

Fat Wife 371

Chapter 371: Coming Back From Jumping Into the Lake

The two of them hurriedly finished doing their shopping and returned to the courtyard house.

He Ning looked at the withered flowers and plants beside him and said, "Take these away quickly. Ask the experts to see if they can save them."

As soon the plants were removed, he felt his temples throbbing. His head hurt badly and he felt uncomfortable all over when he could not smell the fragrance of flowers.

Even though the doctor could not explain why it made him feel better, he continued to surround himself with as many flowers as he could so long as it made him feel more comfortable. He did not care if it was just a psychological effect.

"Men! Get me another batch! Get the best ones!" He Ning said as he rubbed his temples.

His attendant quickly removed the old flower pots and arranged for new flowers and plants to be moved in. Having worked for He Ning for a long time, he knew about He Ning's headaches. He had previously bought a lot of flowers and plants and had them taken care of somewhere else. This was so that he would be able to replace the wilted flowers and plants with new batches as soon as it was required and there would be little downtime.

It was a known fact in the capital that He Ning was unable to keep any plants alive.

However, there were only a few types of floral fragrances that were able to alleviate He Ning's headache. These flowers bloomed only during certain periods in a year and there was a high chance of running out when the flowers were not in season.

This issue was a headache for all the experts. Every time the flowers ran out, He Ning would fly into a rage. Recently, the He family had started investing a lot of money into research on extending the flowering period of these plants.

Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei arrived back at the courtyard house very quickly. After putting away their things, they returned to Xu Lan's place to rest.

As soon as they walked through the door, they saw Liu Fen talking earnestly to Xia He.

"Xiao He, how can you do this? You're still his wife..."

Seeing that Liu Fen was about to continue, Qiao Mei hurriedly rushed to Xia He and said, "What's wrong you, elder sister? Why is your hair so wet? But it's not raining today?"

"Your elder sister jumped into the river!" Zhou Hua said with a fake show of concern.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia He in surprise. She did not expect such a thing to have happened so early in the morning.

"Second Aunt-in-law, do we have ginger soup at home? Hurry up and get some for elder sister!" Qiao Mei said.

Qiao Mei turned around and smiled at Liu Fen. On seeing that, Liu Fen closed her mouth awkwardly and went to the kitchen to make some ginger soup.

Xu Lan was very surprised by Liu Fen making a compromise. It seemed that this new daughter-in-law of hers was quite capable of dealing with Liu Fen. Although she did not know what happened, she decided that she had to be more careful of the girl.

"I'm fine," Xia He said gently.

Xia He slowly dried her hair with a towel. She was wearing old clothes that looked a little too big on her. Qiao Mei vaguely remembered that these were Xu Lan's clothes.

"Why did you jump into the lake?" Qiao Mei asked.

Qiao Mei had squatted down earlier and Xia Zhe went forward to help her up, bringing her to one side to sit down. Qiao Mei's belly was much bigger now and she was not as nimble as before.

"I went boating with him at the lake in the park, but we got into an argument on the boat. We couldn't reach an agreement, so I left him alone on the boat and swam back," Xia He said with a smile.

Xia He whispered into Qiao Mei's ear proudly, "I don't know if he can come back ashore today. He can't swim."

Qiao Mei looked at Xia He with admiration. "This is such a great idea!"

Qiao Mei looked at Xia He cautiously and asked, "Does Xia Zhe know how to swim?"

She thought that if Xia Zhe also made her angry one day, she might be able to use this trick!

Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei with a dark expression. This young girl really had a lot of ideas.

"Then you're going to be disappointed. Our Xia Zhe has been trained in all aspects since he was young. Don't forget that we were all trained by Eldest Aunt. We're omnipotent." Xia He smiled at Qiao Mei.

This young lady was really interesting. No wonder Xia Zhe liked Qiao Mei so much. Putting aside Xia Zhe, she liked Qiao Mei very much as well.

Qiao Mei thought for a moment and suddenly looked at Xia Zhe with an awkward smile. "Well... I don't think I know how to swim."

Xia He laughed out loudly when she heard this.

"How can you even think of leaving Xia Zhe stranded at the lake when you can't swim? Hahahaha, why are you so funny!" Xia He laughed until tears came out of her eyes. It was impossible to tell that she had just argued with someone.

Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei's figure and sized her up. From behind, it was impossible to tell that Qiao Mei was currently pregnant. If she wore a swimsuit...

Chapter 372: Double Standards

"It's fine. After you give birth, let's get Xia Zhe to teach you how to swim," Xia He said.

Xia Zhe had just been lost in his thoughts about Qiao Mei's graceful figure. When he heard that Qiao Mei wanted to learn how to swim, he immediately became stern and said, "No, I won't teach her. It's too dangerous. She must stay away from the water!"

Liu Fen walked out of the kitchen with a bowl of hot ginger soup and agreed, "That's right, Xiao Zhe is right! Why should a girl learn how to swim! It's so embarrassing to be seen by men dressed like that!"

Given that there was finally someone in the family who agreed with her on something, she must definitely say her piece.

Qiao Mei blinked her big bright eyes and looked at Xia Zhe with a smile. She tugged at Xia Zhe's sleeve and swayed it gently.

"It's useless to do that. I won't teach you. There's no room for discussion on this matter!" Xia Zhe shook off Qiao Mei's hand and said sternly.

Qiao Mei pouted and said, "If you don't want to teach me, so be it. Why are you so fierce..."

Xia Zhe also regretted his harsh words and actions just now. He looked at the aggrieved Qiao Mei and did not know what to say. He was surrounded by his elders and could not really say anything.

Xia He reached out to rub the goosebumps on her arms and said, "The two of you are really mushy! Hurry up and go back to your room! Don't let me see you!"

"I don't want to talk to Xia Zhe. Elder sister, let's go to the room and talk," Qiao Mei said.

Xia He took the ginger soup from Liu Fen and gulped it down. She wiped the corners of her mouth and said, "Thank you, Second Aunt-in-law."

After that, she went into the room with Qiao Mei. The living room was filled with her elders. If she stayed any longer, Second Aunt-in-law would definitely nag at her about what women should and should not do.

She had long wanted to leave the living room and go back to her room. Before Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe returned, Xia He had already been reprimanded once. However, she was brought up to respect her elders. Furthermore, Liu Fen was being kind and did not have any ill intentions, so Xia He was too embarrassed to just walk out.

Now that Qiao Mei was back, she finally had a chance to avoid her elders. Their timing was really perfect!

Liu Fen held on to the bowl and chased after Qiao Mei and Xia He as she said, "I'm not done yet! Xia He!"

Qiao Mei smiled at Liu Fen and said, "Second Aunt-in-law, it's almost noon. Isn't it your turn to cook today?"

Liu Fen stood rooted to the spot and did not dare to take another step forward. She said softly, "I'll go now, I'll go now." Then, she turned around, went into the kitchen and did not come out again.

Xia He looked at Liu Fen strangely and then at Qiao Mei with admiration.

She was also there when Qiao Mei and Liu Fen confronted each other, but she did not expect such a surprisingly good outcome. Even Xu Lan, who had married into the Xia family for so many years, could not do anything to Liu Fen. She did not expect Qiao Mei to be able to subdue Liu Fen so easily.

Xia Zhe also finally found out how Qiao Mei managed to scare Liu Fen so much.

The scene was a little different from what Qiao Mei had described to him. The Qiao Mei in front of him was someone he had never seen before. Her eyes were filled with coldness and determination, and the look she gave was spine-chilling.

It was no wonder that Liu Fen was so deferential to Qiao Mei. Anyone who saw that look would be afraid of her.

When Qiao Mei saw Xia Zhe looking over, her expression softened a lot. She smiled sweetly at Xia Zhe and brought Xia He upstairs.

Xia Zhe shook his head resignedly. "This young girl..."

After going upstairs and entering her room, Qiao Mei felt much more relaxed. Xia He also loosened up as she finally did not have to face Liu Fen's questions anymore.

"Elder sister, you aren't able to reach an agreement with him? What did you say?" Qiao Mei sat on the bed and asked.

"I told him about the divorce." Xia He roughly told Qiao Mei about what happened on the lake.

Qiao Mei understood what it meant and asked, "So if he really sends Old Madam Kong and Kong Li back to the countryside, you won't get a divorce?"

This same question had also crossed Xia He's mind. She had originally thought that if it was a possibility, then she would take a step back. However, the truth was that it was impossible for such a thing to happen.

"I'm lying to him. Even if he wanted to send his mother and sister away, these two people would do anything to kick up a fuss and then he would agree to anything they want, so it's impossible," Xia He said with a cold smile.

Chapter 373: A Ruthless Person

But what if?

If Kong Lu really made up his mind to do it, then what would happen to elder sister?

Qiao Mei looked at Xia He worriedly but did not say anything. If she asked the question she was thinking of, it would feel as if she was looking forward to Xia He's divorce. In this era when societal norms frowned on separation, if others heard what Qiao Mei said, they would think that Qiao Mei had bad intentions.

Xia He knew what Qiao Mei was worried about. She held Qiao Mei's hand and said, "If he is really able to send them away, it will only be temporary. This whole matter will be an arduous battle. Even if Kong Lu is lucky enough to win in the end, his mother will still be ready to counterattack at any time."

Qiao Mei nodded in admiration. This was really a child raised by a military family. Her choice of words were all so professional.

"He will need to pay a huge price just to get his mother to go back for the time being. When he's injured and on his last breath, he will come and beg me not to get a divorce. At that time, he will view me as his lifesaver."

Xia He spread her hand and reached out to grab the air. "At that moment, I'll reject him and insist on getting a divorce. Then, his last hope will be shattered."

Qiao Mei looked at Xia He in shock. What a ruthless person.

However, given that Xia He had her own plans and intentions, there was no need for Qiao Mei to plan anything for Xia He.

After chatting briefly with Xia He, Qiao Mei went downstairs to help Liu Fen with the cooking. She was currently especially picky with food. She did not like food that was made by others and could not get used to the taste.

“What’s wrong with Second Aunt-in-law? Her culinary skills are too indescribable. Does she not cook at home? Based on her character, it doesn’t seem like it,” Qiao Mei looked at the kitchen and asked curiously.

“How can it be that she does not cook at home? Perhaps she doesn’t have any talent. Some people can’t cook well even if they do it all their lives,” Xia He said.

It seemed that Liu Fen was such a person.

Xia He silently raised her hand and said, “I’m such a person too.”

Another reason why Old Madam Kong looked down on her was because she did not know how to cook. The Xia family always had helpers who cooked for them. It was not just Xia He, even Xu Lan did not know how to cook.

Old Madam Kong could cook very well, but she just did not want to do it and always insisted that Xia He did the cooking. She despised Xia He’s cooking and would scold Xia He as she ate, but she still asked Xia He to cook every day.

Thinking about the past gave Xia He a headache. She shook her head vigorously and decided not to recall these memories anymore. She wanted to have a fresh start.

Qiao Mei walked into the kitchen. Xia Zhe also wanted to go over and help out, but he did not expect to be blocked by Zhou Hua the moment he got up.

“Um... Xiao Zhe, can Third Aunt-in-law ask you for something?” Zhou Hua stammered.

Xia Zhe could guess what Zhou Hua stopped him for.

“Third Aunt-in-law, you can go ahead and ask, but you know the Xia family’s rules. I can help you with things that are within our principles, but it’s best not to mention it if it’s not,” Xia Zhe said as he sat opposite Zhou Hua.

When Zhou Hua saw that Xia Zhe was willing to listen to her, she said excitedly, "Of course I won't ask for something that's not! It's definitely within our principles!"

Xia Zhe looked at Zhou Hua and said, "Then what does Third Aunt-in-law want?"

"It's just that... I heard that Qiao Mei has wild ginseng at home. Does she have any that are more than 30 years old? Can you give Third Aunt-in-law a few as I have an urgent use for them? I'll pay you later!" Zhou Hua said seriously.

Xia Zhe did not expect Zhou Hua to be here asking for ginseng, but it was quite obvious what the ginseng was for.

"Why do you need ginseng? The act of giving gifts violates the Xia family's principles," Xia Zhe said.

Zhou Hua waved her hands and said, "No, no! Xiao Zhe, you've misunderstood! I'm buying it for my father! It's just that his health has gotten worse recently, so I want to buy some ginseng for him as nourishment."

"Then... how many do you want?" Xia Zhe asked.

"It's definitely better to have more! It would be easy to finish one a month, otherwise what's the point!" Zhou Hua made it sound as if wild ginseng was easy to come by and free to eat.

Even Xu Lan, who was sitting at the side, could not stand it anymore and said, "You talk about finishing one ginseng a month, and it's even 30-year-old wild ginseng that you're talking about. Aren't you afraid of dying from too much nourishment? One ginseng can last ordinary people for a year!"

Chapter 374: Lying

"I... because it's so hard to find good ginseng. It's a treasure that can only be chanced upon by luck! I feel that I should stock up. What if I don't have any when I really need it?" Zhou Hua said self-righteously.

In the kitchen, Qiao Mei really could not stand it anymore. She handed the spatula to Liu Fen and walked out.

“Third Aunt-in-law, you’re really too prudent. You even know that you have to keep good things for yourself in case of emergencies!” Qiao Mei came to the sofa and pushed Xia Zhe aside, sitting down opposite Zhou Hua.

She had to be the one to handle such matters. If it was a matter between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, then the man should stand up for his wife. However, when it came to other relatives in the family, the wife would need to play the role of the bad guy.

“You! You’re a daughter-in-law of the Xia family! You must put our Xia family first in everything! It’s not a difficult thing for you to help! I won’t ask you for too many. Just one will do,” Zhou Hua said angrily.

“It’s not the Xia family’s problem. It’s your personal problem,” Qiao Mei said.

Qiao Mei looked at Zhou Hua’s exasperated expression and continued, “Besides, I have to put Xia Zhe’s parents and grandfather before him, and then there’s Xia Zhe himself. In my opinion, there are so many people I need to prioritize before you, right? I don’t have that many wild ginsengs at home, so I have to think for my family as well. Don’t you think so, Third Aunt-in-law?”

“You! You! You!” Zhou Hua stood up angrily and pointed at Qiao Mei.

Zhou Hua did not expect the young lady to be so sharp-tongued and to make her suffer a setback. Zhou Hua knew she could not win the argument against Qiao Mei, so she turned to Xia Zhe and said, “Does a woman have the final say in your family! Does she think she can make decisions for your family?”

Xia Zhe leaned back on the sofa and said, “You’re not asking for help from my family, but from Qiao Mei’s family, so she should be the one making the decision. But if Third Aunt-in-law is talking about our own little family, then Qiao Mei is indeed in charge.”

Zhou Hua was speechless for the moment and just stared at Qiao Mei.

Liu Fen had wanted to come out and join in the fun, but she immediately met Qiao Mei's warning gaze. Liu Fen did not dare to stay outside any longer and immediately ran back to the kitchen to continue cooking.

"Oh my, the water is boiling. It's time to cook," Liu Fen muttered to herself.

She slowly closed the kitchen door and focused on cooking. This was the battlefield she was comfortable with and she decided not to worry about anything outside.

"Third Aunt-in-law, I really don't have too many ginsengs at home. You should buy from someone else," Qiao Mei said.

Zhou Hua looked at Qiao Mei and was about to say something when Xia Zhe stood up, stared into Zhou Hua's eyes and said, "Third Aunt-in-law, everyone knows what you want to do with the ginseng. Let's not say it out loud and leave it dignified."

"Xiao Zhe, what are you talking about... I'm using it to treat illnesses..." Zhou Hua avoided Xia Zhe's gaze and did not dare to look at him directly.

"It's useless for you to lie. I'll tell my father, grandfather, Eldest Aunt and Third Uncle about this. If your father is really sick, our Xia family won't sit back and do nothing," Xia Zhe said.

When Zhou Hua heard that he was going to tell Xia Guang about this, she immediately became anxious. She hurriedly waved her hand and said, "No, no, no! Don't tell your third uncle! If your third uncle finds out that I come to trouble you about my family matters, he'll scold me! Don't tell him!"

Xia Zhe looked at Zhou Hua in disappointment. She was still lying so stubbornly.

He had not intended to tell the elders in his family about this. However, now it seemed that he must tell them about this, otherwise there would be endless trouble in the future.

"You're just a junior member of the family. Why are you getting involved in our matters?" Zhou Hua said.

“Third Aunt-in-law was still asking us juniors for help just now. Why aren’t we allowed to get involved now?” Qiao Mei said.

Xia Zhe stared at Zhou Hua intently and asked, “Have you already done something? Or have you already given something? Who are you giving the ginseng to? Who has agreed to grant you something you wish for?”

Zhou Hua was so nervous that her forehead started to sweat and she spoke incoherently. Xu Lan, who was usually not concerned about family matters, looked at Zhou Hua nervously when she heard what Xia Zhe said. It was not as if she did not know anything at all. In the entire capital, there were not many families who could render help to others. Apart from the Xia family, only the He family could do the same.

Chapter 375: Background Check

“Xiao Zhe, what nonsense are you talking about? I did not ask anyone to grant me a wish, seriously...” By now, Zhou Hua had to wipe off her cold sweat.

Xia Zhe frowned and probed further, “The Ma family? The Zheng family? Or... the He family?”

Zhou Hua did not react when she heard the first two words, but she trembled when she heard the He family being mentioned.

Xia Zhe relaxed his furrowed brows and looked at Zhou Hua coldly.

When Qiao Mei heard that it was the He family, she was shocked and looked at Zhou Hua in disbelief. She did not expect He Ning to be so powerful and to have already infiltrated the Xia family.

Xia Zhe looked at Zhou Hua in silence for a while. Zhou Hua kept her head lowered and did not intend to explain anything. She already did not manage to seize her last chance.

Xia Zhe did not say anything and walked out to make a phone call.

Zhou Hua knew that it was all over at this time. Not only would the careers of Xia Xing and Xia Guang be ruined, but her life might also be ruined.

“How muddle-headed...” Xu Lan sighed and said.

Zhou Hua sat on the sofa dejectedly. This matter started with an empty thought of hers, but He Ning was absolutely sure that he would be able to arrange for Xia Xing to return to the capital and take on a higher position, which was why she was willing to give it a try! Besides, she would just be giving him a ginseng and not telling him about the Xia family’s secrets!

At this moment, Zhou Hua was still deceiving herself and feeling that she did not make any big mistake.

Xia Zhe returned and looked at Qiao Mei before saying, “After you’ve had your meal, go upstairs and rest with elder sister. Don’t wait for me.”

“Yes, I understand.” Qiao Mei nodded obediently and went to the kitchen to help with the cooking.

After Xia Zhe returned, he did not sit at the dining table to eat. He sat quietly opposite Zhou Hua and stared at her, putting a lot of pressure on her.

Qiao Mei, Xu Lan, Xia He and Liu Fen went upstairs to their rooms to rest after the meal. Not long after that, Xia Mao, Xia Xiu, Xia Wen and even Xia Jun arrived home. Xia Zhe brought Zhou Hua to the study and it did not take long for Zhou Hua to explain everything.

“Tell us, when did you contact the He family?” Xia Jun asked.

“I... I didn’t contact the He family! I really didn’t! I really needed the ginseng for an emergency!” Zhou Hua stammered.

“Third Aunt-in-law, it’s better for you to tell us everything.” Xia Wen looked at Zhou Hua sternly.

When Zhou Hua saw that everyone was scrutinizing her sternly, her psychological defenses collapsed. She slumped to the ground and said, "I was out one day and bumped into an attendant from the He family."

"And then?" Xia Xiu asked.

"Later on, he told me that He Ning from the He family could solve my urgent problem and invited me over, so I went. He said that he would arrange for a better job for my son and help Xia Guang clear the obstacles in his career path. He only needed one ginseng in return," Zhou Hua said honestly.

Xia Xiu looked at Xia Mao beside her but Xia Mao remained silent.

Based on their understanding of Zhou Hua, she would not do anything to harm the Xia family's interests and reputation. After all, she was also a member of the Xia family and she still needed to maintain her status as a daughter-in-law of the Xia family.

"Third Aunt-in-law, you're so muddle-headed. If you receive benefits from He Ning, he will be able to blackmail you after that. It's not just a matter about one ginseng," Xia Wen said helplessly.

Zhou Hua looked at the people around her agitatedly and said, "No! I really didn't say anything about the Xia family! He just asked me for one ginseng! Then he will be able to help my husband and son in their careers! I didn't say anything else! I really didn't say anything!"

"Even if he doesn't want anything else, why would he only want ginseng? Didn't he just take the Cao family's ginseng?" Xia Xiu asked in confusion.

Zhou Hua did not know anything about this. She did not know about such things.

"Maybe he's using Third Aunt-in-law to do a background check," Xia Zhe said.

Xia Mao looked at Xia Zhe in confusion and asked, "Background check?"

“One ginseng can only alleviate his illness slightly, but if he wants to stay alive, he needs an endless supply of ginseng. He Ning is using Third Aunt-in-law to check on how many ginseng Qiao Mei has,” Xia Zhe said.

It was only then that everyone came to a realization. At this moment, Zhou Hua also understood how stupid her actions were. However, Old Master Xia did not want to help her husband and son, so she had no choice but to take the risk.

Chapter 376: Eavesdropping

After they finished speaking, everyone came out of the study and Zhou Hua left in Xia Xiu’s car.

The rest of them also left one after another. When Xia Zhe returned to the room, he saw Qiao Mei leaning against the wall, looking curious and trying to eavesdrop.

“What are you doing?” Xia Zhe looked at Qiao Mei in puzzlement.

“Eh? Are you done?” Qiao Mei looked at Xia Zhe in surprise.

Xia Zhe smiled dotingly. This young girl must be trying to eavesdrop.

“What exactly is going on? Hurry up and tell me,” Qiao Mei grabbed Xia Zhe anxiously and whispered.

Although there were no outsiders around, this was the first time Qiao Mei had experienced such a matter. She felt inexplicably stressed and did not even dare to breathe or speak loudly.

“It’s nothing much. He Ning got someone to pretend to bump into Third Aunt-in-law by chance and then lied to Third Aunt-in-law that she can use ginseng to exchange for her family members’ career prospects,” Xia Zhe said.

“Just that simple?” Qiao Mei looked at Xia Zhe in surprise.

Qiao Mei thought that He Ning had discovered some dirt on Zhou Hua and used that to make her help the He family. She did not expect things to be so simple.

“Yes, that’s it. He Ning can be quite direct sometimes, but his intention this time is to check if you have any more ginseng,” Xia Zhe explained.

Qiao Mei nodded in realization. She seemed to have discovered a new way to make money. The method was a little wicked, but it was still much less evil than what He Ning had done.

Since He Ning wanted a large amount of ginseng, she could give it to him. She would just drain the energy from the ginseng so that there could be no benefit to his health at all, and he would be paying for something useless. This way, she would be able to exact revenge on He Ning for trying to break up her family and also earn some money at the same time.

“Third Aunt-in-law is too gullible and she agreed so readily. If she had known earlier that He Ning was able to help her, she would probably have gone to look for him long ago,” Qiao Mei said.

He did not expect Qiao Mei to be able to tell Zhou Hua’s character after only meeting her a few times. Although Zhou Hua would not harm the Xia family’s interests, it would take very little for her to take the bait once someone dangled some benefits in front of her.

“My Mei Mei is indeed smart. You’re so right!” Xia Zhe praised Qiao Mei. After saying that, he reached out and poked her face.

“Ahem, there are still other people in the room. Watch your behavior!” Xia He suddenly said from one side of the room.

If she still did not say anything, she did not know what else Xia Zhe could do.

“Although I’m not right under your noses, I’m still in the room. This room is only so big. Do you really not see me?” Xia He asked in confusion.

Xia Zhe had actually seen Xia He, but he was only focused on his Mei Mei and did not pay attention to Xia He at all. He just ignored her and pretended that she did not exist...

Qiao Mei was so excited to hear the gossip that she forgot Xia He was also in the room. Besides, he had only poked her face and had not even kissed or hugged her yet. This was nothing!

“Where is Third Aunt-in-law now?” Qiao Mei asked.

“We sent her back. Third Uncle has been informed about this and he wants to have a good talk with her at home,” Xia Zhe said.

Qiao Mei did not know what kind of person the third uncle, Xia Guang, was. She did not know if Zhou Hua would be beaten or punished when she returned home. After all, such things happened often in their village.

“How is Third Uncle as a person...” Qiao Mei asked worriedly.

“Third Uncle is a very nice person. He will be returning to the capital soon and grandfather wants to have a good chat with him. Third Aunt-in-law has done many things that grandfather would consider to have already crossed the line,” Xia Zhe said in a deep voice.

Qiao Mei nodded and did not ask further. These were all matters concerning the Xia family and it was not convenient for her to ask too much. At the moment, she only had the right to know but no power to make any decision, so she just needed to listen and not ask for too much details.

Suddenly, they heard Liu Fen shouting downstairs.

“Heavens! Kong Lu, what’s wrong with you! Come in quickly! Hurry, hurry, hurry!” Liu Fen shouted.

Only then did the people in the room remember that Kong Lu had been left in a boat in the middle of the lake. Xia He frowned and walked out of the room, followed closely by Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe.

Initially, Xia He felt quite anxious and worried that Kong Lu might be injured. However, after thinking about their current relationship, she decided that there was no need to worry about Kong Lu and she could not be so indecisive anymore.

Chapter 377: Looking Down on People

Kong Lu was already back. What else could have happened to him?

When Qiao Mei saw how Xia He walked anxiously to the living room at first before slowing down, she knew that Xia He had completely come to terms with it. Qiao Mei was afraid that Xia He would say one thing and mean another, that although she said she wanted a divorce, she actually could not bear to part with him. In such a case, if she tried to persuade Xia He to proceed with the divorce, she would become a sinner for all eternity.

She did not know whether Xia He really wanted a divorce now, but she knew that Xia He was at least very rational at the moment.

When they went downstairs, they saw a drenched Kong Lu with mud and dead leaves from the lake stuck on him.

Xia He frowned and walked up to him. "You fell into the water? How did you get ashore? Were you saved by someone? Are the good Samaritans outside the door now? Ask them to come in so that we can thank them properly."

After all, they were still husband and wife and had not gotten a divorce yet. When she saw him in trouble, she still wanted to help and could not sit back and do nothing. As a wife, she still had to do what she had to do.

When Kong Lu saw that Xia He was worried about him, he smiled happily and said, "The person who saved me didn't leave his name. He just saved me and left after that. At that time, I couldn't speak and felt a little dizzy. I only made my way back after I felt better."

"Let's go to the lake later and ask if anyone saw what happened. We have to go and thank the person properly," Xia He said.

Kong Lu suddenly started coughing and held on to his chest.

“Cough, cough, cough... I... cough, cough.”

Xia He went forward to hold Kong Lu and said, “What’s wrong? Maybe your lungs got injured! Come! Let’s go to the hospital! Let’s go to the hospital where Aunt is!”

Xia He pulled Kong Lu along and prepared to walk out the door. Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe looked at each other and immediately understood what each other was thinking.

Xia Zhe went forward to stop Xia He and Kong Lu and said, “You must be lying.”

Xia He was stunned. She looked at Xia Zhe in confusion and said anxiously, “Xiao Zhe, what are you talking about! He’s already feeling so uncomfortable, just let me bring him to the hospital!”

Qiao Mei went forward and looked at Kong Lu. “You only soaked yourself in water so that my elder sister would feel sorry for you.”

Kong Lu looked a little flustered and embarrassed. Xia He slowly let go of him and asked, “You... you’re lying to me?”

“I’m not! Xia He, listen to my explanation! I really fell into the lake!” Kong Lu looked at Xia He nervously.

“Tell me the truth. Did you fall into the lake or not?” Xia He asked as she pointed at Kong Lu.

Kong Lu quickly flung his hands and went forward. “I’m not lying! Xia He!”

“You’re still not telling the truth! I trust my younger brother and sister-in-law more than you!” Xia He roared at him.

"I'm not, I'm not!" Kong Lu repeated this sentence to the two siblings.

"If you really fell into the water, your voice should be hoarse now. If you had tried hard to survive just now, you definitely won't have the strength to talk to us here like this," Qiao Mei said.

"I..." Kong Lu did not know how to explain himself.

"Your leather shoes are clean. If you had fallen in the water, you would definitely have lost your shoes. Even if you don't lose them, they will still be covered in mud. You're covered in mud, but your shoes are very clean. Are you sure you fell into the water?" Xia Zhe asked as he pointed at the leather shoes on Kong Lu's feet.

Kong Lu tried to hide his feet, not knowing how to answer.

Xia He looked mockingly at the leather shoes on Kong Lu's feet. These were the only pair of shoes that her mother had bought for Kong Lu. She had said that they were luxury goods and very expensive. Therefore, Kong Lu took care of them very carefully and could not bear to wear them.

"You must have taken off your shoes before getting into the water. So in your heart, I'm not even comparable to a pair of leather shoes? You can't even bear to part with a pair of shoes and would rather lie to me!" Xia He said as she looked at Kong Lu.

Xia He felt that if Kong Lu had bothered to put on an act, she would not hate him so much. However, when Kong Lu heard what she said, he did not see it that way.

Kong Lu felt that Xia He was looking down on him and mocking him for being poor.

Kong Lu had grown up in the countryside since he was young. His family was poor and he lost his father when he was still very young. Later on, his mother brought up all her children painstakingly. Leather shoes were something he did not even dare to dream about when he was growing up. In order to ensure that his younger brothers at home could eat, he started working very early in life.

Chapter 378: Resisting Desperately

At that time, leather shoes were very expensive. He worked very hard and managed to get into a very good workplace unit. The salary at the unit was high and the benefits were good, and it was enough for him to support his family.

Everyone at the workplace was dressed smartly and all his colleagues in the department wore leather shoes during formal occasions. At that time, he had asked Old Madam Kong to buy them for him, but she said that there was not enough money to buy food for his brothers at home and rejected his request.

What happened was a traumatic experience for him. It was only after he became a soldier that he could finally afford to buy leather shoes. He treasured all his shoes, carefully wiped down each and every pair, stored them properly in boxes and could not even bear to wear them.

However, every time he was with Xia He or when he came to visit the Xia family, he made sure to wear leather shoes.

Kong Lu flew into a rage out of humiliation and said, "Yes! That's right! I pretended to fall into the water to make you feel sorry for me! Why can't I pretend to fall into the water? Do you really want me to drown!"

"Smack! Smack!"

Xia He raised her hand and slapped Kong Lu twice.

"You should sober up!" Xia He shouted.

Kong Lu's eyes instantly reddened and his entire body trembled with anger. He clenched his fists and stared fixedly at Xia He. She had actually raised her hand and slapped him twice in front of so many people, and did not bother about how it made him look.

After slapping him, Xia He immediately regretted her action, but she did not want to back down. She glared back fiercely at Kong Lu, making him feel even more embarrassed.

Besides, Xia Zhe was still around and there was nothing he could say...

He turned around to leave the Xia residence, but Xia Zhe grabbed him tightly.

“Trying to leave? Every time, you would avoid the problem and let my sister bear the responsibility alone. Don’t even think about going anywhere today. Go upstairs and settle the issue with my sister before taking your sister with you!” Xia Zhe said as he looked at Kong Lu coldly.

“Let go of me!” Kong Lu roared back.

Xia Zhe maintained his grip on Kong Lu and refused to bulge. Exasperated, Kong Lu wanted to punch Xia Zhe, but Xia Zhe stopped him with one hand.

Xia Zhe forcefully dragged Kong Lu upstairs as if he did not hear Kong Lu cursing at him.

Kong Lu took the opportunity to try and take Xia Zhe down, but Xia Zhe saw through his plan and the two of them started fighting at the staircase.

“Xia Zhe! Enough is enough!” Kong Lu roared.

“How dare you still be so pompous!” Xia Zhe was so angry that his veins were bulging. Without another word, he dragged Kong Lu upstairs. Liu Fen came out of the kitchen and felt at a loss when she saw the scene in front of her.

“Oh! Stop fighting! Xia He, go and stop the fight!” Liu Fen hurriedly walked up to Xia He and Qiao Mei.

“Xia Zhe will be fine. Third Aunt-in-law, don’t worry,” Qiao Mei said with a smile.

“You! How can you still smile! Your husband is in a fight! And you, Xiao He! Why don’t you care about your husband!” Liu Fen stood there and pointed angrily.

It was not that Xia He did not care about Kong Lu, but what just happened made her unwilling to worry about this man who always lied to her.

“Kong Lu won’t die. Xiao Zhe knows his limits,” Xia He said calmly.

After saying that, the three of them looked towards the upper floor. Xia Zhe’s fists kept landing hard on Kong Lu’s body. There were numerous muffled thuds and Qiao Mei felt a sense of pain just looking at what was happening...

Her heart ached for Xia Zhe’s hands.

“This is still considered light? Still considered knowing his limits?” Liu Fen hesitated for a moment before asking Qiao Mei.

“Um... it seems alright. Third Aunt-in-law, if you’re worried, why don’t you go up and take a look?” Qiao Mei said with a smile.

When Liu Fen heard this, she silently turned her head away and looked up worriedly.

Although she wanted to go up and stop the fight, she was sure she would lose her life if she got hit accidentally! Seeing how merciless Xia Zhe’s punches were and how decisive Kong Lu was in retaliating, it was definitely a serious fight.

Xia Zhe threw Kong Lu into Xia He’s room and stood at the door, not entering the room.

Xia He sighed and walked upstairs expressionlessly, followed by Qiao Mei and Liu Fen.

Liu Fen had even forgotten how scared she was of Qiao Mei and chased after her to ask, "What exactly happened between Xiao He and Kong Lu? What's the conflict? Do you know? Can you tell me about it? Why?"

Qiao Mei rolled her eyes and wanted to ignore Liu Fen. She did not know which question to answer first.

Chapter 379: So Be It, Let's Get a Divorce!

When Liu Fen went upstairs and saw Xia Zhe, she immediately grumbled, "Xiao Zhe, why are you so harsh! How is your sister going to get along with him after this!"

Liu Fen stood beside Xia Zhe and whispered, "Look at that Kong Lu. One look and you can tell that he's a petty man. How do you think your sister will fare in the future! He's arrogant and likes to hold grudges. How can your sister still have a good life in the future!"

Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei looked at Liu Fen in surprise. They did not expect her to know that Kong Lu was petty!

Qiao Mei laughed loudly and shouted through the opening in the doorway, "Second Aunt-in-law, why are you still so concerned for Kong Lu's reputation! Kong Lu was not even concerned about elder sister's reputation! Elder sister has been taking care of his relatives and siblings for so many years, but look what happened to her in the end! She was like a dough that everyone took turns to knead! If you ask me, let's give him a taste of his own medicine!"

"Although Xia Zhe hit him today, would he dare to hit elder sister? Let him try! Then we can just beat him to death! If he doesn't want to part on good terms, there are ways to make him suffer so much that he would prefer to die!" Qiao Mei said fiercely.

Qiao Mei clenched her fists and waved them in the air. Liu Fen knew that Qiao Mei was joking and that she was doing this for Xia He's sake.

"Then what if Xia He goes home! Old Madam Kong won't let Xia He off!" Liu Fen also imitated Qiao Mei and shouted towards the opening in the doorway.

Liu Fen leaned against the door and continued, "Will Xia Zhe be able to follow Xia He to the Kong family? Or can Xia He hit Old Madam Kong! In the end, Xia He will be the one who's at a disadvantage! What should we do then! Xia Zhe's wife!"

Liu Fen gave Qiao Mei a look and Qiao Mei immediately understood what she meant. Qiao Mei shouted loudly towards the door, "Who told you that elder sister is going back to that tiger's den! Get a divorce! Do they think that there's no one in the Xia family to back her up!"

When Liu Fen heard Qiao Mei suggesting a divorce, she stomped her feet anxiously and whispered, "You said the wrong thing, kid! You should give him a warning! How can you talk about a divorce!"

Qiao Mei found it funny when she saw Liu Fen's anxious expression. She thought that Second Aunt-in-law looked quite cute at the moment.

Qiao Mei pulled Liu Fen downstairs to take a rest. As they walked, she said, "Second Aunt-in-law, elder sister has spent so much money and effort for so many years, but in the end, her family still scolds her and her husband still only sides with his mother. Elder sister's life has been tough enough already. She should take advantage of the fact that she doesn't have any children and escape quickly from her misery."

"But what will happen to a divorced woman..." Liu Fen sat on the sofa and sighed helplessly.

During this era, getting a divorce was a stain on a woman's reputation. No one would be willing to be with a divorced woman.

"But how can elder sister stay in that family for the rest of her life? Wouldn't that be an even worse situation for her? What do you think you would do if she's your daughter?" Qiao Mei advised patiently.

Liu Fen thought about it quietly. What Qiao Mei said made sense. In the beginning, she thought that it was Xia He's fault for being stubborn and headstrong.

This time round, Xia He talked about a lot of her experiences over the years. Liu Fen had also heard much of it, but her judgment was clouded because she had heard that divorced women would not have an easy life.

“Look, elder sister is at a woman’s most glorious age, and she’s also beautiful and earns a lot of money. In the past few years, she has given all her money to the Kong family. If she had been able to save up the money, she would have been able to buy a house for herself long ago. With our family’s clout, can’t we protect elder sister? Second Aunt-in-law, you’re a sensible person. When there are difficulties in a marriage, you know how hard it is for the woman.” After Qiao Mei finished speaking, Liu Fen suddenly felt enlightened.

Liu Fen slapped her thigh and said agitatedly, “That’s right! Our Xia He is still a good girl! She doesn’t need to live in the Kong family’s kennel anymore! At most... at most Xia He can come to my house! She can stay with me!”

Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe looked at each other and smiled. Liu Fen finally understood what Xia He was going through and how hard it was for Xia He. However, there was really no need for Xia He to go and live with Second Aunt-in-law...

If she lived with Second Aunt-in-law, it would probably not be any better than living with the Kong family.

Inside the room, Xia He looked at Kong Lu, who could not even straighten his back. She did not feel any concern for him this time. He had brought this upon himself. Everything was retribution! He could not blame anyone else!

Chapter 380: Get Lost Quickly

“In a while, I’ll get Xia Zhe to find me the divorce application form. Complete it and then send it to your army unit. Once they approve it, then we’ll be officially divorced,” Xia He said calmly.

To get the divorce, she needed Kong Lu to take the initiative to apply for it. Otherwise, this matter would not be settled. Although she belonged to the military art troupe, she was still different from a regular soldier.

For people like Kong Lu and Xia Zhe who worked in the army all year round, the soldier would need to agree if his spouse wanted a divorce. Otherwise, the divorce could not go through.

"I don't agree! You can give it up! I won't agree to a divorce even if I die!" Kong Lu said through clenched teeth.

Xia He said calmly, "Do you want me to be bullied by your mother in your house for the rest of my life?"

"I can promise you that my mother will definitely not criticize you anymore," Kong Lu said as he swore to the heavens.

Xia He's eyes turned red from anger. "Let me tell you this! It's fine if you don't want a divorce, but you have to send your mother and sister away within a week! Otherwise, I'll beat them up every time I see them! I've also practiced boxing since I was young! Let's see if I can beat them to death! If you're not afraid, you can try me!"

Xia He broke the wooden stool beside her with a kick and looked at Kong Lu fiercely. The children of the Xia family had to learn all these skills so that they knew how to protect themselves.

As the eldest granddaughter of the Xia family, she had always been brought up like a boy. At that time, Xia Mao and Xu Lan were not at home all year round. Afraid that Xia He would be bullied alone, they asked Xia Xiu to train all the children together.

Although her martial arts skills were not as good as Xia Wen and Xia Zhe, there were not many women who could defeat her back then. If not for Kong Lu, she would not have chosen to go to the military art troupe and would not have given up her bright future and opportunities to go and take care of the Kong family.

Kong Lu looked at the shattered pieces of wood beside him and realized that Xia He had a lot of skills. She had just been hiding her capabilities all along.

"I don't want to see you at all now. Don't lie on the ground and play dead. Go to Aunt's house and take your sister away. Find a guest house to go to and don't come to our Xia residence again. Come back when you've settled your family matters. Either the house returns to its original state or you apply for a divorce. Get lost quickly after the meeting you came for," Xia He said.

Kong Lu widened his eyes in disbelief at Xia He's words.

In the past, no matter how fiercely they quarreled, Xia He would never ask Kong Lu to get lost. However, she actually just asked him to get lost...

Hearing this phrase felt far more painful than when Xia Zhe hit him. He felt as if his dignity was being crushed and grinded against the floor, but he was powerless to fight back.

Kong Lu stood up angrily and walked towards the door with Xia He following closely behind. She had to go to Xia Fang's house to stand guard. Who knew if Kong Li would secretly come looking for trouble while Kong Lu was not around.

"Elder sister! His luggage! Don't forget his luggage!" Qiao Mei shouted.

Xia He immediately turned around and went into the room to pack up Kong Lu's things before chasing after him. Liu Fen wanted to stand up and stop her, but when she thought of what Xia He had gone through, she suppressed her urge and sat back down.

Qiao Mei nodded in satisfaction at Liu Fen's actions and whispered to Xia Zhe, "Look, Second Aunt-in-law seems to have really thought it through."

"Second Aunt-in-law really cares for elder sister. Our parents were never around when we were young and Eldest Aunt had always kept an eye on us and trained us. Back then, there was only one girl in the family and Second Aunt-in-law doted on elder sister the most," Xia Zhe explained in a whisper.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia Zhe with heartache and then in the direction where Xia He had left. It seemed that Xia Mao and Xu Lan really did not spend much time with the three children when they were young.

"Why are you looking at me like that? At that time, elder brother was already old enough to take care of elder sister and me. Besides, elder sister and I were both in boarding school, so there were not many issues." Xia Zhe patted Qiao Mei's head and comforted her.

“Sigh! The two of you! You are really troublesome!” No matter how Liu Fen thought about it, she still felt that a divorce would not be good for Xia He’s reputation in the future. Divorced women were despised everywhere. She wondered what would happen in the future.

Liu Fen was so anxious that she stomped her feet and went upstairs to be alone. She did not want to care about this matter anymore!

Qiao Mei thought for a moment and said, “No matter what happens in the future, you have to discuss everything with me!”