

Fat Wife 271

Chapter 271: Ownership of the House

Xia Jun and Xia Mao smiled when they saw the wild ginseng and felt that this child was very considerate. Only Xu Lan did not appreciate the gesture.

“What do all these things have to do with you buying a house?” Xu Lan said disdainfully.

Qiao Mei did not take Xu Lan’s attitude to heart and continued, “Other than these things, my grandfather also asked me to bring a 100-year-old wild ginseng that he dug up. He has asked me to see if there is anyone in the capital who wants to buy it and then use the money to buy a house.”

By now, everyone in the Xia family understood that the house was exchanged with the ginseng from Qiao Mei’s grandfather.

Xu Lan did not care about how it was done. What she cared about was that Qiao Mei kept saying that it was her grandfather who exchanged it.

“So do you mean that the house belongs to your grandfather?” Xu Lan said.

Qiao Mei did not say anything and just looked at her quietly. Strictly speaking, it was Qiao Mei’s name that was listed on the documents, so it was strictly not considered as Qiao Qiang’s property.

However, the name on the property deed of the main house was still Xia Zhe’s grandmother, so this house still belonged to the Xia family.

“Why aren’t you saying anything? You intend to bring your grandfather over to occupy the old house?” Xu Lan said even more harshly.

Xia Fang frowned and looked at Xu Lan. She originally thought that her second sister-in-law had designs on this house, but she did not expect Xu Lan to be the first person to express such clear intent.

“The exchange was done using the ginseng from Mei Mei’s grandfather. Of course the house belongs to him,” Xia Zhe said calmly.

This made Xu Lan furious. The girl had just married into the family and she had the audacity to bring her grandfather along immediately.

“Why are you kicking up a fuss? If not for Brother Qiao, who knows when we would be able to get the entire old house back,” Xia Jun said.

Xia Jun did not know what was wrong with Xu Lan today. Usually, she did not dare to speak loudly in front of him, but she had rebutted him repeatedly today.

“Young girl, when does your grandfather intend to come over? It’ll be good for us brothers to get together,” Xia Jun said.

For Xia Jun, it did not matter who the house belonged to. Moreover, Qiao Qiang was his good brother and the person who saved his life. Now that Qiao Qiang had even helped them to get the entire house back, he felt that there was really no way to repay such a favor.

“My grandfather doesn’t really want to come here yet. There are still things to do back home,” Qiao Mei said.

“Then do you want to stay in our house or move to the old house?” Xia Jun asked.

Before Qiao Mei could answer, Xia Zhe said, “Qiao Mei will eventually become a military spouse, but just not now. It’s not convenient for her in her current condition, so she will stay at Aunt’s place for the time being. The old house hasn’t been repaired yet, so she’ll only go over later.”

Xia Jun and Xia Mao nodded while Xia Fang also felt very happy. After all, Xiang Jin rarely came back from the army. With Qiao Mei accompanying her, her days were much happier. Moreover, she was a doctor and could take care of Qiao Mei if anything should happen.

Xia Zhe lowered his head and whispered to Qiao Mei, "The army gave me a month's leave this time. The next mission is more dangerous, so I can't bring you along. Besides, it's not safe for you to stay alone in the military compound in your existing condition."

Qiao Mei looked down unhappily. It was not because Xia Zhe could not bring her along in the army, but because Xia Zhe would be going on another mission soon and the two of them would be apart again.

"That's right. Mei Mei will stay at my place and she can do so comfortably," Xia Fang said happily.

After thinking about it, Qiao Mei still felt that she did not want to disturb anyone anymore. She also missed her younger siblings and her grandfather at home.

"I think I'll go back to the village. I'm used to living there. My grandfather is at home and I miss him too. I also have to go back and take care of my younger siblings." Qiao Mei tactfully rejected everyone's kindness.

"Younger siblings? Where did your younger siblings come from?" Xu Lan asked.

It was not as if they had not investigated Qiao Mei's background before. She was her mother's only child, so Xu Lan could not understand how she could have any other younger siblings.

Qiao Mei did not hide anything and told everyone that her younger siblings were the children that her mother, Li Gui, had with her stepfather. She told them everything, but solely left out the part about her mother being beaten up by her stepfather.

Even if she did not say it, it was obvious to Xu Lan.

Chapter 272: Elder Sister Is Back

This stepfather must not be any good if he was the kind of person who could chase away his wife and four children to the countryside.

Her father had passed away early and her mother had to take care of her four half-siblings and a seriously ill grandfather. Her family background was not only not good, but she was also from the countryside.

Xu Lan frowned as she thought about all these. She did not know what Xia Zhe saw in the girl and how he could think that such a family background was worthy of the Xia family.

“Alright, it’s time to prepare dinner,” said Xia Mao.

Xu Lan stopped thinking about the mess as she decided she needed to think about everything at length.

Xu Lan sat on the sofa and looked at Qiao Mei silently. It was almost time for dinner. Xu Lan thought that any sensible person would know that it was time to help out.

Qiao Mei understood what Xu Lan meant. She was about to get up and walk to the kitchen to help with dinner preparation when Xia Zhe grabbed her hand.

“Hey, this bangle of yours is really beautiful. I must say that grandmother made a good choice. Let me take a closer look. I’ve never seen this bangle before,” Xia Zhe said as he held Qiao Mei’s hand.

Qiao Mei did not know what to do and turned to look at Aunt.

Xia Fang shook her head gently, indicating that Qiao Mei should not move. She was quite surprised that Xia Zhe knew what was going on though, and felt that he was quite meticulous.

Xia Fang stared at Xu Lan coldly. In the past, even when Xu Lan felt that Tan Jing’s family background was not that good, she also did not ask Tan Jing to help out in the kitchen on her first day in the house.

Why did she ask Qiao Mei to help when it was also Qiao Mei’s first visit here?

There was no precedent in the family of asking the new daughter-in-law to cook on the first day of her visit. The rules in their family were not so regimental yet.

Xu Lan turned her head in embarrassment and coughed lightly before giving Xia Zhe a fierce glare.

Xia Zhe pretended that he did not see anything. It was not as if they had no helper at home. Even during usual times, his aunt and sister-in-law only needed to assist in minor tasks. Although Qiao Mei's culinary skills were really good, the helper also had professional skills.

Dinner was soon ready. Before everyone could get up and go to the dining table, they heard the main door open with a bang.

Everyone turned to look at the door and saw two women walking in with multiple bags in their hands.

"Oh my. Xia He, why are you back!" Xia Fang said in surprise.

Between the two women, one was fat and one was thin. One was tall and fair with her hair tied into a high ponytail and wearing a smile as warm as the sun.

The other one looked very similar to Qiao Mei in the past. She probably weighed almost 300 pounds and panted heavily when she walked.

"Of course I have to come back and take a look when my brother brings his wife back!" Xia He said to everyone with a smile.

Xia Zhe held Qiao Mei's hand and slowly walked over to Xia He.

"Elder sister, this is my wife, Qiao Mei." After saying that, Xia Zhe turned to Qiao Mei and said, "This is my elder sister, Xia He. You can call her elder sister as well."

"Hello, elder sister," Qiao Mei said with a sweet smile.

Xia He was especially happy to see such a cute and beautiful young girl with a sweet voice.

“Hello, hello, hello.”

Xia He turned to look at Xia Zhe and said, “Not bad, kid. How did you get such a beautiful wife.”

“I’ll tell you another time. Come and eat first,” Xia Zhe said.

Everyone seemed to ignore the person who came in with Xia He.

“Who is this?” Xia Fang asked.

Xia He looked at everyone awkwardly and said, “This is my husband’s sister, Kong Li.”

Xia Zhe looked at Kong Li thoughtfully and turned to look at Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei hurriedly shook her head. She knew what Xia Zhe was thinking about and could only hope that he could quickly forget that memory.

Although the fatty in front of her was not as fat as she was back then, her facial features were already distorted by her size in a similar manner.

Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei in amusement and did not say anything.

Xia He looked at the two of them making faces at each other as if they were sharing a secret. It seemed to be something that only the two of them knew about and no one else could get involved.

“What secret are you two sharing? Don’t show off your love and affection in front of me,” Xia He said.

“Hello,” Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei said in unison to Kong Li.

Kong Li looked at Xia Zhe in embarrassment and replied shyly, "Hello..."

Seeing this, Xia He hurriedly pushed Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei to the dining table to wait for dinner to be served.

Chapter 273: A Quarrel Between Sisters-In-Law

Before Kong Li could say anything more, she was left standing at the door alone.

Xia He said happily to Xia Mao and Xu Lan, "Father, mother, I'm back. Don't you welcome me?"

"You're not back to see me. Aren't you here to see your sister-in-law?" Xu Lan rolled her eyes and said while sulking.

Xia He stood there awkwardly. At this moment, Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei were already seated.

"Why not? Hurry up and sit down to eat. You haven't been back for a long time," Xia Mao said.

Only then did Xia He take her seat. Kong Li walked over angrily and stood beside Xia He.

She reached out and gave Xia He a slap on the shoulder, putting on a fake smile as she said, "Why did you walk so fast? Is it because you don't want me to look at your brother?"

Xia He's shoulder hurt, but she did not say anything. Xia Zhe frowned when he saw what happened.

Qiao Mei reached out to hold Xia Zhe's hand under the table and shook her head.

Although Xia He had a grudge with this woman, it was still someone else's family matter after all. It was not good to comment without knowing everything.

Upon seeing that Xia He was ignoring her, Kong Li did not say anything else and went to sit down beside Xia Zhe.

“You must be my sister-in-law’s brother,” Kong Li said while blushing.

Xia He pointed at Kong Li and said angrily, “You stay away from my brother! How can you sit there!”

When Kong Li saw that Xia He did not care about embarrassing her, she stood up and banged her hand on the table. She used so much strength that half of the soup was spilled on the table.

Xia Mao and Xia Jun did not raise their heads to see what was going on. Men like them did not participate in matters between women and they pretended not to see it.

Xu Lan frowned and glared at Kong Li. “This is the Xia family residence. What are you doing!”

Kong Li pointed at Xu Lan and said, “Since I’m a guest, you have to give in to me. Otherwise, I’ll go out and say that the Xia family is unkind and doesn’t treat guests well.”

“If you continue to behave like this, I’ll just send you home!” Xia He shouted.

Unexpectedly, Kong Li did not care at all and said indifferently, “It’s impossible for you to send me home. I’m going wherever you go. If you’re so capable, you can go and tell my brother to see if he will side with you.”

There were some things that Xu Lan did not know. Xia He rarely confided in Xu Lan and would talk to Xia Fang instead.

Xia Fang knew that ever since Xia He married into the Kong family, she had not had a peaceful life. Xia He’s relationship with her husband, Kong Lu, was no longer the same as before.

Previously, the two of them were very much in love. They had fallen for each other on their own and were not matchmade. Xia He also had a stubborn temper and, like Xia Zhe, she made her own decisions regarding her own marriage and did not say much to her family.

She did not expect Kong Lu to bring his mother and younger sister over to live with him after they got married. Ever since then, the two of them had often quarreled. In addition, Kong Lu was very busy now, so Xia He had to take care of everything at home.

Kong Lu did not know anything about what happened at home.

In the past year, Old Madam Kong kept asking for a grandchild, so she forced Xia He to try for a baby.

However, Xia He did not manage to get pregnant. Old Madam Kong became very angry and started telling the neighbors that Xia He was unable to have children and it made people look down on Xia He.

In the past, Xia He would still explain to the neighbors one by one, but when she could not stop the rumors from spreading, she just endured it.

No one knew why Xia He had returned to the Xia family this time.

“Miss Kong, I think you’re too unreasonable,” Xia Fang said.

“Who do you think you are?” Kong Li could not be bothered with Xia Fang at all.

Xia Fang did not say anything else. She stood up and moved Kong Li’s chair to the spot next to her.

“Since you’re a guest, you should know that guests should follow the host’s instructions. Didn’t your elders teach you manners?” Xia Fang asked.

This question made Kong Li speechless. When she left her house, Old Madam Kong had told her to do everything she could to create trouble for Xia He.

Now, she could not say that her elders did not teach her manners or this would mean that her family was improper.

Although Kong Li was not smart, she was not a fool.

Chapter 274: Quick Escape

Kong Li sat down embarrassedly beside Xia Fang. When she returned home, she would tell her brother that this woman had bullied her and made Xia He suffer for it.

The family finished their meal in silence.

After dinner, Xia Mao left in the military district car. After all, he had a limited amount of time to come home this time and there were still things that he needed to settle at work.

Xia Wen and Tan Jing also had their own work to do and left not long after.

Xia Jun, being an old man, became bored at home after a while and went out for a walk to look for his friends.

As for Xu Lan, she was already retired. Since her children were back, she wanted to speak with them. She had always known that Xia He was unhappy, so she wanted to ask her daughter about what was going on.

Xia Fang quietly pulled Xia He aside, held her hand and asked, "How have you been recently?"

Xia He lowered her head in silence.

When Xia Fang saw Xia He like this, she knew that Xia He's life had not improved.

“Then why did your sister-in-law come with you? She must be the one who’s causing the problem between you and your husband.” Xia Fang glanced at Kong Li who was eating fruits.

“I didn’t want her to come, but I had no choice. She insisted on coming,” Xia He said with a sigh.

“It’s fine, just do your thing. You still have me,” Xia Fang said.

“Aunt, you don’t know how sad the situation is. With her looks, she still wants to find a partner who’s an army officer,” Xia He said mockingly.

“An army officer? Then why doesn’t her brother find one for her but ask you to do it instead?” Xia Fang frowned and said.

“It’s all because they want to ride on our Xia family’s status. They think that we can randomly introduce a soldier to her. Didn’t you see how her eyes were on Xiao Zhe the moment she entered?” Xia He became furious at the mention of this.

While the two of them were still talking, Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe were dealing with Kong Li on their end.

“You’re also my relative. Why don’t you bring me out?” Kong Li asked.

Qiao Mei suppressed the anger in her heart and said, “Who’s your relative?”

“How can you not be considered my relative? My sister-in-law is your elder sister.”

“So we are relatives.”

“Since we’re relatives, why can’t you bring me out?”

“...”

Kong Li sat beside Qiao Mei and spoke a lot to convince Qiao Mei that they were considered relatives.

There was nothing that Xia Zhe could say and he could only sit at the side and listen.

Xia Fang and Xia He also noticed what was happening. Xia He was about to go over to speak her mind when Xia Fang pulled her back.

“It’s fine. Don’t worry, Mei Mei knows what she’s doing. She won’t lose out,” Xia Fang said with a laugh.

After spending so many days together, Xia Fang had a rough idea of Qiao Mei’s personality. Qiao Mei had a good character, but she also had quite a fiery temper.

If someone was kind to her, Qiao Mei would definitely return the favor many fold.

“I just don’t feel like going shopping with you! You stay at home alone! I don’t want to bring you to my house either! Even if we’re relatives, I don’t know you well, so don’t try to act familiar with me!” Qiao Mei said, feeling exasperated.

Qiao Mei had no choice when faced with such an unreasonable person. Since being cultured was not an option, she decided to resort to being forceful.

Qiao Mei pulled Xia Zhe along and left without looking back. Seeing this, Xia Fang patted Xia He’s hand to reassure her and hurriedly followed them.

Xu Lan sat in the living room and did not say anything. It was not easy to have her children home, but everyone had left by now.

If not for this fatty, her children would still be accompanying her at home.

“Auntie, are you going to watch your daughter-in-law bully me like this? I’m a guest after all!” Kong Li shouted at Xu Lan.

Xu Lan could have spoken to Kong Li politely, but the way Kong Li addressed her as “auntie” made her feel unhappy.

Initially, she thought that Qiao Mei was the one she hated the most. She did not expect herself to hate Kong Li even more now.

Xu Lan looked at Kong Li and did not say a word. After all, she was still a guest. If she also reproached this person, she would be criticized if word got out.

Xia He could not do anything about it. Xu Lan had long known that she had such a troublesome sister-in-law.

Chapter 275: Bad Luck

“Auntie, why don’t you say something? Why aren’t you saying anything!” Kong Li said as she sat down beside Xu Lan.

It was not a big deal that she sat down, but the sofa suddenly made a loud sound.

Xu Lan’s heart skipped a beat. This sofa was bought by her eldest son, Xia Wen, when he got married. It was an imported item and was especially expensive.

“Are you feeling full yet? If you don’t feel full, then ask them to make something for you outside. If you’re full, then take a rest,” Xu Lan said in annoyance.

Kong Li thought that Xu Lan was telling her to eat whatever she wanted. She did not realize that Xu Lan was telling her to shut up.

At this moment, Xia He suddenly received a call.

“Hello, who is this?” Xia He asked.

“Elder sister, it’s me! I’m Qiao Mei! Tell them you have something on and come out quickly!” Qiao Mei said.

What a clever person!

Xia He smiled gently and said, “Yes, yes, I understand. Okay, I’ll go now.”

After hanging up, she took her bag and prepared to go out.

“Where are you going!” Kong Li shouted.

“There’s some issues at the art troupe. They want me to go over,” Xia He said as she ran out.

After Xia He ran out of the courtyard, she saw Qiao Mei, Xia Zhe and her aunt at the road junction.

Xia He walked over and smiled brightly. She hugged Qiao Mei and said, “How did you come up with this plan?”

“I reckon you’ll feel very tired at home and I think it’s better for you to come out and relax with us,” Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Xia He nodded and said agreeably, “Let’s go, let me bring you shopping. I’ll buy you anything you like today!”

Xia He hugged Qiao Mei and they walked in front, chatting and laughing.

Qiao Mei realized that Xia He looked really beautiful when she smiled. Her smile was so dazzling and felt as warm as a little sun.

If she had not married the wrong person, perhaps she would be living in a better and brighter world.

At the thought of this, Qiao Mei smiled and turned to look at Xia Zhe.

Fortunately, she had Xia Zhe and she did not marry the wrong person.

When they arrived at the mall, Xia He found out that Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe were going to stay at the old house and decided that they would need a lot of supplies.

She bought everything for them, from small items like pots and pans to big items like a dining table and furniture. She ordered three sets of bedding items for them, as well as a coffee table, chopping board, oven, water heater, and so on.

Xia He paid for everything. Even before buying everything that they would need, she had already spent more than 1,500 dollars.

At this time, an amount of 1,500 dollars was equivalent to the salary of two people over a year and a half. For people in this era, their salary was only around tens of dollars a month.

It would take two people more than a year without eating or drinking to save 1,500 dollars.

However, Xia He was a rich woman. She was a member of an art troupe that often went out to perform. With the performance fees, salary and bonus, she could earn a few hundred dollars a month.

This was the reason why Old Madam Kong kept bullying Xia He. She wanted to make use of the Xia family's prominence in the capital and also wanted Xia He to give her money every month to pay for her expenses.

They always argued about the same thing.

Initially, Old Madam Kong wanted her to hand over all her salary to the family. At first, Xia He was willing to do so, but after knowing Old Madam Kong's character, she became unwilling to do it.

Old Madam Kong felt indignant and brought this matter up with her son.

Kong Lu was a biased person. He felt that his mother had raised him and his brother alone in the past, so he should be filial to his mother now.

Therefore, Kong Lu handed over all his salary to his family and he did not give Xia He a single cent. Furthermore, Kong Li even asked Xia He to give her more than 100 dollars every month.

Kong Lu seemed not to know about these things. It was not as if Xia He had not told him about what happened before, but he did not really care to listen and only felt that his mother and younger sister would not do such things.

On the other hand, when Kong Li complained to Kong Lu about Xia He every day, Kong Lu listened to her.

For 80% of the time when he was home, he would scold Xia He, saying that she did not take good care of his family and made them suffer. As time passed, Xia He became no longer willing to explain herself to him.

She had chosen to get married to this person and she had never regretted it. However, she did feel a little sad and could not understand how things had ended up like this between Kong Lu and her.

Where had all the previous love and affection gone?

Everything had long been worn down by these trivial matters. The love and affection from the early days had long been forgotten. They had been married for a long time and the first few years of their marriage were still marked with anniversaries. Now, Kong Lu could not even remember Xia He's birthday.

Chapter 276: Wanting a Divorce

They strutted down the street and bought a lot of things before returning to the old house.

Xia He felt relaxed the moment she entered. She sat under the grapevine and said, "This house is truly nice."

"It's not just the two sections in front anymore. Qiao Mei just bought the two sections which the Cao family had. Now, this entire house belongs to Xiao Zhe and Qiao Mei," Xia Fang said.

When Xia He heard this news, her eyes lit up. Then, she felt emotional the next moment.

"It would be nice to have my own house. Then, I can do whatever I want every day and wake up whenever I want. I don't have to lock all the drawers and cabinets and I don't have to worry about others stealing my things. It would be so nice..."

Xia He leaned her head against the vine rack and quietly looked at the sky, imagining her life in the future.

Xia Zhe looked at his sister at this moment and felt that she was like a stranger. In the past, Xia He used to be very carefree and would think of him whenever there was anything nice to eat or drink. She used to live her life with a bright smile on her face.

Now, Xia He was always frowning and thinking about how to get through every day. Her mother-in-law and sister-in-law made things difficult for her, and her husband did not care about her.

"Then buy a house for yourself. It's not like your salary isn't enough," Xia Fang said.

Qiao Mei objected to that suggestion, which caught Xia He by surprise.

"Elder sister, do you still plan to stay with that man?" Qiao Mei suddenly asked.

Her question surprised everyone. Xia He's relationship with Kong Lu had not been good for a while and everyone in the family had heard about it. However, how did Qiao Mei know about it?

Xia Zhe was always away in the army and did not know anything about all these things happening with his family. Xia He had only told her aunt and her aunt would never have told Qiao Mei.

“Don’t look at me like that. I just happened to hear it when I walked past earlier and also guessed most of it from what I saw today,” Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Xia He sighed and smiled resignedly as she said, “I didn’t want the two of you to know, but it’s also good that you found out. Actually, I came back home this time without any intention to go back.”

Qiao Mei nodded. She thought that Xia He was right to think that way. That house was like an inferno and she definitely should not go back.

“Since you’re not divorced yet, I think the matter of getting a house can wait. If you buy it now, our brother-in-law will get a share of the house. It’s possible they will even say that your mother-in-law and sister-in-law will get a share as well,” Qiao Mei explained.

These words were like a wake up call for Xia He. After being married for so many years, all her money had been taken by Old Madam Kong and Kong Li. If her house belonged to them after the divorce, it would be a huge loss to her.

“Qiao Mei is right. You can’t buy a house yet. The most important thing now is to get a divorce!” Xia Fang said as she turned to look at Xia He.

“But is it that easy to get a divorce?” Qiao Mei asked curiously.

She said that she wanted a divorce, but how could she get one?

Xia He and Kong Lu had a military marriage, and Xia He was also a government worker. If Xia He wanted a divorce, she must get Kong Lu’s agreement unless it was due to Kong Lu making a serious mistake.

When it came to a conflict between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law, there was no serious mistake at all. It was not even a mistake, just a family conflict.

With Xia He being like a cash cow, Kong Lu would not agree to divorce her. Even if Kong Lu agreed, Old Madam Kong would not allow it.

“If you get a divorce, then what about your job?” Xia Zhe asked.

“That’s not a big deal. I’ve applied for a permanent position in the capital,” Xia He said.

Xia Zhe nodded and felt at ease. He thought that he should look for Kong Lu soon and have a good talk with him. He could not let his sister suffer in vain.

“Alright, everyone. Stop troubling yourself with my affairs. The delivery man from the mall will be here with the furniture soon. Let’s hurry up and clean up the house,” Xia He said as she stood up.

Qiao Mei rolled up her sleeves and was about to walk into the house when Xia Zhe stopped her midway.

“It’ll be very dusty when we clean the house. Don’t go in. It’s not good for your health. When I’m done, then you can go in and do what you need to do,” Xia Zhe said.

Chapter 277: Protect Carefully

Qiao Mei smiled and nodded. Not long after she sat down, Xia Zhe finished cleaning up. Qiao Mei wanted to go in and have a look at the space to see how the furniture could be arranged, but Xia Zhe stopped her again.

“The furniture is all angular. Sit down and let me do it so that you won’t accidentally knock into them.” Xia Zhe busied himself with work after saying that.

After that, Xia Zhe kept giving all sorts of reasons to stop Qiao Mei from doing anything.

“These things break easily. What if they break and you cut your hand? Go and sit at the side. Don’t worry about these things.”

“Don’t get up. Just sit there. It’s still very dusty even though it’s already been cleaned once. Wait for me to clean it again. Don’t come in yet.”

“The soil in this backyard is dirty. Tell me what you want and I’ll do it for you.”

“Don’t move this thing. Tell me what you want to do. This thing is so heavy. What if you can’t carry it and hurt yourself?”

“...”

In the house, there was only the sound of Xia Zhe nagging non-stop. Sitting at one side, Xia Fang and Xia He were stunned. They did not expect Xia Zhe, who was usually cold and quiet in front of them, to have such a side to him.

At the sight of this, Xia He could not help but think of the time when Kong Lu wooed her. Back then, he agreed with her on everything, but now...

Xia He felt sad again. There were still good men in the world, but this particular good man was her own brother. She did not meet a good man herself.

Xia Fang could tell what Xia He was thinking. She reached out to stroke Xia He’s back and said, “The family will always be your strongest backer. Don’t be afraid.”

Xia He nodded and said, “I’m fine. I just feel that it’s really good that Xiao Zhe turned out this way.”

“That’s true. Qiao Mei is also a smart and quick-witted kid. Moreover, she’s very capable and knows how to do almost everything. She learns everything very fast. Xiao Zhe really found a treasure this time,” Xia Fang looked at Qiao Mei and said with a pleased look.

“Since Aunt says so, then she must really be quite good. But for some reason, I feel that my mother doesn’t like her very much,” Xia He said.

“Tsk, don’t you know your mother? She just doesn’t like the fact that Qiao Mei is from the countryside and is uneducated.” Xia He rolled her eyes and got angry just thinking about it.

Qiao Mei looked at the old house and the busy Xia Zhe. He did not allow her to do anything. What exactly was she allowed to do?

“Aunt! Come and discipline your nephew! He doesn’t allow me to do anything. I’m so bored!” Qiao Mei rushed to Xia Fang’s side and complained to her.

Anyone who heard this delicate voice and saw the aggrieved look on her face would think that she did not do anything wrong at all. It must be someone else’s fault.

Xia Zhe stood where he was and looked at Xia Fang, indicating to her that he did not do anything.

“How about this? It’s getting quite late. Let’s go out to buy groceries and then come back to cook,” Xia He said.

“Good idea. I suppose it will be alright with you if I just cook!” Qiao Mei turned around and shouted at Xia Zhe.

Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei, who was so annoyed with him, and found her so cute and funny.

“Yes, yes, yes. You guys go ahead then. I’ll stay at home and pack these things.” After saying that, Xia Zhe went back into the house to continue packing.

Qiao Mei walked out arm in arm with Xia Fang and Xia He on each side. After a short distance, Xia Fang tapped Qiao Mei’s hand.

“Walk properly outside and don’t do unnecessary things. If others see you, they’ll gossip about you again. Later, they’ll put up posters in the alley to criticize you!” Xia Fang said.

Qiao Mei retracted her arms aggrievedly and walked behind silently. Even if it made Qiao Mei feel wronged, Xia Fang had to tell her that. Otherwise, it would not be good if someone got hold of some evidence and gossiped about it.

After all, once gossip started spreading, there was no way to know how the story might get twisted in the end.

If one bought a fish today and the neighbors found out and spread the word about it, the story narrated tomorrow might be that one had bought a cow. This was quite common.

One needed to be careful when one was outside. Some people were just plain nasty and could not bear to see others doing well. If you were doing well, they would get jealous and then think of ways to snatch away what you had.

Chapter 278: Giving Best Wishes

They went to the market nearby to buy some vegetables and fruits before heading home.

“Oh my, Grandpa Zhou!” Qiao Mei saw Zhou Sheng at the entrance of the alley and greeted him warmly.

When Zhou Sheng turned around and saw that it was Qiao Mei, he smiled so widely that it was as if he had seen his own granddaughter.

“Oh, Mei Mei, you’re back!” Zhou Sheng said with a smile.

“Yes I am. Grandpa Zhou, where are you going?” Qiao Mei asked.

“Me? I’m just heading home after a walk. Oh, Xiao Fang is also here too. And who is this?” Zhou Sheng asked curiously as he looked at Xia He.

“Grandpa Zhou, I’m Xiao He,” Xia He said.

It was no wonder that Zhou Sheng could not recognize her. Xia He did not used to go to the old house often. During her schooldays, she went to boarding school and did not go home much. She only saw Zhou Sheng more often when she was much younger and living with her grandparents.

“Oh my, it’s Xiao He! You’re so grown up now and so beautiful,” Zhou Sheng said happily.

Back then, Xia He also did not hold a wedding banquet. Xu Lan did not agree to this marriage to begin with, and Kong Lu was still poor then and could not afford to pay for a wedding at all. He even needed to borrow money to prepare the betrothal gifts.

Zhou Sheng did not know that Xia He got married. The last time he saw Xia He, it was when Xia Zhe’s grandmother passed away.

“Grandpa Zhou, I bought a lot of groceries. Come to our house for dinner!” Qiao Mei said as she swung the groceries in front of Zhou Sheng.

“I’d better not. I won’t go given that you’re having a family reunion,” Zhou Sheng waved his hand and said.

“Grandpa Zhou, it’s just me, Xia Zhe, Aunt, and elder sister. You must come. I’m going to go back and cook now. Don’t stand on ceremony with me. I’ll take it that you’ve agreed. You must come and eat,” Qiao Mei left with her things the moment she finished talking.

“This child is in such a rush,” Zhou Sheng said as he smiled and shook his head.

Xia Fang and Xia He bade farewell to Zhou Sheng and he headed home.

Qiao Mei thought that she did not manage to show off her skills at Zhou Sheng’s house the last time. Today, she must cook some nice dishes for Zhou Sheng. They could also celebrate their elder sister’s homecoming as well.

As soon as Qiao Mei entered the house, she rushed into the kitchen. Xia Fang wanted to go in and help but was pushed out by Qiao Mei.

“There’s no need to help me. I can do it by myself. Aunt and elder sister, why not go and take a seat in the house and take a look at how the furniture is being arranged. I’m worried that Xia Zhe won’t be able to get it right on his own,” Qiao Mei said.

Xia Fang and Xia He had no choice but to go into the house to help Xia Zhe with the furnishings.

The furniture that they bought today had all arrived. Compared to the relatively empty house from before, it now had a more warm human touch to it. However, the new furniture were all modern designs, so there was no classy vintage feel anymore.

There was also a huge dining table in the main hall that was big enough to accommodate the entire Xia family. For normal mealtimes, there was another small dining table.

“Elder sister, is there anything that you don’t eat?” Qiao Mei, wearing an apron and holding a kitchen knife and spatula in her hands, ran over and asked.

The way she looked gave three of them a fright.

“Oh my goodness, my little ancestor. Why did you come out like this? What if you fall and get hurt by this kitchen knife!” Xia Fang hurriedly took the kitchen knife from Qiao Mei.

Xia Zhe also had a troubled expression on his face.

Qiao Mei smiled awkwardly and quietly moved the spatula in her hand behind her back. She asked in a playful tone, “Elder sister, is there anything you don’t eat? Anything that you avoid eating.”

“I eat everything. I’m not picky. I’ll eat anything you make,” Xia He said.

“Alright, I got it.” With that, Qiao Mei returned to the kitchen to get busy.

Xia Fang was still worried about Qiao Mei and followed her while holding the kitchen knife.

While there was a lively atmosphere in the Xia residence, Zhou Sheng had a frown on his face when he got home.

It was not due to any serious matter. It was just that when he first met Qiao Mei, he did not give her anything nice. This time, he must bring her an appropriate gift.

He searched through his house but could not find anything that was suitable for Qiao Mei. Throughout his life, he had no other hobbies except writing calligraphy.

Zhou Sheng took out a calligraphy piece with the words “Harmonious Family” written on it, which he had personally written in the past, and encased it into a frame.

Chapter 279: Calligraphy and Painting

Before he entered the courtyard, Zhou Sheng shouted from the door, “Xia Zhe, can you come out quickly?”

Xia Zhe put down what he was doing in the house and ran out in a hurry. When he opened the door, he saw Zhou Sheng standing there with a picture frame that was even taller than him.

“Grandpa Zhou, what is this?” Xia Zhe asked as he hurriedly took the picture frame from Zhou Sheng.

“The last time Mei Mei came to my house, I didn’t give her anything. I don’t have anything valuable, and I only like to write. I thought that I’ll give both of you a calligraphy piece which I wrote previously. Hopefully it will bring good tidings to you,” Zhou Sheng said while panting.

When Zhou Sheng entered the house, Qiao Mei finished cooking at the same time.

“Grandpa Zhou, you’ve come at the right time. I’ve just finished cooking. Eh? What’s this?” Qiao Mei looked curiously at the thing that Xia Zhe was holding.

“It’s a calligraphy piece by Grandpa Zhou. He said it’s for you,” Xia Zhe said.

Qiao Mei liked things like antiques, paintings and calligraphy the most.

“Thank you, Grandpa Zhou. I love these things the most. Grandpa Zhou, quickly come in and eat.” Qiao Mei held on to him and helped him into the house.

Xia Zhe took the calligraphy into the study and hung it up. Previously, Qiao Mei had thought that the study looked ordinary and did not feel like a study at all. Once the calligraphy was hung up, the room suddenly had a more scholarly feel.

When everyone sat down, they saw a table full of nice dishes. There were only five of them but the food was enough for twelve people. There were eight dishes and one soup, plus a cold dish.

There were a total of 10 dishes.

“Are we celebrating any festival today? Why are there so many delicious dishes?” Zhou Sheng asked curiously.

“It’s because our elder sister is back. Besides, I didn’t make any delicious food at Grandpa Zhou’s house the last time. Everyone can try my cooking this time!” Qiao Mei said with a smile.

“Mei Mei is nicest to me. She even makes me so much delicious food when I’m back.” Xia He smiled happily.

In the letter that Xia He received from home, Xu Lan had mentioned Qiao Mei’s family background. Therefore, Xia He thought that if Qiao Mei was from a small family, she must be a petty person. She did not expect Qiao Mei to be not only capable, but also very eloquent.

“Alright, alright, everyone. Stop praising me. Hurry up and eat,” Qiao Mei said.

Xia Fang was used to Qiao Mei’s cooking, so she felt that it tasted normal and was not surprised by the spread.

However, the other three people had shocked looks on their faces. They could not believe that Qiao Mei's culinary skills were actually comparable to that of a chef from a five-star restaurant.

"Mei Mei, your culinary skills are really fantastic. Xiao Zhe really has it good with a girl like you around," Zhou Sheng said with a sigh.

Xia He also felt the same way. There was nothing that tasted like this at the Kong family residence. She did not know how to cook and just ate whatever that Old Madam Kong cooked.

At the art troupe, there were usually meals provided. If she had to go back at night, she would find something else to eat or go to a restaurant. Ever since Old Madam Kong came to live with them, she had to eat the food that the old lady cooked.

The issue with the food made by Old Madam Kong was that it was not a matter of whether the food was edible or not, but more a matter of whether the food was safe enough to eat without getting poisoned.

Even with such food, Kong Li could still become so fat. When Xia He first got married, Kong Li did not look like this. Later on, after the mother and daughter took all her money, Kong Li started to eat and drink so much that she became obscenely fat.

The Xia family had a helper to do the chores. After Xia He got married, she did not do any housework at first. After Old Madam Kong came, the old lady asked her to wash the dishes every day.

Xia He often needed to perform in front of the camera and sometimes, there would be close-ups of her hands and face. If she washed the dishes often, her hands would not look as good as before. She had a longstanding argument with Old Madam Kong over this matter.

She originally thought that Kong Lu would back her up when he returned, but not only did he not help her, he even said that it was a woman's duty to do these chores. In the end, she had no choice but to wash the dishes while wearing gloves.

After dinner, Xia Zhe rushed to wash the dishes and clear the table, making Qiao Mei feel embarrassed.

During that era, these chores should be done by women. If a woman did not do the cleaning up and other people saw it, they would gossip about her.

Chapter 280: Couple Time

There was still Grandpa Zhou and his elder sister around. Xia Zhe had gone ahead to do the cleaning up without thinking about how they might react.

“This Xiao Zhe knows how to dote on his wife. Not bad, not bad. This is how it should be.” Zhou Sheng looked at Xia Zhe and praised him.

“Qiao Mei, there’s no need to be shy. Our family doesn’t have so many rules. These are all things that Xiao Zhe can do. You don’t have to do these things,” Xia He said.

When she heard what elder sister and Grandpa Zhou said, Qiao Mei’s face turned even redder.

“Why are you blushing? I didn’t say anything about you. Alright, alright. The young girl is shy so I shan’t say anything more. I’m going to head back.” Zhou Sheng teased her before leaving and slowly made his way back to his house.

Xia He packed her things and prepared to leave.

“Elder sister, I’ve already tidied up the guest room for you. You can stay here,” Qiao Mei said.

“I want to stay here too, but Kong Li is still at home. If she causes any trouble, I won’t be able to show my face next time,” Xia He said helplessly.

With Kong Li’s temper, she would definitely anger their grandfather if she stayed in the Xia family residence.

Moreover, Xia He's parents placed their things casually around the house and did not lock the drawers and cabinet doors. If anything went missing at home or Kong Li broke something, it would be too embarrassing to have to explain it to her family.

Thinking of this, she felt worried.

"Come to my house then. My place is the most suitable," Xia Fang said.

In Xia Fang's apartment compound, there were people whose tempers were comparable with Kong Li's temper. It might even lead to an exciting drama later.

"That'll do. So sorry to have to disturb you, Aunt," Xia He said to Xia Fang with a grin.

"What a glib tongue. Let's go quickly. If we miss the last bus, we won't be able to go back," Xia Fang said.

After the two of them reached the door, Xia Fang suddenly made her way back anxiously. She held Xia Zhe's hand and walked him to the side, then she whispered, "Don't be rash, kid. She's still in the early stages and she can't handle any rough action."

Although it was medically safe for Qiao Mei to sleep with Xia Zhe by this stage of the pregnancy, Xia Fang was worried that Xia Zhe did not know his limits. If he used too much strength and hurt Qiao Mei, it would be bad if something went wrong.

Xia Zhe understood what Xia Fang meant and nodded with a blushing face.

After speaking with Xia Zhe, Xia Fang left with Xia He.

Only Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe were left in the huge house. For a moment, they felt that it was too quiet.

"Mei Mei, the hot water is ready. Do you want to take a shower?" Xia Zhe asked.

“Yes, but the dishes in the kitchen are not washed yet. I’ll go wash the dishes first,” Qiao Mei said.

“Go take a shower. By the time you’re done, I will be done washing these dishes. Then I’ll go and take a shower. You don’t have to worry about these things. Go quickly.” Xia Zhe pushed Qiao Mei to the bathroom door situated in the side room.

“Thank you for your hard work.” Qiao Mei tiptoed in a playful manner and gave Xia Zhe a quick kiss on the cheek before rushing into the bathroom.

Xia Zhe was left alone outside the door. He stood in a daze as if he was still reminiscing about the kiss just now.

“Don’t stand at the door in a daze. Go quickly!” Qiao Mei shouted from the bathroom.

“Oh, oh! Call me if you need anything!” Xia Zhe went to the kitchen to wash the dishes after he got his senses back.

After they both showered, the two of them went back to the bedroom and lay down on the bed.

It was finally a world where there were only the two of them. Previously, when they were together in the army camp, they were surrounded by his comrades who had very sensitive hearing. There were also patrols every day, so he did not dare to make any sound at all.

At the current moment, no one could hear what they said or did in the house.

Xia Zhe gently hugged Qiao Mei in his arms and buried his head in her neck to take a deep breath.

“You smell so good...” Xia Zhe said intoxicatedly.

Qiao Mei, who had a sensitive neck, could not help but laugh.

“Hahahahaha, don’t touch me there. It’s so itchy!” Qiao Mei said while laughing.

Xia Zhe raised his head and adjusted his position. He placed his hand on Qiao Mei’s stomach and touched it gently, as if he was greeting the baby in her belly.

“Alright, both my big baby and little baby, go to sleep. If you don’t sleep soon, I’ll eat you up and leave nothing behind!” Xia Zhe said as he closed his eyes.

When Qiao Mei heard what Xia Zhe said, she looked at him with her big sparkling eyes and said coquettishly, “So what if you eat me? Don’t just talk about it without doing anything!”