

Fat Wife 321

Chapter 321: Take a Detour if You See It

After Xia Zhe finished cooking, he called Qiao Mei over to eat together. It was a full moon night, so they decided to eat on a low table outside. It was late at night and he had a beautiful girl by his side to admire the moon together. It made for a lovely scene.

After dinner, the two of them talked about what happened today.

“Are you familiar with those two people from your village?” Xia Zhe asked.

“I’m not. Actually, I’ve only seen them once. At that time, my second grandfather’s family wanted to matchmake me. My grandfather was seriously ill then and their plan was to marry me off, wait for my grandfather to die before snatching my family’s house,” Qiao Mei said as she looked at the moon in the sky.

She wondered if her grandfather was doing well in the village. It had been two months since her grandfather last wrote to her. However, she still called him on the phone regularly and she heard from Uncle Zhao Liang that her grandfather was doing well. The four younger siblings at home were also filial to her grandfather. Zhang Qian also did not come to ask Li Gui for money anymore and everything was fine at home.

Xia Zhe’s heart ached as he hugged Qiao Mei and asked, “How is grandfather’s health now? Why don’t I get someone to bring him over for treatment now.”

Qiao Mei leaned on Xia Zhe’s shoulder and said, “Grandfather is much better now. Moreover, there are four children at home to play with him. He’s very happy now and he’s cheerful every day.”

“The person who instructed the two people today is from the He family. It’s He Mei’s third uncle, He Ning. He stays in the suburbs and is seriously ill, so he won’t be able to live long. However, the Cao family recently gave him that ginseng in exchange for the stability of their positions in the government for the next few years. If He Ning stays alive for a few more years, many people will suffer,” Xia Zhe said.

Qiao Mei kept quiet. The ginseng had caused trouble instead. If she had known earlier, she would not have given something so good to the Cao family. He Ning did not even know her, yet he could come up with such a despicable method to harm her. If it was anyone else on the receiving end, the person probably would have suffered greatly.

If those two people had succeeded today, she would be doomed. In this era, tricking a soldier into getting married using a fake pregnancy was not a matter that could be resolved by getting criticized and re-educated. It was a jailable offense. If that happened, she would have a criminal record after she was released and she would never be able to find a good workplace.

He Ning was so ruthless only because Qiao Mei was in his way.

“Do you know where He Ning lives?” Qiao Mei looked up and asked.

Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei curiously and said, “Why are you asking this?”

“I... I just want to know where he lives! I’ll take a detour in the event I have to pass by, in case I get captured. What if something happens and you can’t find me?” Qiao Mei pouted and said.

Xia Zhe could not help but pinch Qiao Mei’s cheek. It was so soft and cute.

“He lives in the suburbs, near the nursery. I don’t know where exactly, but there aren’t many residents there. As long as you don’t go to the nursery, you’ll be fine.” Xia Zhe gave some thought to it and felt that he needed to find out He Ning’s address. It would be bad if He Ning continued to have an eye on Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei nodded and noted it down obediently. When she had some free time, she would go there to ask around. She knew the location of the nursery because Aunt liked orchids very much, but there were very few pretty ones available in the capital.

Someone had told her that there was a nursery in the suburbs which specialized in growing rare flowers and plants and asked her to go there to take a look. However, she had always felt that it was too far and was unwilling to make the journey. This time, she could take the chance to make a trip to find out where He Ning lived as well as to buy a few pots of orchids.

As Qiao Mei thought about this, she leaned against Xia Zhe's shoulder and gradually fell asleep. Xia Zhe was about to say something when he turned around and saw Qiao Mei sleeping soundly with her eyes closed. He smiled tenderly and carried Qiao Mei back to the bed in the house.

The next morning, there was an argument in the He family. Xia Xiu's interrogation room had kept the matter very quiet and it was already the next day when the He family found out that Wang Yong had been interrogated.

He Ning was so angry that he refused to speak and did not want to eat breakfast. This was the first time he had seen someone fail at such a small matter. It was only much later that he found out what went wrong.

"They've only been married for a few months. How can Qiao Mei slim down so much that they can't recognize her? How is that possible!" He Ning said with a frown.

If something else had gone wrong, he could still accept it, but this bunch of good-for-nothings even got the person wrong! They were definitely lying!

Chapter 322: Threaten and Intimidate

He Ning looked at He Mei coldly and asked, "Exactly how much does Qiao Mei weigh now?"

Reluctantly, He Mei said, "Slightly more than 100, I guess."

He Mei also could not believe that the original Qiao Mei was a big fatty. If Xia Zhe was even willing to marry a fat person like Qiao Mei, then what was wrong with her? Why was he not willing to accept her!

He Ning asked again, "She looks as beautiful as a fairy?"

He Mei was even more unwilling to admit this fact and nodded reluctantly.

He Ning sighed. He was unwilling to face the fact that he had failed this time because he had underestimated his opponent. He originally thought he did not need to put in too much effort to handle a country girl, thus he did not ask for a lot of details before getting someone to arrange this matter. If he had paid more attention at the beginning, he would have known what Qiao Mei looked like now.

It was said that after Qiao Mei came to the capital, she visited many prominent families. Her reputation for being beautiful had long spread around and he would have only needed to ask around to know about it. It was his fault for not paying attention and causing the plan to fail.

He Ning stood up and walked around the living room a few times before stopping in front of the French windows. He looked into the distance and said, "I can't continue to rest anymore. If I continue like this, I'm going to be crippled."

Ever since he obtained the ginseng, his health had become much better. He no longer felt weak and dizzy like before. The effect of this ginseng was hundreds of times stronger than the normal kind. He also did not feel as lifeless as before, and could feel that his body was much more agile.

He wanted more of this ginseng. One was far from enough!

"Find out where that woman lives now, what time she usually goes out, who she knows and what activities she takes part in. Find out all these for me," He Ning said.

"I have the information. She's now living in the Xia family's old house, that courtyard house. She had followed Xia Zhe around to visit the neighbors, but now she seldom leaves the house," his attendant said from the corner of the living room.

He Ning's eyes lit up. When Old Madam Xia died, she left this house solely to Xia Zhe. He had found out long ago that there were many treasures hidden under the Xia family's courtyard house.

"Is the Cao family still living in that courtyard?" He Ning asked.

The attendant continued, "They're still around. Recently, they've been looking around for a house, but they haven't found anything they like. They have seen a few really nice places, but they keep rejecting the options. I don't know why."

He Ning smiled and said, "Go and tell them to hurry up and give them some pointers. Then, let the Xia family know what the Cao family is doing."

"Yes." The attendant went out to carry out the instructions.

In the living room, He Guo and He Mei looked at each other. He Mei did not know anything, but He Guo knew a lot about what had happened back then. He Guo looked at He Ning and said, "You can't be thinking of..."

He Ning looked at his elder brother with a smile and did not say anything. If the Cao family really dug up something, that would become the Cao family's weakness. When the time came, He Ning could easily make use of the Cao family. If the Xia family knew that the Cao family had dug up something, Xia Zhe would definitely not be able to stay calm. A young and impetuous lad would not allow his family's things to fall into the hands of other people.

Then, once Xia Zhe made a wrong move, he would be able to get anything he wanted from the Xia family. If Xia Zhe could manage to keep his cool, He Ning had other plans that he could set in motion.

After the Cao family received the news, the entire family was in an uproar. They did not know why the He family knew about this. They did not leak any information at all and wondered who exactly informed He Ning about this matter.

"What should we do now?" The Cao family's eldest daughter-in-law said as she looked at Cao Da anxiously.

Cao Da sat on the chair and sighed. "I just know that He Ning would never lose out. He's threatening us because he has something on us now."

Old Master Cao had gone overseas to visit his relatives earlier and had recently returned to settle these family matters. He looked at the junior family members in the yard and said, "There's no other way. It's too late for us to stop now."

It was not as if he had not done anything all these years. He had already searched underground. Even if they were not the ones who buried the things, who would be able to give any good explanations if anything was found under their house? Furthermore, they had recently searched under the floor tiles again. Anyone who came to investigate would be able to tell what they had done. If word got out, it would be even more difficult for them to explain. No one would believe anything they said now.

Chapter 323: Not Leaving

It did not matter whether outsiders believed them or not. What was more important was that He Ning had something on them now and could expose them at any time to make everyone believe that they had found something.

“Since he reminded us to hurry up, tell him that we appreciate his kindness and know what to do next. Ask him not to worry,” Old Master Cao said resignedly.

He Ning was ruthless and meticulous in whatever he did. Even when he clearly had something on someone, that person still had to thank him.

After He Ning’s attendant spoke to the Cao family, he arranged for people to secretly guard the Xia family and observe their movements carefully.

Xia Zhe discovered this on the same day the arrangement was made. Qiao Mei had originally planned to go to the antique market again. She still needed two pairs of tables and chairs at home, but Xia Zhe stopped her before she left.

“What’s wrong?” Qiao Mei asked curiously.

Xia Zhe said solemnly, “Try not to go out these few days. Just stay at home and wait a few days before you go out again.”

Qiao Mei looked around and whispered, “What happened?”

Xia Zhe leaned close to Qiao Mei's ear and said, "I don't know who is secretly monitoring us. There are more people spying on the Cao family, but there are also a few people observing us."

Qiao Mei was very puzzled. She did not understand what relationship the Cao family could have with the Xia family. They did not have much contact with each other at work nor did they have any common relatives, so how could anyone think that they were related. The only form of relationship they had was living in the same courtyard house.

The house? Could it be...

Qiao Mei stared at Xia Zhe to confirm if her thoughts were correct. Xia Zhe understood what she meant and nodded.

"Maybe the Cao family is being targeted by someone else. Recently, they must be tired from working during the day and then coming back to dig at night. It's possible that the neighbors heard the commotion or perhaps there were children who saw them and accidentally said something. It's hard to tell who sent these people here," Xia Zhe said.

Although there were many possibilities, Xia Zhe felt that this matter was arranged by He Ning. Qiao Mei also thought the same thing. A few days ago, he had just tried to destroy their marriage. Now that such a thing was happening, it was hard not to suspect that he was the one who arranged it.

"What does he want? Could it be that he wants to take advantage of the situation?" Qiao Mei also thought that He Ning might have done this and thought that he wanted to take advantage of the Cao family's dig to take the treasures for himself.

Xia Zhe did not understand their intentions either. "Let's wait patiently."

Ever since there were people monitoring the surroundings, the Cao family no longer went to work. They dug the ground at home day and night to look for those things. Even their grandchildren who were in other cities were recalled home to dig together. Since the He family already knew about what they were doing, they were not afraid of others finding out. Anyway, even if they managed to dig something up, they would still die. If they could not dig it up, they would also not be able to survive. It was a vicious cycle so they could only do whatever they could.

When Qiao Mei saw the Cao family working so hard, she secretly pulled the treasure chest down another 20 meters while they were resting. Even if they worked themselves to death, they would not be able to find the treasure chest.

After digging for more than a week, the time came to hand over the house. Xia Zhe went over to collect the keys. The Cao family knew that this day would come and had long thought about how to delay it for a period of time.

“Have you not found a place to stay yet?” Xia Zhe asked as he looked around.

“It’s not easy for us to suddenly have to find a house. Can you give us a few more days? Anyway, you’re not in a hurry to stay here. Can’t you just give us a few days?” The Cao family’s eldest daughter-in-law negotiated with Xia Zhe in a self-righteous manner.

This reason was exactly the same as what Zhou Hua said when she requested to stay in Xia Zhe’s house, that if no one else was going to stay there, it was only right for them to stay. Their mentality was that since no one was going to use the place anyway, Xia Zhe had no reason not to let them stay.

Xia Zhe did not say anything and turned to leave. The Cao family members looked at Xia Zhe as he left and smiled smugly. Young people were so easy to fool, they believed everything and did not have their own opinions on anything.

Even in the beginning, they had already thought it through. If they could not find anything, they would not leave the house. If Xia Zhe forced them to leave, they would publicize this matter extensively. At that time, the Xia family would be implicated. There were so many people in the Xia family, thus they would definitely be concerned about their reputation. Besides, Qiao Mei’s grandfather was alone and there were already so many rooms for him to stay in at their side.

Chapter 324: Déjà vu

If Xia Zhe were to criticize them, then they would offer to pay rent. It was not like they were asking to live there for free. He would not be able to kick up any fuss once they paid rent.

When Xia Zhe reached home, he said, "The Cao family is behaving like we expected. They don't plan to move away anymore."

Qiao Mei said angrily, "I just know that they want to cheat me of my ginseng!"

Xia Zhe pinched Qiao Mei's little cheeks and said with a smile, "Don't be angry. I have plenty of ways to deal with them."

Qiao Mei's eyes lit up and she asked curiously, "What solution do you have?"

"Cao Da had encountered a problem previously but it was suppressed by He Ning later. Since he can suppress it, I can revive it again and make him leave quickly," Xia Zhe said.

At that time, the Cao family could go to the countryside, the suburbs, and the wilderness. They could go anywhere they wanted!

The people from the Cao family were all useless. The only pillar of the family was Cao Da. If Cao Da failed, the Cao family would be finished. Therefore, Old Master Cao would definitely leave quickly to protect his son.

If Xia Zhe wanted to stir up trouble, he would inevitably encounter He Ning. As long as it was something He Ning had promised, there was nothing he could not do. Therefore, when the time came, He Ning would definitely do his best to protect the Cao family. This was why He Ning had been able to survive until now. Even though he had harmed many people, those who had been helped by him would still remember his kindness.

"It's my fault for thinking too simply of this matter. I should have asked them to move away immediately and not given them time," Xia Zhe said apologetically as he patted Qiao Mei's head.

"It's not your fault. It's the Cao family who didn't keep their word. What has it got to do with you? You just need to learn from your mistakes and don't be so soft-hearted anymore," Qiao Mei comforted Xia Zhe.

Xia Zhe smiled and looked at Qiao Mei. The anger in his heart had lessened a lot. He had also guessed He Ning's motive over the past few days. He Ning wanted to see the Cao family fight with the Xia family so that he could reap the benefits.

Xia Zhe wanted to go out to run errands, but Qiao Mei hugged his arm and refused to let him go.

Qiao Mei said in a pitiful manner, "It's already so late, don't go out. I'm scared to be alone. Look at the weather, it's probably going to rain soon."

Xia Zhe looked up at the sky and thought that it might be better to wait until tomorrow. It was not appropriate to leave Qiao Mei at home at a time like this, and he did not want to trouble his aunt and sister to come over.

"Alright, I'll stay at home with you," Xia Zhe said.

If he went out and He Ning's men came to the house to take revenge, it would be terrible if Qiao Mei got caught in the situation. These days, he did not dare to let Qiao Mei leave his line of sight for fear that something might happen. It would be better to bring Qiao Mei along to run his errands tomorrow and forget about going out tonight.

Not long after, it started to storm heavily. The bean-sized raindrops pattered on the roof tiles, making it too noisy to fall asleep. When Xia Zhe kept groping around under the blanket, Qiao Mei sat up angrily and slapped his stomach.

"I'm going outside to take a look." Qiao Mei still had something important to do tonight.

"It's my fault, my little ancestor. What if you catch a cold if you go outside so late at night?" Xia Zhe thought that it was his fault and quickly apologized.

Xia Zhe kept stopping her from going out. Qiao Mei was so angry that she reached out, grabbed his hands and pinned them above his head, pressing him onto the bed. Then she sat on him and looked at him.

This posture seemed to be exactly the same as what happened when they first met. Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei with a deep gaze. Seeing that the situation did not seem right, Qiao Mei hurriedly got out of bed and ran towards the toilet in the side room.

“Don’t follow me! I’m going to the toilet!” Qiao Mei shouted towards the bedroom.

Xia Zhe was still slowly reliving the feeling he felt in bed just now and gradually recalling what had happened that very first night.

When Qiao Mei reached the side room, she did not go into the toilet at all. She stood by the window and quietly scattered some vine seeds, slowly inducing their growth. The vines quickly crawled along the wall to the window.

Qiao Mei reached out to hold the vines and said softly, “My little darlings, whether we succeed or not depends on this! Tonight, it will depend on your performance! If you perform well, you will be greatly rewarded!”

When the vines heard what Qiao Mei said, they became even more active.

Chapter 325: The House Collapsed

Qiao Mei gently held the vines and transferred energy to them. Very soon, the roots of the vines formed a huge net under the Cao family’s side of the house.

The Cao family members continued digging even in the rain. However, they did not dig in the yard this time. Some time ago, they had already searched through the entire yard. If they did not manage to find anything at the depth they reached, they were sure that there was definitely nothing in the yard.

This time, they were digging inside the house. The floor tiles had already been cracked and removed. They planned to dig through one room at a time and they were sure that they would find something eventually. Two days ago, they had sent all the children staying in the side rooms to their relatives’ houses. By now, only the main room was still untouched.

Everyone in the Cao family was trying their best to find something underground in every corner of the main room.

Suddenly, there was a rumbling sound that shook the entire house. The Cao family members looked up at the house and ran out the next second with their hands over their heads. As they ran, they shouted, "Run! There's an earthquake!"

The neighbors also switched on their lights one after another. Qiao Mei wanted to continue watching the Cao family's farce, but the door of the side room was suddenly slammed open. A black figure rushed in, hugged Qiao Mei tightly and rushed out with her.

Qiao Mei was not afraid. She knew that the person hugging her was Xia Zhe. He must have heard the Cao family's yells and came to look for her. Given that he had experienced an earthquake himself, he was more sensitive to such a matter. If not for Qiao Mei saving him then, he would have died long ago.

Xia Zhe only let go when they were out of the house and in the courtyard.

"Are you alright? Are you scared?" Xia Zhe asked as he held Qiao Mei's shoulders tightly.

Qiao Mei gently touched Xia Zhe's chest and felt his rapid heartbeat and panicked breathing.

Qiao Mei smiled and looked up. "I'm fine. Don't be afraid."

Xia Zhe slowly exhaled and hugged Qiao Mei tightly in his arms. "I won't dare to let you out of my sight again."

Qiao Mei laughed heartily in Xia Zhe's arms and said with a smile, "Are you going to watch me even when I go to the toilet and take a bath?"

Xia Zhe thought for a moment and replied, "We're legally married, so I'm fine as long as you don't mind."

Qiao Mei raised her hand and gently hit Xia Zhe's chest twice.

"I don't think it was an earthquake just now. Earthquakes will shake the earth and mountains. It just shook for a moment and then there was nothing." Qiao Mei checked with him.

Xia Zhe looked around and said, "I think the sky looks quite normal too. It shouldn't be an earthquake. Looks like someone's house collapsed."

Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe looked at each other and understood what each other was thinking. The first people to mention an earthquake were the Cao family members. Moreover, they had also felt some tremors at their side of the house. Furthermore, there were more than enough reasons for the Cao family's house to collapse.

Xia Zhe carefully brought Qiao Mei to the side bedroom and said, "Rest here. It's raining heavily outside, so don't go out. I'll go and take a look at the situation and I'll tell you when I'm back. You don't have to wait for me to come back to go to sleep. Just sleep in this room tonight."

Xia Zhe went to the master bedroom to get two new sets of pajamas, one set for himself and the other set for Qiao Mei. Now that the weather was so cold and she had just gotten drenched in the rain, it was better to be careful.

"Have a good rest. I'll be back in a while." Xia Zhe quickly gave Qiao Mei a kiss and put on the raincoat that he had left in the side room before going to the Cao family's side.

Whatever happened to the house was a small matter. If someone got hurt, he had to help out. No matter how bad these people were, they did not have any intention of harming others. They were forced into it.

Qiao Mei did not want anyone to die either. She just wanted to teach the Cao family a lesson. However, this lesson seemed to be a little too big. Half of the backyard had collapsed and all the rooms would have to be repaired. Even when it was completed, it would definitely feel different from before. However, there was nothing she could do about it.

Xia Zhe's appearance shocked the Cao family, but it was actually not that strange. It was impossible for Xia Zhe not to know about it after such a huge commotion. Moreover, this house did not collapse from any earthquake at all. It was caused by all the digging they did.

The Cao family was just about to find an excuse to send Xia Zhe away when the other neighbors came running over to ask what had happened.

"What happened?"

"Why did this house collapse?"

"Who knows! This house is quite sturdy. We've lived here for so long without any issues."

Chapter 326: Natural Disaster or Man-Made Disaster

Everyone started discussing among themselves. Although such houses had been around for a long time, it was uncommon for them to collapse. Even if any collapses occurred, it would only be confined to a storeroom or one or two side rooms. No one had ever encountered a situation like what happened with the Cao family, where half of the house had collapsed.

Other people might only have a collapsed storeroom, but the Cao family only had a storeroom left.

Just as everyone was discussing, the remaining rooms also collapsed. Now, not a single room was left intact.

What exactly did the Cao family do to cause this house to collapse?

"Director Cao, what exactly is going on?" Xia Zhe said as he looked at the surrounding ruins helplessly. "Even if you don't want to return the house to me, you don't have to do this."

The neighbors understood what was going on once they heard what he said. Two days ago, they had already heard that Xia Zhe had used a 100-year-old wild ginseng to exchange for the Cao family's side of

the house. Everyone knew about this matter and had praised Xia Zhe for being a good kid who knew how to fulfill his grandmother's wishes. The people who lived here were all old neighbors and everyone knew Old Madam Xia's character.

Back then, Xia Zhe's grandmother, Wu Min, often helped the people around her. The neighbors in the vicinity had all been indebted to her at one time or another. Everyone remembered her kindness, so they doted on Xia Zhe very much.

Everyone knew about the exchange done with the ginseng. Not only did they know about it, but they also knew that the Cao family had turned around and given the ginseng to the He family.

However, they did not expect the Cao family to go to such an extent. Not only did they take the ginseng and use it to protect their wealth and status for the rest of their lives, but they even forcefully took apart Xia Zhe's house. This was an ancestral home and it would be difficult to restore it to its original condition.

The neighbors took out their flashlights to see which Cao family members were around. They realized that only the adults were there and the children were not with them. It was obvious that this was definitely not an accident. This was man-made!

These people were afraid that the children would get hurt in an accident and had sent them away in advance. The Cao family was really black-hearted.

Cao Da quickly waved his hands around and explained to everyone, "It's not like that! It's not what everyone thinks!"

"Then tell us how this house collapsed!" The neighbors demanded an answer.

Cao Da stammered and did not know how to explain. The Cao family's eldest daughter-in-law stood up and explained to everyone, "It's the heavy storm today that made the house collapse. What happened today was an accident and we were almost buried as well."

"I haven't been back to live in the front yard for more than 10 years. Tonight, the front yard didn't collapse but the backyard did. Furthermore, it collapsed right after you refused to give me back the house," Xia Zhe said to the Cao family.

On the Cao family's side of the house, even if all the side rooms collapsed, the main room should not have been affected. Such an important part of the house would have been constructed with good materials and would not collapse so easily.

"The rain was just too heavy! We were almost smashed as well!" Cao Da said.

The Cao family really had no other reason to refute the accusation, and could only make everyone believe that they were also the victims so that everyone would be less suspicious of them.

Xia Zhe shook his head and did not say anything. They just stood there in a deadlock. Everyone just joined in and waited for the Cao family to explain themselves. However, the Cao family did not dare to speak up and confront Xia Zhe. They were worried that the more they said, the more mistakes they might make.

"The rain is getting heavier. Why don't we clean up tomorrow? Let's all go back today," someone in the crowd shouted.

Xia Zhe turned around and left. He still had to go back and accompany Qiao Mei. The Cao family's mess would have to wait until tomorrow. The only good thing was that he did not have to go through too much of a hassle to cause trouble for them.

The crowd gradually dispersed. The Cao family members looked sadly at the collapsed ruins. Old Master Cao crumpled to the ground and sat there in a daze. None of them had expected this outcome.

They did not plan to leave, so they did not move anything out of the house. Now, all the household appliances at home were ruined!

Old Master Cao did not care about the furniture. He was upset about the jade antiques that he had accumulated over his entire life. Those were all his treasures that stayed in good condition for most of his life. He did not expect them to be destroyed at this moment and was on the brink of tears.

Chapter 327: Heavy Losses

Old Master Cao did not come from a privileged background and was born in an ordinary family. Later on, he worked as a waiter in a restaurant and met his benefactor there. After that, he became an apprentice in a pawnshop. He was diligent and quick-witted, so he quickly became the manager of the shop. As time passed, he also fell in love with antiques and calligraphy. When someone came to pawn valuable things, he would hide them.

Later on, Old Master Cao hid everything he had and only kept a few of his most precious jade artifacts with him. After being displaced and wandering around for half a year, he finally moved into this part of the Xia family's house. He originally thought that he could live in peace for a few years, so he had placed the items inside the wall of the main room. Now that the house had collapsed, the jade were all gone.

Old Master Cao wanted to weep out loud, but he was afraid of disturbing the neighbors, so he could only sit on the ground and teared as he looked at the ruins.

He did not dare to act rashly and attempt to look for those treasures in the ruins. If someone found out about it, he would never be able to explain himself. At that time, he would have to explain where his money came from and how these things came about.

"Why is Old Master Cao so sad? What happened to his family?" asked a passerby.

"Him? I guess he's crying for his treasures." The people around him laughed about it and went home.

The people here had all lived here for more than 10 years and everyone knew everyone's background. It was no secret that Old Master Cao liked antiques, but there was no evidence so no one reported it. Now, it seemed that Old Master Cao had hidden away a lot of "good stuff"!

When the Cao family members saw the old man crying silently, they realized something was wrong. However, it was too late and all the things inside must have been destroyed.

Qiao Mei had yet to withdraw the underground vines. Now, she could still sense what was happening at the Cao family's side and she silently observed the items in the ruins.

She could find scattered money, broken porcelain, eroded calligraphy and paintings, broken bangles, among other things. These things were not valuable at all. She slowly searched around and suddenly felt energy surging nearby. There must be something valuable nearby.

Qiao Mei looked around and finally found an inconspicuous jar. She used a vine to slowly reach into it and found a treasure!

It was a rusty iron box. After opening it, she found a crystal clear bangle inside. The quality of this bangle was definitely not inferior to the one she was wearing! It was such a pity that it was part of a set and only this bangle was left intact.

The golden energy slowly transferred to Qiao Mei's body through the vines. She closed the box and wrapped the vines tightly around it before pulling it underground.

"Father, stop crying. Let's find a place to stay first," Cao Da advised.

If Old Master Cao continued crying in such heavy rain, he would probably fall sick and be hospitalized.

"Where else can we go..." asked Old Master Cao.

The Cao family's eldest daughter-in-law said, "Let's go to stay at Xia Zhe's house. He can't possibly leave us in the lurch!"

The rest of the Cao family members also thought that it was a good idea. As long as they stayed in the front yard, they would definitely still be able to dig up something!

However, they did not expect that Xia Zhe had no intention to let them into the house.

The Cao family made their way to the front yard and knocked on the door. Their voices were so loud that they could be heard from two streets away. Xia Zhe came out with an angry expression and asked the Cao family, "What do you want?"

The Cao family's eldest daughter-in-law put her hands on her hips and said, "Our house collapsed! You have to take us in!"

Xia Zhe was so angry to hear what the Cao family's eldest daughter-in-law said that he burst out laughing. How dare they destroy someone's house and then still have the cheek to ask the owner to take them in. If they wanted to ask for help, then they needed to have the right attitude. What were they trying to do with this air of self-righteousness?

"No, my wife is asleep. She's pregnant and can't take any shock. You guys can find another place." After saying that, Xia Zhe closed the door and refused to open it no matter how they shouted.

Qiao Mei got up in a daze and looked towards the door.

"Xia Zhe! Xia Zhe!" Qiao Mei shouted twice before she saw a black figure enter the room.

"I'm here." Xia Zhe took off his raincoat and placed it along the long corridor. He went into the room and hugged Qiao Mei.

"Why is it so noisy outside?" Qiao Mei asked curiously.

She had been focused on searching for treasures in the Cao family's side and did not notice that the Cao family had started to have designs on her front yard.

Chapter 328: Extremely Stupid

"It's nothing, let them be." Xia Zhe hugged Qiao Mei and went to bed.

Qiao Mei found a comfortable angle and gradually fell asleep.

The Cao family members took turns to shout at the door. They did not believe that Xia Zhe would be able to sleep well if the five of them took turns to keep shouting!

“Xia Zhe! Open the door!”

“Xia Zhe, you’re just leaving us to die!”

“Even if we die, we’re going to die on your doorstep! Open the door!”

Not long after they started shouting, a pebble was thrown out from next door and someone shouted, “Are you done! Why are you shouting in the middle of the night! Stop shouting!”

The Cao family was so frightened that they stood rooted to the ground. Old Master Cao sat on the steps outside Xia Zhe’s house and sighed.

“Let’s go. Let’s look for a guest house,” Cao Da said.

“We don’t have money! Everything at home is gone!” the Cao family’s eldest daughter-in-law whispered.

Cao Da helped Old Master Cao up and walked towards the road. The Cao family’s eldest daughter-in-law could only follow behind and scolded him softly, talking how she had never had a good day after marrying Cao Da.

She said such things a few times a day since something happened to Cao Da, so everyone was used to it.

Cao Da first made arrangements for his family to stay in the guest house and then went to the suburbs alone to look for He Ning. He had to ask He Ning for help on this matter. Only He Ning could help their family now.

He Ning received the news even before Cao Da arrived, but he only knew that Cao Da had dug up his house and caused it to collapse. He did not know that Xia Zhe did not take them in and even chased them away.

The last time he failed, he admitted that he had underestimated his opponent and that was why he did not succeed. This time, it was supposed to be foolproof. He did not expect Cao Da, that idiot, to be able to dig until the house collapsed! What a joke!

“You’re asking me to clean up your own stupid mess!” He Ning said as he pointed angrily at Cao Da who was standing in the living room.

He Ning now hoped that the crystal chandelier hanging from the living room ceiling would fall and smash this idiot to death! He was so incompetent that everything he touched turned to dust! He was as useless as Wang Yong and the others!

“Get lost!” He Ning said as he turned around.

The guards in the house chased Cao Da out. He Ning was not exactly heartless. Before Cao Da left, he even gave him 500 dollars to help his family survive this period of time.

After sending Cao Da away, He Ning could not sit still. He had already sent someone to observe Xia Zhe’s house for a long time, but Xia Zhe actually did not do anything for a week. He Ning thought that Xia Zhe was really calm.

Did Xia Zhe really not know anything, or did he have extraordinary endurance?

He had secretly gotten someone to spread the news about the Cao family to Xia Zhe a week ago. Xia Zhe already knew about it! Yet Xia Zhe chose not to take action even after knowing about it.

“How impressive,” He Ning said, looking out the window.

He Ning looked at the rain outside and said with a smile, “As expected, the person chosen by Old Madam Xia really can’t be underestimated. It’s a pity that Xia Zhe has a fatal weakness. Since ancient times, no man can resist the charms of a beautiful woman.”

Since Xia Zhe did not fall for his trap and even gave him a big gift, he had to return the favor.

He Ning called his attendant over and whispered something in his ear.

“Go,” He Ning said.

“Yes.” The attendant rushed out after receiving the order and disappeared into the night.

At the crack of dawn, there was a big group of people gathered at the main door of Xia Zhe’s house. Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe had just fallen asleep when they were woken up by frantic knocks on the door.

“What is it...” Qiao Mei asked in a daze.

Xia Zhe changed quickly. He went out to take a look and then came back to help Qiao Mei change her clothes.

“These people don’t come with good intentions. Get dressed first, so that you don’t catch a cold,” Xia Zhe said gently.

It was still early in the morning, the rain had just stopped and the dew was heavy. It was easy to catch a cold at a time like this and nothing was more important than Qiao Mei’s health.

“Stay in the house and don’t come out.” Xia Zhe walked out after saying that.

There was a big group of people waiting outside with all kinds of tools. They looked menacing.

“Who are you?” Xia Zhe asked after he opened the door.

The man in front of him looked like the leader of this group of people. He was about 40 years old and looked kind, but was probably a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Looking at the tools his subordinates were holding, Xia Zhe could already guess who they were.

“Hello, you must be Xia Zhe. My surname is Chu and I’m the section chief of the Inspection Department. We received a report that there is a large number of restricted items hidden in your house. We came to do a check and hope that you can hand them over,” Section Chief Chu said. Restricted items referred to any items or publicity materials that were detrimental to the country.

“You must have heard wrong. We don’t have any restricted items,” Xia Zhe said.

“That’s not for you to say. We won’t know if you’re telling the truth. We’ll only know whether there’s any after we go in and conduct a search,” Section Chief Chu said as he took two more steps forward.

Xia Zhe looked at the people in front of him and thought that they looked legitimate. If he stopped them from entering the house to search the yard, there was a high chance that he would get into trouble for obstructing a public servant. They would also think that he was preventing them from entering because there really were restricted items in the house.

Xia Zhe pondered for a moment before stepping aside to let them in.

He realized that this was He Ning’s backup plan to ruin his reputation. As long as anything was found within the Cao family’s section or his section of the house, he would not be able to escape the aftermath.

The group of more than 20 people standing outside rushed into the house, but they did not act rashly. Two old men came out of the group with their walking sticks and slowly observed the surroundings with their flashlights.

“Comrade Xia Zhe, please don’t take offense. These are our old experts who are especially experienced in digging for treasures and doing inspections,” Section Chief Chu explained to Xia Zhe with a smile.

“Section Chief Chu, you don’t have to explain it to me. I understand. It’s just business, right?” Xia Zhe said as he looked into Section Chief Chu’s eyes.

Those eyes were filled with murderous intent, scaring Section Chief Chu so much that his back broke out in cold sweat. However, Section Chief Chu still had to stand up straight as he had the He family behind him!

“Of course it’s just business! We’re all legitimate,” said Section Chief Chu.

“That’s good. Don’t cause the house to collapse with your digging, like what the Cao family did. That would be a disaster. Am I right, Section Chief Chu?” Xia Zhe said as he looked at the ruins of the Cao family a distance away.

“Don’t worry, we’re all professional experts,” said Section Chief Chu.

The two experts pointed around and exchanged opinions. Finally, they decided to dig in the corner of the courtyard and a few other spots that they deemed special, including inside the well and under the cherry tree.

Just as they were about to start, Xia Zhe looked at Section Chief Chu and said, “This cherry tree was planted by my grandmother when she was still alive. I don’t want it to be damaged at all.”

Section Chief Chu ignored what Xia Zhe said and waved his hand to get his subordinates to continue.

Xia Zhe looked coldly at the people who were about to start work. His gaze was even colder than the icy rain that poured down last night.

“Chu Fan, 42 years old, originally from Zhaocai Village, started working at 17 years old after being introduced by someone...” Xia Zhe stood where he was and quietly narrated details of Section Chief Chu’s resume.

Section Chief Chu looked at Xia Zhe in surprise. This was only the first time they met and he did not expect Xia Zhe to be able to memorize details of his resume. A small fry like him usually did not attract any attention. There were not many people in the Xia family who were involved in politics and Xia Zhe also never asked about political matters. He did not expect Xia Zhe to know everything so clearly, down to the timeline. There were certain things that even he could not remember clearly by now.

“Be careful, all of you! Don’t expect to keep your job if you damage anything here!” Section Chief Chu said to his subordinates.

The Xia family was indeed not to be underestimated. Even though he had He Ning backing him up, He Ning would not help him if something really happened. A small fry like him was like cannon fodder. It would be no loss to the two families to simply throw him to the wolves.

Xia Zhe stayed with them in the yard and carefully looked at every place they dug. If they managed to throw in any restricted items when no one was paying attention, he would not be able to defend himself at all. After all, it would not be the first time that He Ning had done something like this.

Over the past few years, as long as He Ning had any doubts, he would get someone to check for restricted items at Xia Zhe’s house. However, his people would be chased out due to inconclusive evidence. He Ning did not believe that Xia Zhe could still be so calm after knowing about the Cao family’s actions, unless... unless Xia Zhe knew that the items were not in the Cao family’s side but in his own yard!

This was also the reason why He Ning had asked these people to dig up the house thoroughly. He Ning believed that Old Madam Xia had a very good reason for giving this house to Xia Zhe alone.

Not long after, another group of people came to the door. These people were not Section Chief Chu’s subordinates, but the Xia family members.

Chapter 330: End the Battle Quickly

Xia Zhe did not get anyone to inform his family. It was Zhou Sheng who had sent a message to the Xia family in the middle of the night to inform them that Xia Zhe’s house had collapsed. All the Xia family members rushed over in a panic, and even Xia Fang and Xia He rushed over from afar.

“What’s going on?” Xia Mao asked as he entered and saw the people in the yard.

Xia Fang and Xia He quickly grabbed hold of Xia Zhe and asked if Qiao Mei was injured or traumatized by the incident.

Xia Zhe pointed to the room and told them that Qiao Mei was inside, so they went in to see her. They did not know how to deal with the matters outside anyway, but they did not worry about it as all the men of the family were around.

The rest of the family members stood behind Xia Mao. This matter was not big enough for them to alarm Xia Jun yet.

Section Chief Chu said with trepidation, "Someone reported that there are a large number of restricted items in your house. We had no choice but to come and do a search to see if it's true."

Section Chief Chu looked carefully at the expressions of the Xia family members. He had been forced by He Ning to come here and carry out this task, but he could not afford to offend the Xia family either. He was just a junior section chief and was in no position to deal with either family. It was such a dilemma for him.

Xia Mao looked expressionless, but he was feeling extremely shocked. He did not know whether there was anything buried underground. Back then, he had his own suspicions but Wu Min never mentioned anything to him.

While Xia Mao could control his expression, the people behind him were not able to do the same. Everyone was stunned, especially the womenfolk.

When Section Chief Chu saw this, he realized what was going on. It appeared that what He Ning told him earlier about the Xia family members not knowing about this matter was the truth. Now that he had said it out so openly, the Xia family must be in a state of disarray.

"Nonsense! During that time, my family gave everything we had to the government. In order to commend us, the government even specially gave us a letter of commendation. The letter is still hanging at home now!" Xia Mao said angrily.

"You're right, but we still have to do a routine check. Who knows what's under the ground? It's not for us to play favorites," Section Chief Chu said with a smile.

"Of course Section Chief Chu is businesslike. We all know that," Xia Wen said.

Section Chief Chu knew about this eldest young master of the Xia family, who looked gentle and refined but was actually the one not to be trifled with. Back then, He Ning had reminded him not to communicate too much with Xia Wen. The young master was sharp and quick-witted, and would definitely be able to get something on him.

Xia Mao did not know if there was anything underground or not, but he was relieved to see Xia Zhe's calm expression. Even if there was, Xia Zhe had probably already dealt with it.

While they were talking, the workers had already dug down two meters deep. The Cao family's team of weak people could not dig so much in one night. These workers were professionals and they were quick and efficient..

The people who jumped into the well had also dug out a lot of soil and piled it up high beside the well.

When the Xia family heard that Xia Zhe's house had collapsed, they immediately sent someone to investigate. Later on, when they found out that it was the Cao family's side which had collapsed, they were relieved. However, they also had a lot of doubts and suspicions. Logically speaking, the entire house was constructed using top quality materials. They could not understand why only the Cao family's side collapsed and not a single room was left standing.

There must be something wrong here. When Xia Mao and Xia Wen came, they already knew that this matter was not that simple.

The Xia family members stood in the yard and watched them dig. The Xia family's intelligence officers came in from time to time to submit their reports. Section Chief Chu saw what was happening but he was unable to stop them. He had no right to say anything.

It was a battle of capital and might between the He family and the Xia family. A small fry like him could only wait quietly. If he said anything wrong, it could bring about a calamity for him.

He Ning had instructed the team that they must dig something out. No matter how capable the Xia family was, he wanted to skin them alive. However, he also told the team to end the battle quickly without any delay. The Xia family would definitely not give the team the luxury of time at all.

When the team dealt with other families In the past, it was normal for them to dig for three to five days. However, this was the Xia family the team was dealing with and there was no way they would allow a slow and lengthy digging process.

Section Chief Chu also had his own superior at work. If the Xia family reached the higher-ups to issue an instruction for the team to stop digging, they would have made a wasted trip. However, if such a thing should happen, making a wasted trip would be the least of his problems by then!