still about 20 minutes before the real danger arrived, and she hoped that what she did would be effective enough to be able to save more people. She had already done her best.

Qiao Mei quickly lost consciousness and blacked out onto the ground. Then the violent shaking started after 20 minutes.

The world seemed to spin away and the sun and moon went dark as if they lost their light. The mountains and rivers appeared to be roaring as huge rocks rolled down and dust filled the air in an instant. In just 25 seconds, the entire city was in ruins.

The plants around Qiao Mei spontaneously surrounded her, forming a cocoon-shaped protective barrier that silently shielded Qiao Mei and her children, and reduced the impact of the tremors from the ground. At the same moment, the pendant quietly emitted a dark green light that was slowly being transmitted to the surrounding plants.

Chapter 169: Rescued

After the earthquake ended, the plants around Qiao Mei dissipated into ashes and scattered in the air. Some of these ashes landed on Qiao Mei's body as she silently planted a wild ginseng seed under her body to slowly induce its growth and absorb its energy. After doing this, she regained some strength but was still too tired to move. In the end, Qiao Mei closed her eyes and fell unconscious.

Soon, the other local governments heard about what had happened at Gushan and the places close by quickly sent troops to help with the rescue. Half an hour later, the first rescue team arrived.

The troops were instructed to divide themselves into various teams to search the entire city for survivors, check for casualties and make arrangements for rescue.

People who were still alive gathered in groups to seek warmth and to comfort one another. There were people who knelt on the ground crying after seeing their homes in ruins. There were also people who lamented that they were really lucky to still be alive, while there were others who spontaneously helped everyone else in whatever way they could.

If not for the small earthquake that happened before the big one, they would have died under the ruins.

Four hours later, the various teams finished checking all the places in the city. The process was much faster than they had expected.

"Report! There are no deaths at the moment. Some of the injured parties have already been transferred to safe areas!" one of the team leaders reported.

Xia Zhe nodded and mentally noted down the number of injured people and the location to carry out the evacuation.

Xia Zhe looked at his brother-in-arms, Zhang Yong, who understood what he meant and said, "Same here. There are no casualties and everyone has been evacuated to a safe area."

Xia Zhe finally relaxed his serious expression, but there was still a frown between his eyes.

"Everyone, take a ten-minute break and then go back to the city to conduct a full-scale search again. You must not miss a single corner! You must make sure that everyone has been rescued! Do you understand!" Xia Zhe shouted.

"Understood!" all the soldiers replied loudly.

"Everyone, rest on the spot! Zhang Yong, Zhao Wu, Zhuang Hua! Step forward!" Xia Zhe ordered.

.....

"Yes!" the three men replied in unison.

Just as he was about to go to the tent to discuss the subsequent plans, a soldier rushed over.

"Report!"

"Speak." Xia Zhe looked at the soldier standing in front of him.

"There's someone in the ruins over there," the soldier said, pointing to some ruins in the distance.

Xia Zhe followed him and saw that there was indeed someone lying motionless on the ground.

“Quick! Medic! Rescue!” Xia Zhe shouted at the medics in the distance.

Xia Zhe squatted down to check if Qiao Mei was still breathing and if she had a pulse. At this moment, Qiao Mei felt someone touching her. She slowly opened her eyes and saw the face that she had been thinking about day and night.

“Am... am I... dreaming?” Qiao Mei subconsciously reached out to touch the face of the person in front of her.

After confirming that Qiao Mei was alive, Xia Zhe tilted his head slightly to avoid Qiao Mei’s hand and let the medics go forward to rescue her.

“Arrange for treatment immediately and do your best to treat her,” Xia Zhe said, making the arrangements calmly.

Before Qiao Mei could see clearly whether the person was actually her loved one, she was already being carried away on a stretcher. She wanted to get up to ask about it but was pressed down on the stretcher by the medics.

“Let me take a look...” Before Qiao Mei could finish speaking, she was already secured to the stretcher.

“Don’t move around now. We need to see if you are injured. We’re from the medical unit and we’re giving you treatment. Don’t worry, you’ll be fine!” a medic said to Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei thought to herself, “Of course I know that I’m fine, but I want to see if that person is Xia Zhe. Can you not stop me!”

Xia Zhe had turned away to deal with the danger in the area, so Qiao Mei had no choice but to receive treatment as she was told. She lay on the stretcher and fell asleep again.

The entire troop methodically made arrangements for the rescue and relief efforts. Xia Zhe and his brothers-in-arms were so busy that they did not even have time to eat as they threw themselves into the disaster relief efforts. In the end, they only recalled the main unit after searching the entire city

three times. Even then, they still arranged for a small team to take turns to search around and ensure that they did not miss anyone.

Qiao Mei also slowly recovered her strength in her sleep, as the lost energy slowly returned to her body.

Chapter 170: Regain Consciousness

Qiao Mei slowly opened her eyes and gradually had a clear idea of where she was. Her surroundings were all white and there were many identical beds around her. The people on those beds looked more seriously injured than her. Some of them were wrapped in bandages and some were in casts.

It appeared that there were still some people who did not manage to make it to the open space in time and still got injured. However, it was not possible for Qiao Mei to save so many people single-handedly. She had already done her best.

“You’re awake,” a medic said to Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei was about to get out of bed when she was stopped by the medic.

“Hey! Don’t move. I’ll have to give you a checkup before you can move around.” The medic carefully checked Qiao Mei’s various joints and physical indicators. He only allowed Qiao Mei to move around after confirming that there were no abnormalities.

“Alright, you can go to the temporary base outside the city.” The medic packed his things and prepared to move on to the next patient.

“Wait, what’s the base outside the city?” Qiao Mei asked with a puzzled expression.

“It’s the place where the disaster victims are currently being held. We’re still in the city and it’s not safe. You need to evacuate to a safe area,” the medic said.

“Yes... Thank you, I understand now.” After saying goodbye to the medic, Qiao Mei began to think about how to stay inside the current camp. It was not easy to find Xia Zhe, so she could not leave so easily.

She quietly walked out of the tent and went around the area to see if there was anything she could do to help the troops. She had barely taken two steps before she ran into Xia Zhe who had come to take a headcount.

“You? Are you fine now?” Xia Zhe said as he looked at Qiao Mei coldly.

Qiao Mei did not dare to say that she was doing fine as she still wanted to stay here. If she was sent out of the city, it would be difficult for her to come in again.

.....

“I.. I’m still a little dizzy...” Qiao Mei pretended to be weak and reached out to hold her forehead.

Xia Zhe sized up Qiao Mei. She did not seem to have any external injuries, and the medic had already told him that this person was fine and could be transferred.

Qiao Mei saw that Xia Zhe was indifferent to her and reached out to tug at his sleeve. She said in a sweet voice, “Can I..”

Before Qiao Mei could finish speaking, Xia Zhe frowned. Why did this voice sound so familiar? Qiao Mei immediately became alert and stopped talking. She pretended to faint and fall against Xia Zhe.

Xia Zhe hurriedly caught hold of Qiao Mei, but as they were of opposite sexes, Xia Zhe called out to the female soldier who was closest to him and said, “You, come here! Send her to the infirmary!”

The young soldier immediately came over to help her up and they limped their way to the infirmary. Qiao Mei was secretly happy that he was not overly concerned about unfamiliar women and thought that he deserved praise for it.

When Qiao Mei arrived at the infirmary, she quickly woke up and said to the young soldier, “Thank you for sending me back. I feel much better now.”

Hearing her sweet voice, the young soldier thought of her as a gentle and kind little girl, and did not suspect that she was pretending to be sick. The soldier said to Qiao Mei, "You're welcome. It's what I should do."

"By the way, please tell me where I can get some water as I want to wash up." Qiao Mei touched her face and sighed as she looked at the two inches of ash on her hand.

Given that they were both girls, the young soldier also knew that it was really uncomfortable to be dirty all over. She pointed to the tent at the other end and said, "There's a temporary water tank over there, you can get some water to do a simple wipe down or something. However, there's not much water so you can't take a shower, but you can wash your face though."

Qiao Mei nodded and said, "Thank you. I'll be careful about the amount of water I use. Don't worry."

The young soldier had other tasks to do so she bid a simple farewell to Qiao Mei and returned to the troop.

Qiao Mei took a basin to get some water and wiped herself clean with a towel before washing her feet. Water resources were very precious now, so she had to make full use of them as much as possible. After washing up, Qiao Mei looked like a completely different person from before. When she came out of the water storage tent, she was aware that there were many pairs of eyes staring at her.

Even if Qiao Mei had the ability to conceal her presence, she was now among the army troops and this was a place with more male soldiers than female soldiers. No matter how inconspicuous she tried to be, she was still very eye-catching. Many soldiers were stunned by the sight of her. They had not heard that there was such a beautiful girl among the people rescued.