

Fat Wife 571

Chapter 571 Chitchat

The old man from the Guo family had one son and three daughters, the son being the youngest. All four children were born to different mothers. It was said that the old man had married five times in his life, and Qiao Yu would be the sixth wife he was going to marry.

Out of the first five wives, two ran away after being beaten by him. Another two of them had difficult childbirths and only the children survived. The last wife could not stand being tortured by him and committed suicide.

The Guo family was a famous well-to-do family within the surrounding eight villages. In the past, they were also the wealthy businessmen in this area. During the generation of Old Man Guo's father, the family started to decline and they no longer did as well as before.

However, a starving camel was still bigger than a horse, and they were still richer than ordinary families.

Old Man Guo did not have any other hobbies except for having a soft spot for young girls. Even Zhang Qian knew that at his age, he should find a widow so that no one would gossip about him. However, Old Man Guo still wanted a wife who was young enough to be his granddaughter!

In any case, daughters from poor families were not highly valued. Their family would find it a good thing if they were able to get more money for the betrothal gifts.

It was difficult for Old Man Guo's son to get married because of Old Man Guo's bad reputation. It was true that good news did not travel far, but bad news spread far and wide.

It was said that Wang Qin had secretly found a matchmaker to go to the Guo family to ask around, with the intention of marrying off one of the daughters in the family. Then she would be able to get a share of the money to supplement her family's income.

Although being the accountant of the brigade sounded like a cushy job, she did not make much money. In addition, there were so many people in Qiao Zhuang's family and he was famous for being stingy. The grownup sons in the family had to give Qiao Zhuang 10 dollars a month.

As this money was Qiao Zhuang's alimony for his old age, he secretly saved this money to buy liquor and the best cigarettes.

Old Man Guo and Qiao Zhuang were old acquaintances. Back in the past, the two of them went gambling together and were the best mahjong buddies. That was why Old Man Guo felt at ease marrying a daughter from the Qiao family.

"Then doesn't my second grandmother feel sorry for her own daughter?" Qiao Mei asked curiously.

"So what if she feels sorry? She's been beaten up and scolded by Qiao Zhuang her entire life, so she probably doesn't know how to resist anymore. However, it's hard to say. A rabbit will also bite when it is anxious. Besides, Qiao Yu is her only daughter. Will she watch on as her daughter gets thrown into the fire pit?" Auntie Dong said.

Qiao Mei's face was filled with sadness. She was not worried about Qiao Yu's safety, but she felt sorry for those girls who died. She did not expect Old Man Guo to be such a cruel person.

What a beast! He was worse than pigs and dogs!

"Mei Mei, you're still concerned about their family! Don't you know how badly your mother and grandfather were bullied by their family when you weren't around!" Auntie Wang said angrily.

Qiao Mei looked at everyone in puzzlement. Her family had not told her about this and all she knew was that Zhang Qian had come to ask for money.

"What happened?" Qiao Mei asked anxiously.

"They did not do anything to your grandfather, but it was just that Qiao Zhuang's family members came around to say that they can't afford to buy food anymore. After that, your grandfather often went out and did not stay at home, so they gradually stopped coming. However, your mother..." Auntie Dong hesitated to speak.

Everyone knew what happened to Li Gui. If it was any of them, they would not even want to stay in this village anymore. They did not think they could be strong enough to endure it.

"Wang Qin often uses her authority in her position to deduct work points from your mother. To be honest, the amount of work your mother does in the fields is not any less than my husband, but she only has half the amount of work points. Your mother has a soft personality and doesn't dare to confront others, so she has tolerated it until now," Auntie Dong said.

"Sometimes, they will even deliberately cause trouble in the area that your mother is in charge of and mess up the land. All these will be recorded on your mother's account and she will have to bear all the responsibility," Auntie Wang added.

Everyone chimed in and told her everything about how Qiao Zhuang's family bullied Li Gui. Some of these things she heard had actually already crossed her mind, but she did not expect Qiao Zhuang to be so unscrupulous.

Now that her stomach was getting bigger by the day, she could not go to their house to demand an explanation for Li Gui like what she used to do in the past. Qiao Zhuang's family was not like Zhang Qian's family who bullied the weak and feared the strong.

Qiao Zhuang's sons were not people to be trifled with. If they could use their fists, they usually would not waste their breath on you. If they got physical with Qiao Mei, she would be the one at a disadvantage.

"Mei Mei, bear with it for now. You can settle this matter later," Auntie Dong whispered.

She was also concerned for Qiao Mei. The most important thing now was for Qiao Mei to give birth safely.

Chapter 572 Things To Note

Qiao Mei did not think so. Instead, she felt that no one from Qiao Zhuang's family would dare to touch her. Putting aside whether Xia Zhe was around or not, even if she went to look for Qiao Zhuang's family alone, they would still be afraid that something would happen to Qiao Mei and would not really go after her.

"Don't worry, aunties. I know what I'm doing. I won't put myself in danger!" Qiao Mei said with a smile.

The women felt relieved. As long as Qiao Mei was fine, they were at ease.

Besides, Wang Qin would not be the brigade accountant for much longer. The person taking on this position was chosen once every two years. Wang Qin could be the brigade accountant for so many years only because Qiao Zhuang's family was not to be trifled with.

If anyone dared to choose not to vote for Wang Qin, Qiao Gui would bring his brother to go from house to house to find those people until everyone agreed to vote for Wang Qin.

"Mei Mei, how many months pregnant are you? When's your due date?" Auntie Dong asked.

Qiao Mei touched her stomach and said, "There are still a few months to go. It's not time yet. I'm having two children and I'll definitely have a hard time giving birth. I'm quite worried about this!"

Two!

There had not been anyone in the entire village who got pregnant with two babies at once! Such good fortune was not something that ordinary people could have!

"Oh my! Let me take a look! I've never seen anyone pregnant with two children!" Auntie Dong circled Qiao Mei excitedly while the other women looked at her enviously.

During this period of time, people tended to favor boys over girls because men could do a lot of farm work. The more men in a family, the more rations and money they would have. If Qiao Mei gave birth to two sons, her family would definitely have a prosperous life!

However, it was not a bad thing to have two daughters. The older generation always said that daughters were considerate little sweethearts. When they grew up, they would be very attentive and filial, and much more considerate than sons.

Everyone hoped that Qiao Mei was pregnant with a boy and a girl!

This was called prosperity brought by the dragon and phoenix! It was a great thing!

"Auntie, I'm not sure yet. There are still a few months to go," Qiao Mei said shyly.

"That's right, Auntie Dong. It's as if Qiao Mei is your daughter. Look at how anxious you are!" Auntie Wang said with a laugh.

Auntie Dong did not care about what others said at all. She even wished that Qiao Mei was really her daughter!

"The children you're carrying are so obedient. They don't torture you. Back when I was pregnant with my son, I felt terrible. I felt like throwing up whenever I smelled stir-fried vegetables!" Auntie Dong said enviously.

All the women present had given birth and raised children before. They all had sons and daughters and had a lot of experience.

Among the women here, Auntie Feng was the most experienced. She got married at the age of 18 and had eight children by now! The oldest few were already married and had their own children, while the youngest was still studying.

"Auntie Feng, do you have any experience to impart to me? This is my first time giving birth and I'm a little uncertain," Qiao Mei said.

"Actually, I don't have much experience. When I gave birth to my second son, I was still working in the field! As I raised my arm to lift the hoe, I felt that I was about to give birth! My second son was born in the field, so his name is Feng Tian. The rest of the children were born quite smoothly and I did not feel any discomfort," Auntie Feng said.

Auntie Dong grabbed Qiao Mei's arm and said, "You have to eat well and make sure you get your nutrition. You need a lot of calcium when you're pregnant! You have to replenish your calcium! Otherwise, what if your health becomes worse after giving birth?"

"That's right. You indeed need to replenish your calcium and you can't touch cold water. Otherwise, you'll fall ill after giving birth. Back then, I was pregnant and taking care of my eldest son at the same time, and also did all the housework. Now, whenever it's windy, rainy or cold, my fingers and legs will hurt terribly!" Auntie Wang said as she stretched out her tanned hands.

Her hands were extremely rough. It was obvious that she had been doing farm work for a long time and did a lot of work. Moreover, her joints were a little protruding. It was very likely that she had some minor illnesses.

"I understand. I'll pay attention to these things!" Qiao Mei seriously took note of all these things.

"Qiao Mei, is there anything you feel like eating? Tell us aunties and we'll make you whatever you want to eat," Auntie Wang asked.

"That's right, tell us!" the other women asked in unison.

There was really nothing that she particularly craved for. She was fine with her usual diet and did not have any special needs. Her preferences also remained the same as before.

Chapter 573 Sweet Talk

Qiao Mei thought about it seriously and said, "I don't have any particular craving..."

"No? Really? When I was pregnant, I really craved the potatoes that we grew at home!" Auntie Dong said in shock.

No one believed what Qiao Mei said. She was currently at the stage of pregnancy when the symptoms became really obvious. Most women would throw up all the time, and there were women who would even throw up immediately after they ate so they could not even eat a mouthful of rice.

It was fair enough if Qiao Mei had no symptoms, but she did not even have cravings!

Her children were really worry-free! They were simply sent by the heavens to repay her kindness!

"Then, do you prefer spicy food or sweet food?" Auntie Wang asked.

"I like salty food..." Qiao Mei said as she scratched her head in embarrassment.

"You are so different from other pregnant women. When I was pregnant with my children, I suffered a lot. With my eldest son, I liked to eat sour apricots. The more sour, the better. They were so sour that my husband's teeth almost fell out when he ate them, but I thought they tasted fine. In fact, I still found them not sour enough," Auntie Feng said.

Auntie Feng's words brought back memories for everyone. Different people had different cravings for watermelons, grapes and apples among others. These were all common foods that could be bought anywhere.

Auntie Wang had craved for a strange thing when she was pregnant! She actually wanted to eat burnt potatoes! Moreover, she only ate the burnt portion and gave the rest to her husband.

"I wish that I have worry-free children like yours. My third son started tormenting me since I was pregnant. I threw up everything I ate and there was never a day of peace. Now that my third son has grown up, he's causing trouble everywhere!" Auntie Wang said with a sigh.

"I don't think Qiao Mei will have to worry about her two children in the future. They're both such obedient children!" Auntie Dong said happily.

While they chatted, everyone's beans had been dried in the sun. They each carried a basket and went home to grow bean sprouts.

Everyone would return the baskets later when they were free. This was their usual practice.

Qiao Mei rubbed her shoulders and slowly stood up. Her throat was dry after talking for so long. Suddenly, a hand appeared in front of her with a glass of water.

Qiao Mei smiled and said, "Oh my, my hands are so sore! I'm unable to hold this cup!"

Xia Zhe brought the glass of water closer to Qiao Mei's lips and let her drink from it slowly.

"Don't spoil me like this. If I don't want to feed myself in the future, will you feed me? You'll spoil me like this!" Qiao Mei said.

Spoiling her was a wrong thing to do, not spoiling her was even more of a wrong thing. She was so hard to serve.

He had no choice. Qiao Mei was the wife he chose for himself. Even if he had to go through hell and high water, he would do it without any hesitation.

"No worries. You can do whatever you want. As long as it's something I can do, I'll do it. I'll even feed you for the rest of your life! I can't ask for more!" Xia Zhe said.

Qiao Mei had goosebumps all over her body from how mushy Xia Zhe was. For some reason, when they did not meet in the past and only corresponded via letters, the nature and tone of their letters were very serious and they rarely exchanged sweet nothings.

Nowadays, Xia Zhe was glib-tongued and could say different things to her every day. She really did not know where he learned all this.

"Why are you so enlightened? Have you learned to sweet-talk me?" Qiao Mei asked.

These were all things that Xia He had told him. Previously, Xia He had taught him ways to make Qiao Mei happy and gave him many examples, like how saying sweet nothings could make Qiao Mei happy every day as if she was living in a honey pot. She also told him to take care of Qiao Mei in a meticulous manner, so as to make Qiao Mei get used to his existence and not be able to leave him.

They spoke for an entire afternoon!

"You... you don't like it?" Xia Zhe asked nervously.

"I do! Of course I like it! As long as you're being yourself, I like everything!" Qiao Mei said with a smile.

"Then that's good. I thought I did something you didn't like," Xia Zhe said.

Recently, the firewood in the backyard had piled up very high. Xia Zhe had gone up the mountain to pick the wood by himself and then chopped the firewood into a standard size. In the past, Qiao Qiang was the one who did these chores. Ever since he got older, he rarely went up the mountain and would only go when the family ran low on firewood. In the past few days, the firewood in the backyard had been piled up to the height of two people.

Chapter 574 Coming To Propose Marriage

"Why did you chop up so much firewood? This firewood can last us until next summer," Qiao Mei said.

"I'm worried that there's no one to chop up the firewood after I go back. It'll be easier for grandfather if I prepare more," Xia Zhe said.

As Xia Zhe counted the days, he realized that it was almost time for him to go back. He did not expect one month's vacation leave to pass so quickly.

Qiao Mei originally thought that they still had a lot of time. One month was a long time and the two of them had plenty of time to spend together. Now that the deadline was almost up, she felt reluctant to part with him.

"Then when are you leaving?" Qiao Mei said as she looked at Xia Zhe sadly.

Xia Zhe stroked Qiao Mei's head. If it was possible, he also wished he could be by Qiao Mei's side at all times. He had devoted himself to the army for so many years and had not taken a single day off. Actually, he still had more than a month's vacation leave left.

However, he could not leave his troops without a leader. Not long ago, he received news that Zheng Yuan's father had left the army because of that incident when Zheng Yuan caused a scene, and he had gone to a small place to train new recruits.

There were a lot of things waiting for him to deal with in the army.

"Probably the next few days. Maybe after three days," Xia Zhe said.

"Three days... Then I have to start preparing some stuff for you to bring back," Qiao Mei said.

Xia Zhe did not want to bring too many things with him. He was often out on missions and could not bring along the things that Qiao Mei made. If he left them in the camp, Zhao Wu and the others would just snatch them away.

He intended to only take some raisins and two jars of pickled vegetables. He did not need anything else while in the army. In the army, everyone ate and used the same things. It was not good for him to have anything special.

"I'll come back to see you when I can take more leave. Then, I'll bring you and grandfather around the capital to have fun. When I have some time, I'll talk to Aunt and ask her to bring you and grandfather to the capital. When the time comes, there will be someone to take care of you when you give birth. I'm also concerned that it will be hard on grandfather if he's alone," Xia Zhe said worriedly.

Although Li Gui was Qiao Mei's biological mother, she also had four other children to take care of. Zhang Chao and Zhang Miao were still undergoing treatment and she could not do so many things at the same time.

Qiao Mei had also already thought about what Xia Zhe said. Although her grandfather's condition had improved, he still had not gone to a proper big hospital for a checkup yet. She must find time to bring him to the capital to get him checked out. Furthermore, the medical equipment in the county city was really too lousy. If she really gave birth here, she would have a slim chance of survival!

She could recall from the memories of the original owner of the body that she had given birth to the children in a hospital in the county city. At that time, she had encountered a quack doctor and all three

lives were almost lost! Fortunately, the original owner of the body had a strong will and she survived, so the children were also safe and sound.

At the moment, she did not know what kind of fate she would have, but it was always good to play it safe.

"Let's wait and see. I remember Aunt's phone number. I'll just contact her when it's time," Qiao Mei said.

The sound of gongs and drums could be heard from the village entrance. The matchmaker from the Guo family had come to choose a girl from Qiao Zhuang's house!

The matchmaker was dressed brightly and went to the door with the betrothal gifts from the Guo family. The Guo family had announced that they would marry whichever daughter was available in Qiao Zhuang's family!

Wang Qin rushed all the way out to welcome the matchmaker, smiling widely from ear to ear. Those who did not know better would think that she was the one marrying off her daughter!

"You're here! The whole family is waiting for you! I've been looking forward to seeing you!" Wang Qin said excitedly.

"I haven't seen you for so many years, but you're still so eloquent! The things you say! So melodious to my ears~" the matchmaker said as she held Wang Qin's hand.

"Come in quickly. Everyone at home is waiting!" Wang Qin said.

The people with her carried the betrothal gifts into the house and Qiao Zhuang's eyes lit up.

Then, the matchmaker took out a red cloth bundle from her pocket and said, "Big brother! This is the betrothal gift money from the Guo family. It's 1,000 dollars! See if the amount is correct!"

She knew Qiao Zhuang's family too well. If she did not make things clear in person now, it was possible for them to say anything contrary in the future. It was not a big deal for them to say that she was greedy for money, but if word got out, it would ruin her reputation!

She was a famous matchmaker in this area! No one was as good as her and she had matchmade half the number of couples in every village!

"We're rest assured given that you're the matchmaker! Who doesn't know what kind of person you are! We don't have to check the amount!" Qiao Zhuang said with a smile.

The matchmaker reached out to hold Qiao Zhuang back and said, "Big brother, these are two separate things. We all have to do what we have to do. Otherwise, it will be difficult for me to do business in the future!"

Chapter 575 The Third Party Reaps The Benefits

The eldest son, Qiao Fu, and the second son, Qiao Gui, also craned their necks to take a look. All their money was given to Qiao Zhuang and his wife. They had never seen so much betrothal money.

It was an eye-opener for them today!

"Father, just open it and take a look. This way, everyone will feel at ease," said the third son, Qiao Wang.

Qiao Zhuang opened the cloth bag impatiently. He had no intention of framing the matchmaker at all. Such a thing was beneath him.

He was actually guarding against these heartless sons and daughters-in-law of his. This amount of 1,000 dollars was like a bomb. Who knew when these sons would turn against one another or conspire with his daughters-in-law to kill him and divide up his assets.

Wang Qin's eyes widened as she looked at the money in the cloth bag. The last time she saw so much money was at Qiao Mei's wedding. At that time, Qiao Mei's betrothal gift money had accidentally scattered all over the ground.

However, she did not manage to see everything then. She only saw a few 100-dollar bills.

"The Guo family is really generous!" Wang Qin flattered.

The matchmaker said haughtily, "Of course. The Guo family said that as long as it's a girl from Qiao Zhuang's family, she can marry into the family, no matter who it is. Once she joins the Guo family, there'll be plenty more things coming."

According to the norms, if any family hired a matchmaker, they would have to give the matchmaker a pig head as a reward.

Not only did the Guo family give her a pig head, but they also gave her 200 dollars!

It was said that most other people were unwilling to help make the match and no one knew if she was willing to do it. The others did not want to do it as they felt that it was immoral to ruin someone's daughter by marrying her off to Old Master Guo.

She could not bear to do it as well, but she also had her own children to raise. Moreover, her son was about to get married and the family needed money.

Therefore, even if she was unwilling, she had to make a trip on behalf of the Guo family.

"Brother Qiao Zhuang, is the amount of the betrothal gift money correct?" the matchmaker asked.

"Yes, yes. Come in quickly!" Qiao Zhuang hurriedly put the cloth bag into his pocket and decided to hide the money when there was no one around later.

The matchmaker carefully sized up the situation at Qiao Zhuang's house. Although the house looked old, it was very clean. There were no spider webs or dust on the ceiling, nor was there any dust on the cabinets and brick bed.

Either Qiao Zhuang's wife was capable, or these daughters-in-law were hardworking. However, based on what she had heard when she asked around, it should be Qiao Yu who did these chores.

This girl seemed to be the one whom the Guo family had taken a fancy to.

"By the way, where is the young lady? Let me take a look so that I can bring the message to the Guo family. Otherwise, they'll be unhappy that I concluded this matter without even seeing her," the matchmaker said.

"The young girl is shy and embarrassed to come out, but don't worry! She is definitely not bad!" Wang Qin said.

The matchmaker still shook her head and said embarrassedly, "I also know that the young miss is anxious about having to get married. We have all experienced it ourselves! But you have to let me take a look, right? Otherwise, if I ruin my reputation, how can I survive within these eight villages in the future? Sister, don't you think so?"

Everyone looked at one another. It was not something they could avoid, so they could only clean Qiao Yu up and bring her to meet the matchmaker.

It was not that they did not want to let Qiao Yu come out, but Qiao Yu had chosen not to eat or drink for the past few days and had lost a lot of weight. If the matchmaker saw her in this state, she might worry that the Guo family might be dissatisfied.

"Then wait here. My sister-in-law and I will go and help her get dressed up." Wang Qin grabbed Liu Ying and walked out with her.

Liu Ying also knew the seriousness of this matter. If Qiao Yu did not appear today, her Qiao Hua would have to get married on Qiao Yu's behalf!

"Eldest Sister-in-law, you've seen the current situation. I can't persuade Qiao Yu anymore. She looks at me like a mouse seeing a cat and doesn't want to say a word to me. Eldest Sister-in-law, why not you go and persuade Qiao Yu," Wang Qin said as she pretended to be in a difficult position.

Of course, Liu Ying knew what Wang Qin was up to. Wang Qin wanted Qiao Yu to bear a grudge against Liu Ying and cause both sides to suffer losses so that she could be the one to reap the benefits.

However, Liu Ying could not think of any other way at this moment. She could not come up with a better idea to resolve this disaster.

She decided to just be the evil person in this situation! As long as it helped her daughter! She did not care about anything else!

Chapter 576 Come Out With Me

The inside of the woodshed was a completely different world from the outside. Not only were there rats, but there were also snakes and poisonous insects. It was very dark all year round and even when the kerosene lamps were lit, it was still very dim.

Qiao Yu sat on the ground with listless eyes. This woodshed which did not see daylight was like her life, dark and hopeless.

Liu Ying slowly opened the door of the woodshed and a ray of sunlight shone on Qiao Yu. Qiao Yu remained indifferent. She knew that what awaited her was not a good life, but the beginning of a life of pain.

"Qiao Yu, Eldest Sister-in-law will bring you to take a bath and eat something. Come with me." Liu Ying reached out to Qiao Yu.

Qiao Yu remained unmoved. She knew that nothing good would happen if she was brought out. Nothing good ever happened to her in this house.

Everyone had disliked her since she was young. She had five elder brothers at home and by right, she should have been the most pampered child. However, the situation was the exact opposite.

She had been treated like a slave in the family since she was young. It was even too mild to describe her as a slave.

She could only wear her brothers' castaway clothes, and had never had any new clothes in her life. She had to use her brothers' old clothes to make new ones for herself.

Among the six children in the family, only her eldest and second brother had gone to school. The fifth son, Qiao Gang, was currently in school. Even if she wanted to study, she would not get the chance.

She still remembered that there was a famine one year and there was no food at home at all. All the food they had was given to the boys first. By the time it got to her mother, Shen Ge, and her, everything in the bowls had been licked so cleanly that the bowls looked cleaner than after they were washed.

Qiao Yu could only eat tree bark and the cores from the corn stalks to fill her stomach. After eating these things, she would be so constipated that she could not go to the toilet and her stomach would hurt terribly.

"Qiao Yu? Qiao Yu, what's wrong?" Liu Ying asked fearfully.

Qiao Yu's lips were dry and cracked. She slowly raised her head and said, "I'm not going..."

"Qiao Yu, listen to Eldest Sister-in-law's advice. Don't torture yourself like this. Your mother will feel sad if she sees you like this," Liu Ying said as she could not bear to see the girl like this.

"My mother? Didn't my father hit my mother?" Qiao Yu asked.

Only at the mention of Shen Ge did Qiao Yu look more energized and her eyes seemed to light up.

During those difficult days, only Shen Ge was by her side, saving up her own rations for her.

"No, your mother wanted to argue with your father yesterday and I stopped her. Otherwise, your mother would definitely have been beaten up by your father," Liu Ying said.

Actually, Shen Ge did not argue with Qiao Zhuang at all. She also did not know how to help Qiao Yu escape her fate of marrying into the Guo family.

"Does my mother ask about me?" Qiao Yu said as she stood up with difficulty, holding on to the wall.

"Well... of course! Your mother is especially worried about you and is always thinking about your health," Liu Ying said with a smile.

Worried? If she was worried, why did she not send her any food for so many days and did not sneak out to talk to her at night.

"You must be lying to me! If she cares about me, why doesn't she come to see me!" Qiao Yu asked sadly.

"Because... because your mother is also locked up. She can't come out now and can't come and see you," Liu Ying said.

Qiao Yu did not believe these words at all. After living in this family for so long, she had long known about Qiao Zhuang's tricks. It was all a lie to talk about locking people up. The real thing he did was to punch them hard.

Wang Qin waited outside anxiously. As time passed, she still did not see any no movement in the woodshed at all. The matchmaker would leave in a while!

Unable to wait any longer, Wang Qin rushed into the woodshed and said, "Qiao Yu, come with me quickly!"

Qiao Yu looked at Wang Qin in fear and gradually crawled towards the corner.

Wang Qin pressed on and slowly approached Qiao Yu. "Your mother is already locked up in the storeroom by our father. If you don't go out today, your mother will definitely be beaten to death by our father."

Hearing this, Qiao Yu suddenly covered her face and sobbed. She had no way out now. Why was her life so hard!

"Qiao Yu, Second Sister-in-law also knows that it's difficult for you, but think about it. It's not as if there's nothing to gain from the Guo family. They are a big family with so much money and assets. Won't it all be yours when the time comes?" Wang Qin said agitatedly.

Liu Ying stood at the side and listened quietly. If she did not know that the person getting married was Qiao Yu, she would have thought that Wang Qin was the one eyeing the Guo family's assets!

Chapter 577 Only One Daughter

"I'll go..." Qiao Yu said as she wiped her face with her sleeve.

Since she could not avoid it, she would just have to accept her fate. The truth was right in front of her, only these people had the final say.

Wang Qin beamed with joy and said, "That's great! Come! Come to my room! I'll help you get cleaned up! I promise you'll look beautiful!"

Qiao Yu followed behind Wang Qin silently. When Qiao Yu was done dressing up, Wang Qin and Liu Ying held Qiao Yu's hands and entered the house.

Before she even saw the matchmaker, Wang Qin started shouting, "Come and take a look! The beautiful daughter from our family!"

The matchmaker put down the pastry in her hand and sized Qiao Yu up seriously. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the person in front of her was all skin and bones and her face was sickly pale. If such a person married into the Guo family, Old Guo would cut her matchmaker's fees!

"This is the... sixth child of your family, Miss Qiao Yu?" the matchmaker said doubtfully.

Wang Qin nodded and said, "That's right, this is Qiao Yu. Are you satisfied with her?"

"I remember you say that there are other girls? Bring them over for me to take a look as well!" the matchmaker said with a smile.

Liu Ying's face instantly fell. She had thought that the matchmaker was only here for Qiao Yu, and she did not expect her to ask to see Qiao Hua.

If the matchmaker saw Qiao Hua, she would definitely settle for Qiao Hua. At that time, no matter how capable Liu Ying was, she would not be able to bring Qiao Hua back.

"There's no one else! She's the only daughter! Don't tell me you think there's something wrong with our Qiao Yu?" Liu Ying asked.

"Didn't Wang Qin tell me that the granddaughter of the family is also of age? I'm doing this for your own good. If the Guo family asks me how many daughters you have and how many I've seen and whether I choose carefully, won't it be hard for me to answer? I hope you can understand my difficulty," the matchmaker said.

Wang Qin immediately asked Qiao Gui to remove Liu Ying from the living room. She must get this matter done! As long as Qiao Zhuang was on her side, even an immortal could not help Liu Ying!

"Yes, yes, yes. That's our eldest granddaughter, Qiao Hua. She looks like a flower, just like her name! She's in the other room now! Should I bring her here?" Wang Qin asked tentatively.

At this moment, Liu Ying broke free from Qiao Gui's grip and laughed crazily. "You shameless animals! You want to see my Xiao Hua! Dream on!"

"What does this mean? Is she crazy?" The matchmaker looked at Liu Ying in horror.

Wang Qin stomped her feet anxiously and scolded angrily, "Take her away quickly! Bring Qiao Hua here!"

Liu Ying pointed at Wang Qin and said, "Qiao Hua has long left! All of you won't be able to find her for the rest of your lives! I'm telling you, I will never let you ruin my daughter!"

Liu Ying was not a fool. She had long expected Wang Qin to have designs on Qiao Hua. Instead of letting Qiao Hua sit at home and wait for her doom, it was better to let Qiao Hua go far away and never come back.

"Where did you bring Qiao Hua!" Wang Qin asked.

"Don't ask anymore. I won't tell you. Even if you beat me to death! I won't tell you!" Liu Ying stuck her neck out and shouted.

In Qiao Zhuang's whole life, he had never felt so ashamed before. He raised his stick and was about to hit her.

Liu Ying did not dodge. She just stood there and glared at Qiao Zhuang as she shouted, "Come on! Beat me to death and everything will be over!"

As the saying went, bad-tempered people were not as scary as people who did not fear death. When one was not even afraid of dying, one was no longer afraid of anything.

"You people deal with your family matters first! I'm leaving now!" The matchmaker hurriedly ran towards the door.

Liu Ying grabbed her and said, "Go back and tell the Guo family that Qiao Zhuang only has one daughter, Qiao Yu. Regardless of whether they want to go through with the marriage, she is the only one available. Ask them to make their decision!"

The matchmaker was so frightened that she quickly nodded and disappeared with a whoosh.

She felt that she was really unlucky today. It was clearly supposed to be a joyous occasion, but it just did not go well. Once she returned to the Guo family, she would explain everything to them in detail. It was not that she could not conclude the arrangements for this marriage, but it was that Qiao Zhuang's family had really gone too far.

Even all the village chiefs had to be nice to her, but Qiao Zhuang's family could cause such a mess. She did not know if she would be able to keep her job as a matchmaker!

Chapter 578 Willingly

"Tell me quickly! Where did you bring Qiao Hua!" Qiao Zhuang roared angrily.

"You can guess where she is! She's probably married by now! Would you force a married girl to marry into the Guo family? If you really do that, it's against the law!" Liu Ying said.

Against the law? Did she think that they were uncultured and ignorant, and she could bully them?

As long as there was no evidence in the village to prove that she was married, it was simply child's play! It was nonsense!

Since ancient times, a match was made by order of the parents and the word of the matchmaker! There was no such thing as getting married in private! Qiao Zhuang thought that this woman simply had no respect for him!

"Why didn't you tell me about such an important thing! I'm the head of this family! All of you have to listen to me! I'm not dead yet! Are you intending to set up your own household!" Qiao Zhuang said as he pointed at Liu Ying.

"I can decide on my daughter's marriage! Father! It's enough that you decide on the marriages of your own children! You don't have to worry about my daughter!" Liu Ying replied firmly.

Wang Qin was frightened by this fearless Liu Ying. She had thought that Liu Ying was a soft and easy person to manipulate and that she was just glib-tongued and full of fluff!

She did not expect that a rabbit would bite when it was anxious. Liu Ying was going all out!

"You! What a rebel! Qiao Fu, don't you care about this matter! She's your wife! Was everything she did actually your idea?" Qiao Zhuang asked as he stared at Qiao Fu.

Qiao Fu quickly waved his hands and knelt on the ground anxiously as he shouted, "Father! I don't have that kind of intention! I really don't know about this! I really don't know anything!"

"Whether you hit me or scold me, I'll accept it!" Liu Ying said.

She had slogged so hard for the Qiao family her entire life. Even if she had no achievements, she should still be rewarded for her efforts. However, they did not take her seriously at all. Instead, they felt that they were entitled to her efforts.

Would she allow Qiao Hua to live such a life? Absolutely not!

Even though she was not very capable, she was still a mother who loved her child and would do anything for her.

"Do you think beating you to death is useful! What's the point of having you dead! Qiao Hua can't come back!" Qiao Zhuang threw the stick in his hand to the side angrily.

The most important thing now was to appease the Guo family. He could not let them take back the 1,000 dollars!

If the money was taken back, how could he hold his head up high in this village anymore! How could he continue to be a tyrant!

"Father, rather than thinking about how to deal with me, you might as well use the time to prepare Qiao Yu's dowry. The Guo family already said that they're fine with any daughter from our family. So they have no choice but to marry Qiao Yu!" Liu Ying said smugly.

She had planned all of this. By now, her Xiao Hua had already gone to another city and married someone else. This person was her distant relative and he was quite a nice boy. She had long decided on him as her son-in-law.

She was just waiting to marry Qiao Hua into that family once she reached 18 years old. She did not expect that things did not go according to her wishes and that the marriage would be brought forward by two years. She actually could not bear to marry Qiao Hua off so early.

However, for the sake of Qiao Hua's future happiness, she was fine to let her get married earlier.

Qiao Yu looked at Liu Ying angrily and went forward to question her. "You want to ruin my life just because of your Qiao Hua! I have parents too! Sister-in-law, why can't you pity me!"

"The person who wants to marry you off is your own father! If you're unhappy, go confront him! Eldest Sister-in-law has let you down. In the future, Eldest Sister-in-law can be your slave! As long as my Qiao Hua is safe and sound, I'm willing to die even if you want me to now," Liu Ying said.

Qiao Yu also knew that there was nothing she could do about it anymore. Anyway, she did not have the guts to confront Qiao Zhuang.

It was already good enough that he did not starve her to death back then.

"Qiao Fu, bring your wife back and educate her well. Let her know that it's the people with the surname Qiao who have the final say in this family." Qiao Zhuang emphasized the word "educate".

Qiao Fu immediately understood what Qiao Zhuang meant and went forward to grab Liu Ying.

At this moment, Wang Qin, who was the main family housekeeper, suddenly seemed to think of something and quickly went to the cabinet to look for the box containing the family's savings.

Qiao Zhuang asked impatiently, "What is it now!"

Chapter 579 Going To Take A Look

"The money! Where's our money!" Wang Qin asked in a panic.

These words exploded in Qiao Zhuang's house like thunder had struck. Wang Qin was in charge of a portion of the family's living expenses. Shen Ge only knew how to work hard but did not know how to manage the household.

Qiao Zhuang could not be bothered to deal with most things in the family, so he handed everything over to Wang Qin. Anyway, his children would give him money regularly every month, so he did not care about anything else.

Wang Qin was also the accountant of the brigade. Since she could manage the accounts of the entire village, what was so hard about running a household? It was simply a waste of talent!

"What money! What are you talking about!" Qiao Zhuang immediately panicked.

"It's her! It must be her! She must have stolen it!" Wang Qin said as she pointed at Liu Ying.

Liu Ying laughed and said, "I took the money for my Xiao Hua."

Qiao Zhuang pulled Liu Ying and pushed her into the courtyard. The house was filled with the betrothal gifts that had just been sent over, as well as the new furniture that they bought for the wedding.

These things were all worth a lot of money. It was not worth it to damage anything in the house because of Liu Ying.

Liu Ying crouched over the ground in a sorry state and laughed loudly. She had never felt so good in her life. It would be even better if she could just die today. Anyway, she had no parents and Qiao Hua was already married. She had no burdens now.

When Zhao Liang heard the news, he quickly rushed over. As he passed by Qiao Qiang's house, he rushed into the courtyard and shouted, "Uncle Qiao! It's not good! Something big has happened!"

"What's wrong? Xiao Zhao, don't be anxious! Tell me slowly!" Qiao Qiang said.

"Someone's going to get killed at Qiao Zhuang's house. They're having a big fight over the matter of Qiao Yu's marriage. If this continues, Liu Ying will be beaten to death! After all, this is their family matter and I can't get involved. Aren't you Qiao Zhuang's eldest brother? Can you see if you can come forward and talk about this matter?" Zhao Liang said anxiously.

Qiao Qiang found himself in a difficult position. He had just said that he wanted to sever ties with Qiao Zhuang. If he went over now and meddled in their family matters, it would be like a slap to his own face.

"Uncle Qiao! I know you're in a difficult position, but it's a human life! You also know Liu Ying. She married into Qiao Zhuang's family when she was young. Her parents are no longer around and she is all alone. If she dies, it will be difficult for me as the brigade leader. Uncle Qiao, can't you just take it as helping me?" Zhao Liang begged.

Zhao Liang had helped their family a lot. When Zhang Wei got into an accident, it was he and his wife who took care of Zhang Wei. Qiao Qiang would not forget such a favor.

"Alright, I'll go with you," Qiao Qiang said resignedly.

"I'll go too!" Qiao Mei said as she rushed out of the backyard. Xia Zhe followed behind her.

"What are you two kids messing about! Qiao Zhuang's family is almost beating someone to death! You're pregnant, what if an accident happens! It's not like you don't know that their family hates you!" Zhao Liang said.

"Mei Mei, be good and stay at home. I'll be back soon. You don't have to worry about me," Qiao Qiang said.

Qiao Mei said firmly, "I have to go. I can't let grandfather go alone. Uncle Zhao, don't worry. Bring grandfather over first. I'll follow behind right away."

Zhao Liang and Qiao Qiang could not dissuade Qiao Mei, so they could only agree to her request. Xia Zhe stood at the side and did not say a word. He knew that as long as Qiao Mei set her mind on something, she would do it even if the sky collapsed.

"Why haven't you stopped me? None of them wants me to go," Qiao Mei asked curiously.

Xia Zhe sighed and reached out to gently touch the tip of Qiao Mei's nose. He said dotingly, "As long as it's something you want, I'll try my best to help you achieve it. With me around, no one will be able to hurt you. It's fine if you want to go and take a look. Why should I stop you?"

Qiao Mei smiled sweetly. She knew that Xia Zhe doted on her! He would also protect her well!

This time round, it was something she must do. Although Liu Ying often came to the house with Wang Qin to do evil, Qiao Hua took good care of her and would secretly send her nice food when no one was paying attention.

Other than the two of them, no one else knew about this.

Therefore, on the surface, everyone thought that Qiao Yu had a good relationship with Qiao Mei, but no one knew about Qiao Hua.

"Qiao Hua treats me very well. Liu Ying is not nice to me, but she's Qiao Hua's mother after all. No matter what, I have to go and take a look," Qiao Mei explained.

Xia Zhe could understand Qiao Mei's intentions. He put on a coat for her and walked with her towards Qiao Zhuang's house. On the way, they even asked Auntie Dong and Auntie Wang to go with them.

Chapter 580 A Rich Family With One Hundred Dollars

"Tell me! Where's all the money! Where is Qiao Hua! How much money did you give her!" Qiao Zhuang shouted fiercely.

Liu Ying lay on the ground and looked at Qiao Zhuang mockingly. "Ha, better beat me to death! As long as I don't say anything, you'll never know where Qiao Hua is."

Qiao Zhuang panted heavily and looked around. He had already broken all the things in the house that could be used to hit someone. Only the tools used for farm work were left.

He took the hoe he had put aside and looked at Liu Ying viciously.

"Since you want to die, then don't blame me!" Qiao Zhuang raised the hoe to strike her.

None of the other sons and daughters-in-law in the courtyard dared to stop him. Why would they want to be the one to get hurt in this situation?

Even Liu Ying's husband, Qiao Fu, stood at the side indifferently, as if this matter had nothing to do with him and the person being beaten up was not his wife.

"Wait!" Zhao Liang stood at the door and shouted.

Fortunately, he did not dawdle on the way and had rushed all the way here with Qiao Qiang. Not any later! Liu Ying's life would probably be in danger.

When Qiao Zhuang saw that it was Zhao Liang, he slowly put down the hoe in his hand and said with a long face, "Brother Zhao! You have to uphold justice for me! Our family can't live!"

"What's going on? Why are you using the hoe? We're all civilized people now. It's against the law for you to do this!" Zhao Liang said sternly.

Qiao Zhuang did not understand what was against the law or not. He only knew that although there were laws in this world, but as the elder in this family and Liu Ying's father-in-law, there was nothing wrong with him teaching his daughter-in-law a lesson.

Was this against the law?

"Brother Zhao, what are you saying? How is it against the law for me to teach my daughter-in-law a lesson in my house?" Qiao Zhuang questioned righteously.

"That won't do. It's wrong of you to hit someone! Let's talk things out!" Zhao Liang exhorted earnestly.

Qiao Qiang stood behind Zhao Liang and did not say a word. He looked at everything in front of him calmly, as if what was happening had nothing to do with him.

In reality, other than the blood relationship that he could not choose, the rest really had nothing to do with him.

Qiao Mei and Xia Zhe arrived at Qiao Zhuang's house soon with a group of curious bystanders. There were not many people who could afford television sets nowadays. If anything happened to anyone in the village, they would hurry over to take a look. Otherwise, if they missed it, there was no repeat broadcast!

Such an exciting scene did not happen often!

"What's there to say! This woman stole our family's money! And it's not a small sum! Wang Qin, tell us! How much is it!" Qiao Zhuang said as he pointed at Wang Qin.

Wang Qin stammered and said hesitantly, "The box contains the money for our family's living expenses. In total... about 120 dollars."

An amount of 120 dollars! Everyone present gasped. This sum of money was not a small sum in the countryside!

Actually, Liu Ying had no idea how much money was in the box. She had accidentally discovered where Wang Qin had hidden the money and had taken it when Wang Qin was not paying attention.

There was only a handful of money inside. She felt guilty the entire time and did not even count how much money there was. She just took all the money and stuffed it into Qiao Hua's hands so that she could leave quickly.

"Oh my! This Qiao Zhuang's family is quite rich!"

"That's right! I really didn't expect them to have so much money! They have more than 100 dollars for the family's expenses, so how much personal savings does each of them have?"

"A rich family with 100 dollars! It's already a luxury for our family to spend 10 dollars a month! I never expected their expenses to be more than 10 times that of ours!"

"Where does this money come from? I'm so envious."

The villagers discussed among themselves. No one in their family had a job and they all relied on farming for a living. Even if they earned some money, they would go to the black market to sell vegetables like everyone else.

Even if one woke up early and went to work in the dark, one would not be able to earn much money.

Wang Qin was the only one in their family who made the most money and she earned 20 dollars a month.

How could she have 120 dollars a month for expenses? How could Wang Qin manage such a big family and be such a spendthrift?

Qiao Zhuang also started to have doubts, but he had both internal and external problems at the moment. Instead of thinking about this mere 120 dollars, he might as well try to find Qiao Hua and marry her off to the Guo family so that he could get more money.