

Fat Wife 621

Chapter 621 Difficult Times

"I... I'm her mother! Why can't I come here! I'm just here to see my daughter!" Old Madam Li explained nervously.

"Even if the emperor is here, he has to show a pass! If you don't have a pass, you can't stay in our village tonight! Leave quickly!" Zhao Liang said.

"I'm just staying for one night! Look, it's already dark outside! If I walk back again, the two children won't be able to take it! Please be kind and let us off!" Old Madam Li used her thick skin again and knelt on the ground to kowtow to Zhao Liang non-stop.

Zhao Liang did not fall for it. He pointed at Old Madam Li and said, "What if something goes missing in the village? Our village has a lot of valuable things! If anything goes missing, it's all on you! What do you think!"

When Old Madam Li heard this, she slowly stood up. What could they lose in one night! He had said it to scare her!

If Qiao Mei said tomorrow that she had lost the betrothal gifts that Xia Zhe had given her, Old Madam Li would not be able to afford it even if it was just one!

Old Madam Li could not dissuade Zhao Liang and left dejectedly with the two children. Before she left, she even took the big pumpkin from the house.

It was very easy to get the pass. As long as she went to the village to explain the situation, she would be able to get it. It did not matter if she could not stay today. She would come back another day! She did not believe that Li Gui could keep avoiding her!

When Old Madam Li came, she had observed those chickens and ducks. Those chickens would definitely be able to lay eggs within the next three days! Her cousin used to raise chickens at the supply and marketing cooperative in the county city. She had also worked there when she was young. She could tell what the chickens were up to when they wiggle their butts.

No one knew chickens better than her! It was just that later on, she stole five eggs from the supply and marketing cooperative and was chased away.

"Thank you, Brother Zhao. I didn't expect to have to trouble you again," Li Gui said embarrassedly.

She felt really embarrassed to have to keep troubling Zhao Liang because of her family matters. Her family was poor and there was nothing she could give Zhao Liang to express her gratitude to him. If she rashly went to help out at his house, people would gossip about it.

She could only hope that the children could repay Zhao Liang in the future.

"It's fine. It's my job to help the villagers. You don't have to take it to heart. If there's nothing else, I'll go now." Zhao Liang waved his hand and was stopped by Qiao Mei the moment he stepped out of the house.

"Uncle Zhao, is there any way to stop them from entering the village? It's also very difficult for us if they keep coming," Qiao Mei asked.

"Sigh... There's nothing I can do. As long as the procedures are done properly, I can't stop them," Zhao Liang said awkwardly.

If he abused his power and got reported, losing his job was a small matter. He might even go to jail!

"I'll think of a way myself then. Thank you for today, Uncle Zhao. Without you, she would have stuck around for a long time!" Qiao Mei said with a sigh.

Zhao Liang also felt that Qiao Mei and Li Gui had tough lives. One of them had lost her parents and only had her grandfather since she was young, and the other one had a vampire-like husband and maternal family.

Their lives were really tough!

"So long as you're fine. Before Xia Zhe left, he asked me to take good care of you! I'm indebted to your grandfather and I'll definitely help your family if anything happens. Don't stand on ceremony with me!" Zhao Liang said with a smile.

"When we cook delicious food at home another day, you and auntie must come over!" Qiao Mei said.

As Zhao Liang walked away, he said, "No problem! Hurry up and go back!" Then he got on his three-wheeled vehicle and left.

Qiao Mei was also very surprised when she heard what Li Gui said to Old Madam Li while sitting outside. She did not expect Li Gui to be so determined to protect her this time round.

It seemed that Li Gui was no longer the submissive woman from before. She could protect her children well.

"Elder sister, where are Zhang Chao and Zhang Qin?" Zhang Wei asked in a panic.

As soon as Zhang Chao saw outsiders, he would run into the storeroom. It was useless even if Qiao Mei went to look for him. He would only come out after the person left.

Qiao Mei pointed at the storeroom helplessly and Zhang Wei immediately understood what she meant. As soon as he entered, he saw Zhang Chao hiding in a big vat. Zhang Wei carefully held his hand and said, "Don't be afraid. Eldest brother is back. I am here!"

Zhang Chao looked up timidly and slowly followed Zhang Wei out.

"Zhang Chao, don't be afraid. They've already left! Don't be afraid! Eldest brother is here!" Zhang Wei hugged Zhang Chao and comforted him.

Chapter 622 Good Destiny

The issue that weighed on Zhang Chao was these evil people who bullied them. If they came to bully Li Gui and these children again and again, Zhang Chao would always be traumatized and felt like hiding away for the rest of his life.

The doctor said that they should let him try his best to face these issues bravely, but Qiao Mei felt that it would be very difficult. Even if Zhang Chao could become braver, it was not something that could be done overnight.

This was something that needed to be done slowly and could not be rushed.

It was the same for Zhang Miao. In the past, when she could move, she could run away or dodge if someone bullied her. However, now that she was lying on the bed and could not move, she had to rely on Li Gui to take care of her. The psychological pressure she felt was no less than what Zhang Chao was feeling.

These two children who used to be lively and cute were harmed to this extent by the Zhang family! Although Zhang Qian had paid the price and received the punishment, it was not enough to vent her anger!

Qiao Mei looked up at the sky and sighed. When would such days end! Let Zhang Chao and Zhang Miao get better soon!

She was also a human being and would get tired. Why did these evil people refuse to let them off?

Li Gui cleaned up the empty bowls and cutlery on the table and went to the cellar to get more food. The cellar was located in the corner of the storeroom.

Originally, there was no cellar when the house was first built. However, the Zhang family had come to ask for things repeatedly, so Li Gui had no choice but to plan for a place to hide things. Otherwise, the children would have starved to death long ago.

"Mei Mei, I cooked more food. Come in quickly and eat. You can't go hungry," Li Gui said with some heartache.

Qiao Qiang had something on today and she had wanted to take good care of Qiao Mei on his behalf. She did not expect such a big mess to happen. Ever since she came to the village, these children had not managed to have even one peaceful day.

Qiao Mei was not in a hurry to go into the house to eat. Instead, she grabbed Li Gui to sit down beside her, wanting to have a chat.

"Mom, how's Zhang Miao?" Qiao Mei asked.

Li Gui looked towards the house and sighed. "Now, we have to go and get the medicine on time every month. The doctor said whether Zhang Miao can recover or not depends on her willpower now. In the future, she still has to practice walking on her own. If she doesn't practice hard, she might not be able to walk normally again."

In this era, there was no such thing as rehabilitation exercises in the hospital. One could only rely on one's own hard work to survive such a difficult situation.

Zhang Miao was still young and her bones had not fully developed yet. It was not too late to correct the issue, but doing so would delay her progress in school.

Summer was already over and the elementary school in the neighboring village had already started classes for a long time. If the children did not go to school soon and they fell behind in their homework, they would have to wait for another year.

"I intend to bring the other three children to school tomorrow. They can come back and teach Zhang Miao whatever they learn. Zhang Miao is still young and there's still time for her to go to school after she recovers, but Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao can't afford any more delays," Qiao Mei said earnestly.

Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao were destined to be the pillars of the family. If they were illiterate and could only do manual work, they would not be able to support the family.

Moreover, they were all talented children. Such good seedlings should not be wasted and must be nurtured well.

"But I can't take care of them. I still have to take care of Miao Miao. If the three of them go to school, I'm worried about the expenses..." Li Gui looked at Qiao Mei awkwardly before looking at Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao.

She already owed more and more debts. If this continued, she would not have money to buy medicine for Zhang Miao.

It was not as if she had not made plans for the other three children. It was easier to plan for the girls. When the time came, she would choose good in-laws for them and let them live a peaceful life. This was the best she could do as a mother.

The truth was that Li Gui wanted Zhang Wei to go to work soon to earn money to supplement the family's income. She understood that she would let Zhang Wei down like this, but she had no choice.

If there was no one else earning money, none of the children in this family would be able to survive!

The earlier he went out to work, the earlier he could earn money and get married. It could be considered a good destiny for him!

As a mother, she was also in a difficult position. It was a tough call to give up on any one of them and it hurt her no matter who was the one affected.

"You don't have to worry about the school fees. Just treat it as if these children owe it to me. When they grow up, they can work and earn money to pay me back," Qiao Mei said.

Chapter 623 Good Days Will Come

"That won't do! You're about to give birth! Raising children needs a lot of money! The most important thing for you now is to take good care of yourself! You've already helped me a lot. I can't drag you down anymore..." Li Gui said.

"You're my mother, so it's only right for me to help you. I'm not going to send my younger siblings to school for free. I didn't know how to read and write when I was young, so I hope they won't be like me. It can be my loan to them," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

At the mention of Qiao Mei's childhood, Li Gui had mixed feelings. She did not spend a single day by Qiao Mei's side and it was all thanks to the heavens that the girl was able to survive. She did not expect Qiao Mei not to dwell on the past and that not only did Qiao Mei not hate her, but she also took good care of the children she had with Zhang Qian.

She had to treat Qiao Mei even better in the future. She could not let Qiao Mei feel that she favored the other four children.

Qiao Mei did not care about the past at all. Her mind was filled with the issues about the children going to school.

Since she intended to lend the children the money to go to school, they had to agree to it. Otherwise, it was only a one-sided agreement.

Qiao Mei asked the three children to come over and said seriously, "Elder sister wants to tell you something. After mom and I discussed it, we can't afford to provide for your education now, so you can't go to school."

The three children all looked disappointed. The first person to look better was Zhang Wei. He forced a smile on his face and said, "Elder sister! We know that it's not easy at home now. It doesn't matter if we don't go to school! Grandfather has a lot of knowledge and he can teach us."

"That's right, elder sister! Younger sister's health is the most important thing now. It's fine if we don't go to school," Zhang Qin said obediently.

Li Gui felt both gratified and sad to see how sensible the children were.

Qiao Mei felt incomparably proud and gratified. They all cared about their family and their siblings. No matter what happened in the future, they would not abandon one another. This was the best form of knowledge to have.

"Now, elder sister has a better idea. You can decide whether you want to go to school or not. Elder sister and brother-in-law can fork out the money to let you go to school, but you have to consider this money as a loan from us. When you grow up and earn money, you have to pay us back. Are you still willing to go to school if that's the situation?" Qiao Mei asked.

After all, Xia Zhe was the only one in the family who had a salary at the moment. Her "small side businesses" were all unstable and she did not earn much from it anyway.

Furthermore, she had made Xia Zhe sound so scary in front of the children back then. Now was the time to make him look good in front of them! Otherwise, it would still be awkward for Xia Zhe to face the children the next time he came back.

Zhang Wei and Zhang Qin quickly agreed with Qiao Mei's plan. Only Zhang Chao kept thinking about it. He did not want to go to school and interact with others. He just wanted to stay at home, in a place where he felt safe.

"Zhang Chao doesn't want to go to school?" Qiao Mei asked patiently.

Zhang Chao shook his head gently.

"Don't you like to make models and handmade mechanisms? When you go to school, you can learn more. Then in the future, you can build even more powerful ones! Don't you want to learn?" Qiao Mei said as she looked at Zhang Chao.

Even if she went to the capital and brought back all the books about mechanics and construction, it would be useless if Zhang Chao did not know enough words and basic knowledge to read them.

Zhang Chao was a little hesitant, but he was still unwilling to come into contact with the outside world. What if someone hurt him again?

"Don't worry! There's eldest brother around! No one will dare to bully you!" Zhang Wei patted his chest and said confidently to Zhang Chao.

"Second brother! I'll protect you too! Believe me! There are three of us! We can definitely defeat the bad guys!" Zhang Qin said.

"And me too! I'll go to school too and be with all of you," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Finally, with everyone's encouragement, Zhang Chao agreed with Qiao Mei's suggestion. With his siblings around, he was not afraid of being bullied.

"Mom, look! Second brother is smiling! Second brother is smiling!" Zhang Qin pointed at Zhang Chao and said happily.

Everyone turned to focus on Zhang Chao. Even Zhang Chao himself did not notice that he was smiling and his ears turned red from being the center of attention.

"Alright, alright, let's go in and eat! The food will get cold soon!" Li Gui said.

Everyone returned to the house happily to eat. As long as they looked ahead, good days would definitely come!

Chapter 624 Giving It Away

However, the He family's good days were coming to an end.

He Mei knelt on the ground and begged He Ning not to let her go to jail or hand her over to the Xia family. She had nowhere to go now.

"It's useless even if you beg me now. The Xia family has conclusive evidence. What right do you have to decide to do such a thing at that time?" He Ning said helplessly.

Even though he planned everything meticulously, this stupid niece of his had caused him to lose everything!

She only knew how to keep causing trouble for him! Now that He Mei's face was injured, there was no chance of her sending her off for a marriage alliance! Keeping He Mei would just be keeping a useless thing.

After the Xia family secretly sent Qiao Mei away, they started to make use of the situation to cause trouble for He Ning. They did everything they could to tire He Ning out.

Originally, He Guo, He Wei and He Li had already been released under He Ning's arrangements. He did not expect them to be sent back to prison by the joint efforts of the Xia and Jiang families after only being out for a few days. He Guo had already been sentenced and there was nothing he could do about it. At the moment, he could only think of a way to save He Wei and He Li.

Qian'e was not able to leave the Qian family house under his surveillance. He did not expect the Xia family to find a way to get Qian'e out. Now that Qian'e was under the Xia family's care, he could not act rashly.

It would be useless to threaten Qian'e with the safety of her family. Qian'e was more than happy to see them dead! Why would she even want to save them?

He Ning had been vexed about this matter for a long time. He felt that his long stint in prison had made his mind go dim. He had actually let the Xia family succeed. In the future, he must not show any mercy to them, otherwise he would be letting down the hardships he suffered over the past month.

Recently, He Ning had been so busy that he could only sleep four to five hours a day. He was able to hang on only because of the ginseng soup, otherwise his body would have broken down long ago!

The Xia family had now threatened that if he did not hand He Mei over, they would use the evidence to destroy the He family!

"Little Uncle! You can't leave me in the lurch! If I'm taken away by them, I definitely won't have a good ending! Please save me! I'll give you all my family's assets! We don't want them anymore! Little Uncle, save me!" He Mei said nonsensically.

He Ning looked at He Mei and smiled. Although a small portion of the He family's business was from their ancestors, most of it was the empire that He Guo had worked hard to build.

He Mei was really generous to give it away just for her own selfish reasons.

If He Guo could come back from prison and hear what He Mei said, would he die from anger?

"What use do I have for your family's assets? You probably don't know yet, but eldest brother has been sentenced. He will be imprisoned for 10 years and all his assets will be confiscated. You're no longer the spoiled young lady of the He family," He Ning said.

He Mei widened her eyes in disbelief. She crawled over to He Ning and grabbed the corner of his trousers tightly as she asked, "Little Uncle, are you joking with me! It's not true! Didn't you promise me that my father won't go to jail! Why is it like this!"

"The Xia family is relentless. Do you think I have any choice? If you hadn't laid your hands on Qiao Mei, the Xia family wouldn't have fallen out with us!" He Ning said as he shook off He Mei.

"No! It's not like that!" He Mei cried.

"This is all thanks to you! How dare you cry in front of me! You still have family members locked up inside! Are you satisfied now!" He Ning roared.

It was not that he did not think of a way. He even took out a lot of his treasures to ask for help, but the Xia family had irrefutable evidence and they even made it known that anyone who helped the He family hide anything would get dragged down together.

No one dared to act rashly now. If they were not careful, they would die together with the He family.

"Little Uncle, I know you're very capable. You must have a way! Think of a way to save me! You watched me grow up! You can't not save me!" He Mei said as she sobbed.

It was not that there was no solution, but he did not know if the Xia family would be willing to accept it.

"Stop it, you're giving me a headache. Get lost! Don't bother me!" He Ning said as he rubbed his temples and leaned against the sofa with a frown.

He Mei kowtowed to He Ning a few more times and left the house quietly.

Huo Gao slowly walked forward with a bowl of medicine. The medicinal smell could be detected from afar and it felt as if it was very bitter.

"Did you change the prescription?" He Ning asked unhappily.

"Bear with it for a while. You've been too tired recently so I added some tonic in it. Since you don't cherish your body, your taste buds will have to suffer," Huo Gao said teasingly.

He Ning did not quibble anymore. He gritted his teeth and drank the medicine in one gulp. It was so bitter that he almost vomited.

Chapter 625 - 625 Job Transfer

625 Job Transfer

Originally, he should be able to recover his health after eating the ginseng he received from Qiao Mei, and he would have been able to live for at least another 10 years! However, thanks to the Xia family, his health was even worse than before!

"It tastes awful. Can't you make some nice tasting medicine?" He Ning complained as he threw a tantrum.

In the face of this old friend with a bad temper, Huo Gao only smiled and did not say anything. He Ning said similar things a few times a month, but he was simply complaining.

After the bitterness subsided, He Ning focused on thinking about how to give the Xia family a satisfactory answer without losing too much on his end.

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Although the current He family was not as powerful as before, it was not a big deal for him to take out 200,000 dollars.

However, this method did not work on the Xia family at all. The Xia family did not care about money. They just wanted He Mei to pay the price and they wanted to get an explanation for Qiao Mei.

"Where do you think I should send He Mei?" He Ning asked Huo Gao.

“Miss He Mei has an arrogant temper. It’s not a bad thing for her to go out and gain some experience. Let her go out and suffer a little. Then she’ll understand your painstaking efforts,” Huo Gao said.

He Ning nodded in satisfaction. It would be good to send her away. Out of sight, out of mind. It would save him the trouble of having to clean up her mess after she went around causing trouble in the capital.

At this moment, Xia Wen and Xia He were eating grapes and planting flowers in the courtyard house. After Qiao Mei left, Xia Wen brought the students to work overtime to repair the courtyard house. It was now in an even better condition than before.

This was the last batch of grapes this year. If they did not come over to pick them, the grapes would probably all drop to the ground. At that time, the entire courtyard would be filled with insects and ants and the smell of rotting fruits. It would then take a lot of effort to clean up the courtyard.

They had to take care of these things themselves so that Qiao Mei would not be disappointed to see a dilapidated courtyard when she returned.

“Elder brother, look at these grapes. They’re big and sweet and even more delicious than what grandmother planted!” Xia He sat on the swing and said with a smile.

Xia Wen usually did not eat grapes. Back then, the grapes planted by his grandmother were a little sour. Every time she coaxed him to eat them, his face would scrunch up from the sourness.

These grapes seemed to be of a different variety. It seemed that Qiao Mei really was not just bragging when she talked about her skills with plants.

“When Qiao Mei comes back, are you going to come here every day to freeload?” Xia Wen said.

Xia He thought about it carefully and said, “That’s really possible. Anyway, Xia Zhe won’t be back. What’s wrong with me accompanying Qiao Mei!”

“Those who don’t know better would think that Xia Zhe married this wife for your sake!” Xia Wen said with a laugh.

There were not many people in the family who could get along well with Xia He. In the past, she had always stuck close to Xia Wen. After Xia Wen married Tan Jing, they stopped interacting much so as to avoid making anyone uncomfortable. In the past, Tan Jing used to be a very suitable candidate, but nowadays she would feel sorry for herself every day and was full of negative energy. After talking to her, it usually made one even more depressed.

As for the rest of the family, Aunt could be considered a candidate. However, Aunt was still an elder and it was not appropriate for her to talk to her elders about private matters. Qiao Mei was still the best. Although she was young, she was understanding and very interesting. No one would ever feel bored when with her!

“What are you saying! If Xiao Zhe finds out, he will definitely chase after me and beat me up. I can’t beat him,” Xia He said.

“By the way, have you settled your work matters? Do you need any help from the family?” Xia Wen put down the things in his hand and sat opposite Xia He.

Ever since Xia He and Kong Lu got a divorce, she had already started moving her work to the capital. Xu Lan also helped out secretly and this matter was quickly settled. Xia He was going to the military art troupe in the capital for training next month.

There was only one thing that was very difficult for her. The current principal performer of the art troupe was someone who had lost to her back then. If not for the fact that she wanted to live a stable life with Kong Lu, she would have held on to the position of principal performer for life! That person had always been dissatisfied with her and felt that she was able to become the principal performer only because of Xu Lan’s support.

After Xia He left, that person flaunted her prowess every day. Given that Xia He was going back, she might gossip about it!

However, Xia He had never been afraid of such things and did not take these people to heart at all. The most important thing now was to quickly earn money so that she could buy things for her nephew! She heard that children were very difficult to take care of and were especially precious. At the mall, their things also cost more than other things.

Chapter 626 Trash At The Door

"It's all settled. I'll go back to work after a while. If I don't go to work soon, there won't be room for an idle person like me at home," Xia He said self-deprecatingly.

"Even if you stay at home for the rest of your life, the family can afford to pay for you," Xia Wen said.

During this period of time, Xia He did not go home and stayed at Xia Fang's house. Every time she returned home, she would see Xu Lan crying. There was nothing she could do about Xu Lan, but she could not tell her the truth either. She felt really uncomfortable holding it in and thought that it was better to hide away rather than to face it.

"Then what about Kong Lu? What are you going to do? Don't blame me for asking too many questions. There has to be an end between the two of you," Xia Wen asked.

This was the first time Xia Wen had asked Xia He about this matter in a serious manner. He had never been worried about his younger sister. The only issue he ever had was with this brother-in-law.

Back then, he did not agree to them being together. If not for Xia He's stubbornness, they would not have been able to get married!

However, he had no right to criticize Xia He. When he first got married to Tan Jing, Xu Lan did not think highly of Tan Jing either. She felt that Tan Jing's family background was not worthy of them. It was only because Tan Jing had a good temper and was a quiet person that she begrudgingly allowed them to get married.

"Let's wait for him to return all the money to me. He hasn't contacted me yet and I'm not in a hurry. The ones who are anxious are definitely his mother and sister! Without my salary, they won't be able to survive with that little bit of money that Kong Lu has!" Xia He said.

It was easy for someone to go from frugal to extravagant, but difficult to go from extravagant to frugal. The Kong family's mother and daughter had been living a luxurious life for so many years. Now that they no longer had a good source of income, they could not even afford to buy vegetables! It turned out that the food coupons they used belonged to Xia He.

"Don't forget too easily. You'll be the one at a disadvantage later," Xia Wen complained.

"I've already made a decision about this matter. Besides, Qiao Mei also talked to me about it. Anyway, he has to return the money to me first before we get the divorce. Then, I'll use this sum of money to buy a house or something and make a home of my own. Qiao Mei said that if I buy it now, it will be seen as the joint property of the married couple. When we get a divorce, I'll have to give half of the house to Kong Lu. I'm not going to let him take it away!" Xia He said.

"Qiao Mei even knows this!" Xia Wen exclaimed.

What a quirky little girl. It was the Xia family's fortune that Xia Zhe married her.

During this time, there was not much understanding about the division of assets between husband and wife. Even if there was a law, everyone would choose to settle it in private. After all, divorce was still a scandal in this era. Who would want to make a big fuss about the division of assets?

Besides, even if there was money, how much could both of them take away? For the sake of their reputation, everyone chose to suffer in silence.

As she spoke, there was a knock on the door. Xia He stuffed the grape she was holding into her mouth and ran to open the door.

The moment she opened the door and saw He Ning and Huo Gao, and the hypocritical and smiling expressions on their faces, Xia He slammed the door shut again.

He Ning's smile froze on his face. The only people who would dare to leave him out in the cold was the Xia family. If his inner thoughts could manifest, then there would definitely be a bunch of ellipses above He Ning's head.

"What's wrong? Who knocked on the door?" Xia Wen looked at Xia He in confusion.

"Nothing. There are two pieces of trash standing at the door," Xia He said sulkily.

When Xia Wen heard Xia He's description, he knew who it was. He stood up and patted Xia He's head gently and said, "You. You're so rude to them. Go inside quickly. I'll handle this matter."

Xia He carried the plate of grapes into the house angrily. Even if she had to feed the grapes to the dogs, she would not give He Ning a bite!

Xia Wen put on his professional smile and slowly opened the door. He felt good when he saw He Ning's unhappy expression.

"My younger sister just had an argument with me and she's not in a good mood. If she offended Brother He, please don't take it to heart," Xia Wen said with a straight face.

"It's fine. It's common for girls to throw tantrums," He Ning said with a smile.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. Come in and have a seat." Xia Wen turned sideways and invited He Ning and Huo Gao into the courtyard.

He Ning looked around at the courtyard house in satisfaction. The original design was too old-fashioned and boring. There were spots that were too damaged. After Xia Wen worked on it, it looked quite elegant and suited his taste.

Chapter 627 - 627 Eating Grapes

627 Eating Grapes

"This house is not bad," He Ning praised.

"It's all thanks to you," Xia Wen said mockingly.

If He Ning had not made an anonymous report saying that they had hidden away cultural relics and then hired a bunch of people to dig up the house until it was unrecognizable, why would they need to renovate the house?

He Ning did not feel embarrassed at all. He was a person who would admit frankly what he had done and firmly deny what he had not done.

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It could be considered one of He Ning's very few strengths.

"Are you here just to take a look at my brother's house?" Xia Wen asked.

"No, I'm here to give you a settlement," He Ning said as he sat at the stone table.

Xia Wen had been waiting for this day for a long time. He thought that He Ning would endure it for a few more days until there was too much work for him to handle before appearing. He did not expect He Ning to not have the patience.

It seemed that he had overestimated He Ning.

"Are you going to deal with He Mei yourself or leave her to us?" Xia Wen said.

"We plan to send He Mei to rebuild the village at Lan Gu. What do you think?" He Ning probed.

What he meant by "rebuild the village" was actually a scheme to send the educated young people in the city to the countryside to train them up, and to let them understand the hardships of the farmers and experience that every grain of rice was not easy to come by. Then, they were also supposed to bring the knowledge and technology developed in the city to the countryside and let the countryside know how exciting the outside world was.

Currently, there was still the policy to "rebuild the villages". In another three years, this policy would be completely scrapped. If He Mei was not allowed to go now, she would never have the chance to go and get trained up.

"Lan Gu, that's such a good place. You're really willing to part with her," Xia Wen said with a smile.

It was rumored that as He Ning had no children, He Mei was the person he doted on the most among the kids of the next generation. However, at the current moment, Xia Wen did not feel that He Ning liked her that much.

That place was cold and remote. If traveling by the mountain road, one would have to walk more than 10 kilometers. There might even be no road. One had to go through a ropeway between the two valleys to reach the other side.

It was difficult to make a phone call there. If one wanted to send something, they could only do it on a yearly basis. The mountains were dangerous and no one was willing to take that kind of risk.

Most importantly, that place was neither within the He family's sphere of influence nor the Xia family's. He Mei could only rely on herself to survive there.

"She has to pay the price for her mistakes. I just don't know if you'll be satisfied with this arrangement?" He Ning said calmly.

"Is she going alone or bringing someone with her?" Xia Wen asked.

"On her own. Our He family won't interfere in this matter," He Ning replied seriously.

It seemed that what He Ning said this time was not fake. Then it was not impossible to deal with this matter like this. After all, He Mei did not really hurt Qiao Mei and her crime was not punishable by death.

He Ning had long discovered the grapes planted in the courtyard, but had been too embarrassed to say anything. Now that they were done with the main topic, he decided to talk about something else.

"These grapes are not bad."

"Thank you."

“It smells so good and looks good. It’s even better than the ones sold outside.”

“Thank you.”

“...”

No matter what He Ning said, Xia Wen’s only answer was to say thank you. Previously, he had heard Xia He complain to him that He Ning shamelessly insisted on eating Qiao Mei’s cooking at home. Now, it appeared that he was eyeing the grapes at their house.

Huo Gao stood at the side and looked at He Ning in shock. He had thought that staying at the Xia family house to eat was already the limit of He Ning’s shamelessness. He did not expect him to be even more shameless.

“Aren’t you going to treat me to some grapes?” He Ning said calmly.

The corners of Xia Wen’s mouth twitched slightly. He Ning really would not give up until he achieved his goal.

“Sure... hang on...” Xia Wen said through gritted teeth.

Xia Wen reluctantly went to the grapevine to pluck a bunch of the smallest grapes and placed them in front of He Ning. He Ning did not treat himself as an outsider at all and even asked Huo Gao to get some well water to wash them.

Since He Ning was so thick-skinned, Huo Gao could not be thin-skinned. He silently washed the grapes and placed them in front of He Ning.

“Where did you put my flowers?” He Ning asked as he looked around.

“What do you mean by your flowers? When did we take your flowers?” Xia Wen looked at He Ning in confusion.

Could it be that there was something wrong with his brain after eating grapes?

Why was he eyeing their flowers everywhere he went? The last time he had already gotten his way on buying the cactus or something from their house, but now he actually wanted to plunder Qiao Mei’s courtyard.

Chapter 628 - 628 Preparing to Go on a Business Trip

628 Preparing to Go on a Business Trip

“The flower pots in your courtyard are all from my place. You must have brought back my flowers too. I can still smell their faint fragrance in your courtyard,” He Ning said.

Was He Ning a dog in his past life? His nose was so sharp. After Qiao Mei brought back those flowers and nurtured them carefully, they came back to life in just a week. Now, as long as he watered them patiently and fertilized them regularly, they would grow well.

In the past two days, some of them had even bloomed. Xia Wen originally thought that it was a good sign, but he did not expect it to be such bad luck!

“These are all things that Qiao Mei bought. How can they still be considered yours? You must have consigned these things at the nursery, right? Qiao Mei bought them at the market price. There was money exchanged for goods. These are our family’s things and have nothing to do with you,” Xia Wen said.

He Ning did not say anything else and quietly ate his grapes while admiring the scenery in the courtyard. He did not expect Qiao Mei to not only be beautiful, but also have superb culinary skills and a very smart mind. Now, he had discovered another of her good points.

His intention to get her to divorce Xia Zhe and bring her home to be his cook became clearer and clearer. If he could get Qiao Mei to be his nanny, he would be able to live for another 50 years!

“Alright, I’ll make arrangements for this in the next two days. Just wait and see the end results.” He Ning got up and prepared to leave.

“Three days at most,” Xia Wen said.

“Deal.” After saying that, He Ning took the entire bunch of grapes from the plate and placed them in Huo Gao’s hand, not even missing out on the few grapes that had fallen onto the plate.

Xia Wen had personally told him that this bunch of grapes was a gift for him. It was not too much for him to take it with him.

He Ning was almost at the door when Huo Gao came back to his senses. He awkwardly held onto the bunch of grapes and bade farewell to Xia Wen before rushing out.

It was too embarrassing! Too embarrassing! Huo Gao had never been so embarrassed in all his years of life!

Xia He walked out of the main hall and said angrily, “Why did you give them grapes!”

“If I don’t give it to him, he will sit here for an entire day. It’s just a bunch of grapes. It’s fine,” Xia Wen said resignedly as he sat on the stool.

“I get so angry when I see him! If it’s not because he came to talk about Qiao Mei’s matter! I wouldn’t have let him in!” Xia He punched and kicked in the direction of the door, pretending that she was hitting He Ning.

Xia Wen was amused by her expression and held back his laughter as he said, “You should be glad that he didn’t take away the plate when he took the grapes and left just now. Qiao Mei bought this plate from the antique market.”

“How can he have the cheek to take it away! I’m so angry! The next time he comes by, I definitely won’t let him off easily!” Xia He said angrily.

“This matter is considered resolved, let’s not talk about it in the future. Hurry up and clean up the courtyard. You take some grapes back to Aunt and I’ll send some to our parents so that they won’t rot here,” Xia Wen said mindfully.

“And Grandpa Zhou! Before Qiao Mei left, she instructed me to send more grapes to Grandpa Zhou when they’re ripe,” Xia He said.

“Sure.” The two siblings carefully packed up all the grapes. Xia Wen cut the grapes while Xia He put them into bags at the side. The two of them quickly finished the task with good teamwork.

He Ning sat in the car and ate the grapes with relish. He suddenly thought of something and said to Huo Gao, “Do you have anything on recently?”

“Me? I have nothing on. Don’t I just follow you around?” Huo Gao said.

“Then come with me on a business trip to Foshan Village,” He Ning said calmly as if he was talking about going home.

Going to the north now would only be harmful to He Ning’s health and not beneficial at all. His workload would increase again!

“Can I choose not to go? Can’t you ask your attendant to go with you?” Huo Gao said bitterly.

“No, he can’t take care of my health. You have to go. I’ll pay extra,” He Ning said with a smile.

He decided to go for the sake of the extra money. After all, two days ago, his wife had told him that she wanted to buy a very expensive skincare product. He did not know much about women’s products, but if she liked it, he would buy it for her.

“Do you really have to go? The weather there is not as comfortable as in the capital. You won’t be able to take it,” Huo Gao said worriedly.

Chapter 629 Speaking

"She has so much ginseng there, why would I need to be worried about my health? Let's hurry up and deal with He Wei's matter, and get him and his son out. Then send He Mei away and we'll set off for the northeast." After saying that, He Ning focused on eating the grapes.

It did not matter whether he was healthy or not. The efficacy of the ginseng he had was not as good as the 100-year-old ginseng. He must get another 100-year-old ginseng as soon as possible.

Qiao Mei did not know that He Ning was going to come and look for her. Lying happily in the rocking chair and basking in the sun was the happiest thing for her every day.

She still had some regrets this time round. Back then, she had asked Xia Zhe to make a swing for her in the capital. She wished that she had managed to get him to make one here. This way, not only would she be able to sit on it, but these children would also be able to come and play with it after she left.

"Elder sister! It's time to eat!" Zhang Qin ran over anxiously, sweating profusely.

"You're here. Why are you in such a hurry? Did your brother rush you?" Qiao Mei took out a handkerchief and slowly wiped the sweat off Zhang Qin's forehead.

For the past two days, Qiao Qiang would go to the neighboring village to look for people to play chess with. He said that they had organized a competition. Whoever won first place would host the chess session the next time.

In order not to travel back and forth in the future, Qiao Qiang had been working especially hard for the past few days so that he could win first place.

"No, it's because I played with eldest brother at home. Elder sister, let's go. The food will get cold if we wait any longer," Zhang Qin said with a smile.

The two of them returned to Li Gui's house hand in hand, chatting happily. As soon as they sat down on the brick bed, they heard someone crying outside.

"Li Gui! My daughter! You have to save me! You can't leave me in the lurch!" They could hear hoarse cries from outside, mixed with the sound of children crying.

This timing was really coincidental. It happened right at lunchtime and not a minute later.

Li Gui put down her bowl and chopsticks and hurriedly walked out. Zhang Chao hid in the corner in fear. Then, he saw Zhang Miao on the brick bed and hesitated before crawling over to hug her.

"Brother... brother is here... Miao, don't be scared... don't be scared..." Zhang Chao said with difficulty.

Qiao Mei, Zhang Wei and Zhang Qin all looked at Zhang Chao in surprise. This was the first time Zhang Chao had spoken since he came home!

She did not expect Old Madam Li to be that little bit useful, but she must get rid of this scourge today. If this dragged on, it made her feel uneasy, and the children would not be able to live in peace as well.

Li Gui hurriedly opened the courtyard door and went forward to help Old Madam Li up. "Mother! What are you doing! Get up quickly! If you need anything, come in and talk."

"I'm not getting up! If you don't help me, I won't get up! You have to save us! If you also don't care about us, we won't be able to survive!" Old Madam Li broke free from Li Gui and knelt on the ground, crying and kowtowing, attracting the attention of many people.

The news spread like wildfire and countless villagers came to join in the commotion. They would grab every opportunity. Ever since Li Gui came to the village, there had been one incident after another at her place. It made everyone's lives so much more interesting!

"Did something happen at Li Gui's house again?"

"Yes, this person looks like she's from the neighboring village. It should be her mother. I've seen her twice."

"Then who are these two girls? Are they the old lady's daughters?"

"Hahahaha, what a joke! It must be her granddaughters! She's almost 70 years old and her husband has been dead for so many years. If it's really her children, wouldn't it be a joke!"

Everyone had different opinions and gradually, they said all kinds of nasty things. Li Gui could neither stop Old Madam Li nor disperse the villagers, so all she could do was stand at one side.

Qiao Mei waited in the house for a while and realized that there were no signs of the commotion ending. She slowly walked out to see what Old Madam Li wanted.

"My life is so hard! I brought you up! Now that our family is in trouble, you don't even care about me! You unfilial daughter! Are you just going to watch me die!" Old Madam Li shouted as she pointed at Li Gui.

"Come into the house with me and have a bite. We'll talk about other things after you eat." Li Gui went forward to help Old Madam Li up, but just as she placed her hand on Old Madam Li's arm, Old Madam Li gave her a tight slap.

"Why did you hit her!" Auntie Dong hurriedly went forward and grabbed Li Gui, wanting to argue with Old Madam Li.

Chapter 630 Why Not

Not to be outdone, Old Madam Li stood up and pointed at Auntie Dong as she said, "Who do you think you are! It's none of your business when I'm teaching my own daughter a lesson! Get lost!"

"How dare you! Do you have a pass from the village office! How did you come into our village! Chase her out quickly! Can any Tom, Dick or Harry come to our village!" Auntie Dong shouted as she stood between Old Madam Li and Li Gui with her hands on her hips.

She was determined to get involved in this matter!

"That's right! Quickly get lost!" everyone said in unison.

"I treat Qiao Mei like my own daughter, so she's my goddaughter! That means Li Gui is my godsister! I'm definitely getting involved in this matter!" Auntie Dong said.

Unexpectedly, after Auntie Dong said this, Old Madam Li did not get angry. Instead, Old Madam Lee looked at her with a smile and said, "If you acknowledge my daughter as your godsister, then aren't I your godmother? Not only are you not filial to me, but you still insult me. How do we settle this? You have to kneel down and kowtow to me and admit that you're in the wrong!"

"You! You! You're going too far!" Auntie Dong pointed at Old Madam Li and was so angry that she could not speak. She did not expect this old lady to have such a quick comeback. Why did she not think of this!

Qiao Mei stood at the entrance of the courtyard and said with a smile, "Why should she be filial to you? You've never even looked at me after I was born. I can make the choice not to acknowledge you as my grandmother, can't I?"

When Auntie Dong saw Qiao Mei, it was as if she had seen her savior. She quickly ran to Qiao Mei's side and said, "Yes! That's right! Why should I be filial to you!"

Old Madam Li looked at Qiao Mei unhappily and thought to herself, "Qiao Mei is such a jinx! Why is it that nothing good happens every time I meet her!"

"Pfft, a dog bites on the strength of its master..." Old Madam Li muttered softly.

No matter how soft her voice was, it did not escape Auntie Dong's ears. If not for her good vision and sharp hearing, she would not have discovered so much gossip about other people and be called the "know-it-all" of the village.

"What did you say! Watch your mouth!" Auntie Dong pointed at Old Madam Li and shouted angrily.

"What's all the fuss about!" Zhao Liang shouted angrily from the back of the crowd. The people around quickly made way for him.

Old Madam Li did not panic at all when she saw Zhao Liang. Instead, she looked a little arrogant.

"Didn't I tell you not to come? Why are you here again? Do you have a pass?" Zhao Liang asked with a frown.

Old Madam Li calmly took out a crumpled piece of paper from her lapel and handed it to Zhao Liang. He opened it and took a closer look, and realized that it was indeed a pass issued by the village office. There was even an official seal on it!

"Look! Look! Isn't this proof! What are all of you making so much noise!" Old Madam Li said smugly.

Since everything was done according to the rules, Zhao Liang could not kick Old Madam Li out. After all, this was Li Gui's family matter and even if he was a cadre in the village, he had no right to interfere.

Auntie Dong also looked at Qiao Mei nervously. They had nothing to hold against Old Madam Li now. Were they really going to let her do whatever she wanted here?

If Old Madam Li stayed in the village tonight, Auntie Dong would be too ashamed to face anyone in the village in the future!

"This is my daughter! This is my daughter's house! I have a pass and I'm her biological mother! Why can't I spend the night in this village!" Old Madam Li said.

"I lent my mother the money to build this house. Before my mother pays off her debts, I have the right to decide who can or cannot live in this house. You come to my house without informing me in advance. It's useless even if you have a pass. If I refuse to let you stay, no one can say anything," Qiao Mei said indifferently.

"You little brat! I'm your mother's biological mother! Your biological grandmother! How dare you treat me like this! My current situation is all caused by you! It's all your fault that your mother divorced the man from the Zhang family, and now the Zhang family members come to my house every day to cause trouble! What do you think we should do!" Old Madam Li said.

"Why don't the Zhang family members come here to cause trouble after the divorce, but go to your house instead? Don't tell me you owe the Zhang family something?" Qiao Mei asked curiously.

Back then, the entire village knew about Li Gui's second marriage to Zhang Gui. Even a woman marrying for the first time would find it impossible to get 500 dollars as betrothal gifts, as well as so many large household appliances and a bottle of good wine. For a widow like Li Gui, she was considered to have done well for her wedding to have such a display of extravagance!