

Fat Wife 561

Chapter 561 Shameless Old Man

At the mention of reading, Auntie Dong started to feel troubled. She was illiterate and only knew how to write her own name. Most people in the village were like her. Even if it was a good book from the capital, they still could not read it.

"Mei Mei, to be honest, when I look at what's written in a book, it's like I'm trying to read a heavenly book. It's difficult to even teach me to write numbers now. Even though I want to earn money, I don't have that kind of ability," Auntie Dong said with a frown.

"It's alright, Auntie Dong. I'll study it first before telling you the contents. When the time comes, we can all work together," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Auntie Dong clapped her hands happily and said excitedly, "Mei Mei! You're really the god of wealth in our village! With you around, I'm not worried that my son won't be able to get a wife!"

"Auntie, go back and let them know I'll teach everyone tomorrow. Anyone who wants to learn can come over," Qiao Mei said.

"Alright! I'll go back now! You should go back too! Take care of yourself!" Auntie Dong left happily with the basin.

Xia Zhe took out a jacket and draped it over Qiao Mei. The temperature dropped drastically at night and she might catch a cold if she was not careful. It would be bad if she got sick.

"Do you want to rest for a few more days? You just came back and you still have to help the villagers. Aren't you afraid that you'll tire yourself out?" Xia Zhe said with a frown.

"I'm not tired. Don't worry. If I feel tired, I'll take a rest," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Xia Zhe knew that he would not be able to dissuade Qiao Mei. Once Qiao Mei made up her mind, even 10 bulls would not be able to hold her back. It was better to let her do whatever she wanted and just help her relieve some of the pressure.

Xia Zhe and Qiao Mei hugged each other tightly and clung to each other. Qiao Yu, who was passing by, looked at the two of them enviously. She had always been superior to Qiao Mei since they were young and she was better than Qiao Mei in everything.

She was prettier than Qiao Mei and more meticulous in her work. She was also more tactful than Qiao Mei and was well-liked by everyone. If she had not been born into Qiao Zhuang's family and was Qiao Qiang's granddaughter instead, she would definitely have a better life than Qiao Mei!

She did not know what kind of sorcery Qiao Mei had used to make herself lose weight! Furthermore, Qiao Mei was now a hundred times prettier than her!

In the beginning, everyone despised Qiao Mei, but now, they all came to curry favor with her. Qiao Yu could not accept such a change.

If Qiao Mei did not use some tricks, why would a man like Xia Zhe fall for her?

Qiao Yu ran back to her house angrily. Just as she was about to push open the door and enter, she heard the people inside discussing something.

"Father, Old Guo from the neighboring village is willing to give 800 dollars as a betrothal gift and wants to marry Qiao Yu. They even say that they will give her three big gifts. It's quite a good marriage. As long as you agree to it, I'll go and look for them now," Wang Qin said as she sat on the brick bed.

Qiao Zhuang's eyes lit up when he heard the amount of 800 dollars. The most expensive betrothal gift his family had given was Wang Qin's betrothal gift, which cost them 300 dollars. He did not expect Qiao Yu to be worth 800 dollars.

He did not raise this daughter for nothing! In the end, she still turned out to be useful.

"Are they really going to give us money? Are they lying to us?" Qiao Zhuang asked suspiciously.

"It's absolutely true! Don't you trust me? They say that it's the same to them no matter which girl from our family marries into their family. It's just that they want the girl to be capable, honest and not talkative," Wang Qin said.

The fourth son, Qiao Liang, slapped his thigh and said agitatedly, "What you're saying does not describe Qiao Yu at all! Isn't this set to fail!"

Outsiders might not know it, but the family members all knew what kind of temper Qiao Yu had. She would only do the chores at home after getting beaten and scolded. Sometimes, she would steal food, and once she started talking, she would not stop.

Everyone in the room became worried when Wang Qin suddenly saw Qiao Hua doing needlework in the corner.

"Isn't our eldest brother's Qiao Hua about the same age as Qiao Yu? There's not much difference between them. Qiao Hua is only two years younger than Qiao Yu. She meets all the requirements!" Wang Qin said as she pointed at Qiao Hua.

Liu Ying immediately stood up and retorted, "Our Xiao Hua is still so young! How can you want to marry our Xiao Hua off. As her mother, I can't bear to part with her. She has to stay by my side for a few more years."

Everyone knew that the Guo family in the neighboring village was a wolf's den. They relied on the fact that they had a big family, and that their children knew how to earn money, to harm other people's daughters. Old Guo was old enough to be Qiao Hua's grandfather! How could he still have the cheek to marry a young girl!

Pfft! Shameless old man! You want to marry my daughter! Let's talk about it in your next life!

Chapter 562 Asking For Help

"Sister-in-law, it's not like what you said. Our mother also wanted to marry Qiao Yu off as soon as possible, but that family may not like our Qiao Yu. That's why I think about your daughter," Wang Qin said.

Liu Ying knew that Wang Qin had always looked down on her. Among the daughters-in-law in the family, Wang Qin was the one Qiao Zhuang liked the most and he felt that she made him proud. The next daughter-in-law whom he liked was her, as she could manage the family's affairs well.

However, she usually cannot beat Wang Qin. In this family, as long as Wang Qin spoke up, Qiao Zhuang would agree to her request in the end.

"Enough! It's so noisy you're making my ears hurt! How about this, let's send Qiao Yu to the Guo family for them to take a look first. If they like her, then they can marry her. If they don't, then we'll find another daughter for them to marry," Qiao Zhuang said.

All these women in the family were not half as diligent as Qiao Hua. If Qiao Hua got married, then only Qiao Yu, the idiot who only knew how to eat, would be left behind. That would be the Qiao family's loss!

Liu Ying looked at Wang Qin smugly. At least she got her way today.

Qiao Yu stood at the door and retreated repeatedly. She never dreamed that her family would sell her one day! Instead of marrying that old man, she would rather they throw her into the river and let her drown!

After leaving Qiao Zhuang's house, Qiao Yu walked aimlessly along the streets. When the neighbors around saw her, they did not dare to greet her. Although they were all willing to interact with Qiao Mei now, they still did not dare to offend anyone from Qiao Zhuang's family.

One could not underestimate the extent to which a village tyrant intimidated everyone.

Qiao Yu unknowingly walked to Qiao Mei's house and stood at the door in a daze. She had offended Qiao Mei previously and did not know if Qiao Mei would be willing to help her now.

Li Gui was the first person to see Qiao Yu at the door. She poked Qiao Mei and said, "Mei Mei, do you think that's Qiao Yu?"

Qiao Mei took a closer look and realized that it was her!

"What are you doing at our house?" Qiao Mei said bluntly.

Qiao Yu held on to the fence and did not dare to push the door open. Qiao Mei had once said that if she dared to take a step into the courtyard, Qiao Mei would beat her and throw her out.

"I... I want to ask for your help!" Qiao Yu said.

"We don't have anything to eat at home. Even if we do, we'd rather feed it to the dogs. You should go back," Qiao Mei said.

Qiao Yu quickly denied it. "No! I'm not here to ask for food! I'm here for my own business!"

The sun was going to rise from the west. Qiao Yu was actually here because of her own private matter.

Qiao Mei entered the house and washed her hands. She slowly walked to the door and asked, "Say it, what's the matter?"

At this time, everyone would come out for a walk after dinner to help with digestion. If they talked at the door, others would definitely hear them. There might be all kinds of versions of the conversation after tonight!

"Can... can I go in?" Qiao Yu asked.

"No. I don't know why you're here to look for me. Why should I let you in? Have you forgotten what I told you before? I'm already being very patient to allow you to stand at the door and talk to me. If you have something to say, then say it quickly," Qiao Mei said impatiently.

Qiao Yu had no choice but to bite the bullet and say, "My father and the others want to marry me to the Guo family in the neighboring village."

The Guo family was a rich family from the neighboring village. It was not bad to be able to curry favor with them.

This was such a great thing, so was she unwilling to marry into the family?

"The Guo family is not a family that any ordinary girl can marry into. I hear that the Guo family's son is quite capable. You won't suffer if you marry him. Why are you here to look for me?" Qiao Mei looked at Qiao Yu and asked curiously.

"I'm not marrying his son. I'm... marrying Old Master Guo..." Qiao Yu's voice became softer and softer as she spoke and Qiao Mei almost could not hear what she said clearly.

This Old Master Guo was actually still in the mood for such amorous stuff at his age. She could only say that he was "old but vigorous"!

However, she did not see the point in Qiao Yu coming to look for her regarding such a matter. It was not as if she could interfere with Qiao Zhuang's family matters. Besides, it was best not to interfere in their family matters and get herself into trouble.

"Just this matter? Alright, I understand. You can leave," Qiao Mei said as she waved her hand.

Qiao Yu was overjoyed. She did not expect Qiao Mei to really not quibble about the past and be willing to help her.

Chapter 563 Gossip

"So you have decided to help me?" Qiao Yu asked eagerly.

"When did I say I want to help you? Aren't you just here to tell me about this? How can I help you? When you get married, I'll definitely send you a big gift," Qiao Mei said to Qiao Yu.

Qiao Yu's mood went through highs and lows like she was on a roller coaster.

"Qiao Mei! How can you treat me like this!" Qiao Yu shouted in exasperation.

Her shouting attracted the attention of people passing by, who all stopped to watch.

Qiao Mei did not know what Qiao Yu meant. Qiao Yu's tone and emotions made it seem as if she was a man who had abandoned Qiao Yu or done something outrageous.

"How did I treat you?" Qiao Mei asked.

"You! You! You!" Qiao Yu pointed at Qiao Mei and kept repeating the same word. She herself could not say how Qiao Mei had let her down.

All she could remember were incidents when Qiao Mei was good to her. There was none of Qiao Mei hurting her.

Instead, she had always been the one scheming against and making use of Qiao Mei.

"Me? Have I let you down in any way? If you can't spell it out, then go back quickly. Don't let others spread the news about you coming to me for help. Otherwise, Second Grandpa will come and find trouble with me later," Qiao Mei said.

More and more people had gathered around. That day, many people saw the Guo family's matchmaker going over to propose marriage and she had specifically asked for a daughter from Qiao Zhuang's family. She had said any girl was fine as long as the girl was young.

"Could it be that the Guo family wants Qiao Yu?"

"It seems so. How can Qiao Yu have the cheek to come and look for Qiao Mei? Back when Qiao Mei was at her house, Qiao Mei almost starved to death. Now, she still has the cheek to ask Qiao Mei for help."

"One must put the saddle on the right horse. What's she doing looking for Qiao Mei?"

Auntie Dong finally came along. Although she did not know what had happened, she would definitely subjectively side with people she liked.

"Say, Qiao Yu! What does it have to do with Qiao Mei whether you get married or not? You're her aunt, and since when does your niece have any say on your business? Just go home! Otherwise, if your father finds out that you're not at home, he'll beat you up again! There are so many families who can't sleep with all your screaming going on!" Auntie Dong said mockingly.

What she said made the people around her laugh loudly. Auntie Dong was still as sarcastic as ever.

Qiao Yu ran home with a red face, feeling ashamed. After that, the people standing around soon dispersed.

Auntie Dong went forward and said, "Qiao Mei, the next time you see her, just chase her off with a big stick! Why waste your breath on her? Don't you find it tiring!"

"Auntie Dong, as if I have any choice. Sigh. It looks like they might come to my house tomorrow to cause trouble," Qiao Mei said worriedly.

Auntie Dong placed her hands on her hips and shouted in the direction where Qiao Yu had left, "Don't worry! As long as I'm around, no one can bully you! I'll see who dares to do that!"

Although Qiao Zhuang was the famous village tyrant, Auntie Dong was not someone to be bullied too. She was the "loudspeaker" of the village.

If any family had any secret, it would definitely not be able to escape her ears. Then, once she heard it, the entire village would know about it. There was never any exception.

Everyone liked to gather together and gossip, especially with people like Auntie Dong, who knew a lot of things.

It appeared that by tomorrow, there would be many versions of the story of Qiao Yu's upcoming marriage circulating around.

"Auntie Dong, do you want to come in?" Qiao Mei said politely.

Auntie Dong smiled and declined. As she walked away, she said, "I'm going home to clean up the house! I only came here because I heard that something happened to you! I'm going off!"

"Auntie, don't forget to come over tomorrow to grow bean sprouts! I'll be waiting at home!" Qiao Mei shouted.

"Fine, fine, fine!" Auntie Dong left happily.

Qiao Mei sat down slowly in the courtyard while holding on to her stomach. During the next two days, she would get Xia Zhe to make a swing when he was free. It was a little tiring for her to sit on such a small stool.

With the swing, she could still entertain herself.

"Mei Mei, why don't you stay at my place with Xia Zhe tonight, or ask Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao to come over and accompany your grandfather. What if Qiao Zhuang comes to find trouble with you in the morning?" Li Gui said worriedly.

Qiao Mei thought that she would deal with whatever came her way when it happened. She did not take Qiao Zhuang's family seriously at all.

"I can't wait for them to come and look for me! Mom, rest early. We still have to grow bean sprouts tomorrow," Qiao Mei said. The two of them tidied up the courtyard and returned to their own homes to rest.

Chapter 564 Locked Up

Qiao Yu ran home dejectedly. As soon as she stepped into the house, Qiao Zhuang threw a tea jar filled with water towards her. The boiling hot water inside splashed down onto Qiao Yu's feet, making her cry out in pain.

“Ah! It hurts!” Qiao Yu fell to the ground and held her feet as tears streamed down her face.

“I heard that you want to ruin this marriage with the Guo family?” Qiao Zhuang’s faint voice came from above Qiao Yu’s head.

Qiao Yu was so frightened that she ignored the pain and hurriedly knelt on the ground to beg for mercy. “Father! I don’t have that intention! I don’t have that intention at all!”

“You don’t? If you don’t, then why would you embarrass yourself by going to Qiao Mei’s place to complain to her! Have we raised you for so many years for nothing! Have we raised you to become a traitor!” Qiao Zhuang said angrily.

“No! No! I just went to chat with Qiao Mei! I didn’t say anything else!” Qiao Yu said with a guilty conscience.

Qiao Zhuang raised his stick and hit Qiao Yu on the back ruthlessly.

“You’re still spouting nonsense! Your sister-in-law saw it! That shrew from the Dong family had been shouting at Qiao Mei’s door! How dare you quibble!” Qiao Zhuang said.

As usual, good news did not travel far, but bad news spread far and wide. They found out about it so quickly.

Qiao Zhuang was about to hit her again when Wang Qin stopped him. She smiled and said, “Father, calm down. What can that girl, Qiao Mei, do? The Guo family wants to be in-laws with us because of you. So what if that little girl, Qiao Mei, has any tricks up her sleeves?”

Qiao Zhuang was still furious. He just could not let it go!

“Father, if you cause Qiao Yu to suffer any injuries, what if we cannot answer to the Guo family later? Calm down and don’t let your anger affect your health. Leave the rest to Wang Qin and me,” Liu Ying said.

At this moment, if she protected Qiao Yu, it would mean that she protected her Xiao Hua as well. Before Qiao Yu married Old Guo, she would not let Qiao Yu escape.

“Qiao Gui, bring Qiao Yu to the woodshed next door. Qiao Yu would have to bear with it for this period of time,” Wang Qin said.

Qiao Gui approached Qiao Yu slowly. The woodshed was cold and damp and there was only one door. Once it was locked, she would not be able to get out unless she dug three feet into the ground.

“Second Brother! Don’t listen to Second Sister-in-law! Second Brother, I don’t want to go to the woodshed!” Qiao Yu begged.

Qiao Gui pretended not to hear anything, grabbed Qiao Yu and dragged her out to the woodshed. He locked the door with a long chain to make sure she could not leave the woodshed at all.

Qiao Yu banged on the door frantically and shouted, “I don’t want to be here! Let me out! Please! Let me out! I didn’t say anything, I didn’t do anything! Let me out!”

Qiao Yu’s heart-wrenching screams made the women in the house feel uncomfortable, but there was nothing they could do. If Qiao Yu did not get married, their daughters would be the ones who had to suffer!

“We must get this matter settled. Otherwise, what if Qiao Mei comes here to ask for Qiao Yu?” Qiao Zhuang said.

“I’ll go and ask Qiao Mei about it tomorrow morning. Father, don’t worry,” Wang Qin promised.

At this moment, Liu Ying also came forward and said, “I’ll go too!”

Qiao Zhuang nodded in satisfaction. With two daughters-in-law like that in this family, he had nothing to worry about.

The next morning, Wang Qin and Liu Ying came looking for trouble early in the morning. Along the way, they caused a ruckus and woke all the villagers up, as if they were afraid that no one else would know about this matter.

They were just short of beating gongs and drums and setting off firecrackers.

Wang Qin stood at Qiao Mei's door with her hands on her hips and shouted, "Qiao Mei, come out!"

"Come out! If you dare to do something, then admit it! Come out!" Liu Ying shouted.

Qiao Mei frowned and stuck her head out from under the blanket to look around. She already expected that Qiao Zhuang would come looking for trouble today but it was really way too early.

Even the roosters at home had not even crowed yet!

Xia Zhe patted Qiao Mei's head and said, "Go back to sleep. I'll go out and take a look."

Qiao Mei nodded obediently and crawled back under the blanket.

Xia Zhe tidied up his clothes and walked into the courtyard with a murderous look. He did not have much of a morning temper, but he also did not like so much noise so early in the morning.

Waking him up was a small matter, but waking Qiao Mei up was a big deal.

"Who are you?" Xia Zhe asked with a frown.

Wang Qin could tell at a glance that this was Qiao Mei's handsome and rich husband. She pointed at Xia Zhe and scolded, "Your family is heartless! You go about ruining someone else's happiness!"

"That's right! What can't you just mind your own business and not get involved in other people's marriages!" Liu Ying chipped in.

Chapter 565 Tell Me If You Can

Before Xia Zhe could say anything, there was a shout from afar.

“You don’t even look in the mirror before you say that others are heartless! Do you really think you’re anything good!” Auntie Dong rushed over with a big group of people.

These were all the people who wanted to learn how to grow bean sprouts from Qiao Mei. Last night, Auntie Dong had gone from house to house to ask around. People who were close to Qiao Mei in the past had all rushed over.

“What does the matter between our family and Qiao Mei have to do with you people! What are you doing passing comments around here!” Wang Qin shouted.

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Auntie Dong looked like she had heard the biggest joke in the world. A few women surrounded Wang Qin and Liu Ying.

Qiao Mei had helped them to make money. Moreover, Qiao Mei did not ask for anything in return, and just helped them sincerely and genuinely. They had not been able to repay her kindness so far.

So, Qiao Mei’s family business was their business. Whoever made things difficult for Qiao Mei was also making things difficult for them!

“Everyone knows what’s going on in your house! There’s no need for you to cause trouble here. We all heard Qiao Yu’s screams last night. No one is deaf!” Auntie Wang shouted.

“That’s right! In the past, your family always asked Qiao Yu to go to other people’s houses to ask for food. Qiao Mei was the one who gave her the most! If not for Qiao Mei, your family would have starved to death long ago! Will you still be able to come and make trouble for others?” Auntie Dong continued.

Wang Qin had never been surrounded and insulted by so many people before. It was simply too embarrassing!

She had two sons and a daughter. Her youngest daughter was only eight years old. Even if the Guo family did not want Qiao Yu, the burden would still not fall on her family.

The Guo family had said that if this marriage was successfully concluded, they would give Wang Qin 100 dollars as a thank-you gift. If not for this 100 dollars, she would not have worked so hard for this matter that was totally unrelated to her.

“It’s none of your business what happens in my family! About that, Qiao Yu was the one who did something wrong, it’s not like we have nothing better to do! That girl Qiao Yu has confessed everything. She said that she came to look for Qiao Mei so that she did not have to marry into the Guo family! If you don’t give me an explanation today, I definitely won’t leave!” Wang Qin shouted.

“Pfft! Are we supposed to believe what you say about why Qiao Yu came to look for Qiao Mei? Do you have evidence! Do you have witnesses! You’re slandering others without any evidence!” Auntie Wang spat at Wang Qin after saying that.

“So what if there are no witnesses! I just know what Qiao Yu said! I don’t care, I have to see Qiao Mei today! I want her to confirm it with me!” Wang Qin said.

Auntie Dong stood in front of Qiao Mei’s door and said, “You still want to enter Qiao Mei’s house? See if you can get past me!”

As the saying went, a pair of fists were no match for four hands. Moreover, there were so many people here.

Liu Ying did not say anything and just stood at the side to watch the commotion. If Qiao Yu was not the one who got married, then Qiao Hua would have to get married! She did not know who would feel more unhappy about that!

“Say something! Am I the one who’s afraid that my daughter will have to get married or are you the one! If you don’t say anything, then I don’t care anymore!” Wang Qin whispered as she grabbed Liu Ying.

“There are so many people, we can’t beat them! Besides, Qiao Mei hasn’t come out yet. Why don’t we go back!” Liu Ying said timidly.

In the past, Liu Ying would still go around making threatening gestures. Now, she was actually being overcautious!

Wang Qin secretly regretted coming over with Liu Ying today. It might have been better to come with the third son’s wife, Jiang Ye!

“What? Are the two of you plotting about how to make your way home?” Auntie Dong said mockingly.

Wang Qin could not take this insult lying down. She pointed at Auntie Dong and shouted, “Don’t think that I don’t have any evidence on your family! If you know what’s good for you, get lost quickly! Otherwise, I’ll make you suffer!”

When Auntie Dong heard this, she became even angrier. Her husband was well-known in the entire village for being good at his job. Other people took a long time to harvest rice, but not only was her husband able to do it fast, he also did a much better job than others!

Even if the things grown in their own fields could not be said to be the best in the village, they were at least one of the best!

Even so, his work points were not as high as Qiao Gui’s! It was all because Qiao Gui was Wang Qin’s husband. Wang Qin alone had the final say in how the work points were tabulated, so she could change them however she wanted!

“If you have the guts, just say it! What wicked things have my family done!” Auntie Dong said.

Wang Qin stammered and was unable to say anything. She was just trying to scare Auntie Dong, but she did not expect this old woman to be unmoved by both force and persuasion! She was really a tough nut to crack!

Chapter 566 Stay Around Since You Are Here

Qiao Mei's last trace of sleepiness was completely extinguished by the commotion outside.

She thought that after leaving the hustle and bustle of the outside world, she would be able to rest quietly in the village for a while. However, things did not go her way and trouble just kept coming.

After putting on her thickest set of clothes, Qiao Mei walked out slowly. Other than the last time when she went to Wang Qin's house to ask for the house, this was her second time seeing Wang Qin behaving like a shrew.

"There's nothing to say, is there! Our Dong family can be considered to be long-time residents in this village! Even our ancestors have never done anything sneaky and have always behaved properly! If you have caught anyone from the Dong family doing anything wrong, say it out immediately! Let everyone be the judge! Don't go around complaining later about being wronged after being the one who slandered me!" Auntie Dong said.

It was noisy outside the courtyard, but it was filled with love inside.

As she had come out in a hurry, Qiao Mei did not even notice that there was a button on her coat that she had done up wrongly. Xia Zhe quickly grabbed hold of Qiao Mei and helped her button up her coat again.

"Stop it! What if Auntie Dong can't hold the fort anymore? I have to quickly send them away!" Qiao Mei said anxiously.

"It won't take long. If you get sick, then you really won't be able to hold the fort," Xia Zhe said.

Liu Ying looked around and immediately saw Qiao Mei cuddling with Xia Zhe in the courtyard. She was actually letting a man button her coat for her in broad daylight!

What a vixen! How shameless!

At that time, even after a married couple had already registered their marriage, if they held hands on the streets, they would still be criticized! This was called bad conduct! It would be written on a poster and pasted at the village entrance to be publicized! There would also be a meeting held to criticize them!

"Qiao Mei! I see you! You're actually holding onto Xia Zhe in broad daylight!" Liu Ying's shout shocked everyone around.

Qiao Mei did not think much of it. He was just helping her to button up, not hugging or kissing her. Was there really a need to kick up such a fuss?

"What have I done? I just made a mistake with the buttons and he's helping me with them. Besides, we're a married couple who have registered our marriage. I'm pregnant now and it's difficult for me to move around. What's wrong with my husband helping me?" Qiao Mei asked.

Liu Ying just could not bear to see other women living happier than her. Qiao Fu may seem like a decent person outside the house, but he often beat and scolded her at home.

Whatever Qiao Fu was unhappy outside, he would come back and hit her even harder.

No one noticed this issue, and even the children rarely knew about such things. Every time Qiao Fu hit her, he would gag her so that no one else would know.

"You and your husband are so inseparable! Why do you still want to break up Qiao Yu's marriage! Do you not want to see our family doing well?" Liu Ying said.

"I'm still wondering why you are here. Is it because of this matter? Yesterday, so many people saw me chase Qiao Yu out. What are you up to now? What does Qiao Yu not being able to get married have to do with me? Just do whatever you want and go back to where you come from," Qiao Mei said sulkily.

"You disrespectful thing! You should at least call me Aunt-in-law!" Liu Ying said.

"My grandfather has long cut ties with your family elder. Now, our family has nothing to do with you people. If you're an aunt-in-law, then you should at least act like an elder. Back then, when I almost starved to death in the cowshed, you contributed a fair bit to that, didn't you?" Qiao Mei said as she stared at Liu Ying.

Everyone who lived in this village knew about this matter.

"I don't want to talk to you about something else. Just tell us the truth. Did Qiao Yu ask you for help or not!" Liu Ying said.

"She did, but I didn't agree," Qiao Mei said honestly.

"That's good enough. As long as you promise us that you'll leave Qiao Yu's issue alone, we're all fine!" After saying that, Liu Ying wanted to leave with Wang Qin as soon as possible.

Auntie Dong gave the people standing around a look and everyone surrounded the two women even more tightly. Without Qiao Mei's permission, neither of the two would be able to leave today.

"What are you doing! Are you going against our family?" Wang Qin questioned.

"I never had that intention, but you come to my house to insult me without distinguishing between right and wrong. Don't you have to give me an explanation for this?" Qiao Mei casually picked up a stick and weighed it gently in her hand.

Chapter 567 Severing Ties

The two women were so frightened that their legs went weak. They were good at arguing, but when it came to a real fight with real weapons, they were terrified.

"We... we just want to settle this matter clearly with you..." Wang Qin said.

“Sure, since you don’t want me to interfere in this matter, then let’s make it really clear. My family has never asked your family for any help. Back then, when my mother sent me to your house and asked you to take care of me, you people also benefited from it. You have lived in that house for free for so many years. Now that you want to draw a line with me, then don’t come and look for me ever again,” Qiao Mei said.

On the surface, they said that they wanted to draw a line between themselves and Qiao Mei, but then again, they often asked Qiao Yu to come around to Qiao Mei for stuff like food or household items. Sometimes, she even came to ask for meat!

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If something happened, they would let Qiao Yu take the blame. They did not believe that Qiao Mei would really beat Qiao Yu to death. Besides, a married daughter was like spilled water. Qiao Yu would eventually have to marry into another family and become someone else’s wife. It did not matter to them if she suffered now.

They all had a tacit understanding. As long as Qiao Mei did not pursue the matter, they would be able to continue benefiting from it.

Now that Qiao Mei had addressed the elephant in the room, they would not be able to get any benefits anymore. How were they going to support the entire family in the future?

Furthermore, Qiao Qiang’s health was deteriorating year by year. If he died within the next two years and since Qiao Mei had already gotten married, this house would definitely belong to them.

Severing ties at this moment was simply cutting off their family’s future wealth!

“No! Your grandfather and my father-in-law are biological brothers! How can such a blood relationship be broken off so easily!” Wang Qin said.

“It can!” A strong voice came from behind Qiao Mei.

Qiao Qiang walked over slowly with his walking stick and said, "Go back and tell Qiao Zhuang that I don't have a younger brother like him anymore. From now on, your family doesn't have to care about whether my family lives or dies."

"I can't make the decision on this matter..." Wang Qin lowered her head and did not dare to look Qiao Qiang in the eye.

Their purpose in coming here this time round was to take Qiao Mei down a notch and to tell her not to be a busybody.

Now, not only did she not achieve her goal, but she even incurred a big loss!

"Since everyone is here today, you can all be my witnesses. From today onwards, I will sever ties with my younger brother, Qiao Zhuang. In the future, even if I die, I don't need their family to care about me. Even if my family can't afford to eat, I don't need their charity!" Qiao Qiang said forcefully.

Everyone present broke out in cheers. Wang Qin and Liu Ying took advantage of the chaos to run out of the crowd and return home in a panic.

Qiao Zhuang still did not know about what happened and was singing along with the radio in the courtyard!

"Did you get chased by dogs?" Qiao Zhuang asked curiously.

"We... we didn't do anything. Father, continue listening. We're going back to the house to cook!" Wang Qin said awkwardly.

Before the two of them could take a few steps, Qiao Zhuang shouted from behind them, "Stop right there. What about the matter today?"

Wang Qin tugged at the corner of Liu Ying's shirt but Liu Ying also did not dare to turn around to look at Qiao Zhuang. The two of them continued to push and shove each other, neither of them wanting to speak first.

Between the two of them, Liu Ying probably had it worse. For so many years, Liu Ying had been living in the same house as Qiao Zhuang and the rest of the family, and she did not have her own place. Back then, Wang Qin had made the family look good, so Li Gui's house was given to her family.

If Qiao Zhuang chased Liu Ying's family out now, they would not even have a place to live!

At this moment, Liu Ying hated herself for believing Wang Qin's slanderous talk last night. Now, she was simply filled with regret!

Even if Qiao Zhuang did not pursue this matter, Qiao Fu would also beat her to death!

"Speak up! Are you both mutes!" Qiao Zhuang roared.

Wang Qin slowly turned around and said with a smile, "It's nothing, it's just... it's just that Qiao Mei managed to escape a calamity. Qiao Mei did not agree to Qiao Yu's request yesterday and had chased Qiao Yu away. Many people saw it, so we came back without saying anything else."

Qiao Zhuang stared at the two of them suspiciously. If everything was really fine, why did they look so guilty?

Wang Qin had always been unreasonable, and Liu Ying was the kind of person who could not help but go around singing her own praises.

The two of them behaved like rats in the gutter when they returned today. They were so dejected that they did not dare to raise their heads. If they had not done something wrong, they would not have looked like this.

"Really? If I find out that you're hiding something from me, you'll get it from me!" Qiao Zhuang asked again.

Chapter 568 Might As Well Die

Liu Ying really could not stand the stress. She knelt down with a plop and said, "Father, we... messed it up..."

"What do you mean?" Qiao Zhuang looked at Liu Ying in confusion and then turned to stare at Wang Qin.

Wang Qin also hurriedly knelt down and said, "Qiao Qiang wants to sever ties with you... He said that even if his family starves to death, we don't have to care..."

Qiao Zhuang laughed mockingly and did not take it seriously at all. He knew this old brother of his best. The fellow had a sharp tongue but a soft heart. As long as he begged hard enough, his brother would definitely lend him a helping hand.

!!

He had said things like severing ties countless times. Yet, when had he not come whenever they asked him for help?

Blood is thicker than water! They were brothers from the same mother! Qiao Qiang would not really be heartless enough to ignore him.

"I thought it was some big thing. Get up," Qiao Zhuang said.

Wang Qin and Liu Ying knelt on the ground and did not dare to move. They were afraid that Qiao Zhuang was lying to them and neither of them dared to be the first to look up.

"Do you think he's telling the truth? If it really ends up like what he says, isn't he afraid of being criticized? I'm his biological younger brother. He's said such things countless times, but when is it ever true?" Qiao Zhuang said indifferently.

"But... what if Qiao Mei doesn't give us the house when the time comes?" Wang Qin said.

“Doesn’t give? How dare she! Don’t forget who has the final say in this village! How dare a little girl lord over me!” Qiao Zhuang shouted.

The thing was that this girl knew the head of the armed forces department. Even when the two children, Zhang Chao and Zhang Qin, were kidnapped by human traffickers, she was able to find them. She could even work with the county’s supply and marketing cooperative to sell bean sprouts.

The entire village had made a lot of money, except for their family who did not make any money and even lost a lot! They could not grow the beans no matter what they did!

It was hard to say who had the final say in this village now...

These were all Wang Qin’s thoughts. Of course, she did not dare to say them out loud.

“Alright, alright, I’m not dead yet! Don’t be an eyesore kneeling here. Hurry up and cook. Also, give Qiao Yu more food. Don’t let the Guo family say that she’s too skinny and can’t meet their requirements when they come around.” Qiao Zhuang sat back in the rocking chair to listen to the music.

Wang Qin and Liu Ying scrambled into the house. As soon as they entered, they went to the water vat and filled a big bowl with water. The two of them fought to be the one to have a drink first.

They were already very thirsty from running all the way back just now. Coupled with the way Qiao Zhuang threatened them, they were both almost scared out of their wits.

They had to drink some water to calm down!

“I never expected him not to be bothered...” Wang Qin muttered to herself.

Liu Ying stopped thinking about this matter. She did not even care if there were mountains of gold and silver in the future. The most important thing now was to serve Qiao Yu well and marry her off to the Guo family.

She only had one daughter. If her daughter could not marry into a good family, she would rather die!

After Wang Qin finished drinking the water, she put the bowl aside and went back to her room to sleep. She did not ever help with the chores in this house.

When Liu Ying was done cooking, she filled up the largest bowl in the house with food. Worried that Qiao Yu would not have her full, she scooped two more spoonfuls into it.

She slowly opened the woodshed door and was greeted by the musty smell inside. Qiao Yu stretched out her hands to block the bright sunlight and she could not see who the incoming person was.

“It’s time to eat,” Liu Ying said coldly.

“Eldest Sister-in-law! Eldest Sister-in-law, save me! I don’t want to marry that old man! Please save me!” Qiao Yu used all her strength to crawl in front of Liu Ying and hugged her leg tightly as she shouted loudly.

In her eyes, this person was a straw for her to clutch at! This was her hope!

Liu Ying looked at the miserable state Qiao Yu was in and was rendered speechless. Actually, she pitied Qiao Yu, but if she pitied Qiao Yu, then who would pity her Qiao Hua?

If the person locked up here was her Qiao Hua, would Qiao Yu be so kind as to save her?

Liu Ying placed the food on the ground and pushed Qiao Yu away. She quickly ran out of the woodshed and locked the door, ignoring Qiao Yu no matter how hard she knocked on it.

“Qiao Yu! Don’t blame Eldest Sister-in-law! Eldest Sister-in-law has no choice! If you don’t get married, then what will happen to my Qiao Hua! She’s only 16 years old! I’m sorry, Qiao Yu! What happened today is my fault! In the future, Eldest Sister-in-law will definitely remember your kindness!” After saying that, Liu Ying hardened her heart and left the woodshed.

Qiao Yu collapsed to the ground helplessly. Even though she was very hungry now, she did not feel like eating anything.

Rather than being violated by that old man, she might as well starve to death!

Chapter 569 Recorder

Qiao Mei helped Qiao Qiang back into the house. The people around them all reminded Qiao Qiang to take good care of himself. Auntie Dong brought the few older women into the courtyard.

"Thank you all so much today," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

"Qiao Mei, why are you being so polite to us! We're all neighbors and it's our duty to help one another!" Auntie Dong said with a smile.

Xia Zhe looked at the women chatting happily. It was not convenient for the menfolk, Qiao Qiang and him, to hang around. He patted Qiao Qiang's back gently and said, "Grandfather, let's go in. I'll make you some tea."

Qiao Qiang smiled and said, "Alright, all of you can chat here! Xiao Zhe and I will go into the house!"

"Uncle Qiao, don't you want to talk to us for a while more!" Auntie Wang shouted.

"No, no! I'm old! I have to rest more!" Qiao Qiang said leisurely.

Ever since Qiao Mei came back, Qiao Qiang went around with a smile every day and even seemed more nimble than usual. No elixir or medicine was as useful as Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe being filial by the old man's side!

If there was anyone in the village whom the villagers were most envious of, it would be Qiao Qiang. He had such a filial, beautiful and capable granddaughter, and now he had found a grandson-in-law who was capable in all aspects.

He could simply live his life like an immortal!

"Mei Mei, quickly teach us how to grow bean sprouts! We can't wait!" Auntie Dong said excitedly.

"That's right, Mei Mei! We've already prepared everything and are just waiting to learn from you!" Auntie Wang said.

Qiao Mei took out a few baskets from the storeroom, containing the beans that she had already chosen. Last night, she had filled up all the beans with energy. Even if someone who had no knowledge at all came by, the person would be able to grow bean sprouts of good quality.

"Aunties, I've prepared everything. Take the amount of beans that you need to grow the amount of bean sprouts you want," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Everyone went forward to get a portion of beans. Everyone took a fair portion and no one took more.

Qiao Mei took a portion for herself and slowly walked to the center. She sat on the stool and said, "There are many things to note about the beans. You can't just do things casually and expect them to grow out fair and plump."

Everyone listened to Qiao Mei attentively, afraid that they would miss out on any important information.

Qiao Mei was actually making it up. If she did not have her energy, she would only be able to grow the same type of bean sprouts as everyone else. However, she needed to keep up with the pretenses.

Fortunately, in Qiao Mei's other life, she liked trees and plants and stuff like that, and she knew some theories. Since what she was doing now was related to plants, the same theories should be applicable!

"Everyone, you have to choose the beans first. It definitely won't work if there are any holes or defects. You can pour the beans into the basin and fill it with water. The low-quality beans will float on the surface of the water by themselves. This way, everyone can choose much faster," Qiao Mei said earnestly.

Everyone noted what Qiao Mei said. Some of them even took out their notebooks to take notes.

Auntie Wang pointed at Auntie Dong and said, "I say, Auntie Dong, you're taking notes! Those who don't know better might think that we're having an important meeting! What is the term that my son uses! Yes, yes, yes! Recorder!"

"Hahahahaha!" The laughter in the courtyard attracted the attention of countless passers-by.

"Shoo, shoo, shoo. Haven't you heard of a saying! A good memory is not half as good as a lousy pen! What if your brains can't remember what Qiao Mei said! Won't we still have to trouble Qiao Mei again then! If you're so good, don't come and ask me if you have any questions in the future!" Auntie Dong said as she waved the notebook in her hand.

Although she was illiterate, she was good at drawing! She just needed to roughly draw what Qiao Mei had said, in a way that she could understand herself!

"It's fine. If there's anything you don't understand, you can come and ask me again," Qiao Mei said.

"Mei Mei, you can continue. What should we do next?" Auntie Dong asked seriously.

"Next, we'll fish out these beans and put them in water again to ensure that every single one of them is flawless," Qiao Mei said hesitantly.

It was normal for a batch to contain one or two bad beans. There were at least thousands of beans in one basket. Who would be able to pick them out carefully one by one?

"Mei Mei, if we don't manage to pick out the one or two bad ones, will it affect the germination of all the beans?" Auntie Wang asked curiously.

She had never heard of such a theory before.

Chapter 570 Well-Informed

"That's right, Auntie Wang. You've heard of the principle that a single piece of rat feces can spoil a pot of good soup, right? It's the same thing to have bad beans in a pile of good beans. These beans might affect the germination of the entire basket of beans. If we are lucky, the other beans might not be affected. However, we would rather kill a hundred than let one bad thing get away" Qiao Mei said impassionedly.

Although Qiao Mei was talking to everyone about beans, she spoke as if she was going to battle. Xia Zhe stared intently at Qiao Mei's figure through the window, unwilling to miss a single moment.

Qiao Qiang smiled and said, "Is Mei Mei that good-looking? If you continue staring out the window, your eyes will pop out!"

Xia Zhe scratched his head in embarrassment and said, "I think Qiao Mei is very happy today. The way she shares knowledge with the older women is similar to how we discuss our strategies in the army. It's very interesting."

Qiao Qiang looked out of the window in satisfaction. She could even inspire people when growing bean sprouts. She was really his granddaughter, so similar to him back then!

Qiao Mei did not know what the two of them were muttering about in the room. She only knew that she was almost unable to continue making things up.

"Qiao Mei, then what should we do after we choose the beans?" Auntie Dong asked.

"Let's pour the water out and then put the beans under the sun for an hour. Then, we'll move them to a shady place and sprinkle them with water. After that, we'll just cover them with a cotton cloth," Qiao Mei said.

Dry the beans before growing them! They had never heard of this before. These beans prefer to be damp. To dry them before soaking them with water seemed like a waste of effort.

Could there be some kind of logic here?

Qiao Mei was unable to give them an answer to this question. After all, even if it was a pile of rotten beans, she could still grow the best bean sprouts from them.

"Everyone, let's start. I'll let you know if I spot any problems," Qiao Mei said.

Everyone went to get water and started to wash the beans. They carefully picked out the beans one by one from the basket, worried that they would miss out on something.

"No wonder Qiao Mei's bean sprouts are so good. Look at the cumbersome process. It's so amazing that she can do everything on her own. It's only been an hour or so but my back is starting to ache and I already can't see too clearly!" Auntie Dong said as she rubbed her shoulders.

The other women all experienced soreness and weakness in their bodies. Their legs were either numb from sitting for too long or their necks were sore from lowering their heads for too long.

"Back then, I thought that Qiao Mei had some shortcuts. Now it seems that if you want to do everything well, you have to work hard at it," Auntie Wang lamented as she leaned against the wall.

"Auntie Wang, you flatter me. There are also times when I fail! In the beginning, I failed many times before I mastered all the tricks. Just the steps I mentioned are not enough. In the next few days, you have to control the humidity well. If you're not careful, all your efforts will be in vain!" Qiao Mei said sternly.

The women believed everything she said and they lowered their heads to choose the beans carefully. It took everyone another hour to clean up and put the beans under the sun.

"Mei Mei, this is really a technical job. I was still thinking that it won't be too hard, but now it seems that it's really very difficult," Auntie Dong said.

"You'll get the hang of it after you do it a few times. Later on, you have to teach me any tricks you discover!" Qiao Mei teased.

"Your Auntie Dong doesn't know anything else, but she's very good at finding out about what's going on in other families!" Auntie Dong said proudly.

Qiao Mei's interest was instantly piqued. She really wanted to know if anyone had bullied her grandfather during her time in the capital, or if anyone was relying on anyone's authority to do all kinds of evil!

"Then does auntie know about the matter between the Guo family and Qiao Yu? I only know what Qiao Yu said about Qiao Zhuang wanting to marry her off to the Guo family, but I don't know anything else. Does auntie know?" Qiao Mei probed.

Everyone around them became very interested and stared at Auntie Dong. Auntie Dong did not hide anything and moved the small stool to sit in the center.

"I only know a little about this matter. It's not that much. Just make do and listen," Auntie Dong said humbly.

Everyone urged her to get started quickly. Auntie Dong's casual chit chat was even more interesting than the tales of those storytellers outside! No one knew where she got her news from, but regardless of whether something happened within or outside the village, she would definitely be the first to know.