

Fat Wife 511

Chapter 511 Captured by a Wild Boar

Zhang Cong tugged at the corner of Zhang Qian's shirt and whispered, "That wretched girl is back."

When they came previously, they did not dare to do anything to Qiao Qiang, but they said a lot of nasty things to him about Qiao Mei going to the capital and never coming back. They said that she would leave an old fart like him to rot in the mountain village, and that she would definitely experience a difficult labor when she gave birth and the child would be born deformed. They said all the most unpleasant things.

It made Qiao Qiang so angry that he was almost hospitalized. Now that Qiao Mei was back, she would definitely want to avenge Qiao Qiang.

"I'm asking Li Gui for money, what has it got to do with you!" Zhang Qian said.

"She's my mother. How can it have nothing to do with me!" Qiao Mei said with her hands on her hips.

Xia Zhe went forward and grabbed Zhang Qian's wrist. "Let go."

Zhang Qian looked at Xia Zhe, a good-looking man wearing a military uniform, and thought that this must be Qiao Mei's soldier husband.

"Alright, let go let go..." Zhang Qian said awkwardly as he released his grip.

Qiao Mei quickly went forward to help Li Gui up. Li Gui's face was covered in tears and she was all covered in mud. She was too embarrassed to look at Xia Zhe. It was her first time meeting her son-in-law and she felt so mortified that he had to witness such a shameful matter happening at home.

"Mei Mei, I'm fine... Let's just send them away..." Li Gui said tentatively.

"No, we can't let this matter rest just like that!" Qiao Mei said.

“What are you shouting about! We’re just here to ask for some money! What are you shouting about! Back then, we let them come back to the countryside to earn money! You even lied to us and said that you can earn a lot of money after you come back! I think you have hidden away all the money!” Old Madam Zhang scolded.

In the past, when every family sold bean sprouts, they naturally could make a lot of money. At the moment, not everyone could grow bean sprouts well. The village had reverted to its previous economic level and every family had started to do other businesses.

Li Gui had explained this to them countless times, but the Zhang family did not believe her and kept saying that Li Gui used that as an excuse to lie to them.

“Don’t say anything else! Just hurry up and give me the money! Since your daughter is back, you have to give me 500 dollars! Otherwise, I won’t leave! I’ll smash up your house!” After saying that, Zhang Qian went forward to tear down Li Gui’s shed.

Zhang Wei quickly stood up and said, “There’s no more money at home! We’ve already given you all our money! You can’t touch this shed!”

Only then did Qiao Mei realize that Zhang Wei had grown up a lot in the past two months and had become much bigger and taller.

“Get lost! You little brat, how dare you stop your father! You’re really too bold and deserve a beating! I’ll teach you a lesson first today! I’ll let your younger siblings take a good look! This is the consequence of being disobedient!” Zhang Qian picked up Zhang Wei as if he was grabbing a little chick.

He was about to raise his hand and hit down hard when Xia Zhe stopped him.

“Who do you think you are! Do you think you can interfere in other people’s family matters just because you’re a soldier! I’m teaching my son a lesson! Get lost!” Zhang Qian tried to shake off Xia Zhe’s hand, but did not succeed in doing that.

Xia Zhe kept exerting strength and grabbed Zhang Qian's arm tightly. By now, Zhang Qian had let go of Zhang Wei due to the pain.

"Ouch! Ouch! Let go of me! My hand is going to break!" Zhang Qian twisted around as he groaned in pain.

"You can let go," Qiao Mei said.

After Qiao Mei said that, Xia Zhe let go of Zhang Qian and walked behind Qiao Mei to protect her silently.

The children did not know who Xia Zhe was. In the past, Qiao Mei often mentioned Xia Zhe to them and even said that he was an upright man who was a great hero like their grandfather. She even told them many stories about his "great achievements".

Actually, Qiao Mei made up all the stories to scare the children into being obedient. When children of other families were disobedient, their parents would scare them and say that if they were disobedient again, they would get wild boars to come down the mountain in the middle of the night to capture them! What her family's children heard the most was that if they were disobedient, they would be taken away by their brother-in-law to be taught a lesson. He was even scarier than wild boars!

When they saw how Xia Zhe dealt with Zhang Qian today, they all felt that Qiao Mei did not lie to them back then and that they would definitely not be disobedient in the future.

"You're too much! So many people are bullying the three of us!" Old Madam Zhang shouted shakily.

"If you don't talk, I won't know you're here. After two months, you look even worse? Don't be too angry. Isn't it better to live a few more years?" Qiao Mei said as she rolled her eyes.

Chapter 512 Get Out

"You! You! How dare you curse me! I'm still your grandmother after all! How dare you disobey your elder like this!" Old Madam Zhang stomped her feet in anger.

Qiao Mei could not help but roll her eyes when she heard this. What kind of elder! Was she even worthy to be called an elder!

"I won't dare to curse you. Aren't I just advising you to think more about happy things? If you just stay put in the city, who will bully you?" Qiao Mei asked.

As the quarrel became louder and louder, the number of villagers watching outside also increased. Some of them even went home to ask more people to join in.

Auntie Dong, who loved to join in any commotion, forced her way in from the back of the crowd. Before she even saw who was the one causing trouble, she spotted Qiao Mei in the courtyard.

"Mei Mei, you're back!" Auntie Dong rushed forward excitedly.

"Auntie Dong! I was just about to go to your place to look for you when something happened," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

"Oh my, I'm still wondering what's happening. This group of shameless people can come four times a week. They're even more diligent than the funeral people," Auntie Dong said mockingly.

Her words made the people outside laugh loudly. Auntie Dong's tongue was as sharp as ever.

Seeing that there were more and more people, Zhang Qian wanted to slip away from the back. Before he could even take two steps, Xia Zhe stopped him. Now, they could not get either money or vegetables.

If the villagers did not discover that they were here, they still had a chance to get the things they demanded. They also did not know why the villagers here were so united. If anything happened at Li Gui's house, the villagers would all come to help. As long as they entered the village, someone would definitely inform everyone.

After all, it was Li Gui's family matter and the villagers could only watch from outside the fence. However, as soon as the Zhang family lay a hand on Li Gui, they would be chased and beaten up by the villagers until they reached the outskirts of the village.

At first, Zhang Qian felt that he would have some peace and quiet at home once Li Gui was not around. However, he did not expect Old Madam Zhang to kick up a fuss at home every day because there was no one at home to clean up the house!

“If you can’t fork out the money today... I... I’ll divorce you! You don’t have money and you’re not at home! Our Zhang family doesn’t want you!” Zhang Qian pointed at Li Gui and shouted.

Before Qiao Mei could feel happy about hearing this, Li Gui rushed over and said, “Give me a few more days! Give me a few more days!”

Everyone felt that Li Gui’s reaction was very normal. In this era, not many people got divorced. If one did, one would be mocked for the rest of one’s life. Back then, Li Gui had remarried because Qiao Yue passed away and she had no other choice.

There were also widows and widowers living in this village and very few of them remarried. Whoever got a divorce would be made to feel ashamed for the rest of their lives!

“No! Your daughter and son-in-law are both back! Don’t they have even 500 dollars! If you don’t give me 500 dollars, we’ll have to get a divorce! I didn’t hold it against you previously! Now that they’re back, you have to give me the money!” Zhang Qian said as he shook off Li Gui’s hand.

Li Gui really could not bring herself to borrow money from Qiao Mei, let alone Xia Zhe. How could a son-in-law be asked to help his mother-in-law “repay a debt” as soon as he came for a visit.

For the past two months, she could barely afford to buy rice and noodles. The children already had to set off and walk to school before dawn. They originally still had the money to take the bus to go with the other children in the village. If this continued, the children’s tuition fees would become a problem too. She did not have any money left.

“How can you have the cheek to talk about getting a divorce! Not only does our sister have to raise four children, but she also has to give all of you pocket money! Have you ever given her anything!” Auntie Dong shouted.

“That’s right! Didn’t we say the last time that you need to have identification documents to enter the village! How can any Tom, Dick or Harry be allowed in!” Auntie Wang shouted from within the crowd.

However, there were many ways to enter the village and there were also inconspicuous paths in the mountains that the villagers could not block.

The villagers quickly surrounded them, making the three people from the Zhang family retreat repeatedly. Zhang Qian took advantage of the moment when no one was paying attention and ran out from the back of the courtyard, followed closely by Zhang Cong. Old Madam Zhang was old and it was difficult for her to move around, so she could not keep up with her son and grandson. She was so afraid that she did not dare to make a sound and just stood there with her legs trembling.

“Your son and grandson have already left, so why are you still standing here! Hurry up and leave! Don’t let others say that our village bullies the elderly!” Auntie Dong said as she waved her hand.

Chapter 513 A Make-up Wedding Ceremony

Old Madam Zhang ran out shakily. When she reached the door, she even tripped and had a big fall. She did not have time to check where she was injured but just stood up and continued running. She would probably discover that she had grazed her skin when she got back.

After the bullies left, everyone gathered around and exchanged warm greetings. Their main purpose was to get a closer look at Qiao Mei’s husband!

Back then, Qiao Mei was the only one who organized the wedding and the groom did not even show up. They could all finally get to know one another now, and they considered him to be part of the village from now on!

Qiao Mei was forcefully pushed out of the crowd but she was not angry at all. She stared at Xia Zhe with her big eyes and sat in the pavilion, gloating over his misfortune.

“Qiao Mei! So this is your husband! He’s so handsome!” Auntie Dong could not stop smiling when she saw Xia Zhe, as if she was looking at her own son-in-law.

“That’s right. Back then, we didn’t believe what Qiao Mei said about you being tall and handsome! At that time, you came and left the village in a hurry and we didn’t get to know each other properly. Now it seems that Qiao Mei is telling the truth!” Auntie Wang said.

As everyone chattered, Xia Zhe was quickly surrounded by the women in the village who kept asking him questions.

“Look at his build. He can definitely do hard work!”

“He’s a soldier! That’s for the country! He’s a hero! What hard work!”

“That’s right, that’s right! What’s your name!”

Xia Zhe was so stunned by the aunties’ enthusiasm that he did not dare to move. He stood stiffly on the spot and stammered, “My... my name is Xia Zhe!”

“What a good name! Hahahaha!”

“Xiao Zhe, do you know any nice young men in the army! My daughter is 20 years old this year. She’s beautiful and capable! Please help out!”

“Me too! My daughter too!”

“Auntie Li! It’s too early for you to say that! Your daughter is only 16 years old! What’s the hurry!” Qiao Mei shouted with a smile.

“That’s right! Let my daughter go first!” Auntie Wang said.

Xia Zhe hurriedly looked to Qiao Mei for help. If he did not leave this place soon, this group of women would probably disassemble him and bring him home.

Qiao Mei shouted loudly, "Everyone helped a lot when I was not in the village! Don't go back yet today! Let's have a good meal at my house! We'll treat you to good food and drinks!"

Taking advantage of the fact that everyone was around today, as well as the rare occasion that Xia Zhe could be around, she decided to hold a make-up wedding ceremony so that there would be a lively celebration in the village.

"I have salted vegetables at home. Wait for me to bring them over!"

"And my house! I have sauerkraut! Two full jars! Wait for me to go back and move them over with my husband to make something delicious for everyone!"

"I'll go back and get some too! Wait for me!"

Everyone went back to their homes to bring out the best things they had. Qiao Mei was always very generous and willing to treat them to meat, so they also had to take out what they had at home and could not be stingy.

Qiao Mei stood up to help, but Auntie Dong pressed her back down on the chair and said, "You're already so far in your pregnancy. Just take a good rest. The few of us are enough!"

Qiao Mei called Zhang Wei over and said, "Xiao Wei! Bring your brother-in-law to the old mister's place at the village entrance to buy some liquor. Remember to get the best kind. Also, ask the old mister to bring his wife over for dinner. If the two of you buy too many things, get the old mister to send them over with his vehicle. Do you remember everything I say?"

Zhang Wei stood rooted to the ground. In the past, he often ran errands at home and helped to buy things for his family, but he did not seem enthusiastic this time.

"What's wrong? Did Zhang Qian hurt you just now?" Qiao Mei asked anxiously.

Zhang Wei said fearfully, "He didn't hit me... But elder sister, can I not go with my brother-in-law... I know how to buy the things myself..."

“Then go with Zhang Chao. I’ll be worried if you go alone. If you encounter any danger, remember to find someone nearby to help, understand?” Qiao Mei instructed.

Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao took the money and set off. These two children had learned how to ride bicycles when they had nothing to do and disappeared in a flash.

Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao also ran into the house and peeked at Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei curiously and fearfully through the small window.

Xia Zhe thought that the children did not like him and were unwilling to get close to him. He asked dejectedly, “Do the younger siblings not like me? Was I too fierce just now?”

Qiao Mei looked at Xia Zhe awkwardly. This matter was actually her fault.

“It’s not that they don’t like you. It’s just that I always use your name to scare them and I say that you’re scarier than a big wild boar...” Qiao Mei said softly.

Chapter 514 Can You Not Leave

In that case, it was no wonder that they all avoided him. However, there were also benefits to this. The few of them would not dare to do anything naughty again.

“Then do I look like a big wild boar to you?” Xia Zhe said as he leaned closer to Qiao Mei.

“I think you’re more like a big bad wolf!” Qiao Mei said with a laugh.

Everyone went about cooking happily in the courtyard. There were definitely not enough pots on the stove at home for such a banquet. They took a metal sheet to form a circle to make a stove and then set up an iron pot on it. That was how they set up a portable stove.

Basically, every family had such a thing. If it was still not enough, they would borrow things from their neighbors and everyone would come over to help.

“Now I know why you like coming back,” Xia Zhe said as he looked at the figures busying themselves in the courtyard.

“Although everything is convenient and I’m happy in the capital, I don’t know many people. But I’m familiar with everyone in the village. Everyone helps anyone who needs help. As long as you treat them well, they will also treat you well with all their heart,” Qiao Mei said.

Qiao Mei turned around and saw that Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao were still peeping at them through the window, looking like they wanted to say something to her.

“I’ll go and take a look at my younger sisters. Go and ask grandfather to come over and then keep an eye on Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao. I’m afraid that these two children will be too clumsy and fall down again,” Qiao Mei instructed.

When Xia Zhe heard this, he went to fetch Qiao Qiang. After the two girls saw Xia Zhe had gone a distance away, they ran out happily to talk to Qiao Mei.

“Elder sister! I miss you so much!” Zhang Miao threw herself into Qiao Mei’s arms, scaring Zhang Qin so much that she held Zhang Miao back.

“Elder sister is pregnant! Be careful!” Zhang Qin chided.

Zhang Miao looked at Qiao Mei uneasily. She was just excited and did not rush over on purpose.

Qiao Mei smiled and took Zhang Miao and Zhang Qin by the hands, placing their hands on her stomach as she said, “Feel it. See if your little nephew is fine?”

“Nephew? Elder sister, what’s a nephew?” Zhang Miao asked in puzzlement.

She was still young. In addition, Old Madam Zhang did not allow the girls at home to read and write previously, so they only knew how to do housework. The old woman did not even allow the two girls to

show their faces when there were guests at home. The young Zhang Miao did not know anything about such things.

“Elder sister’s son is your nephew. Once he’s born, he will need to call you little aunt,” Qiao Mei said as she patted Zhang Miao’s head.

Zhang Miao looked at Qiao Mei as if she only vaguely understood what she heard. Zhang Qin also did not quite understand the concept of seniority. Since this was her elder sister’s child, then they would protect him well!

“Elder sister, how long will you be back this time? Can you not leave...” Zhang Miao said aggrievedly.

When Qiao Mei was still in the village, they still had someone protecting them. During the two months when Qiao Mei was not around, they were always beaten and scolded by Zhang Qian. The children from the neighboring villages also bullied them and said that they were fatherless children.

“Did Zhang Qian and the others bully you?” Qiao Mei asked with a frown.

She originally thought that Zhang Qian would behave himself for a period of time after taking the “severance payment”, but after she left, he became even worse.

Zhang Miao covered her face and wailed loudly, causing everyone to look over. Qiao Mei hugged Zhang Miao and said, “The child misses me! It’s fine!”

“Sigh, Qiao Mei is really kind-hearted. She even takes such good care of siblings who are not related to her,” Auntie Wang lamented.

“That’s right. If only that silly boy from my family had married Qiao Mei back then. It’s so difficult to find such a good wife,” another auntie said.

“I remember that someone introduced Qiao Mei to your family back then! Your son chased away the matchmaker without even taking a look at her. You didn’t even like Qiao Mei then!” Auntie Wang said.

The auntie blushed and flicked some water at Auntie Wang. She scolded jokingly, “Shoo, shoo, shoo! I wasn’t snobbish back then! If I had known that Qiao Mei would bring good fortune to her husband and is so beautiful and capable, I would have carried her into my family long ago! I’d be happy to spend any amount of money!”

“Hahahaha, I’m just fooling around! Why are you really angry! I’ll introduce a nice girl to your family if I meet one!” Auntie Wang said with a smile.

Auntie Wang was a famous matchmaker who was well known in the surrounding eight villages. However, she did not usually make introductions as she was afraid that she would offend others and ruin her own reputation. If she was asked to make an introduction, both the families of the man and woman had to give her double the amount of gifts, otherwise she would not render her services.

Chapter 515 All Grown Up

“Alright! We have a deal. You have to introduce a nice girl to my son!” the auntie said.

Auntie Wang nodded. Since she was feeling happy today, there was no need for double the amount of gifts.

“Tell elder sister the truth. How did Zhang Qian and the others bully you?” Qiao Mei asked as she pulled Zhang Miao and Zhang Qin into her arms.

“They came and snatched away all the food at home and took all the money that mom had. They also snatched all the pocket money that we saved up,” Zhang Qin said aggrievedly.

Ever since Qiao Mei promised to give them a share of the earnings when the things they collected from the mountains got sold, they had worked even harder. Basically, each of them had about 10 dollars saved away. Zhang Wei was older and worked hard, so that he had earned more.

Other children did not have a single cent in savings, but for them, they had the final say on how they wanted to spend their own money. They could afford new snacks and toys that were sold in the village convenience store. In the beginning, their classmates looked down on them when they first went to school. Later on, when they saw Zhang Qian and Zhang Chao being able to afford the latest comic book, everyone was extremely envious.

Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao did not have any other hobbies. The girls in their class were envious of their new stationery cases and flower hair clips for a few days. After that, everyone took the initiative to be friendly and wanted to be good friends with them.

With that, they realized the benefits of earning money, so they worked even harder. However, this hardworking attitude was ruined by Zhang Qian. Instead of letting Zhang Qian take all the money they earned, they might as well not go and collect anything from the mountains. At most, they just would not have any money.

“Then did you get injured?” Qiao Mei asked worriedly.

Money was a small matter. Their lives were the most important thing. If they lost their lives, they would not have any chance to take revenge on Zhang Qian.

“We’re all fine, but when dad hit mom, eldest brother would rush forward to protect her. He probably got beaten up too. Eldest brother never told us,” Zhang Miao said softly.

Qiao Mei’s heart ached but she also felt relieved. This was the first time she felt that Zhang Wei had grown up. He was originally the most rebellious kid and did not want to live in the countryside. He even hurt Li Gui with all the things he said. Now, he even knew how to protect his mother well even with his small body.

“I’ll ask Zhang Wei when he comes back later. Since elder sister is back, I won’t let them bully you anymore. Don’t worry,” Qiao Mei said as she comforted them.

Zhang Miao seemed to think of something and grabbed Qiao Mei’s hand excitedly. “Then isn’t brother-in-law very powerful! Elder sister, you always say that brother-in-law is more powerful than wild boars! Then can he defeat all these bad people!”

Qiao Mei did not know what to say for a moment. Should she first explain that Xia Zhe had no direct relationship with the wild boars, or that it was very difficult for a normal person like Xia Zhe to defeat an adult wild boar with tusks using his bare hands, or should she praise Zhang Miao for being smart enough to use a “big devil” like Xia Zhe to defeat those animals from the Zhang family.

At this moment, Xia Zhe quietly stood behind Zhang Miao and said, "Of course I can! I'm very capable!"

"Ah!" Zhang Miao and Zhang Qin were so frightened that they hid behind Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei patted the two children and said, "Hurry up and go in. I'll call you when dinner is ready."

Zhang Qin held Zhang Miao's hand and returned to the house. They went back to their previous position to observe Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei through the window again.

"Did you badmouth me to your younger sisters again?" Xia Zhe said as he sat beside Qiao Mei.

"I didn't say anything. You're making guesses yourself. It has nothing to do with me," Qiao Mei said guiltily.

Xia Zhe did not continue asking. Just now, when Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao saw him, they behaved like mice who saw a cat. Even when Qiao Qiang tried to explain, they did not listen.

"Both Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao are back. Grandfather said to call him over when it's time to eat. He's old and doesn't like to join in the fun. He said that there are too many people cooking now and that he won't be able to help even if he comes and will only cause trouble for everyone," Xia Zhe said.

Actually, he was quite surprised to hear Qiao Qiang say that. After all, in his impression, Qiao Qiang was always very jovial. He had been happy to take care of so many children who were not related to him by blood. Perhaps he was getting older and felt that he had run out of steam.

"Then let's just do what grandfather said," Qiao Mei said with a sigh.

"What's wrong? Is there something on your mind?" Xia Zhe asked as he held Qiao Mei's hand.

He knew that Qiao Mei liked to sigh when she was troubled by something. If it was something that could be easily resolved, she would only tell him the end results smugly. After that, she would ask him to

praise her properly, otherwise she would keep pestering him. If it was a more troublesome issue, Qiao Mei would sit at the side and sigh with a bitter look on her face.

Chapter 516 Piqued

“I’m just wondering why my mother is unwilling to get a divorce. When Zhang Qian said the word divorce, I was so happy. Who knew that my mother would go up to Zhang Qian and beg him?” Qiao Mei said, not able to understand why.

It was such a rare opportunity. As long as they got a divorce, everything would be fine. Zhang Qian would never have the chance to come and bully Li Gui and her four younger siblings again. After that, they would be able to save up a lot of money by working hard.

Li Gui was really muddle-headed!

“Divorce is not something that can be said casually. Besides, it’s a big deal for a woman to be abandoned by a man. This concerns her reputation. Perhaps your mother is doing this for all of you,” Xia Zhe said.

“But nothing happened when she remarried,” Qiao Mei said.

“But your father passed away in an accident back then. It’s not considered a divorce. Besides, she probably doesn’t want to tell you too much about all the hardships she has gone through over the years,” Xia Zhe comforted her.

Qiao Mei thought about it and felt that what Xia Zhe said made sense. It was just that she really could not accept Li Gui being at the mercy of others in this manner. Zhang Qian had bullied her for so many years and yet she still had to continue to bear with it.

She was only Li Gui’s daughter. She could not interfere in the matter between Li Gui and Zhang Qian and could only help her silently.

However, she was no longer willing to help now. Zhang Qian was a person who would keep asking for things. As long as he still had a relationship with Li Gui, he would continue to bully them and put them down.

“Mei Mei, dinner is ready!” Auntie Dong ran over and said.

Everyone helped to bring out the dishes to the table. There were two meat dishes and six vegetable dishes, served with good liquor. Only Qiao Mei’s family could afford to serve such a good meal.

Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao sat inside the house with Qiao Qiang. They did not like the bustle and it was quiet in the house.

Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe stood up and raised their glasses together. Qiao Mei said happily, “It’s been hard on everyone. Thank you for coming! Due to my condition, I’ll use water instead of liquor to make a toast to everyone! Today, everyone must eat and drink your fill! Drink as much as you want! Everyone, enjoy yourselves!”

“Alright!” Everyone cheered in unison.

“The groom should also say something!”

“That’s right! The groom should say a few words to us fellows!” the uncles started making a fuss.

Xia Zhe laughed and said, “Hello, everyone! Let me introduce myself first. I’m Qiao Mei’s husband and my name is Xia Zhe. First of all, I want to apologize to everyone. I couldn’t make it back the last time, so I’ll make it up to everyone this time! I’ll punish myself by drinking three glasses!”

After saying that, Xia Zhe picked up his glass and drank from it. After downing three glasses in a row, Xia Zhe’s face had turned a little red.

“Good! The groom can drink well!”

“None of us mind!”

“Qiao Mei’s husband is quite something! Our Foshan Village sees you as one of us!”

Everyone chattered and started eating. Qiao Zhuang's family was not invited to the banquet this time. The entire village was quiet except for Qiao Mei's house, which was brightly lit and bustling with activity.

Today, everyone was in a good mood. They grabbed hold of Xia Zhe and made him drink a few glasses of liquor in a row. Basically, everyone present drank too much. In the end, they all left Qiao Mei's house walking crookedly. Those who really drank too much and fell unconscious were carried back to their houses.

Xia Zhe hugged the liquor bottle and leaned against the door frame quietly without moving. He did not even notice that there were mosquitoes biting him from time to time.

"Xia Zhe, are you asleep? Wake up!" Qiao Mei walked forward and patted Xia Zhe's face.

Xia Zhe remained still. It seemed that he had really drunk too much. This was the first time Qiao Mei had seen Xia Zhe like this.

"Mei Mei, Xiao Wei and I will help my son-in-law into the room to rest. You're pregnant, so don't go forward," Li Gui said.

Qiao Mei nodded lightly and did not say anything else. She did not want to talk to Li Gui yet as she was still piqued over what happened in the afternoon.

It was said that people who drank would feel heavier than usual. Although she was able to carry Xia Zhe, she was still afraid that an accident would happen, so it was better to get help.

Auntie Dong and Auntie Wang both went forward to help carry Xia Zhe into the room. Qiao Mei grabbed a blanket and covered him with it. There was a fire going in the pit so Xia Zhe would not catch a cold at night.

"Aunties, why don't you stay here for the night too? It's already so dark," Qiao Mei said.

“It’s fine. We’ve walked this path for decades. Even with our eyes closed, we can still find our way home. Besides, my husband also drank too much. I have to go back and take a look. Don’t worry,” Auntie Dong said.

Chapter 517 Finding Out the Details

“We’re leaving! Mei Mei, quickly go home! It’s cold outside, don’t freeze!” Auntie Wang waved her hand and walked home with Auntie Dong.

The courtyard was in a mess. The remaining food and the crockery would have to be cleaned up tomorrow. It was dark now and nothing could be seen clearly.

Li Gui walked to Qiao Mei’s side to help her back into the house, but Qiao Mei dodged her unnoticeably. After going into the room to take a look at Xia Zhe’s condition, she walked to the other room and gathered all the children.

“How much money did you save over the past few months?” Qiao Mei asked.

Zhang Wei was older and could count faster than his younger siblings. Moreover, he was usually the one who distributed the money to his younger siblings after making the sales, so he roughly knew how much money his younger siblings had.

“I had about 20 dollars. Second brother had about 15 dollars. Third sister is more frugal so she had 40 dollars. Youngest sister likes to eat, so she only had about 10 dollars,” Zhang Wei said.

The children did not know the exact amount of money in their hands and only had a rough idea. Qiao Mei did some mental calculations and noted that Zhang Qian had taken about 100 dollars from the children. It appeared that they had plundered a lot of things from the house during this period of time.

“Did you give the money to your father willingly?” Qiao Mei asked.

The children all shook their heads. Zhang Miao said angrily, “It was all snatched by Zhang Cong! I don’t want to give it to him at all! It’s been a long time since I ate the candy sold by the old grandpa from the convenience store! I don’t even have money to buy a replacement for my broken red hair tie!”

“If they took away so much money from all of you, then there’s no need to talk about the savings at home. The amount they took would only be more and not less,” Qiao Mei said seriously.

“There’s nothing to eat at home now. We have to rely on grandfather to survive,” Zhang Wei said as he lowered his head.

He knew very well that grandfather Qiao Qiang was not related to them by blood. Grandfather only helped them because of his elder sister. If not for his elder sister, none of them would be able to survive. He knew that he was grateful to Qiao Qiang and Qiao Mei.

Zhang Wei was a child who cared about his reputation. If not for his father always coming to snatch things from them, they would not have troubled grandfather time and time again.

“Then what do you think about mom getting a divorce?” Qiao Mei asked solemnly.

The children looked at one another and refused to speak up. They knew what a divorce meant.

“If mom and dad get a divorce, does that mean we won’t have a home anymore?” Zhang Miao blinked her big eyes and asked innocently.

“Even if they get a divorce, Miao Miao still has a home. It’s not like mom doesn’t want you anymore. There’s still elder sister and grandfather. What are you afraid of?” Qiao Mei smiled and patted Zhang Miao’s head.

Children were the most innocent and also the easiest to get hurt.

Qiao Mei deeply understood how painful it was for them not to have their parents around when they were young. However, she also knew that if things did not come to an end now, the days ahead would be even more difficult.

“Elder sister... I don’t really want my parents to get a divorce,” Zhang Wei said hesitantly.

Zhang Wei's attitude gave Qiao Mei a surprise. She had thought that Zhang Wei would be the most reasonable one among the children, and she did not expect him to choose to reject the idea.

"Why? Can you tell me?" Qiao Mei asked patiently.

"When I was in school in the city, my classmates all said that we are children without parents. They all bullied me and younger brother..." Zhang Wei said as he lowered his head.

Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao previously did not go to school or interact with the outside world. They did not know what could happen in school and how they could get bullied outside.

When Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao were still studying in the school in the city, their classmates all bullied them and said that their mother was a jinx and they were also small jinxes. Whoever played with them would get implicated and become unlucky!

Although the children in the countryside were envious that they had come from the city, if word got out that their parents had divorced, everyone would look down on them and their good friends would also ignore them.

Qiao Mei was about to persuade Zhang Wei when Li Gui walked into the house after cleaning up the stove. When she saw the children gathered around and talking, she thought that they were sharing some secrets.

"What are you siblings talking about?" Li Gui asked with a smile.

Qiao Mei looked at Li Gui carefully. After two months, she looked much more haggard. Her weak body could not handle so much farm work at all and she had given all the food at home to the children. She probably had not eaten her fill for a long time.

Chapter 518 Thoroughly Disappointed

Zhang Miao happily threw herself into Li Gui's arms and said sweetly, "Elder sister is asking us how we feel about not having a father."

Li Gui's smiley face instantly fell. She did not want Qiao Mei to know too much about this matter. After all, Qiao Mei was the one who provided the money for the "severance payment" back then. She already owed Qiao Mei and Qiao Qiang too much.

Did she have to continue to owe Qiao Mei for this matter?

"Mei Mei... About this, I'm actually..." Li Gui said hesitantly.

"I still want to ask you one last time. Do you really not want to get a divorce?" Qiao Mei asked earnestly.

Li Gui put down the things in her hand and slowly sat down on the brick bed. She was actually more concerned that it would affect the reputations of Qiao Mei and the children. If she did not have children, she would have divorced that bastard long ago.

If she got a divorce now, it would affect the children's chances of getting married and finding a job in the future. In that case, she might as well endure it for a few more years. At the very least, it would give the children a better future.

"I don't want a divorce. After the divorce, the people in the village will definitely talk about it. By then, I won't have a place in the village anymore. The children are still studying now. What if they get bullied in school in the future!" Li Gui said worriedly.

Qiao Mei also knew her difficulties, but it was better to deal with painful things quickly. If she did not get a divorce, she would only feel even more pain.

"You know what the people in our village are like. Everyone knows your difficulties. Even if you get a divorce, no one will say anything. Besides, if you don't get a divorce now, what about these children in the future?" Qiao Mei said as she held back her anger.

"If I get a divorce, it will be difficult for Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao to find a wife. When that happens, Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao won't be able to find a good in-law either. It will be really difficult then," Li Gui said as she wept.

If they did not get a divorce now, Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao would not have the money to get married! No nice girl would be willing to marry into a family where they would suffer!

When nice boys saw such a family situation, they also would not marry Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao. If the girls were lucky enough to have someone come and propose marriage, the Zhang family might even ask for betrothal gifts worth thousands of dollars. Li Gui and the children would not get a single cent in the end and those assholes from the Zhang family would take everything.

“Mei Mei, why don’t you... continue to help your younger siblings...” Li Gui put on a thick skin and said in a low voice.

She really had no choice. If she did not give the Zhang family some money next time, Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao would get beaten up again. Now, there was not even an uninjured spot on Zhang Wei’s back.

Qiao Mei also could not bear to see them suffer, but if Li Gui could not make up her mind to get a divorce, this was a bottomless pit.

No matter how much money Qiao Mei had, it would not be enough to fill up this huge hole.

Since Li Gui was determined not to get a divorce, she did not try to persuade her again. She decided not to fork out any more money to help Li Gui. If Li Gui did not leave the Zhang family, the Zhang family would only become more demanding in the future.

The Zhang family had no limits. If they knew that Qiao Mei was willing to help, there would definitely be no end to it.

“I don’t have any money left. I’ve spent all my money on this trip to the capital. Think of another way. It’s getting late, I’m going back,” Qiao Mei said coldly.

Qiao Mei stood up disappointedly and went to look for Xia Zhe. At this moment, Xia Zhe was already sleeping soundly with his limbs spread out and did not look like his usual disciplined self.

“Wake up...” Qiao Mei reached out and poked Xia Zhe.

Xia Zhe muttered a few words and adjusted himself to a comfortable position before falling asleep again. Qiao Mei sighed resignedly. It seemed that she would have to sleep at Li Gui’s place tonight.

It was not too peaceful at the Zhang family’s house either. When Old Madam Zhang returned home, she felt that her leg seemed to be broken. She kicked up a fuss and insisted on going to the hospital to see a doctor. Although Sun Yan was at home, she did not help with the cleaning and cooking at home. By now, they were all hungry and angry.

“Ow! Hurry up and bring me to the hospital! I’m going to die!” Old Madam Zhang lay on the sofa and shouted.

“If you can walk back on your own, how can there be any problem with you? We can bring you there. Just take out your money and we’ll go,” Zhang Qian said.

People like Zhang Qian and Zhang Cong who had a workplace did not need to spend money if they went to the hospital. Their workplace would reimburse them. Old Madam Zhang did not have a job and had to pay for her own expenses if she went to the hospital to see a doctor.

Zhang Qian did not have any money on hand. He had to set aside a bit of money so that he could still drink and smoke. Moreover, the young widow from the building next door had invited him to her house recently. How would he have the money to pay for the old lady’s medical bills!

He wanted to save some money to get married! He did not want to have to look at that jinx, Li Gui.

Chapter 519 Encounter

When Old Madam Zhang heard that she needed to fork out the money herself, she immediately stopped shouting and making a fuss. If anyone wanted to touch her money, they would have to wait until she was dead!

“Why aren’t you yelling anymore? Weren’t you complaining about the pain just now? Don’t go out and say that I’m unfilial when your bones break!” Zhang Qian said mockingly.

Old Madam Zhang was the best at doing things like that. Now, everyone outside said that he was unfilial and did not hand over his salary to his mother, but just hid himself outside to pay for other women!

If not for the fact that Old Madam Zhang had given Zhang Cong the “severance payment” from Li Gui so that Zhang Cong could get married, he would not have felt so resentful.

Back then, they had agreed that he would get a portion of the money. He had planned to marry the widow from the factory once he divorced Li Gui! Unexpectedly, Old Madam Zhang did not give him a single cent. As time passed, the young widow felt that he did not cherish her and dated the factory manager in a fit of pique. Now, those two people were deeply in love.

She might even have a child in another two months!

Everyone in the factory knew that he had an ambiguous relationship with the young widow. The factory manager was also doing this on purpose to make things difficult for him!

If not for this job, he would have snatched the young widow back and made her his wife long ago!

“When did I ever say anything about you! Don’t spout nonsense!” Old Madam Zhang shouted.

“What are you shouting for! My wife is pregnant! Lower your voices!” Zhang Cong said as he rushed out of the room.

Ever since Sun Yan married into this family, there had not been a day of peace. When Li Gui was still around, she was the punching bag that everyone would beat up and scold to vent their anger.

Now, the house was as chaotic as a pigsty. No one would give in to one another, so they quarreled about anything.

“You still have the cheek to talk about your wife! You shouldn’t have married that wife of yours! At least Li Gui still cooks and does the housework at home! Even when she was pregnant, she did not even take a day off. Look at how delicate your wife is! Those who don’t know better might think that you have married an ancestor you need to worship!” Old Madam Zhang scolded.

Zhang Qian echoed, “That’s right! What’s the use of a woman who doesn’t do the housework!”

If he had known that Sun Yan would not do anything, he would have sent her away for an abortion. It would have been great if he could have gotten a hold of that money to marry the young widow. Not only was she beautiful and young, but she also knew how to take care of the family.

He had been to the young widow’s house once. The house was clean and the cabinets were spotless. It was obvious that she was a person who knew how to live well!

“Then you can bring Li Gui back! Bring her back to do the housework! That’s not what you said when I married Sun Yan back then! She’s pregnant with our Zhang family’s child!” Zhang Cong said.

He was not like Zhang Qian, who had a roving eye. Sun Yan treated him quite well now and her parents also had some say in the factory. When the time came, they would give him an official position. By then, Zhang Qian would have to listen to him even if he was his father!

“So what if she’s pregnant! Like she’s so precious! If not for Li Gui, where would you get the money to get married! You still have the cheek to interfere in my affairs!” Zhang Qian pointed at Zhang Cong and scolded him.

Zhang Cong lowered his head and did not speak. Two days ago, he had accompanied Sun Yan to the shop selling infant items to take a look. Those were all imported items and were very expensive. In the future, he still had to rely on Zhang Qian to go to Li Gui’s place to get the money he needed to support his child.

Zhang Qian looked at the unused stove at home and sighed before turning to leave.

“Where are you going?” Old Madam Zhang hurriedly got up and asked.

“None of your business!” Zhang Qian slammed the door and left.

Zhang Cong muttered softly, “Where else can he go? He must have gone to look for that widow in the building next door.”

There was no food at home, so where else could he go except to her place?

Coincidentally, Zhang Qian’s encounter with Chu Xin was quite accidental. At that time, he had come home from having drinks and was walking back unsteadily. He then bumped into Chu Xin, who had come out to throw away the trash.

His eyes widened at the sight of the woman in real silk pajamas. There were not many beautiful women in such a remote area.

Furthermore, the clothes that people wore in a county city like this were all mainly made of linen and floral fabric. Those who could afford to wear silk were all rich people. One look at this indistinctive body outline, he could tell that she had a very good figure. She was much better-looking than the young widow from the factory.

He made use of his drunken state to go forward and deliberately leaned onto Chu Xin when he walked past her. His hand also bumped into her soft bosom.

Chu Xin was actually not wearing anything underneath!

Zhang Qian looked at Chu Xin in shock. Chu Xin also blushed and said shyly, “How... how long do you want to touch me!”

Chapter 520 Difficulties

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry. I didn’t do it on purpose!” Zhang Qian smiled slyly. Before he let go, he grabbed another handful.

“Ah~” Chu Xin could not help but pout.

Zhang Qian looked at her with an even more brazen expression. He had never met such a lewd woman before. Even the young widow from before had never worn such a thing. This woman was even flirting with a stranger.

“You... ahem... are you from this neighborhood? Why haven’t I seen you before?” Zhang Qian’s eyes were fixed on Chu Xin’s soft bosom.

Chu Xin blushed and slowly leaned towards Zhang Qian. “I... I just came to this neighborhood and I’m still unfamiliar with this place. Big brother, you might not have seen me before.”

This dilapidated neighborhood was built more than 10 years ago. There were no surveillance cameras or street lamps around, and the only illumination on the street was the moonlight at night and the light seeping out through the windows.

Zhang Qian mustered his courage and reached out to touch Chu Xin’s waist. Her waist felt as if it was boneless and became pliable as soon as he touched it. Chu Xin was immediately pulled into Zhang Qian’s arms.

“Big brother is so naughty~” Chu Xin’s sweet voice entered Zhang Qian’s ears, making him feel like he was being scratched by a kitten.

“How am I naughty? I just want to see if I injured you just now.” Zhang Qian’s hands kept moving around Chu Xin’s body, making her tremble all over. She leaned into Zhang Qian’s arms and moaned softly.

Zhang Qian did not know if Chu Xin’s reaction was real or just an act to tempt him. It would be a pity not to take a bite of something that was already sent to his mouth!

“Big brother, my legs feel weak. Can you send me home to sit down~” Chu Xin said.

Zhang Qian happily agreed and carried Chu Xin to her house, staying there the entire night.

Ever since then, Zhang Qian would not return home three to four days a week. If not for Old Madam Zhang nagging at him to go home every day, he would rather sleep at Chu Xin's house every day and never leave the house for the rest of his life!

Today, Chu Xin had already prepared food and was waiting for Zhang Qian to go over.

"I'm here, little beauty!" As soon as Zhang Qian entered, he saw a table full of delicacies and a house filled with warm lighting.

In the past, whenever he went home, he had to face his bad-tempered mother, his disappointing son, a few hungry children crying for food, and his unkempt and old-looking wife. It made him feel so annoyed.

After work, he might as well go and drink with the guys to pass time.

When he was with Chu Xin, he experienced the warmth of home and the considerate companionship of a lover. More importantly, Chu Xin was very flirtatious. When he was still with Li Gui, they only had one position and Li Gui was unwilling to change it. He had long gotten tired of her!

He had never met someone who was so adventurous. No matter how much money he needed to spend on her, he was willing to do so! He was even willing to sell everything he had!

"You still know how to come back! Damn you! I have reheated the food four times! If you still don't come back soon, I'll feed it to the dogs!" Chu Xin came out of the kitchen with two dishes. At this moment, she was wearing very little and the sheer pajamas looked even more tempting to him.

She was not wearing anything underneath. The indistinctive view of her flesh made him forget his hunger and all he wanted to do now was to "eat" her immediately!

"I'm at fault, darling Xin Xin. Please forgive me this time. I'll definitely come back to see you earlier next time," Zhang Qian said as he hugged Chu Xin from behind.

Chu Xin put down what she was holding and used her butt to push away Zhang Qian. "You damn thing, go wash your hands and eat! If we wait any longer, this dish won't be edible anymore!"

“Eating this is not as important as eating you! Let me kiss you first!” After Zhang Qian finished speaking, he leaned forward. Chu Xin smiled and covered Zhang Qian’s mouth.

“You still haven’t told me what you said to your wife today,” Chu Xin said with a frown.

At the mention of this matter, Zhang Qian started to worry. During the past two months when Qiao Mei was not around, he was able to get money nine out of ten times. Even if he did not manage to get any money, he would still be able to get some items.

Now that Qiao Mei was back, and even brought Xia Zhe with her, it would be difficult for him to go there again.

“Sigh, I’ll tell you while we eat. This matter has become difficult now,” Zhang Qian said with a downcast expression.

“You failed?” Chu Xin asked.

“Her eldest daughter came back today. It’s the child she had with her ex-husband. That young girl is very shrewish and not someone to be trifled with. Her husband is a soldier and he’s even more capable. I’m afraid it’s going to be difficult to get money now.” Zhang Qian sighed.