

Fat Wife 331

Chapter 331: Digging up a Fountain

The Xia family was a family of soldiers and politicians after all. It was not a small matter to be accused of hiding restricted items. If the team did not manage to dig up anything and the Xia family asked about who had slandered them, Section Chief Chu would not be able to bear the consequences.

Their digging had already revealed a portion of the thick roots of the cherry tree. They all dug carefully and slowly, afraid that they would break any of the roots.

The Xia family members stared at them intently. If they damaged even one of the roots, no one would be allowed to leave today!

Xia Zhe looked at the tree and recalled what his grandmother had said previously. Back then, he was still too young to understand what she meant. When his grandmother was still alive, Xia Zhe had grown up by his grandparents' side. At that time, Xia Mao and Xu Lan did not have the time to take care of Xia Zhe. One day, Wu Min held Xia Zhe's hand and came to this cherry tree, telling him to treat this tree well.

She told him that if this tree could not be saved or needed to be dug out some day, he would have to do it himself. No one else was allowed to do it.

At that time, he only thought that it was because this tree was planted by his grandparents so it had great sentimental value for them. Now that he thought about it carefully, there might be another reason behind her instruction.

After digging for three to four meters under the tree, they still found nothing. If they continued digging, they might reach the groundwater. If that happened, the water would surge up and flood the entire house. Besides, what normal person would dig for three to four meters to hide something? How long would it take for a person to dig so deep? Even if they wanted to hide something, they would not hide it so deep down.

Xia Mao felt relieved when he saw that there was nothing buried here. Xia Zhe did not know how many treasure chests there were within the yard, so he just pretended that there was nothing under the tree.

Section Chief Chu's subordinates inspected another spot and sent someone to dig there. Xia Zhe looked at the well in confusion. Logically speaking, these people should have found something after so long. He and Qiao Mei had just buried it two days ago, so he did not understand why there was nothing discovered yet.

Then what should I say when they found it and brought it up? Should I say that it was something left behind by my ancestors hundreds of years ago? However, other than the gold and treasure items, there were also silver dollars from recent years inside.

Then who should I say it belonged to...

Let's just say that it belonged to the previous owner of the house, the Jiang family! This house had gone through eight owners before it finally fell into the hands of the Xia family. Most of the Jiang family members had died early and there was not a single one left by now. There was no choice but to let them take the blame.

Just as Xia Zhe was thinking about how to get out of this situation, he heard someone shouting from behind, "Oh no! We've dug up underground water!"

The people digging at the cherry tree shouted out. The Xia family members all looked over. At this moment, the diggers had already climbed out of the pit. The water quickly filled the entire pit and started to overflow.

As more and more underground water gushed out, it eventually formed a fountain. The amount of water gushing out was even greater than the rain last night. In just a few minutes, it had flooded the entire yard and completely filled up the few pits that were dug earlier.

After what happened, there was no way to dig anymore. Section Chief Chu looked at the yard full of water and felt at a loss. There was definitely no way to continue digging today with the whole place being so flooded. If they were to come back another day, the outcome would probably be the same. Given that they did not manage to find anything even after digging up the groundwater, people would say that they had wronged the Xia family.

The Xia family was not one to be bullied. Someone would have to pay for today's losses.

“Dig, continue digging. I want to see what else you can dig up. You have flooded the house and yet you still haven’t found anything. If you can’t dig anything out today, don’t even think about leaving!” Xia Mao roared.

Section Chief Chu stood awkwardly beside Xia Mao and smiled apologetically. He did not know what to say and could only bite the bullet and asked his subordinates to continue digging.

They had no choice but to dig randomly in the courtyard. When they reached a depth that was waist deep, they were not able to dig anymore. If they jumped in and continued digging, the water would soon reach their heads. None of them dared to jump in, but none of them dared to stop either, so they could only dig around silently.

“What are you doing!” A shout came from outside the door.

Section Chief Chu knew that his mission had failed and he would not be able to keep his position. Everything was ruined!

Chapter 332: Dig Quickly

The person who came in was Section Chief Chu’s superior, Wei Huai.

As soon as Wei Huai entered, Section Chief Chu went up to him. However, Wei Huai acted as if he did not see Section Chief Chu and walked straight to Xia Mao.

“You must be Comrade Xia Mao,” Wei Huai said with a smile.

Xia Mao nodded and did not say anything. Wei Huai did not mind that Xia Mao did not exchange pleasantries with him. After all, no one would be in a good mood after someone caused their house to be in such a state.

“I’ll take him away now. Your family is one of the pillars of the country and can’t be holding on to any restricted items. This is all a misunderstanding.” After saying that, Wei Huai waved his hand and prepared to leave with his staff.

Xia Mao shouted, "Wait!"

Everyone stopped what they were doing and looked at Xia Mao quietly.

"Who are you?" Xia Mao asked Wei Huai.

"I forgot to introduce myself to you. I'm Wei Huai, his superior," Wei Huai said.

"You have to finish what you started. You can't give up halfway, right? Your subordinates brought people to search my son's house and said that there were restricted items inside. Did you find anything?" Xia Mao asked.

Wei Huai glanced at Section Chief Chu, who immediately understood and stepped forward to say, "There are still many rooms that we haven't searched. We still can't say that there is nothing here."

He had already taken a look at the furniture in the house, but just because there was nothing suspicious about the furnishings did not mean that there was nothing buried under the floor tiles.

"That's fine. We have plenty of time. Section Chief Chu, hurry up and search. You have to give our Xia family a conclusion today," Xia Mao said as he pointed at the rooms.

"Xia Wen, go and open the main door. Let the neighbors passing by take a look and bear witness for us," Xia Mao said to Xia Wen with his hands behind his back.

Xia Wen ran to open the main door. Many passersby stood at the door and watched. The Cao family's house had collapsed last night and the Xia family's house was being searched today. They definitely did not want to miss such a thing and had come to take a look.

"Everyone, come in and take a look!" Xia Wen said.

Many of the people outside knew the Xia family. They had all come to take a closer look and Zhou Sheng also rushed over early in the morning.

“Xiao Zhe, how’s Mei Mei?” Zhou Sheng hobbled in with his walking stick.

When Xia Zhe saw that, he hurriedly went forward to render assistance and said, “Grandpa Zhou, why are you here? Qiao Mei is fine, she’s in the room.”

Zhou Sheng was relieved to hear that Qiao Mei was fine. Since Xia Zhe was still here and looking well, he must be fine too. Zhou Sheng slowly walked up to Xia Mao.

“Xia Mao, what if this house collapses from their digging?” Zhou Sheng looked in the direction of the Cao family’s side and felt an ache in his heart.

Xia Mao lowered his head and said gently, “Uncle Zhou, it’s fine. They have two experts here. Even if they’re digging for something, there’s also no need to dig up every inch of the ground.”

Zhou Sheng snorted. “Hmph, experts? Yet the groundwater has been dug out and the entire courtyard is flooded.”

“Grandpa Zhou, if you’re worried, I’ll ask a few more experts to come over. They’re all teachers from my school,” Xia Wen said.

Zhou Sheng smiled and nodded. “Yes, yes, yes. Xiao Wen is an expert as well. The people you find would definitely be right for the job.”

Not long after, seven to eight experts arrived outside the door. Xia Wen had already sent them a message earlier, asking them to come by. This was to prevent the inspection team from spouting nonsense that people could not understand.

In the past, people did not pay much attention to education and they all looked down on teachers. Even if they had children, they would let the children come out to work at an early age. Even though there were prominent families who saw the value in education, they were still in the minority.

If those two experts from the inspection team really went around spouting nonsense to the neighbors, the Xia family would not be able to clear their name even if they wanted to.

“Let the experts work together! These are all professors from the university. You can all go and investigate, but hurry up! You have to give our family an explanation today. Don’t let others think that our family is doing anything wrong,” Xia Mao said to Wei Huai.

Today, they must reach a conclusion in order to settle the matter and convince everyone. Otherwise, there would definitely be other people who would use this as an excuse to cause trouble in the future. Firstly, it was to prevent the people in front of them, as well as outside, from eyeing the Xia family. Secondly, it was to stop certain Xia family members behind him from eyeing anything in this courtyard.

Chapter 333: Making Ginger Soup

Section Chief Chu wanted to say something but Wei Huai stopped him. Xia Mao turned around and went into the side house to take a rest. With so many people around, these people would not dare to bring out anything to frame him.

Xia Zhe stood silently at the side and looked at the cherry tree. The water was still gushing out under the tree. As he walked over to the side house, he passed by Wei Huai and said, “I hope that after you’re done investigating, you will restore my tree to its original state.”

“Comrade Xia Zhe, don’t worry. We definitely won’t destroy anything of yours.” Wei Huai gave him a polite smile.

Xia Zhe nodded and said, “That had better be the case.”

“Let’s dig too,” Xia Wen said before he entered the side house as well.

All the Xia family members had come into the side house. The womenfolk present did not dare to speak. There were not many stools in the room, so they could only stand inside.

“Father, mother and aunties, you can go to the room in the main house. I’ll keep an eye on things here,” Xia Zhe said.

Xia Mao stared intently at the courtyard and said, “I’ll stay here. The rest of you can go to the other room. Xia Wen, you stay here as well.”

Tan Jing looked at Xia Wen worriedly. He quietly reached out and held her hand to reassure her. She lowered her head and followed Xu Lan and the others, but she still felt worried and looked back at him every three steps she took.

Xia Mao was so busy that he only just realized that Qiao Mei was also in the house and he had yet to check on her.

“Oh, is Qiao Mei alright!” Xia Mao stood up from the stool and yelled out.

Xia Zhe shook his head and said, “She’s fine. She’s not affected.”

Xia Mao nodded in relief and sat down. Xia Wen looked into Xia Zhe’s eyes and said, “They’ll be going to Qiao Mei’s room later. Perhaps get her to tidy up now, so that she doesn’t feel too rushed later.”

Xia Wen was implying something and Xia Zhe seemed to understand what he meant.

Xia Wen did not know if there was anything in this courtyard, although his whole family had never stopped being suspicious of this courtyard. In particular, Third Aunt-in-law did not hide her unbridled interest in the house and would use this as an excuse every year to express her desire to occupy this house.

If there was really something underground and yet these people did not manage to dig up, then either Xia Zhe found a new place to bury it or he did not manage to hide it in time and had put it all in the main house.

“Okay, I’ll tell her now.” Xia Zhe turned around and went to the main house.

Zhou Hua ran in front of him and rushed into the main house in a hurry. She had long guessed that there must be something in this courtyard. It turned out just as she expected! Given that there were so many people here today, it served to prove that she was right!

Xia Zhe must have hidden all the things away! If nothing was found even after digging up such a big courtyard, he must have hidden them in the main house. She wanted to be the first one to go in and take a look!

Zhou Hua pushed open the door forcefully only to see an empty space. The five rooms in the main house only contained the furniture that Xia He had bought for Xia Zhe some time ago. There was nothing else.

Zhou Hua then ran to open the wardrobe and cabinets. There was nothing inside except for one or two pieces of old clothing. Feeling disappointed, Zhou Hua sat down on a chair.

Xia Zhe ran to Qiao Mei's room and held her hand. "Are you... are the babies feeling okay?"

As Xia He and Xia Fang were still in the room, Xia Zhe was too embarrassed to ask about Qiao Mei in front of them and could only use the children as a cover.

Qiao Mei smiled at Xia Zhe and said, "Feeling much better. Father and elder brother didn't come in as well?"

Qiao Mei kept the modern way of thinking from her other life. Although she knew that in this era, she needed to behave in a manner that avoided arousing suspicions, she was much more open-minded than most people of this time.

Xia Zhe patted Qiao Mei on the head and said, "They have to keep an eye on things outside." This young girl really just said whatever was on her mind. She did not think too much and just did things according to her heart.

Qiao Mei said to Xia Zhe, "Help me get my bag. I want to change my clothes."

Xia Zhe brought the bag to Qiao Mei as she had asked. While she was rummaging through her clothes, Qiao Mei took the opportunity to nip off a small bit of the thousand-year-old ginseng root and hid it under her nail.

“I think I’ll go and make some ginger soup for everyone. The weather is so cold after the rain,” Qiao Mei said.

Xia Zhe nodded and accompanied Qiao Mei to the kitchen to make the ginger soup. While no one was paying attention, Qiao Mei added the ginseng root from under her nail into the ingredients and made a full pot of soup.

When everyone drank the hot ginger soup, their entire bodies warmed up and they could feel the chill and fatigue being swept away.

Chapter 334: Stop Hiding

“Come take a seat and don’t tire yourself out,” Xia Mao said to Qiao Mei with a smile after he drank the soup.

The first time when Xia Mao saw Qiao Mei, he already felt that this child was very obedient and sensible. Others may say that Qiao Mei was a village girl who was not worthy of Xia Zhe, but he did not think so. A village girl had her own good points.

“What exactly is going on?” Xu Lan asked Xia Zhe.

“The Cao family’s side suddenly collapsed in the latter half of the night and I went over to take a look at what happened to their house. Then they came and said they wanted to stay over, but I didn’t let them in. After that, these people came to dig up the courtyard,” Xia Zhe said.

Zhou Hua drank the ginger soup in one gulp and looked at Xia Zhe with resentment as she whispered, “Now that the door is closed, tell us everything. Have you hidden everything well!”

Everyone stopped drinking. Xia Zhe looked at Zhou Hua expressionlessly and asked, "What do you mean by everything?"

"We're all family. Why are you so petty? It's not like I want anything from you. Just tell your third aunt-in-law the truth so that I can cover for you when the time comes," Zhou Hua said.

If not for the fact that there were so many people outside, Xu Lan would have stood up and given her a tight slap to wake her up.

Xia Zhe ignored Zhou Hua and turned to remind Qiao Mei, "They're coming in to search the house later. Just put all your things in your bag."

Qiao Mei nodded. The calligraphy and painting which she had bought at the antique market, the jade jewelry and the bangle were all in her bag. There were also two bundles of money which she had brought with her to cater for emergencies.

There were also Qiao Mei's personal items and underclothes. She wanted to make sure that these things would not get dirtied when they came in to rummage through the cabinets.

Qiao Mei put her bag to one side. Given that everyone had arrived at the house so early in the morning, she knew that all of them must not have eaten yet. Qiao Mei whispered to Xia Zhe, "I'll go and prepare some food for everyone. They must be hungry since they came so early in the morning."

Xia Zhe nodded and instructed, "Be careful then. If it's too much work, I'll go out and buy some. Don't tire yourself out."

Qiao Mei smiled and said, "It's alright, I'm already well rested. I'll go now!"

"Wait a minute!" Xia Zhe took out his jacket from the cabinet and put it on for Qiao Mei, buttoning it up properly.

“Don’t catch a chill.” Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei gently. The truth was that he was afraid the people outside would eye Qiao Mei covetously. Even though Qiao Mei was pregnant, she still had a good figure and had even grown more busty recently. He could not let others feast their eyes on such a sight.

Wearing Xia Zhe’s clothes, Qiao Mei looked like a child who had stolen an adult’s clothes. It did not fit her and looked big and loose. Xia Zhe patiently rolled up the sleeves for Qiao Mei until she could see her own hands.

“I’m off!” Qiao Mei happily ran to the kitchen to cook. Xia Zhe handed the bag to Xia He and said, “Sorry to trouble you, elder sister. I still have to go to the front to keep an eye on them.”

“Sure, leave it to me,” Xia He said.

Xia Fang looked at how Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei were behaving in a loving manner despite everything that was happening and knew that everything was alright. Xia Zhe must have made all the necessary arrangements.

Zhou Hua did not give up on her belief that there were things buried underground. She searched through every room and only went out unwillingly after confirming that there was nothing in the main house. The moment Section Chief Chu arrived at the house, she firmly believed that there must be something in this courtyard. Otherwise, there would not have been an investigation launched out of the blue.

Back then, Wu Min’s family was considered a wealthy family. She did not believe that they did not have anything left. Even if they had donated everything back then, it was impossible that they did not keep a few things.

All these years, she had been looking for the family’s valuable items, but she did not manage to find anything. It turned out that they were all hidden in this courtyard!

No wonder the old lady insisted on leaving this courtyard to Xia Zhe. After today, she must sit Xia Zhe down and ask him what was going on. If she could not get anything out of him, she would ask Xia Guang to come back and ask him!

They were all members of the Xia family, so they had to have a share of all these things! They were all the old lady's biological children, so why should all these things be left to only one grandson, Xia Zhe? Were all her other grandchildren not her biological kin? Zhou Hua herself had even given birth to three boys for the Xia family! Even if this was not an achievement, she should still be rewarded for her efforts!

Chapter 335: There Is Nothing At All

When all the womenfolk in the family were asked to come out of the main house, Qiao Mei also came out of the kitchen to cooperate with the investigation. All of Section Chief Chu's subordinates went into the house to do the search. The floor tiles in the house were all pried open and examined bit by bit. Qiao Mei did not feel any heartache when she watched the Cao family's side of the house collapse, but she felt upset now as she saw the house being stripped bare. This was a historical building. Once it was damaged, it could never be returned to its original state.

Even if the Cao family's side was not pulled down by Qiao Mei, it would still be considered unsafe for habitation as the foundation had been made unstable by their digging. However, if the house remained standing, the Cao family would continue to occupy it. She had no choice but to pull it down.

When Xia Xiu received the news about what happened, she rushed over from the army unit and only managed to reach the house now. As soon as she entered, she saw the Xia family members standing outside and the people inside digging away. On the way, she had already learned the whole story and so she did not ask much.

"Oh, Eldest Aunt is here." Qiao Mei smiled at Xia Xiu, who arrived much later than the others.

Xia Xiu looked at Qiao Mei and asked, "How are you? Do you feel uncomfortable anywhere?"

Qiao Mei shook her head. She thought it seemed that Eldest Aunt was still quite fond of her, given that Eldest Aunt checked on her as soon as she entered the house. The earlier misunderstanding was something they could put behind them.

"I'm fine." Qiao Mei looked at the floor tiles and sighed silently.

"It's alright. There are probably cracks on the old floor. Take this opportunity to put in a new floor," Xia Xiu said grandly.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia Xiu and smiled. It seemed that Eldest Aunt was quite an easy person to get along with. Xia Xiu did not have Xia Fang's gentle temperament and she was more capable and forthright. She looked a little fierce but was actually very protective of her loved ones.

"I haven't had the chance to apologize to you for what happened the last time. I believed in slanderous gossip without checking it out and ended up maligning you," Xia Xiu said as she looked at Qiao Mei seriously.

Qiao Mei could tell that Xia Xiu really wanted to get along well with her and said gently, "It's fine. It was just an oversight on the part of Eldest Aunt. I don't blame you."

The kitchen was in a mess, so Qiao Mei could only bring out everything to cook outdoors. When Xia Zhe saw this, he hurriedly went over to help out. Before long, the fragrant dough soup was ready.

Of course, Section Chief Chu and his team did not get a share of the food. They could only smell it but were unable to eat it and it made them feel terrible.

Xia Mao deliberately stood at the door to drink the soup. He was overjoyed to see them working on an empty stomach.

In the end, they did not manage to dig out anything by the time night fell. Wei Huai brought Section Chief Chu with him to apologize to the Xia family, and then they announced in front of the neighbors that someone made a malicious report against the Xia family but nothing was found in the house.

There were experts everywhere in the courtyard at the moment. If none of them managed to dig anything up, there must be nothing underground.

Wei Huai left with Section Chief Chu and his team, and Xia Wen sent off all the experts who were his colleagues. Xia Mao and Xia Xiu went to deal with the aftermath of this matter, leaving Xia Wen, Xia Zhe and the remaining womenfolk in the house.

"The repairs for this place won't be completed so fast. Come stay at my place," Xia Fang said.

Qiao Mei thought for a moment and shook her head. "I'm worried that I will fight with Kong Li. Aunt, I think we'd better not."

Xia Wen looked at the courtyard and said, "Leave the repair work to me. Our school has experts in the architecture department and many students. We can get them to come over to help out, and they can also make use of the chance to learn about such buildings."

Xia Zhe nodded and said, "Thank you, elder brother."

From the looks of it, Xia Xiu probably intended to get He Ning to hire someone to repair the courtyard. However, he would not dare to use someone that the He family hired. If these people were to plant something inside while repairing the courtyard so as to frame the Xia family, they would find it hard to explain themselves. It was better to use people whom his elder brother knew, as he would be able to check on their backgrounds.

"Let's go, Xiao Jing. We'll go make the arrangements now." Xia Wen held Tan Jing's hand to leave together.

Tan Jing looked at Zhou Hua reluctantly. She was still waiting for Zhou Hua to ask about the things underground so that she could also benefit from the knowledge.

Xia Wen could tell what Tan Jing was thinking and he looked downcasted. He pulled Tan Jing away without further ado and she had no choice but to leave with him.

Chapter 336: Leave the Kong Family Quickly

Xia Fang looked at the cherry tree in the courtyard with heartache. There were a lot of memories attached to this tree. Her mother did not leave behind much and only this tree could still bring back many happy memories for her.

"Can this tree survive?" Xia Fang asked Qiao Mei.

She knew that Qiao Mei was very good with plants. Under Qiao Mei's guidance, the orchids at home were blooming nowadays. When the weather was good, she would bring the orchids to the living room to admire them.

"The tree will definitely survive, but if we don't stop the water from flowing out, everyone living here will not be able to survive," Qiao Mei said helplessly as she looked at the bubbling fountain on the ground.

Actually, those people did not dig up the groundwater just now. It was Qiao Mei who had loosened the soil to stop them from being able to continue digging. However, she did not expect the water to flow out continuously like a fountain.

"Let's leave it for the next few days. It'll be fine after a few days when it stops raining," Xia Zhe said.

He had encountered such a situation during a previous mission, and it became fine after a few days.

"Even so, we can't just let the water keep flowing out. The courtyard is about to be destroyed since the soil has all been dug up," Xia He said as she looked around.

"It's fine. The courtyard has a drainage system. After elder brother makes the arrangements to repair the courtyard, we'll get everything repaired. The water won't flow into the house for the moment," Xia Zhe said.

Just as everyone was thinking about the cherry tree in the courtyard and how to drain the water, Zhou Hua became anxious. She whispered, "Xiao Zhe, just tell everyone the truth. Where did you put those things? Hurry up and dig them out now that they're gone so that we can take them away."

Xia He was rendered speechless when she heard this and rolled her eyes in anger. In the past, Third Aunt-in-law was not so stupid. Why was it that the older she got, the more foolish she became?

Putting aside the fact that they did not know if Section Chief Chu had left anyone behind to spy on them, the people who had been keeping an eye on the Cao family still had not left yet. There were so many pairs of eyes outside staring at the Xia family covetously. Yet, Zhou Hua seemed totally oblivious and ready to announce her thoughts to the whole world.

Xu Lan was also angry when she heard this. She would usually pretend not to hear anything when Zhou Hua talked, but Zhou Hua still dared to spout such nonsense at a critical moment like this. Was she trying to kill the Xia family!

“Liu Fen, I’m leaving. Are you coming back with me?” Xu Lan asked.

“Let’s go, let’s go!” Liu Fen hurriedly held on to Xu Lan’s arm and left Xia Zhe’s house.

Liu Fen also wanted to know if there was anything buried under the old house, but she knew that it was not the time to ask these questions now. She also knew that it was best if these things did not appear for the rest of her life. She and Xia Yao were living a prosperous life and her children were also doing well. All she wanted was for all of them to be safe and sound.

Xia Fang looked at Xia Zhe and said earnestly, “Why don’t you come to my place?”

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Xia Zhe shook his head. He knew that Qiao Mei did not like Kong Li, so he still had to respect Qiao Mei’s wishes. Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei, but she did not say anything.

“Aunt, we won’t go over. So many things have happened at home. Although Qiao Mei is in good health, she’s still probably a little traumatized,” Xia Zhe said with a smile.

Xia He thought for a moment and said, “Why don’t you guys go back to grandfather’s place? It’s indeed not quite possible for Qiao Mei to rest well and take good care of her pregnancy with Kong Li around.”

“By the way, why isn’t Kong Li here?” Qiao Mei asked curiously.

Usually, Kong Li would be the first to rush to the front when it came to such matters. She loved to watch dramatic events like this, especially when it involved Xia He.

“She’s still sleeping at home. Not even a thunderstorm or an earthquake can wake her up,” Xia He said mockingly.

Qiao Mei suddenly felt a little emotional. For a person to be able to behave like this, she had to be a callous person.

“You should all go back to stay at grandfather’s place. I’ve already disturbed Aunt for the past few days. When Kong Lu arrives, I’ll get him to take Kong Li away immediately!” Xia He hugged Xia Fang’s arm and said sweetly to her.

“When is he arriving?” Xia Zhe asked.

“In his letter, he said in two or three days’ time,” Xia He said.

“I’ll ask him to speed up and travel both day and night,” Xia Zhe said as he looked at Xia He.

If it were the old Xia He, she might have told Xia Zhe not to rush Kong Lu as it would be dangerous and that he should ask Kong Lu to be careful and to take his time. Now, she only wanted to leave the Kong family as soon as possible.

Chapter 337: Not Leaving

Qiao Mei rolled up her sleeves and wanted to go forward to deal with the roots of the cherry tree. When Xia Zhe saw this, he quickly stopped her and said, “Just tell me what to do. You can instruct me from the side.”

Now that it had started to rain again, Xia Zhe went into the house and took out the raincoat for Qiao Mei to wear. He was worried that Qiao Mei’s wrist would get tired if she had to hold an umbrella for a long time.

“It’s indeed difficult to do such work in my current clothes. I’ll rely on you then.” Qiao Mei instructed Xia Zhe on how to wrap up the roots of the cherry tree to prevent them from rotting. Otherwise, given the

incessant flooding from both the rainwater and the groundwater, the roots would rot from being soaked in water for too long.

Actually, she was just putting on an act for everyone. Even if this tree died, she would be able to resurrect it. However, she had to make it believable. Otherwise, people would cast suspicions on her.

Zhou Hua sat at the side and looked at Qiao Mei with disdain. This young woman was shameless enough to be able to flirt with a man in front of so many people. She was not as decent as she looked!

After taking care of the cherry tree, Qiao Mei went to pack up the things in the house. They had just moved in for a few days and did not have anything valuable with them. She packed a few items of clothing for both of them and prepared to leave, but Zhou Hua continued to sit down motionlessly.

“Aren’t you leaving, Third Aunt-in-law?” Qiao Mei asked.

“I’ll help you look after the courtyard! Look, it’s so chaotic around here. There are all kinds of people here. I’ll help you look after the things here so they don’t get stolen,” Zhou Hua said.

“Third Aunt-in-law, there’s nothing valuable in this house,” Qiao Mei said.

Zhou Hua pointed at the beds and furniture in the house in exasperation and said, “You’re a child from the countryside after all! Don’t you know how to be thrifty! All the things in this house cost money! You’ve only been married for a few days and you’re already looking down on these things!”

Before Qiao Mei could get angry, she suddenly felt a tight grip over her hand. Xia Zhe had become angry.

“Third Aunt-in-law, there’s no need to waste your time waiting here. Whatever you want is not here. Even if it is, it’s not yours.” Xia Zhe looked at Zhou Hua with a vicious look.

What he said made Zhou Hua so angry that her eyes turned red. She was the third daughter-in-law of the Xia family! She had officially married into the family! She had given birth to three grandsons for the Xia family!

Why was it that the things passed down in the family could not be given to the third son of the family but were all taken over by the eldest son's family! They had already taken the house, did they have to take all these things as well!

"You'd better speak louder too. He Ning's cronies haven't left yet. You'd better let them all know that there's something under the ground. When the time comes, let the He family come and tear down this house. If the Xia family gets implicated, Third Uncle's life will become even more difficult and I hope you'll be happy then!" Xia Zhe said.

Zhou Hua was overjoyed! It seemed that there was really something in this courtyard!

However, why was this matter related to the He family? What did Xia Zhe do to offend the He family?

"What did you do to offend the He family?! Why did you offend him for no reason?! The He family is not to be trifled with! What if you implicate your third uncle?!" Zhou Hua complained as she looked at Xia Zhe.

The He family was the one who started all the trouble, but the Xia family members did not tell their womenfolk about it. This was all political and military strife. The women stayed at home all day and did not work or have any social circles. They just stayed at home obediently, so there were many things that they did not know.

Xu Lan would occasionally hear Xia Mao talk about his family matters. After all, she still had some connections in the military art troupe and might be able to help. Liu Fen did not care about these things at all. What she cared about was Xia Yao's safety and whether her whole family was doing well. She would not even bother to listen to anything else even if someone wanted to tell her.

As for Zhou Hua, they deliberately kept everything from her. Zhou Hua was very easily deceived and misled. If she knew about all these family matters, everyone on the streets would know about whatever was happening in the Xia family the next day.

Sometimes, Xia Jun regretted not being stricter about his sons' marriages. The Xia family had allowed their children to fall in love freely and marry whoever they liked without any restrictions. However, this freedom had now become a "hidden danger" for the Xia family.

Chapter 338: All Imagination

“Let’s go to grandfather’s place.” Xia Zhe held on to Qiao Mei and led her out of the courtyard. He then looked back at Zhou Hua, who was still in the courtyard.

Zhou Hua looked up at the roof and saw a black shadow flashed past. It seemed that what Xia Zhe said was true. If there was really someone secretly monitoring this house, then she definitely would not be able to find anything.

“Why is Third Aunt-in-law not leaving yet? Is she so confident that she’s better than all the experts? So many experts can’t manage to find anything, but she seems to think that she can,” Qiao Mei asked curiously.

Qiao Mei did not mean to look down on or mock Zhou Hua. She was really curious about it.

It made the situation even more hilarious. Although Qiao Mei spoke very softly, everyone around could hear her.

“Third Aunt-in-law, when did you learn about archeology? You even have such skills!” Xia He asked with a laugh.

Xia Fang scolded Xia He from the side, “Don’t look down on your third aunt-in-law! Your third aunt-in-law is so much more professional than those experts.”

Xia Fang rarely joked and was unwilling to make fun of other people, so what she said must be true. So what exactly was Third Aunt-in-law’s expertise?

Qiao Mei widened her eyes and looked at Xia Zhe, then at Zhou Hua behind him with an incredulous look.

“What does that mean?” Xia He asked, feeling puzzled.

Looking at Qiao Mei's expression, Xia Zhe laughed and said, "Third Aunt-in-law's grandfather is a famous local tomb robber. It's said that Third Aunt-in-law's father knows how to do that too. As for Third Aunt-in-law... I'm not too sure about that."

"How would I have that kind of skill? In our family, the skills are only passed on to the men, not the women. By the time it gets to my generation, these sinister skills are gone. No one else knows how to do it," Zhou Hua explained quickly.

Zhou Hua was telling the truth, but there were also some other things that she did not say. She had watched her father and grandfather do these things for a long time and had learned a little from them. She was not proficient in it, but she had enough knowledge to get by.

This was not a matter to be proud of. After she left the village, she did not tell anyone about it. When she married into the Xia family, she never mentioned it at all. Even her own children did not know about these things and she did not expect Xia Zhe to know about it.

"Oh, no wonder. Third Aunt-in-law is so capable." Qiao Mei looked at Zhou Hua and asked excitedly, "Then Third Aunt-in-law, can you see anything? To be honest, we don't know if there's anything under the ground. If there is, can you guess the approximate location?"

Qiao Mei asked Zhou Hua in a low voice with a serious and sincere expression. Zhou Hua thought that she did not look like she was lying. Could it be that they really did not know anything?

From Xia Mao's expression today, it seemed like he also did not know if there was anything buried at home. Qiao Mei's expression looked real, but didn't Xia Zhe say that there was something to be found?

"We're just guessing. After all, the He family has been watching us and I also don't know where to start." Xia Zhe quickly understood what the young girl wanted to do, so he cooperated with Qiao Mei as she looked at Zhou Hua with a troubled look.

Zhou Hua believed what Xia Zhe said and whispered, "I think there are three suspicious places, namely under the cherry tree, the abandoned well, and the corner of the southeast wall. However, nothing has been dug out from these three places. The other places all look unlikely to me, so there are probably no other possible spots apart from the three. If we want to find anything, we have to dig very deep down."

Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei looked at each other. Qiao Mei was even more shocked as she knew where those things were hidden. Zhou Hua was right about all three places.

It looked like they should not underestimate others. Everyone had a capable side to them.

“You’re just making wild guesses. When I was just born, my family only had enough money to barely survive. Later on, when I was at the age when I could remember stuff, my family couldn’t even afford to buy food anymore. At that time, as soon as we had money, my maternal uncle would come and borrow it all. No matter how much money our family had, it was not enough to give to my uncle,” Xia Fang said with a sigh.

Her uncle loved to gamble. Back then, if they did not give him money, his creditors would come knocking on their door. Therefore, they had sold many things in the house to pay off her uncle’s debts.

“Later on, my uncle lost his house in a bet. In a fit of anger, my aunt-in-law went back to her own family with the children. In the end, my uncle fell ill and died. At that time, it was my mother who paid for the coffin he was buried in,” Xia Fang continued.

Chapter 339: Crushed to Pieces

Actually, Xia Fang still liked that uncle of hers very much. Putting aside his gambling habit, her uncle was a knowledgeable and passionate person. Every time he came to the house, he would bring gifts and nice food for Xia Fang.

Wu Min was usually busy with housework and Xia Jun was in the army all year round, so only her uncle kept her company. He would bring her to the temple fairs and even let her ride on his shoulder.

Later on, she did not know who led her uncle astray and brought him gambling. From then on, he made one wrong move after another. He only cared about money and no longer cared about his relatives.

Of course, Zhou Hua did not believe this story and she felt that there would definitely be one or two valuable items left behind. She did not believe in the tale of the prodigal uncle.

“Xiao Zhe, if there’s really something, you can’t just keep it for yourself! Everyone should have a share!” Zhou Hua said with a smile.

Xia Zhe looked to the other side and ignored what Zhou Hua said.

Initially, he had no intention of taking it all for himself. He was going to wait for the matter to blow over before giving everything to his grandfather and letting him do the distribution. However, from the looks of it now, there was definitely no benefit in giving it to someone like Third Aunt-in-law. It would only make Third Uncle die faster and even implicate the Xia family.

These things had to wait.

The He family was not having a good time either. The news quickly reached the He family and He Ning was so angry that he could not even eat lunch.

“What a bunch of trash! How can there be nothing under the ground of the Xia family’s house!” He Ning grabbed a vase and threw it to the ground.

His attendant was so frightened that he did not dare to make a sound.

“What the hell is going on!” He Ning said, pointing at his attendant.

“They’ve basically dug four to five meters deep into the ground at the Xia family’s house. They also carefully checked all the places that we suspected, as well as all the remaining spots. But there’s not enough time, so they weren’t able to check carefully. When we go again next time...” said the attendant.

After hearing this, He Ning sat on the sofa weakly and said, “What next time! Will the Xia family allow you to have a next time? Useless things! Forget it, this matter will end here. The same plan won’t work on the Xia family anymore.”

The Xia family still did not know Qiao Mei’s identity, so it was time to give them a big gift.

“Go and find the Liang family and tell them Qiao Mei’s identity. They will understand and thank me when the time comes,” He Ning said with a smile.

“Yes.” The attendant went off to look for the Liang family.

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The Liang family was now at a dead end. If the Xia family found out that Qiao Mei was related to them, the Xia family would probably not feel good about it.

After the Cao family stayed in the guest house for an entire day, Old Master Cao could not sit still anymore. As soon as the rain stopped, he brought the entire Cao family back to the wreckage. They were shocked to see that someone had obviously dug through the site.

The Cao family members all rushed into the wreckage to look for their own things. Old Master Cao was the most careful and the luckiest. He quickly found his precious box, but it seemed to have been opened by someone and casually thrown aside.

Old Master Cao opened it carefully and his heart almost stopped beating.

The things inside had long been crushed into pieces and there was nothing left. After the heavy rain, most of the calligraphy and paintings that were hidden at home were also ruined.

“Oh heaven! Why do you do this to me!” Old Master Cao hugged his mahogany box and sat on the ground, crying bitterly.

The people around him also sobbed from time to time. The passers-by all knew what had happened to the Cao family, but no one dared to go forward to take a look. Although the Cao family members were pitiful, they were also hateful people.

After crying for a long time, they still could not find anything useful. The women of the Cao family all returned to the guest house. There was no point in guarding the things in the wreckage as they were all crushed and useless now.

The men of the Cao family all went out to think of ways to find a place to live. They could not keep staying in the guest house as it was not a long-term solution.

Before leaving, the old man took a look at the Xia family's house. The Xia family could no longer live here as well. It was dug around as much as their side and looked like it could collapse at any time.

However, why was there nothing dug up? Was there really nothing, or did they not dig enough to reach the things?

Chapter 340: This Is Not Considered My Home

On the way, the old man suddenly remembered that Wu Min had an older brother who was well-known in the area for being a gambling addict. It might have been possible that he had squandered away all the family assets.

It seemed that the Xia family really did not have much left.

The old man left reluctantly.

Qiao Mei originally wanted to stay with Xia Zhe's grandfather, but then she felt that it was not that convenient for them to live in the same house. The house was also quite far from the hospital, so they made a last minute decision to go to the house that belonged to Xia Zhe's parents.

As soon as he reached the door, Xia Zhe became nervous. Previously, they had only gone to his grandfather's house. This was the first time that he formally brought Qiao Mei back to his parents' house.

This house was usually not occupied. Xia Mao spent most of his time in the army and rarely went home. Xu Lan usually stayed in the house that was near the military art troupe and only returned to this house

when Xia Mao came back. She was allocated the house by her workplace unit when she was young. It was very small, but it was good enough for a short stay.

Xia Zhe was raised in his grandmother's courtyard house when he was young. When he grew up and went to school, he lived with Xia Fang and rarely came to this house. In his eyes, this was not considered his home. He would consider his grandmother's courtyard house to be his home.

"We've been too busy these past few days and it didn't occur to me to bring you here to take a look." Xia Zhe explained as he looked at Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei knew that Xia Zhe was not so familiar with this place because he had gone to the wrong block when he entered the courtyard just now. In the end, it was Zhou Hua who showed them the way.

Before Qiao Mei could speak, Zhou Hua said, "You have been busy? What are you guys so busy with?"

It seemed that Zhou Hua still refused to give up on the issue of there being something underground.

"Nothing much. Is Third Aunt-in-law staying here too?" Xia Zhe asked.

Zhou Hua said, "Of course!"

Xia Zhe had always been in the army and did not know much about the matters at home. Usually, when Xia Yao and Xia Guang came home, they would bring their families to stay with Xia Jun. However, when only the womenfolk came back, they would stay at Xia Mao's house.

It was convenient to go anywhere from here and the complex was lax about visitors, so Liu Fen and Zhou Hua would come here to stay.

Xu Lan and Liu Fen were chatting in the house and were shocked to see the people coming in with all their bags. It was only later that Xu Lan realized that she should have asked Xia Zhe if he wanted to come back with them.

She did not do it on purpose as it did not strike her that this was also Xia Zhe's house. Xia Zhe also did not think of it either.

Liu Fen quickly took Xia Zhe's things and brought them upstairs to his bedroom. Liu Fen often came to this house, so she knew the layout of the house like the back of her hand.

Xia Zhe's bedroom was only about 20 square meters. It was very simply furnished. There was only a bookcase, a desk and a single bed.

Qiao Mei looked at the narrow single bed and frowned. How could both of them sleep in such a small bed at night? Fortunately, she had lost weight and did not look like she used to. Otherwise, this bed would definitely collapse!

Xia Zhe, who was behind Qiao Mei, was very satisfied with the size of this single bed. This way, he could stick even closer to Qiao Mei!

Qiao Mei put down her luggage and started to unpack. Not long after, she took out the necessities from her luggage and put them aside. She changed the bedsheets and blankets, and then prepared to go downstairs to cook.

Liu Fen witnessed all these quietly with a look of approval in her eyes. This was so much better than what Tan Jing could do when she first came. Back then, Tan Jing could not even change the bedsheets properly and was unteachable.

Liu Fen was very satisfied with how diligent Qiao Mei was, but she did not understand what Xia Zhe was doing, following behind Qiao Mei all the time. How could a man enter the kitchen!

"Xiao Zhe, such a big thing has happened at home. Aren't you going to your grandfather's place to take a look? Your wife will be fine here with us. Go and do what you have to do!" Liu Fen shouted at Xia Zhe.

Xia Zhe reached out and took the kitchen knife from Qiao Mei's hand. He clumsily cut the potatoes and said, "My father has already told my grandfather that the most important thing for me to do now is to stay by Qiao Mei's side."

Qiao Mei was pregnant and yet He Ning's ultimate goal was to make Xia Zhe a member of the He family. He Ning would not harm anyone from the Xia family, so he would only target Qiao Mei.