

Fat Wife 341

Chapter 341: Blind Dates Are So Difficult

After Xia Zhe said that, everyone in the room felt embarrassed.

Xu Lan glared at Xia Zhe and said, "Aren't you ashamed to say such things in front of so many people!"

After Xu Lan admonished Xia Zhe, she even stole a glance at Qiao Mei. This daughter-in-law of hers was really amazing. Back then, everyone knew Xia Zhe's personality. He was like a human iceberg, but he was now so infatuated with Qiao Mei that he seemed like a completely different person.

Qiao Mei felt at a loss when she looked at the elders in the living room. They already could not accept what Xia Zhe had just said. If they knew those other shameless things that Xia Zhe did behind their backs, they would probably flip out.

He would not turn out like that if he did not have the propensity for doing such things. It was not something she could teach him.

"Alright, Second Aunt-in-law. Come and sit down. Let's not care about the couple's matters." Xia He pulled Liu Fen out of the kitchen.

However, Liu Fen still felt that it was not appropriate. She wanted to say something more but was interrupted by Xia He. "Second Aunt-in-law, there's a young lady from my workplace unit who wants to go on a blind date. What do you think?"

When she heard about the potential matchmaking, Liu Fen's attention immediately got diverted and she asked excitedly, "Which family is she from? Tell me the details!"

"She's from our troupe. Her parents are from a proper workplace unit and she has an elder brother. She's beautiful and tall, and she said she wants to marry a soldier. What do you think of your Xia An?" Xia He said.

Liu Fen looked at Qiao Mei in the kitchen and said, "Is she as good-looking as Qiao Mei?"

“Yes of course, but why didn’t you ask if she’s as good-looking as me? Do you think I’m not as beautiful as Qiao Mei!” Xia He pretended to be angry as she looked at Liu Fen.

“Oh you. Of course you’re the most beautiful!” Liu Fen could not stop smiling.

Previously, Liu Fen wanted to find modest and gentle girlfriends for her sons. She thought that it was not good for a girl to be too good-looking as the man would be worried when he was not around. She felt that it would be better to find virtuous girls, but the problem was her sons were not interested in virtuous girls.

Back then, her sons had agreed to let Liu Fen make the arrangements, but before anything could happen, they became attracted to girls who were almost as beautiful as Qiao Mei. It occurred to Liu Fen that she should find good-looking girlfriends for her sons. After all, it would be hard for her daughters-in-law to avoid comparisons with Xia Zhe’s wife in the future, and she did not want her family to lose out!

She had to find someone who was prettier than Qiao Mei!

In order to have grandchildren as soon as possible, it did not matter even if the girl did not come from a good family. Qiao Mei came from a village and she was kind-hearted and beautiful. Moreover, she knew how to do all kinds of housework and was especially good at it. No one could find any fault with her. It was Xia Zhe who was the one who made people worry. How could he do things that women were supposed to do...

Liu Fen gave Xia He her detailed wishlist. Xia He could only smile and agree. If she had to find someone who looked like Qiao Mei, her two younger cousins from her second uncle’s family would never be able to find girlfriends.

Xia Zhe brought a stool into the kitchen and closed the door after he went in. This way, no one would see Qiao Mei instructing him. The two of them would be in their own world.

Zhou Hua had been staring at Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe the entire time. Since they had closed the door, they must be sharing secrets. Zhou Hua was about to eavesdrop when she was stopped by someone.

“Third Sister-in-law, you said that you wanted Xiao Xing to be transferred back to the capital. How is it going? Is it done?” Xia Fang asked.

Once Zhou Hua was reminded about this matter, she sat down angrily and said, “It’s not settled yet! I’m still waiting to ask our old master for help, but he hasn’t been free. Why don’t you help me talk to him?”

Zhou Hua had been waiting for the old master to give her an answer. Xia Jun had used all kinds of excuses to avoid her, and Xia Mao did the same as well. Therefore, she just kept waiting. If it really did not work out, Xia Fang’s husband, Xiang Jin, was also a high-ranking official! He could also arrange something for her.

“Then what kind of position are you thinking of?” Xia Fang asked patiently.

“It’s best if it’s similar to his current job. This way, it won’t be too difficult for him and he’ll be willing to do it,” Zhou Hua said.

When Xia He heard that, she was so angry to the point that she laughed. “That’s a little difficult. Third Aunt-in-law, your request is not a simple one!”

Chapter 342: Having Lunch Together

Zhou Hua looked at Xia He and said, “Really? But my son is so outstanding!”

Xia He laughed and said, “Oh, that’s right. Brother Xing is the best. For a secretary from a small county to suddenly become a secretary in the capital? Brother Xing must be really capable.”

Xia Zhe, who was in the kitchen, managed to hear snippets of the conversation. It used to be that Xia Xing was doing the best out of the few of them and his third uncle, Xia Guang, was also doing quite well. He wondered what had happened that caused Third Aunt-in-law to become like this. It seemed that he needed to give Third Uncle a call to find out what exactly happened and not let Third Aunt-in-law cause any trouble with her behavior.

Qiao Mei sat at the side and enjoyed the breeze. She smiled in satisfaction as she watched Xia Zhe busy himself in the kitchen. It would be great if he could continue to do this in the future.

It did not take long for lunch to be ready. Everyone praised Qiao Mei's culinary skills for being better than the chefs from the hotels. Even the usually picky Zhou Hua did not say anything harsh.

Only Xia Fang and Xia He knew that the dishes on the table were all prepared by Xia Zhe. There was still a huge difference between his cooking and Qiao Mei's cooking. However, he was still very talented to be able to cook such tasty food not long after he learned how to cook.

Xia He felt emotional as she ate. She lamented about how all good men were taken and she did not know how much longer she would have to suffer.

After the meal, Xia Zhe gave Xia He a secret signal and forcefully brought Qiao Mei upstairs to take a rest. This was a tacit understanding between the two siblings since they were young. Only the two of them understood the secret code.

"I don't think it's a good idea for me to come up to rest just like that. I haven't washed the dishes and cleaned the table yet! It'll be terrible if Second Aunt-in-law sees it," Qiao Mei said softly.

Xia Zhe stood behind her and asked her to hurry upstairs so that she would not get caught by Second Aunt-in-law while halfway up the stairs. He whispered to Qiao Mei, "You're the one who cooked, so don't worry about the rest. You're a pregnant woman. How can you do so much work? Go back and rest."

The two of them did not sleep much last night. Not long after they fell asleep, the Cao family's side of the house collapsed and then, so many people came early in the morning. They did not manage to get much sleep at all.

Qiao Mei obediently packed her clothes and washed up before lying on the small bed.

Fortunately, the bed was placed against the wall. This way, Qiao Mei would not fall down even if she lay on her side. Xia Zhe could still lie flat in the space next to her.

Qiao Mei patted the spot beside her. She looked at Xia Zhe with her big eyes and put on a pitiful expression. He hesitated for three seconds before giving up the struggle and lying down beside her.

No man could resist the charms of a beautiful girl.. He was just going to take an afternoon nap and not anything else.

If Zhou Hua saw this, she would definitely gossip about them again. With so many people outside, it was definitely not proper for the two of them to take an afternoon nap together in the middle of the day.

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Xia Zhe thought that he would just take a short nap, but as soon as he lay down, he regretted it. Qiao Mei had just washed up and smelled nice and sweet. Being enveloped by such a nice fragrance, his heart beat faster and his breathing quickened, but he had to control his desire and not let his hands wander around.

Xia Zhe took a deep breath and gently hugged Qiao Mei so as to suppress his desire. He buried his head in the crook of Qiao Mei's neck and said, "Go to sleep..."

Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei did not manage to rest for very long before they were woken up by Xia He. Xia Wen had contacted an architecture professor and his students to discuss the repairs of the courtyard house. Given that they were the ones asking for help, Xia Zhe did not want to make them wait, so he got up and prepared to go over to the courtyard house.

"I want to go too," Qiao Mei said to Xia Zhe groggily.

Now that Xia Fang and Xia He had gone off, there was only Xu Lan, Liu Fen and Zhou Hua at home. If Qiao Mei stayed here, it would be like sending a sheep into the tiger's den. He felt that it would be safer to bring her along.

Xia Zhe helped Qiao Mei change her clothes and brought her out with him. As soon as they reached the courtyard house, they saw the Cao family in the midst of moving out.

Cao Da had gone to look for He Ning again. With the He family's help, they quickly found a place to stay. They came back here to see if there was anything useful that they could salvage. Although it looked like everything had been destroyed, the Cao family still did not give up hope that they might find some valuable item that remained intact.

Chapter 343: "Blackmail"

"Hello, Professor. Please include the backyard when we carry out the repair work. Thank you for your hard work," Xia Zhe said with a smile.

These historical buildings all had blueprints that were ready to be used for construction purposes. These historical buildings all had specific measurements, so there was no need to redraw the building plan. They could start work right away and add whatever was needed as they progressed.

The professor from the architecture department was about 40 years old and his surname was Zhu.

Professor Zhu looked at the house in front and the wreckage in the backyard with a look of regret.

"Don't worry, it's not hard work. I'll try my best with the repairs," Professor Zhu said in a kindly manner.

Qiao Mei looked at the extent of work required and felt a little worried. She asked softly, "Professor, how much do you think this will cost?"

"If we want to use all original materials, the material cost will be about 1,000 dollars," Professor Zhu said.

It turned out that the quality of the antique bricks used in the original construction was thousands of times better than ordinary bricks. These bricks would remain in good condition even after thousands of years. Professor Zhu had checked through the house and felt that the bricks here could still be used for at least another 300 years. As for the side which had collapsed, the whole place had to be rebuilt. The most difficult part would be to find the timber to construct the house beams. In fact, the 1,000 dollars he mentioned would all be spent on the timber.

“Then how about the labor cost?” Qiao Mei asked as she looked at Professor Zhu.

Professor Zhu was stunned for a moment before looking at Xia Wen and said, “Oh, you didn’t tell them.”

Xia Wen smiled and said, “Professor Zhu is my friend. He’s here to help this time, so there’s no fee.”

Qiao Mei felt that it was inappropriate. It did not make sense for such a large project to be free of charge.

“How can there be no fees? The weather is so warm now, and this isn’t about building one or two rooms. We have to rely on Professor Zhu to repair almost the entire building. It’s definitely not right not to charge us any fees,” Qiao Mei said.

Qiao Mei did not know how to explain her current thoughts. She did not know if the current law allowed professors to take on jobs on their own. She did not know if they could do these things and how much money they should make.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia Zhe, feeling at a loss. The money for the construction work would not come from the Xia family, as the Cao family would definitely need to bear the cost. However, since the builders were hired by the Xia family, they would feel like they were doing a favor for the Xia family. She could not let that happen, as the Cao family must be the one to pay the price.

Xia Zhe understood what Qiao Mei meant and patted the back of her hand to reassure her.

“I don’t think 1,000 dollars is enough for so many bricks and tiles, right?” Xia Zhe deliberately said loudly in the direction of the backyard.

Xia Wen understood immediately and shouted along, “That’s right! We’re only talking about the money for the bricks and tiles just now! We haven’t discussed the rest!”

“Sigh, this house should have been usable for hundreds of years, but now it needs to be rebuilt after getting messed up. It definitely needs to be reinstated to exactly how it was before. Professor Zhu, what do you think?” Qiao Mei looked at Teacher Zhu playfully and blinked.

Professor Zhu also understood what was going on. He adjusted his glasses and said, "I think it will cost about 1,500 dollars for it to be exactly the same as before."

"Ah? I would think 1,500 dollars isn't enough, Professor Zhu? You still haven't said anything about the house beams and the rest of the details. I think we haven't taken all these into account," Xia Wen said as he looked at Teacher Zhu.

Professor Zhu hurriedly said, "That's right, that's right. It will probably cost at least 2,000 dollars."

Professor Zhu felt a little guilty and whispered, "There would still be a lot of money left over from 2,000 dollars. The extra money would even be enough to repair the front courtyard. I think that's enough..."

Qiao Mei grinned at Professor Zhu's cautious manner. She could tell at a glance that Professor Zhu was an honest person who seldom told lies.

Professor Zhu was trembling in fear by then. He nervously took off his glasses and wiped the sweat off his face.

Xia Wen felt that 2,000 dollars was still not enough. He reached out and took Professor Zhu's glasses to wipe it for him and said, "I think 2,000 dollars is still not enough. Back then, the roof was actually painted by a master artist. The painting materials used were top-quality, and they were all natural materials like cinnabar, gold foil and turquoise, among others. If we're going to restore it to its original condition, it should cost at least 20,000 dollars, right?"

Xia Zhe looked at Xia Wen seriously and nodded. "Indeed, I would say 20,000 dollars is a conservative estimate. It's just the cost of materials and does not include the labor fee yet. Altogether, it should cost at least 23,000 dollars."

Chapter 344: Adding Insult to Injury

"That's right, that's right. Xiao Zhe is right. There are so many students and experts here. In addition, we would need to get a master artist to come and do the painting. All these would incur a fair amount of

charges. Even if we can find a master artist, the end result won't be the same as before. What a pity, what a pity!" Xia Wen said and sighed.

She did not expect that there would be someone even more ruthless than her. What they had said about the works of a master artist were all nonsense. Which master artist would come to such a place to paint! Which master artist would paint on the ceiling! It was at most a master craftsman who had painted it.

Qiao Mei looked at the two brothers telling lies with a straight face and tried hard to hold back her laughter. Professor Zhu was so nervous that beads of sweat kept flowing down his face.

Qiao Mei took Professor Zhu to the side to drink some tea. She would leave the negotiation to the Xia brothers.

The Cao family members stomped their feet in anger when they heard the quote.

Old Master Cao pointed his finger at Xia Zhe's nose and scolded, "Little brat, you're taking advantage of the situation!"

"This is called adding insult to injury," Xia Zhe said as he looked at him indifferently.

The Cao family members were speechless.

"I still have experts over there. If you don't trust my experts, you can also invite those two experts from Section Chief Chu's team over here to find out how this house collapsed." Xia Zhe had no expression when he looked at the men from the Cao family.

The Cao family members immediately cowered. It was fine to talk about some things in private, but it would be hard to explain themselves if the truth was exposed. The He family could suppress all the rumors now, but if Xia Zhe blew up the whole matter, He Ning would not care about them anymore.

"My house was originally fine but it collapsed because of you. Shouldn't you reinstate it back to its original state?" Xia Zhe said as he looked at the Cao family members.

“We’ll repair it, but 20,000 dollars is too much. How about we find someone to repair it for you,” Cao Da looked at Xia Zhe and said hesitantly.

“I don’t trust you to fix it for me. What if the house collapses again after a few days?” Xia Zhe said.

“Just 2,000 dollars. We don’t have any more than that,” said the Cao family’s eldest daughter-in-law fiercely.

“I’d say 2,500 dollars. There are so many workers to be paid. The amount of 2,500 dollars is non-negotiable. Send the money to us tomorrow morning. Otherwise, let’s talk about how my house collapsed.” After saying that, Xia Zhe returned to the front yard with Xia Wen.

The Cao family members were stunned on the spot. They wondered where they could get 2,500 dollars when they did not even have 500 dollars now.

“The Xia family is really too much! Isn’t he afraid that we’ll tell everyone about this?” The Cao family’s eldest daughter-in-law gritted her teeth as she looked at Xia Zhe’s back.

“So what if you tell everyone? The Xia family’s house has already been checked and there’s nothing there at all. Even if you tell everyone, you’ll just be telling people that the Cao family is cowardly and doesn’t dare to retaliate when we’re bullied,” Old Master Cao said sulkily.

Back then, they had occupied this side of the house because they wanted to take the Xia family down a notch. After being so tyrannical for so many years, they had caused the Xia family’s house to collapse before they left. The Xia family would definitely not waste the chance to be able to take revenge.

This was all just retribution. It was really an eye for an eye.

“Then we’ll sue the Xia family! We’ll say that they’re extorting money!” shouted the Cao family’s second son.

Old Master Cao kicked his second son on the leg and said, "Little brat, speak louder so that Xia Zhe can hear you! He hasn't gone far yet! If you really sue him, he will definitely spend all his money on repairing the house. At that time, even 2,500 dollars won't be enough. He will continue to ask you for money until the house is repaired."

The old man had enough experience to know how things could turn out. After all, he did not live his long life in vain.

The Cao family's second son calmed down and looked at the old man with a long face. "I only have 300 dollars left. Even if we ask eldest brother's family and third brother's family to chip in, I don't think we can come up with 2,500 dollars."

When the house collapsed, the Cao family's savings were all destroyed as well. The money they had now was what they carried with them when they escaped or borrowed from their relatives later. They did not have a lot of money left.

When Xia Zhe and Xia Wen returned in high spirits, Qiao Mei knew that they must have quoted a sky-high price.

"How much did you agree to in the end?" Qiao Mei asked with a smile.

"We asked them to pay 2,500 dollars by tomorrow," Xia Wen said with a smile.

Chapter 345: Being Neighbors

Qiao Mei thought for a moment and asked, "Then if they don't have money, they'll go back on their word again!"

Back then, when they were asked to hand over the house, they used all sorts of excuses to stall for time. If Qiao Mei had not secretly pulled down the house, they would have just continued to stay there for the rest of their lives!

“Don’t worry, everyone from the Cao family has proper workplace units. If they all go to their units to get their salary in advance, they will definitely be able to raise the money,” Xia Wen said.

Qiao Mei felt more at ease to hear that. Besides, Xia Zhe still had something on them. They would definitely not dare to renege on this matter.

Professor Zhu led the students around to survey the area and have an understanding of the state of the buildings so that they could move on and come up with the construction plan.

Qiao Mei looked at the cherry tree and thought about how to save it. She could not make up her mind on whether to leave it in its current position or to move it to another location.

Over the past two days, the rain had lessened and the water coming out of the ground had also decreased a lot. Qiao Mei used the roots of some underground plants to plug in the holes so that she could replant the cherry tree in a few days.

Qiao Mei looked down the well and leaned forward. Xia Zhe was so frightened by her action that he quickly grabbed onto Qiao Mei’s wrist and did not dare to let go.

“Why don’t the two of you go back? I’ll keep an eye on things here. You two are just going around and scaring people here.” Xia Wen felt his heart tightened when he saw Qiao Mei standing by the well.

Xia Zhe did not want to leave. He was afraid that the things underground would be dug out after construction started. He wanted to stay here and keep an eye on things, but he was also worried about Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei did not want to leave either. The jade items belonging to the old man from the Cao family were still in the wreckage. She had to think of a way to get them out. Otherwise, it would be terrible if someone else took them away.

Qiao Mei slowly walked away from the well under the watchful eyes of Xia Zhe and Xia Wen.

Xia Wen sighed helplessly and said, “Keep an eye on your wife. She’s pregnant. What if she falls in?”

Xia Zhe did not know what to do. It was not just Xia Wen who was nervous. He had also broken out in cold sweat just now, but the young girl just acted as if nothing had happened.

I must find a chance to teach her a lesson! It's so worrying to have a young wife.

Xia Wen shook his head and decided to look for Professor Zhu to talk about the next steps. Even if Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei did not manage to kill him with their mushy behavior, he would probably be scared to death by Qiao Mei.

Xia Wen was seven years older than Xia Zhe and had a deeper impression of this house than Xia Zhe. He also had more feelings for this place than Xia Zhe given that he was raised by his grandparents from a young age. Also, he did not join the army so he had stayed by Wu Min's side for a long time.

Everyone in the family thought that Xia Wen was the one whom Wu Min doted on the most. After all, she was definitely closer to him than Xia Zhe, who rarely came home. The truth was that Wu Min loved both of them equally. It was just that Xia Wen was a very scrupulous and precise person and was not as determined and steadfast as Xia Zhe. That was the only reason why she left the house to Xia Zhe, and Xia Wen had never second-guessed her decision.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia Wen as he busied himself and she smiled. This elder brother was really a good person.

The concern on Xia Wen's face when she stood by the well was real. She must definitely include elder brother in all her lucrative endeavors. She definitely could not give him a share of this house, but she could urge him to buy a courtyard house nearby.

"Where does your elder brother live now?" Qiao Mei asked.

"Near the university. It's a house allocated by the university," Xia Zhe said.

Qiao Mei thought for a moment and asked, "Is that house a big one?"

“About 60 square meters, on the west side of the city,” Xia Zhe said.

In the future, the houses in the west side of the city would not end up being valuable. It seemed that she must get elder brother to change his house.

“Then ask elder brother to buy a courtyard house and be our neighbor,” Qiao Mei said.

“He has no money,” Xia Zhe replied without hesitation.

Qiao Mei was speechless for a moment, but Xia Zhe was telling the truth.

During this time, teachers did not make much. Even the monthly salary of a university teacher was only about 70 dollars. Although it was already much higher than the salary of an ordinary worker, it was still not enough to be able to save up to buy a house.

Tan Jing was a clerk at the same university as elder brother and her monthly salary was only 50 dollars. It was not even as much as elder brother’s salary, so it was hard for her to save money too.

Chapter 346: Green-Eyed Monster

Although the current housing prices were extremely cheap compared to the future, many people still could not afford it. Everyone’s income now was also very low.

If the Cao family’s half of the courtyard house was to be bought with money, it would cost about 40,000 dollars. Even if Xia Wen’s family did not spend any money at all, they could only save a little more than 1,000 dollars a year. It would be hard for Xia Wen to have 40,000 dollars.

People did not think of buying properties during this time. Their workplace units would allocate houses to them, so there was no hurry for them to buy their own house. It was good enough to have a place to stay and they did not worry about such property issues at all.

During this time, people were not allowed to buy and sell privately-owned houses and only exchanges were allowed. Even if Xia Mao and Xu Lan wanted to buy a house using money, they would not be able to do it. The houses that the Xia family members had were all allocated by their workplace units.

“My sister-in-law’s family always uses all kinds of reasons to ask my elder brother for money, so my elder brother doesn’t have a single cent to his name,” Xia Zhe said.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia Wen and did not know what she could do. It would be too sad if such a good brother still had to struggle financially.

Xia Zhe watched as Qiao Mei kept staring at Xia Wen. She was smiling and sighing and her expression kept changing. Xia Zhe felt very uncomfortable to see her doing that, even if the person she was looking at was his elder brother.

“Tell me, why do you keep going to the well?” Xia Zhe pinched Qiao Mei’s face forcefully and turned her around to look at him.

Qiao Mei covered her face in pain and said reluctantly, “Green-eyed monster...”

“What did you say?” Xia Zhe did not hear her clearly and leaned closer to look at Qiao Mei.

“I said! You’re such a green-eyed monster! What’s wrong!” Qiao Mei shouted.

It was so loud that Xia Wen could hear it from the backyard. Professor Zhu thought that the two of them were having a quarrel and hurriedly asked Xia Wen, “Xiao Wen, could it be your brother and sister-in-law quarreling? Aren’t you going to check on them?”

In this era, it was common for men to hit women when they were drunk. There were many such incidents in the village that Qiao Mei came from, and it was common even in the capital. Professor Zhu was just worried that Xia Zhe did not know his own strength if he was that kind of person...

Xia Wen smiled and said, “Professor Zhu, don’t worry. My younger brother is not that kind of person. He dotes on his wife very much.”

Qiao Mei placed her hands on her hips and looked at Xia Zhe in exasperation. She widened her eyes and stared intently at him. She was just thinking about how to help elder brother become rich so that there would not be too much of a difference between the two brothers' financial situations. Although Tan Jing looked timid on the surface, she was also a person who got jealous easily. She might not have been like this before, but she had become a sensitive person because of Third Aunt-in-law.

"I'm wrong, I'm wrong. Don't be angry, my little ancestor. I'm just..." Xia Zhe stammered, not knowing how to express that he was really jealous of his elder brother just now.

"Yes, yes, yes. You're just getting so jealous," Qiao Mei said.

"I just don't want you to look at other men..." Xia Zhe said aggrievedly.

Qiao Mei turned her head to giggle. If there was no one nearby, Qiao Mei would have gone up to give Xia Zhe a kiss.

"I won't look anymore. I won't ever look anymore," Qiao Mei said as she looked at Xia Zhe.

Xia Zhe nodded and looked at the well. "Why do you keep going to the well?"

Qiao Mei said, "I wonder if Professor Zhu and his team know how to repair a well. I still want to use this well."

Xia Zhe thought that they had already closed this issue, but he did not expect Qiao Mei to still be thinking about it.

"I'm still worried. It's just too dangerous," Xia Zhe said with a frown.

Qiao Mei looked at the surrounding buildings and said, "Having a dry well is not good for feng shui as well. We can just get Professor Zhu to put a lid on it and lock it up when it's not in use."

Seeing how persistent Qiao Mei was, Xia Zhe gave up on the idea of putting a stop to what she wanted to do. Anyway, Qiao Mei would become a military spouse in the future and she would not be staying in this house often. It would not be a problem to repair the well and fill it up again.

Just as Xia Zhe was about to ask Professor Zhu if he knew how to repair a well, two people came to the door. It was a man and a woman in their thirties or forties and they had an air about them that suggested that they were from one of the wealthy families in the capital.

Xia Zhe did not know these two people, but Xia Wen did. Xia Wen quickly walked to the door and glanced at Qiao Mei when he walked past her.

It seemed that these two people were here for Qiao Mei.

Chapter 347: Unthinkable

“What rare guests. Director Liang, how would you have time to come here?” Xia Wen greeted the visitors.

The surname was Liang?

Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe looked at each other and thought of the same person at the same time. Xia Zhe only wanted to target the He family, but he did not expect the He family to actually make use of the Liang family. He had really underestimated He Ning, who could apparently make use of anyone.

“I don’t expect Professor Xia to still remember us. It has been four years since our first meeting. Professor Xia really has a good memory!” Liang Guo said with a smile.

“What are you saying, Director Liang? You’re the one with a good memory. You can remember everything even though we’ve only met once,” Xia Wen said respectfully.

The two of them looked amiable and spoke politely with smiles on their faces, but they each had something else on their minds.

The two of them shook hands and they gave off very different vibes. Xia Wen looked younger and more handsome and cultured, while Liang Guo looked like a heavyweight. He was almost 40 years old and exuded a strong bureaucratic aura. It was obvious that he had been a government official for many years.

“Hello, Secretary Liang. Long time no see.” Xia Wen smiled and shook hands with Liang Lan.

Liang Lan had an elegant smile, exuding the feeling of an intellectual woman, and she looked very classy. The two visitors looked very respectable, but all Qiao Mei felt was that these were two hypocritical people.

In the past, if these two people had not personally written an untruthful report that falsely accused her grandfather of wrongdoings, he would not have been so angry that he publicly severed ties with his two children.

Qiao Mei looked at Liang Lan. Before Qiao Mei could react, she saw tears welling up in Liang Lan’s eyes. She choked and said, “Is this Qiao Mei? She looks so much like our father.”

Qiao Mei did not know how to answer. Xia Zhe recalled the first time he saw Qiao Mei, when she was the little fat girl standing under the kerosene lamp. Now, Qiao Mei looked like a doll. No matter then or now, she did not look like Qiao Qiang at all.

It was such a pity that such a talented person did not become an actress.

“You said I look like your father? Then who are you?” Qiao Mei pretended not to know anything.

Xia Zhe looked at his wife beside him and felt that Qiao Mei was the one who should become an actress...

“I’m Qiao Qiang’s daughter, Qiao Lan. This is your uncle, Qiao Guo.” Liang Lan walked up to Qiao Mei and wanted to hug her and reminisce about the past, but she was blocked by the tall figure in front of her.

Liang Lan looked at Xia Zhe in confusion. This must be the second young master of the Xia family. He was really good-looking, but his temperament was really very different from his brother. Xia Wen was as warm as a spring breeze, but when she looked at Xia Zhe, it felt as if she had fallen into an ice cave. His gaze was intent and fierce.

No wonder so many girls in the capital refused to get married and they all wanted to wait for Xia Zhe.

However, these were all just external factors. Most importantly, Xia Zhe was Xia Jun's successor! The future head of the Xia family!

"You must be Xia Zhe. I'm your aunt-in-law," Liang Lan said tearfully.

Before this, she was already at her wit's end and did not know what to do. She did not expect to receive this piece of joyous news from the He family. She never dreamed that she could become a relative of the Xia family, and even become Xia Zhe's aunt-in-law!

"Wait a minute! Why are you called Qiao Lan? Isn't your name Liang Lan?" Qiao Mei looked at Liang Lan with a confused expression.

Looking at Qiao Mei's puzzled gaze, Liang Lan felt relieved. Before she came, she was worried that Qiao Qiang had already told Qiao Mei about the past and she would need to explain the misunderstanding. She did not expect that Qiao Mei did not know anything. It would be a much easier situation for her now.

"My surname was Qiao for more than 20 years, but after our parents divorced, we followed our mother and had to change our surname. It was our mother who forced us to do so, so we had no choice." At this point, Liang Lan even wept openly.

Liang Lan wiped her tears and said, "We've always thought about our father and we have never forgotten that our surname is Qiao. It's something we dare not forget."

"Then do you still remember what my grandfather looks like?" Qiao Mei asked.

Chapter 348: Talking Nonsense

Liang Lan's expression froze and she was stumped for an answer.

Qiao Mei continued asking, "No one in our village has ever said that I look like my grandfather. Why do you say we look alike? Could it be that you got the wrong person because my grandfather and your father have the same name?"

Everyone present fell silent. Xia Wen held back his laughter while standing at the door and looked at the deflated expressions on the faces of Liang Guo and Liang Lan. At the same time, he was a little shocked by the cute young girl behind Xia Zhe.

He did not expect Qiao Mei to be such a person. Xia Wen could not tell if this was real or just an act.

Liang Guo and Liang Lan, on the other hand, felt that Qiao Mei was very stupid and that it was expected for a girl who grew up in the countryside to be so rude. They were obviously trying to get close to her but she could not tell. How stupid of her!

"Ah... don't you look alike? I think you do though. Maybe it's because I don't have my glasses with me. I just feel that the outlines of your faces look very similar," Liang Lan said awkwardly.

Qiao Mei's expression immediately turned serious. It was really hard to deal with such a shameless person.

"Is that so? Then it's indeed easy to get confused when you can't see clearly. However, since I was young, I've never heard that I have any other relatives. I've never seen either of you during the past 10 years and I dare not acknowledge relatives randomly. My apologies," Qiao Mei said solemnly.

In the end, she was still too young and could not continue with the pretense!

Liang Lan looked at Qiao Mei, who was starting to falter, and said with a smile, "Your grandfather may not have mentioned us, but Chen Hu should have told you about us. You actually know about us, right?"

If not for Chen Hu's letter, Qiao Mei might have been able to get away with it.

Qiao Mei looked at Liang Guo and Liang Lan and understood that the problem lay with Chen Hu. Back in the village, Chen Hu had asked her to persuade her grandfather to return to the capital to reunite with them. Chen Hu had probably told them about this in his letter.

"Let's talk inside," Xia Zhe said coldly.

Since these two people were already here, they were definitely not going to be dismissed so easily. They would definitely not give up until they achieved their goal.

Xia Wen brought everyone to a room that had been cleaned up. The original floor tiles in the house had already been pried up, and Professor Zhu and the students had specially cleaned up a place for them to rest and talk.

After bringing them there, Xia Wen left the room. After all, this was Qiao Mei's family matter and it was not convenient for him to be there.

Xia Zhe tested the chair for stability before letting Qiao Mei sit down and then placed a soft cushion behind her back. He then stood at the side and looked at Qiao Mei.

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When Liang Guo and Liang Lan saw how Xia Zhe treated Qiao Mei, they were overjoyed. The more favored Qiao Mei was in the Xia family, the more advantageous it would be for them. This way, the Xia family would be theirs for the taking.

"How's your grandfather?" Liang Guo asked.

Qiao Mei looked at Liang Guo but did not answer him.

Liang Lan then asked, "Is your grandfather feeling better? Has he gotten better?"

"When did you find out that my grandfather was sick?" Qiao Mei asked as she looked at Liang Lan coldly.

"Erm... maybe about a year ago," Liang Lan replied.

Qiao Mei suddenly laughed and said, "That's really interesting. It's only been a few months since my grandfather found out that he was sick. You actually knew it earlier than my grandfather. Could it be that you're a prophet?"

Liang Lan and Liang Guo looked back at her coolly and did not know what to say. This Qiao Mei kept talking back to them. She really did not have any manners and did not know how to respect her elders.

Xia Zhe almost suffered internal injuries from trying to hold back his laughter. This young girl was sharp-tongued and said the meanest things with the cutest expression and sweetest voice. She even looked cute while doing it. Only Qiao Mei would be able to do such a thing.

"I only heard that he had a small problem at first and later found out that he was seriously ill," Liang Lan said.

Qiao Mei wanted to retort, but she did not say anything. Back then, when Qiao Qiang found out that he was sick, he did not tell anyone. It was only when she went out to seek treatment for him that everyone found out that her grandfather was sick.

There was no need to delve into these matters. The real question at hand was why they had come to look for her.

"Who told you that I'm here?" Qiao Mei asked the two people.

Liang Lan did not know if she should say it or not. Seeing that Liang Guo did not speak, Liang Guo deliberated for a long time before finally saying, "He Ning told us."

He Ning again.

Xia Zhe had a fierce look in his eyes when he looked at the two people now.

Chapter 349: Telling the Truth

“We heard from He Ning that the Xia family had recently gotten a new daughter-in-law, but we really did not know that she was our niece. We only found out after the He family congratulated us,” Liang Guo said.

Actually, they had known about this a long time ago, but they thought that the name was just a coincidence. They did not expect Qiao Mei to actually be their niece, and it made them overjoyed.

He need not have to inform Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei about his relationship with the He family, but since his family wanted to rely on the Xia family in the future, he had to make it clear in advance. If he hid these things now and did not tell them, it would make things worse if it was exposed in the future.

Furthermore, it was also something that they could not hide from the Xia family.

“Alright, I know what you mean, but we still don’t have any form of relationship. My grandfather has long cut ties with you, so there’s nothing between us. I hope you won’t mention it again,” Qiao Mei said impatiently.

When Lang Lan heard that Qiao Qiang had already told Qiao Mei about what happened in the past, her eyes immediately turned red. “How is your grandfather?” she asked.

Qiao Mei rolled her eyes and was so angry that she could not speak. She wondered why there was no end to this matter.

However, Qiao Mei had no reason to refute her. This woman just kept asking questions about her grandfather’s health. There was nothing wrong with that and she could only answer the woman patiently.

“He’s doing alright,” Qiao Mei said.

“Then can he take the train? When can he come to the capital? Do you need us to prepare anything?” Liang Lan quickly asked when she heard that Qiao Qiang was doing fine.

“He’ll come after the backyard is fixed,” Qiao Mei said.

“Oh, then there’s no need to wait. Come and stay at our place. We have many rooms there. We are his children, so it’s only right and proper for us to take care of him when he’s old,” Liang Lan said with a smile.

“That’s right, you can ask him to come to the capital now,” Liang Guo echoed.

“Didn’t you sever ties with one another?” Qiao Mei said as she looked at the two Liang family members.

Now that they remembered him, they said that it was right and proper for them to take care of him. Then, why were they disloyal and unfilial back then? Did they suddenly recover the conscience that they had lost in the past?

“Sigh, you’re just a child and you don’t understand our situation at that time. We could only do what we did at that time. Otherwise, our family would still be living an unknown existence in goodness knows where. I think you should understand what we’re saying, right?” Liang Guo looked at Xia Zhe as he finished up his sentence.

“Foshan Village,” Qiao Mei suddenly said.

“What?” Liang Guo and Liang Lan did not quite understand what Qiao Mei was talking about.

“Of course you’re going to Foshan Village. Where else?” Qiao Mei was stunned for a moment before asking them.

“What Foshan Village?” Liang Lan asked curiously.

Qiao Mei laughed and said, "Don't tell me you don't know that my grandfather and I live in Foshan Village?"

Liang Lan and Liang Guo looked at each other. They really did not know the name of that village. They only knew that it was located in a poor mountain area in the northeastern part and it was a place where people could not go out for half a year when it snowed. It was located in a remote countryside that was extremely far from the city.

They had only started to look for Qiao Qiang in the past few months and had gone to Chen Hu to ask for all this information. However, Chen Hu only told them about Qiao Qiang's recent situation and did not mention the name of the village.

"Ah... yes, yes, yes! We remember it even after all these years! We won't forget Foshan Village. We've always wanted to go back and see you guys, but you also know that your grandfather has a very stubborn temper, so we don't want to disturb him and make him angry," Liang Lan said.

Qiao Mei suddenly laughed out loudly and said, "Hahahaha, I'm just teasing you! Our place is called the Qiao Family Village."

The expressions on the faces of Liang Guo and Liang Lan instantly darkened. This wretched girl had so many tricks up her sleeve!

"The Xia family can't help with the Liang family's issues," Xia Zhe said coldly.

The two members of the Liang family thought that Qiao Mei was just a girl who grew up in the countryside and had not seen much of the world. They did not expect this wretched girl to be so scheming and even managed to fool around with them.

Xia Zhe was the second young master of the Xia family and Xia Jun's future heir. It seemed as if he did not have any real power given that he had been away from home, but in fact, his words still carried a lot of weight in the Xia family.

Liang Guo glanced at Liang Lan and she asked with a smile, "Then when are you going back to the Qiao Family Village? How about we go back with you to visit your grandfather?"

Qiao Mei looked at Liang Lan and smiled as she said, "I already said that it's a lie. Our house is in Foshan Village."

The two members of the Liang family could not stand it anymore. Their lie had been rudely exposed and it was no longer possible to keep up with the pretense that they missed their father.

"Is there anything else?" Xia Zhe sneered as he spoke to the two Liang family members.

Given that they could not pretend anymore, they left without even saying any niceties.

Xia Wen saw the two Liang family members walk out in exasperation and went forward to ask, "What's wrong? Aren't you going to stay for dinner?"

"No, Professor Xia," Liang Guo said coldly.

Xia Wen looked at the two people leaving and felt confused. When he entered the house, he saw Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei having a good laugh together.

"What did the two of you do? Look at how angry those people are," Xia Wen said with a smile.

Xia Wen believed that it was impossible for Xia Zhe to be rude to strangers without a reason. Seeing the way the Liang siblings walked out, they were definitely furious because they had been embarrassed.

"They came to my house and put on a show of deep love that a pair of children had for their father, so I just exposed them a little." Qiao Mei shrugged innocently.

Xia Zhe said as he massaged Qiao Mei's head, "You still have the cheek to say that. Why are you so naughty?"

Qiao Mei told Xia Wen everything that transpired just now, giving Xia Wen a rough idea of the whole issue. He did not ask about the details and only knew that it also concerned the Xia family.

Although Xia Wen was a university professor, the truth was that the Xia family had originally wanted Xia Wen to go into politics and Xia Zhe to join the military. This way, the Xia family would have their hands in both military and political affairs. In the beginning, Xia Mao was the one who handled the Xia family's matters. Later on, Xia Mao brought Xia Wen along as his understudy and slowly started to leave the family matters to Xia Wen.

"This whole thing was their fault in the first place, but you're quite impressive. Liang Guo is famous in the political circle for being a very tactful and slippery eel. I didn't expect you to be able to make him so angry today!" Xia Wen thought of Liang Guo's expression when he left just now and found it very interesting.

Today, they had only temporarily forced the Liang siblings to retreat. Those two would not let the matter rest. Qiao Mei was probably the only person in the entire capital who could turn them away empty-handed.

"It's fine, elder brother. Let's not bother about this matter." Qiao Mei then said to both Xia Zhe and Xia Wen, "My grandfather cut ties with them back then because he really doesn't want to interact with them anymore. I would never have known what happened at all if it was not someone else who told me about it after all these years. I think my grandfather's original intention was for me not to know."

"Yes, I understand. I'm glad we think the same." Xia Wen looked at Qiao Mei appreciatively.

The young girl was very meticulous even though she was still young. Back then, before Qiao Mei entered the family, Xia Wen had heard Tan Jing mention a few things. She had heard the gossip from Xu Lan and the other aunts-in-law, and it was all bad things about Qiao Mei. At that time, Xia Wen really thought that there was some unspeakable reason behind Xia Zhe's decision to marry Qiao Mei.

In fact, it was truly because of an unspeakable reason...

Now that Qiao Mei was a capable girl who was even able to help the Xia family, it was something to be happy about. If Qiao Mei sided with others, it would undoubtedly be fatal to the Xia family. In that case,

there would only be two outcomes. There would be a rift between husband and wife, and the Xia family would be greatly affected.

Qiao Mei could also tell that Xia Wen was the one handling all the family matters. As long as Xia Wen understood what she was thinking, then there would be no big problem.

The matter regarding the Liang family was considered settled. Xia Wen looked at Qiao Mei and said, "Professor Zhu said that he doesn't know how to dig wells, so I found a new person to help. This matter has also been resolved."

Qiao Mei said happily, "Thank you so much, elder brother. Thank you so much."

Xia Zhe was still worried about the well. He thought that it would be better for him to keep an eye on this matter personally. He also had to test if the well cover was sturdy enough in case Qiao Mei was not careful. Since he could not dissuade the young girl, he could only find another solution.