

Fat Wife 631

Chapter 631 Everyone, Do Not Leave

Everyone was very envious of Li Gui then, and felt that beautiful people really had more luck. Even though she was a widow, many men came to ask for her hand in marriage.

However, the current Li Gui looked like a completely different person from back then. She had only been married to Zhang Qian for more than 10 years, but she looked like she had aged for more than 20 years.

After so many years in the Zhang family, she had to bear children as well as take care of the housework. She did not go through her confinement period even once!

Old Madam Li and the Zhang family were the same kind of people!

"What... what can I owe them! That's the money I deserve!" Old Madam Li said vaguely.

"Then who else can the Zhang family look for if not you? Whoever takes the money should be the one to take it out again. This matter is as simple as that," Qiao Mei said.

Old Madam Li quickly said, "You can't say that! I raised her for so many years! Is it wrong of me to take the betrothal gifts from the Zhang family! That is money for my hard work!"

Auntie Wang said indignantly, "So you mean you sold your daughter! You're really shameless to say such things."

"What hard work? Have you given my mother nice clothes or bought jewelry for her? Where were you when my mother was seriously ill? Were the betrothal gifts for you! They were for my mother! You took them all away! You even took away the money that my mother gave you to support me! If we calculate everything clearly, don't you still have to return this money to me?" Qiao Mei asked.

Although Old Madam Li was stubborn yesterday and insisted that Li Gui give her money to show her filial piety, everyone knew very well that if they really haggled over the sums, it would show that she had taken more than 500 dollars over the period of more than 10 years.

When Old Madam Li could not win with logic, she started to act shamelessly.

She immediately lay on the ground and sobbed. "Oh my heavens! Why are you doing this to me! I gave birth to a daughter who is not filial to me! Let me die! Old man, take me away! I don't want to live anymore!"

Li Gui could not bear to see Old Madam Li like this. No matter how badly Old Madam Li treated her, this was still her biological mother! Blood was still thicker than water. This blood relationship could not be severed.

Tears welled up in her eyes. She wanted to go forward and help Old Madam Li up a few times, but the people beside her stopped her.

"Alright, alright! Just say what you want," Qiao Mei said impatiently.

Old Madam Li immediately perked up. She sat up and stretched out her palm as she said, "I want 500 dollars. In the past two days, the Zhang family has taken more than 100 dollars from me and more than 50 dollars from my eldest son. All the valuable items in the house have been taken, so I want 500 dollars!"

"We don't have money for you! Even if you cry yourself to death here, no one will care about you. Everyone, let's disperse. Don't stay here to watch the commotion." Qiao Mei waved her hand to dismiss everyone.

Auntie Dong pulled Qiao Mei to the side and said anxiously, "You're so muddle-headed! If you really let her kick up a fuss here, what if she dies? She's already so old and her health isn't good. Her health can act up at any time!"

Of course Qiao Mei had thought of this. She returned to the house and asked Zhang Wei to bring out a stool.

She intended to sit at the entrance and watched Old Madam Li kick up a fuss. When Old Madam Li got tired from shouting, she would give her a bowl of water. When the old woman was hungry, she would

give her some wild vegetables to eat. If she really fainted, she would get someone to carry her to the clinic.

In any case, she would sit at the door for as long as Old Madam Li could shout. There were so many people at home and they could take turns. How could they not be able to keep an eye on this person?

"It's fine, Auntie Dong. I know what I'm doing. Just wait and see." Qiao Mei patted Auntie Dong's hand and comforted her.

The people standing around gradually dispersed and Old Madam Li started to panic. She had wanted to use this opportunity to force Qiao Mei to submit to her. She knew that Li Gui did not have any money, but Qiao Mei did!

As long as she acted shamelessly, Qiao Mei would definitely send her away if she found it annoying. That was what everyone said outside.

The old widow and her son from the same village as her seemed to have become different people after returning from the capital. Every day, they would publicize in the village how Qiao Mei's in-laws were presentable and rich.

The amount of money they had could pile up into the shape of a mountain and they would not even be able to spend it all. Why would Qiao Mei be unwilling to part with a mere 500 dollars?

"Hey! 400 dollars is fine too! Don't go! 300 dollars! I want 300 dollars! Everyone, don't go!" Old Madam Li shouted as she looked around her.

Now, only Li Gui's family, Qiao Mei, Old Madam Li and Auntie Dong were left.

Aunty Dong was really curious about how Qiao Mei was going to solve this prickly issue.

Chapter 632 Protecting The God Of Fortune

"Stop shouting. They won't come back. You should think about where you're sleeping tonight. Let me make it clear to you. If you're tired from shouting, we can give you water. But if you're hungry, there's nothing to eat. After all, we don't have enough food ourselves. If you fall ill, we can get someone to send

you to the clinic at any time. However, you have to pay for the treatment yourself. You can continue shouting," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

To deal with such a scoundrel, one had to be as unreasonable as her.

"Li Gui! You can't just watch your mother going through this! You can't just ignore your eldest brother, Li Dong. Look at his two children! You can't just watch us starve to death!" Old Madam Li begged.

After she could not get anything by being shameless, she started to put on a pitiful act.

Such young children had to suffer together with Old Madam Li and become her tools to make money. These children also had a tough life.

Li Gui could not bear to let the two children kneel on the cold ground. She was also a mother and could not bear to see children suffer.

She tugged at Qiao Mei's sleeve and whispered, "Mei Mei, why not... let them come in and stay for the night. Look at those two children, they're so pitiful."

Qiao Mei could not bear to do it as well, but what could being kind achieve?

Could others bully you without any limit just because you were kind? Could you let others trample on you just because you could not bear to take action?

Back then, when she almost froze to death and starved to death in Qiao Zhuang's cowshed, was she not also pitiful? She still managed to survive based on her own determination.

Since one could not choose one's fate, then one would need to fight hard and persevere. Even if her heart ached for these two innocent children, she could not allow Old Madam Li to use the children as leverage again and again.

The last time, these two children had already been made use of to beg for food. Now, Old Madam Li was using them as a bargaining chip.

If they did not resolve this matter ruthlessly, these two children would be coerced by Old Madam Li again.

Moreover, these two children were not Li Gui's biological children. The four children in the house, as well as her, were the ones who were Li Gui's own flesh and blood! Li Gui could not even protect herself now, yet she still wanted to save others. Could it be that the lives of the five of them were not precious?

If Old Madam Li and the kids stayed tonight, they could never be chased away again. In the future, Zhang Miao and Zhang Chao would only get more sick and their conditions would not improve.

"If you want to care about these two children and their lives, and not the lives of your own five children, then I won't care about this matter anymore. I won't come to your house again in the future. Let's go our separate ways and live our own lives, and not get in each other's way," Qiao Mei said as she looked at Li Gui coldly.

"Child, how can you talk like this!" Old Madam Li shouted in a panic.

Old Madam Li immediately got up, patted the dust off her thighs and pulled the two children up. If Qiao Mei no longer acknowledged Li Gui, then she would not be able to get any money at all.

How much money could she get from Li Gui? If not for Qiao Mei, why would she want to look for Li Gui!

This "God of Fortune" must not get away!

There was still a long way to go and there would be plenty of time to come and find trouble with them in the future. As long as she came to visit them more often, they would definitely send her away with money if they found her annoying!

"It's getting dark! I'll settle the score with you another day!" With that, Old Madam Li limped away with the two children.

Qiao Mei continued to sit on the stool in silence. Auntie Dong noticed the awkward atmosphere and said with a smile, "Oh my, Li Gui, don't take it to heart! Mei Mei was just saying things out of anger! She was just scaring your mother!"

"I'm telling the truth. Mom, I know you're a kind person, but you have to think of us more. We're your biological children, right? If you let her in today, then what about Zhang Miao's illness? Will Zhang Chao be so afraid that he won't be able to sleep all night? Do you know that Zhang Chao spoke today? What if Old Madam Li enters the house and agitates him, causing his condition to worsen?" Qiao Mei said angrily.

Li Gui lowered her head and did not dare to look at Qiao Mei. She said softly, "I... I just want to let them stay for one night. I'll chase them away tomorrow."

Qiao Mei was so angry that she could only laugh. She pointed in the direction where Old Madam Li had left and asked, "If you can't even manage to chase her away today, how are you going to chase her away once she has moved in? The family is already running out of food. Are you going to let my four younger siblings starve to death!"

Chapter 633 Unable To Be Ruthless

Even though Li Gui understood everything that Qiao Mei said, Old Madam Li was still her biological mother. Even though Old Madam Li treated her badly most of the time, she just could not bring herself to treat Old Madam Li harshly.

"I... I don't know either... I just feel that since she's my biological mother, I can't do this." Li Gui looked at Qiao Mei awkwardly.

Li Gui really did not know what to do at the moment. On one hand were her sick children and on the other hand was her lonely old mother.

In the face of all this, she did not know what to do.

"Forget it, you can think about it yourself. I'm going home," Qiao Mei said in a fit of pique.

"Mei Mei! Mei Mei, you haven't eaten yet! Mei Mei, don't be angry!" Li Gui shouted as she looked at Qiao Mei's departing figure.

However, she still did not have the courage to grab hold of Qiao Mei. She could only watch her leave step by step.

Qiao Mei returned home angrily. At this moment, Qiao Qiang had already returned from his good friend's house. He had heated up his meal and was listening to the radio on the brick bed as he ate happily.

Qiao Mei did not notice Qiao Qiang at all. As soon as she entered the house, she closed the door forcefully, causing the entire house to shake.

"Why are you so angry? Who provoked my precious eldest granddaughter? Tell me and I'll deal with her for you," Qiao Qiang said.

"No one provoked me! I'm just angry at myself! I deserve it! I shouldn't have interfered in my mother's affairs!" Qiao Mei sat on the brick bed and looked at Qiao Qiang while huffing and puffing.

Qiao Qiang put down his bowl and chopsticks and looked at Qiao Mei. "Then who are you angry with? Are you angry with Old Madam Li?"

When he returned to the village, he ran into Zhao Liang, who was working in the village office. Zhao Liang told Qiao Qiang everything that had happened in the past two days and he understood why Old Madam Li was here.

In the end, it was just because of money.

"No! Why would I be angry with someone who has nothing to do with me!" Qiao Mei said.

"Then let grandfather make a guess. Did that child Zhang Wei do something wrong? He has been through so much recently and is already much more mature than before. So it shouldn't be him. Zhang Chao has been obsessed with doing research on his inventions recently and doesn't talk to anyone at all.

It's even more impossible for Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao to provoke you." Qiao Qiang beat around the bush, not mentioning the key people involved.

He just wanted Qiao Mei to say it out herself about who she was angry with and why.

Qiao Mei pouted and said, "It's my mother. She insists on taking pity on Old Madam Li! Tell me why does she take pity on that evil person and the two children she brought with her! It's one thing for Old Madam Li to squeeze my mother dry in the past, but she's still doing evil things now. How can such a person be pitied!"

Qiao Qiang looked at Qiao Mei and laughed. In the end, she was still a child. Even though she was pregnant and was going to be a mother soon, she had not given birth and raised her own children, so she did not understand how a mother would feel.

He did not watch his son, Qiao Yue, grow up but he had raised the two unfilial children of the Liang family. He knew what it felt like to be a parent.

As a parent, one could not bear to see one's children suffer and feel aggrieved. One would want to give them all the good things in the world.

Perhaps it was because Li Gui had suffered when she was young, so she could not bear to see other children have similar experiences. She would try to help as much as she could.

"Grandfather, say something. Don't tell me you think my mother did the right thing?" Qiao Mei asked with a frown.

"How would I know so many things, but grandfather knows that your mother must have her own reasons for doing that. She's also an adult and should know how to consider the consequences before she does anything. What's wrong if she's willing to take responsibility when something happens? What's the point of you worrying here," Qiao Qiang said with a smile.

Qiao Mei suddenly felt dejected. She thought carefully about what Qiao Qiang said and agreed with him.

In her eyes, she was trying to help Li Gui get rid of an evil person. However, to Li Gui, the person she was going to get rid of was not an evil person, but Li Gui's own mother.

She put herself in Li Gui's shoes. She herself did hate Li Gui for abandoning her when she was young, and even if Li Gui had tried to contribute money, she still did not fulfill her duty as a mother. However, she had already forgiven Li Gui now and did not become unfilial to Li Gui because of this.

Li Gui was facing the same problem now. Like her, Li Gui could not bring herself to be ruthless to her own mother.

Chapter 634 Remember For A Lifetime

"I understand now. I won't interfere in this matter anymore. I was too anxious. I just want those children to be safe and sound," Qiao Mei said.

"It's good that you've thought it through. I heard from your Uncle Zhao that Old Madam Li always comes at mealtimes. Did you eat at your mother's place?" Qiao Qiang asked.

Qiao Mei was about to stubbornly say that she had eaten when her hopeless stomach growled.

She looked at Qiao Qiang shyly and said, "Hehe, I was too focused on being angry with my mother. Do we still have food at home?"

"There's still food in the pot. I'll go and get some for you. I've only just started eating. Recently, I've been so focused on playing chess that I haven't eaten with you in a long time." Qiao Qiang stood up to get more food for Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei quickly said, "I'll go on my own! I can still do this kind of thing. Grandfather, don't be too nervous. My children aren't that fragile!"

"You! If I had accompanied you to the capital, you wouldn't have been targeted by that... Wang family or the Zhao family..." For a moment, Qiao Qiang could not remember who had tried to harm Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei came back with the bowl of rice and said, "It's the He family! Grandfather, why can't you remember it? Is your memory not too good lately?"

"I know everything. But why should I remember the name of a bad guy? If anyone dares to harm you again, I'll take his life!" Qiao Qiang used his hand to mimic a knife and made a gesture of swinging a big knife, moving his arms a few times in front of Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei was so amused by him that she laughed loudly and said, "Grandfather is the best! So did you win the chess game today?"

"Of course! Your grandfather is invincible in the village! Next time, they have to obediently play chess at our house!" Qiao Qiang said proudly.

"Grandfather is like a good sword that never dulls! Then you have to take care of your own health. When the bad guys come, you have to protect me well!" Qiao Mei said.

"Alright, alright, stop teasing me. Hurry up and eat." After Qiao Qiang and Qiao Mei finished eating, they went back to their rooms to rest.

After Li Gui settled the children down for dinner, she did not eat anything and just sat in the courtyard in a daze. She began to regret not chasing after Qiao Mei to explain herself.

Yesterday, she had already decided to be a good mother and protect her children well. However, when she saw Old Madam Li, she always felt that she should help Old Madam Li more. She always felt that Old Madam Li still doted on her, and it was just that compared to her two older brothers, Old Madam Li had less time to dote on her.

Now that she thought about it carefully, she owed Qiao Mei and these children even more.

Zhang Qin tiptoed to Li Gui's side and appeared in front of Li Gui with her hands behind her back.

"Xiao Qin, why are you here to look for mom? What do you have behind you?" Li Gui asked with a smile.

Zhang Qin took out the roasted sweet potato she had hidden behind her back and held them up in front of Li Gui like it was a treasure. She said excitedly, "Look! Eldest brother helped Uncle Zhao with some work! Eldest brother roasted this. He said to let mom eat first, then we'll eat."

When Li Gui heard what Zhang Qin said, she was stunned. She looked at the sweet potato, and then at Zhang Qin, as tears gradually welled up in her eyes. She did not expect the children to have learnt to care about her.

"Mom's not hungry. You guys can eat it." Li Gui patted Zhang Qin's head sadly.

Zhang Wei ran out and said, "We all have one. Uncle Zhao gave me many and we each have one! The biggest one is for mom!"

In the afternoon, Li Gui went to help out at someone else's house and did not notice what Zhang Wei had brought back. When she heard that all the children each had one to eat, Li Gui felt at ease enough to take the roasted sweet potato from Zhang Qin.

This was the first time she had eaten something made by the children. It also reminded her that she had done the same thing for Old Madam Li when she was young. That time, Old Madam Li had praised her for the first time.

However, she was still young at that time and felt that her mother's praise of her was the best reward. Later on, she realized that the sweet potatoes she brought back had all been given to her older brothers. She did not even get to eat a single bite.

That was something that she had remembered for a lifetime.

She had always lived in misery and would hold on to any bit of sweetness. No matter how ruthlessly and fiercely she was treated, she still did not want to imagine that her loved ones had evil mindsets.

Chapter 635 Scoundrel

Old Madam Li's village was more than 20 kilometers away from Foshan Village. It would take at least a day to get there by foot.

The one adult and two children casually stopped a horse carriage on the road and set off for their village after discussing the price. By the time they reached the village entrance, it was already dark. They did not expect the coachman to raise the price at the last minute.

"You're going too far in. Give me another 50 cents!" the coachman said unhappily.

"Pfft! 50 cents! Why don't you go rob someone! You're already charging us a dollar and 50 cents simply for bringing us here from the neighboring village! How dare you ask me for another 50 cents now! I'm not giving it to you!" Old Madam Li said rudely.

"If you don't want to give me, then get off now! Give me a dollar and 50 cents! Otherwise, you have to pay me more!" the coachman said as he glared at Old Madam Li.

The village entrance was still four kilometers away from Old Madam Li's house! It would take at least an hour to walk back.

When the two children heard this, they held on tightly to the carriage and refused to get down.

"If you don't send us to our door! We won't get off! We'll stay here!" Old Madam Li took the opportunity to lie down in the carriage.

She was using her shameless method again, but the coachman did not fall for it. He had seen many people like this after doing this job for so many years!

"If you don't get off, I'll send you to a place where no one can find you. I don't think you're worth much. These two children of yours are not bad. Are you going to pay me or not?" the coachman said as he looked at Old Madam Li sinisterly.

"Get down, get down! We'll walk back ourselves!" Old Madam Li dragged the two children out of the carriage forcefully and reluctantly took out a stack of money from her pocket.

She was more afraid of losing her life!

The coachman thought that she was a rich person, but when he took a closer look, he realized that the stack of money were denominations of 10 cents and 20 cents. The largest denomination was probably only 50 cents!

Old Madam Li reluctantly counted the money and handed it to the coachman. The thick stack instantly reduced to a few notes and the coachman left the village without looking back.

"You! The horse carriage will definitely fall into a deep ditch! You'll die a horrible death!" Old Madam Li muttered as she watched the coachman leave.

The two children hugged each other to keep warm from the cold. They were still wearing summer clothes and the clothes were also obviously too big for them. They were wearing tattered clothes that their older brothers discarded.

One of the girls kept shivering from the cold and asked in a trembling voice, "Grandma... Can we go home now?"

"Always rushing me! What are you rushing for! If we don't go home, are we going to stay here and be food for the wolves! Hurry up and go!" Old Madam Li kicked the two children sulkily.

The children staggered behind Old Madam Li and walked for more than two hours before they reached home.

Zhao Hong thought that they would all be sleeping at Li Gui's house tonight, so she turned off the lights and went to bed early. Usually, she could not go to bed until the middle of the night.

Old Madam Li forced her to keep doing needlework and housework. As long as it was something that she could do, the old woman would make her do it and did not allow her to rest at all.

"Dong dong dong! Dong dong dong!"

There were loud bangs at the courtyard door. All the dogs in the village barked wildly when they heard the sound, making it so noisy that no one could fall asleep.

"Jinx! Open the door quickly! How dare you slack off when I'm not at home! Come out here! Open the door quickly!" Old Madam Li shouted while panting as she kicked the door forcefully.

Zhao Hong ran out to open the door for Old Madam Li without even putting on her clothes properly. As soon as she opened the door, she received a slap from Old Madam Li.

"Who allows you to go to bed so early! Don't you know that I'm coming back tonight! Do you even listen to me! Don't you take my words to heart!" Old Madam Li pointed at Zhao Hong and scolded her.

When the two children saw their mother, they quickly shrank back beside Zhao Hong and looked at her timidly, not daring to say anything.

"Mother... I'm not trying to be lazy..." Zhao Hong explained aggrievedly.

"Then why! Tell me!" Old Madam Li shouted.

"Are you done! Can't you let me sleep in the middle of the night!" A scolding came from afar.

Old Madam Li quickly walked out of the courtyard with small steps. With her hands on her hips, she shouted, "What the hell! You can sleep if you want! How dare you interfere with my family's business! Come out if you dare! How dare you scold me!"

No one in the entire village dared to provoke Old Madam Li. It was not because she was a village tyrant like Qiao Zhuang, but because she was a famous scoundrel in the village!

Chapter 636 Bleeding

Whoever provoked her would not have a peaceful time for the entire year. She would either stand at your door to curse you or wept at your door until you apologized.

Everyone just wanted peace and quiet. No one dared to provoke her. Otherwise, the whole place would definitely be thrown into chaos by her!

"Mother, let's go inside. It's cold outside," Zhao Hong whispered.

After Old Madam Li noted that there were no more scoldings, she snorted and returned to her room to rest. She was tired after walking for the whole day.

Zhao Hong suppressed the grievance in her heart and brought the two children to the side room. She noticed that the two children's shoes were already torn from all the walking. Her younger daughter's entire sole was covered in blood, while the older child had blisters all over her feet.

"Does it hurt... It's all my fault... I'm so useless..." Zhao Hong looked at her two daughters' feet with heartache. There was nothing at home that could be used to disinfect the wounds, so she could only wash their feet with water.

"Ah! Mommy, it hurts!" The younger daughter screamed as soon as she put her feet into the water.

Zhao Hong was so frightened that she quickly covered her younger daughter's mouth and cried as she said, "Be good. Mommy will be gentle. Bear with it. If you wake grandma up, she will hit you again, understand?"

The younger daughter nodded obediently. Zhao Hong brought a towel over and let her bite hard on it so that she would not be able to scream.

However, the sounds of pain that the child made still pierced her heart. The mud and blood in the basin were like knives that cut her heart ruthlessly.

The Zhang family came to cause trouble and took away all the valuable things in the house. Li Dong abandoned them and brought his two older sons to the county city. The three of them firmly believed that they could make a name for themselves in the county city.

From then on, Old Madam Li complained every day. She would hit and scold Zhao Hong whenever she was unhappy. Sometimes, she would even hit and scold Zhao Hong's two daughters.

After she heard the idle chit-chat between the old widow and Wang Yong, she actually wanted to sacrifice Zhao Hong's two daughters and make use of them to beg Li Gui.

Zhao Hong was helpless in the face of these things and could only let Old Madam Li make whatever arrangement she wanted. Even if she felt sorry for the children, she could not even protect herself. How could she protect these two children?

The children were in so much pain that they could not sleep. Zhao Hong gently waved the fan in her hand to keep the cold wind blowing on their feet. Only then did the two children feel more comfortable.

Old Madam Li was so tired after a long day and did not even managed to get up the next morning. Her snores sounded like thunder.

Zhao Hong did her usual chores, bringing in the clothes from the courtyard, cooking for the family, and doing all the things Old Madam Li wanted her to do.

She prepared the ingredients and was about to cook when she realized that there was not much firewood left. Her husband and sons were originally the ones who took care of this. Now that there was no one else at home, she had to do it herself.

As her posture was wrong when she tried to chop the firewood, she failed several times. Instead, the noise woke Old Madam Li, who was sleeping soundly in the room.

"What are you doing so early in the morning?! It's so rare that I'm sleeping so well! Then you wake me up! Do you want me to die early?!" Old Madam Li pushed open the door and shouted fiercely.

Zhao Hong threw aside the ax in a panic and said, "No, there's no more firewood at home. I was about to cook..."

"Hurry up and do it then! You're dragging your feet! Why did my son marry a jinx like you!" Old Madam Li muttered as she looked around for the two children.

"Where are your two children?" Old Madam Li asked Zhao Hong.

Zhao Hong's heart skipped a beat. Trouble was brewing.

"Mother, the children's feet are bleeding. They really can't walk that far," Zhao Hong said.

"What are you talking about! So what if there's blood! Just bandage it up! How can they be so delicate! When I was young, I was fine even if I walked more than 20 miles on the mountain path! Just walk more and it's fine!" Old Madam Li said stubbornly.

Zhao Hong knelt in front of Old Madam Li with a plop and begged, "Mother, these two children will get hurt if they walk again! They really can't walk! Why don't we rest for a while and go again in two days?"

The wounds on the soles of the two children's feet were not disinfected yet. If there was any serious infection, their limbs would need to be amputated! At that time, Old Madam Li definitely would not be willing to pay for the children's treatment. Then the children would definitely die!

Even if she would get beaten up today, she had to protect these two children!

"You dare to resist me? Who gave you the guts! How dare you talk back to me! Is it because my son isn't around and you think you can call the shots in this family!" Old Madam Li said angrily.

Chapter 637 Worse Than Livestock

"No, no! I'm just thinking that if we visit them repeatedly and they get annoyed, then the more we won't be able to get the money?" Zhao Hong said cautiously.

Old Madam Li was about to retort, but then she felt that what Zhao Hong said made sense. After all, Qiao Mei's attitude yesterday was already very bad. Even if she went again today, nothing good was going to come out of it.

If Qiao Mei really cut ties with Li Gui, then Li Gui would be of no value at all. Perhaps her four children would be able to earn money when they grew up and she could still get some money then. However, she was not sure if she would still be alive by then!

She was already almost 70 years old. By the time those children grew up, she would be 90 years old! There was no way that she would have the strength to go and cause trouble for them.

"Then you tell me, what should we do about this matter?" Old Madam Li asked.

Zhao Hong had always been a person with no opinion. At this point in time, asking her to think of ways to harm and deceive others now was just making life difficult for her. All her life, she had only followed instructions and it was never her place to make decisions.

"Mother... You also know that I'm stupid, but I do know that if you travel such a long distance every day, what if you tire yourself out after a long time? Won't we be at a disadvantage then?" Zhao Hong said.

Although Old Madam Li was old, she used to be an expert climber in the village. When she was young, no one was as fast or as good as her.

No one would believe it if she got tired or became sick from walking more than 20 miles.

"I really feed you for nothing! It's better to feed livestock than to give food to you! What a waste! What good is your brain for!" Old Madam Li pointed at Zhao Hong and scolded her.

Zhao Hong knelt on the ground and did not dare to make a sound. It was fine to just get a scolding, but if she talked back and got beaten up, that would be really miserable!

"Why are you still kneeling here! Hurry up and cook! Are you going to starve me to death! Get lost, get lost!" Old Madam Li waved her hand sulkily to send Zhao Hong away.

Zhao Hong ran to the kitchen with tears in her eyes. She had no right to speak in this house.

Old Madam Li was right. She was indeed inferior to livestock. The livestock belonging to others could at least rest after they worked in the fields, but she did not get any rest all year round and still had to be beaten and scolded every day.

Back then, her father had owed Old Man Li 200 dollars and really could not repay the debt, so he gave her to the Li family to be their daughter-in-law. If not for that, her life would not have been so miserable.

It was so unfair!

"Cry, cry, cry! All you can do is to cry! If you're really capable! Find my son and my grandsons! I've worked so hard for most of my life and thought that I could enjoy life with my children and grandchildren for the next few decades. In the end, ever since a jinx like you married into the family, nothing had gone smoothly!" Old Madam Li cursed in the courtyard.

She often muttered to herself about how tough her life had been, and scolded Zhao Hong for being useless.

She could repeat all these more than a thousand times a day. Anyone who passed by the Li family's main door would see Old Madam Li beating and scolding Zhao Hong. In the past, there was a kind villager who secretly gave Zhao Hong some ointment to help her wounds recover quickly.

Unexpectedly, Old Madam Li saw what happened. Old Madam Li went to that person's house and caused a scene for a week. Later on, when everyone in the village saw Zhao Hong, they all avoided her, afraid that Old Madam Li would misunderstand them if they spoke to her.

For people like Old Madam Li, as long as one was a tiny bit related to her, one would get skinned alive by her. If one did not give her money, she would definitely cause a lot of trouble.

The second son of the Li family, Li Xiong, could not stand Old Madam Li's actions. That was why he left the village with his wife and children and settled down somewhere else. He did not even come back once during the new year and festive season.

If not for the fact that the eldest son, Li Dong, was useless, they would have long distanced themselves from Old Madam Li as well!

After mealtime, Zhao Hong went into the room to check on the two children's feet. She could not see clearly at night, but now that she could, she was flabbergasted.

A pair of originally fair little feet were covered in wounds and there were parts which had already started to fester and even bleed. The other child's blisters had also been burst from rubbing against the rough cotton blanket. There was not an unhurt spot on either child's feet.

If the wounds were not disinfected, the condition of the children's feet would only become more serious.

If infection set in and the flesh rotted to the bone, they would not be able to keep their feet!

Chapter 638 Helping Out Of Kindness

Zhao Hong took advantage of the time when Old Madam Li was taking an afternoon nap to rush to the village clinic. However, she did not have a single cent on her. It was most likely that she would not be able to get rubbing alcohol or anything that could be used for disinfection.

She could not care less now and could only brace herself to go and ask. If she had to steal it, she would!

"Excuse me... is the doctor here?" Zhao Hong pushed open the door and asked cautiously.

"Ah, Sister Zhao. What's the matter?" The person on duty today was Liu Xiao, the new young doctor from the county city. This village was her hometown. Back then, she went to the city alone to work and had a tough time as most people there did not like someone from the countryside. Therefore, she came home to work.

Zhao Hong clenched her fists tightly and said awkwardly, "My... my children have blisters on their feet and the wounds are bleeding... There's pus coming out as well. I want to get some medicine for them."

"Then what kind of medicine do you want? If you want the child to feel less pain, I will suggest that you use iodine as it's painful to use rubbing alcohol. But iodine is more expensive than rubbing alcohol. They'll be fine after taking some anti-inflammatory medicine as well," Liu Xiao said with a smile.

Seeing that this doctor was easy to talk to, Zhao Hong became even more nervous and guilty. She whispered, "I... I don't have money... Can I owe you first!"

The smile on Liu Xiao's face suddenly became awkward. The clinic did not accept credit. This was a rule set by the higher-ups, so it was not appropriate for her to make an exception.

"I can't, Sister Zhao. I'm just an employee at the clinic. Look, it's not easy for me as well. If the superiors question me, I won't be able to explain myself," Liu Xiao said awkwardly.

When Zhao Hong heard this, she hurriedly knelt down in front of Liu Xiao and kowtowed. "Please! I beg you! If I can't get the medicine! My two daughters will die! Please! Please save my daughters!"

Liu Xiao was so shocked that she quickly went forward to help Zhao Hong up and said, "Sister Zhao, what are you doing! Get up quickly! Even if you do this, I can't give it to you!"

"But I really have no choice! My children's feet won't stop bleeding and they're not getting better yet. I really have no choice. Please save my children!" Zhao Hong cried.

Liu Xiao really could not bear to see Zhao Hong like this because of her children. When Liu Xiao left the village, she was only 16 years old. At that time, Zhao Hong was still very young and beautiful. The person in front of her now looked like a completely different person from before. She was so thin that there was only skin and bones left!

She also did not want the two children to have any aftereffects. As a doctor, she could not leave them in the lurch.

Liu Xiao took a bottle of rubbing alcohol from the back of the shelf as well as some gauze and handed them to Zhao Hong. "Take this first. This is all I can do. Go back quickly to take care of the children."

Zhao Hong looked at Liu Xiao in disbelief. She did not expect someone to really be willing to help her. After feeling agitated, she felt worried that she would not be able to pay Liu Xiao back. She looked at Liu Xiao nervously and said, "I... I don't have money to give you..."

"It's fine. I'll pay for it. Saving someone is more important," Liu Xiao said with a smile.

"Thank you! Thank you so much! When my children recover, I'll definitely bring them here to thank you. No, no, no! To kowtow to you!" Zhao Hong said agitatedly.

"No need, no need! When you go back, use this to disinfect the wounds properly. Make sure that you clean up all the dirt first before wrapping it with gauze. Keep it dry and let it breathe. It'll get well slowly if you take good care," Liu Xiao said.

Zhao Hong wanted to kowtow to Liu Xiao a few more times to express her gratitude, but Liu Xiao stopped her and said, "Oh my! Sister Zhao, get up quickly. It's more important to save the children. Go back quickly."

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" Zhao Hong kept turning around to thank Liu Xiao even as she walked out. She accidentally bumped into the head of the clinic, Hai Hua.

"Why don't you look where you're going! Isn't this the eldest daughter-in-law of the Li family? Why are you here today?" Hai Hua looked at Zhao Hong in confusion.

Zhao Hong nervously ran off with the rubbing alcohol and bandages in her arms and did not say a word.

Hai Hua looked at Zhao Hong in puzzlement as she left. The sun had really risen from the west. When did the Li family have the money to buy medicine? They were so poor that even rats would cry after entering their house.

"How strange. Why would she have money? Don't tell me she stole money from her family," Hai Hua asked Liu Xiao in confusion.

Chapter 639 - 639 Getting Beaten Up

639 Getting Beaten Up

Liu Xiao said resignedly, "I bought it for her. She said that her children were seriously injured and would die if the wounds were not disinfected. I had no choice."

Hai Hua smiled meaningfully and patted Liu Xiao's shoulder. "You're still too young. You just came back and haven't heard about what happened in the village in the past two years."

“No...” Liu Xiao shook her head in confusion.

Hai Hua did not say anything else. She only told Liu Xiao to pray for the best and hope that Old Madam Li did not come to confront her.

!!

After all, she was that kind person from back then. If not for the fact that she helped Zhao Hong out of kindness back then, she would not have been targeted by Old Madam Li.

Zhao Hong did not care about how others looked at her along the way and ran home happily. She stared fixedly at the bottle of rubbing alcohol, afraid that she would accidentally drop it. These were life-saving medicines for the two children.

As soon as she stepped into the courtyard, she heard a whisper that seemed to come from the mouth of a demon.

“Where did you go?” Old Madam Li said as she stood by the pillar behind the door.

The moment Old Madam Li woke up, she realized that Zhao Hong had disappeared. The two children were still lying sickly on the brick bed. There were so many things waiting for her to do at home, yet she still dared to go out on her own at this time. She was simply being so disrespectful!

She had then taken a stool to sit behind the door and waited for Zhao Hong to return!

Zhao Hong hurriedly hid the rubbing alcohol and bandages behind her back and said, “I... I just went for a walk... I didn’t do anything...”

“Went for a walk? Isn’t the courtyard at home big enough for you to walk around? Could it be that... you were out having an affair! Do you have a man outside! How dare you betray my son! Betray the Li family!” Old Madam Li said as she pointed at Zhao Hong angrily.

Zhao Hong quickly shook her head and said, "No! It's not like that! There's really no such thing!"

Old Madam Li picked up the big stick beside her and pointed it at Zhao Hong as she asked, "Then where did you go! Tell me! If you don't tell me, you must be having an affair!"

If she told Old Madam Li that she had gone to the clinic to get medicine, Old Madam Li would definitely suspect that she had stolen money from the family or that she had hidden away some money.

When Li Dong returned, she would not have an easy time either!

She definitely could not say anything about this! If she did, the children would be out of hope! She might even implicate Liu Xiao!

"I'm not! I really just went for a walk!" Zhao Hong said stubbornly.

Old Madam Li gritted her teeth in anger. If she did not beat up Zhao Hong today, it would be difficult to vent the hatred in her heart!

Over the past few days, after going to look for her wretched daughter Li Gui in Foshan Village, she did not get a single meal or a single cent out of her! She even had to spend money out of her own pocket!

How unlucky!

Old Madam Li used all her strength to raise the stick and hit Zhao Hong. Zhao Hong screamed in pain and ran around the courtyard. When Old Madam Li was not paying attention, she threw everything that Liu Xiao gave her into the pile of firewood.

Then she fell onto the firewood and pressed her back against it so that Old Madam Li could not see anything.

“I’ll beat you to death! How dare you dodge! I’ll teach you a good lesson today! I’ll beat you to death! I’ll beat you to death!” Old Madam Li waved the big stick with a lot of effort and only stopped when she was exhausted and panting.

Zhao Hong was already covered in wounds from the beating and there was not a single unharmed spot on her body.

“Remember this! If I find out that you go out without informing me or go sneaking around again! I’ll get my son to beat you to death! Do you hear me!” Old Madam Li shouted as she held the big stick.

“I... I’ll remember that...” Zhao Hong said softly.

Old Madam Li hit Zhao Hong again and shouted, “Louder! Haven’t you eaten! Didn’t you shout very loudly just now!”

“I’ll remember that!” Zhao Hong shouted with a sob.

Old Madam Li nodded in satisfaction and threw the stick aside. She rubbed her shoulders and returned to the house. As she walked, she muttered, “It’s so tiring, you thick-skinned thing! You really don’t know how to appreciate favors! Why did my son marry you back then!”

Zhao Hong continued to lay motionlessly on the firewood pile. She would probably be covered in bruises again after this beating. Fortunately, the old woman had only used a stick this time. If she had used the bamboo cane at home, her skin and flesh would definitely be lacerated!

Zhao Hong got up with great difficulty and took the items from the firewood pile and stuffed them into her clothes. She hid them in the room she shared with the children. She could not apply the medicine for the children yet and could only do it after Old Madam Li fell asleep at night.

Chapter 640 - 640 Giving Ideas

640 Giving Ideas

Zhao Hong’s older daughter, her third child, cried and asked, “Mom... did you get beaten up again...”

Zhao Hong forced a smile and walked over with difficulty to pat her child's head. "Be good. It doesn't hurt. Mom is fine. Don't worry..."

"But this part is swollen..." The child reached out and pointed at Zhao Hong's wrist.

If her child did not say anything, Zhao Hong would not have noticed it herself. In her panic, she had used her arm to block the stick just now and her wrist was so swollen that it was almost the size of her palm.

She was already used to such injuries.

"It's fine. Mom will be fine tomorrow! Don't worry, go and sleep now," Zhao Hong said sadly.

After comforting her two younger children to sleep, she dragged her injured body to the courtyard to do farm work. She worked until it was dark and then she prepared food for Old Madam Li before going to do needlework.

It was only when Old Madam Li fell asleep in the middle of the night that she quietly returned to the room and woke the children up to apply medicine for them.

The two children were also very obedient and bit the cloth tightly without making a sound. They only fell asleep when she was all done.

Zhao Hong looked at the rubbing alcohol in her hand and then at the wounds on her own body. In the end, she chose to keep it for the children. She did not need to use these things.

Early the next morning, she repeated the same chores she did yesterday. Just like that, she lived day after day without any joy or expectation.

Her only motivation to persevere was her children. As long as the children grew up safely, she did not have any other needs or desires.

Old Madam Li still looked for excuses to scold her as usual, but it was different today. For some reason, she had the thought of asking Li Gui for money again and insisted that the two children accompany her to Foshan Village. She wanted to use the two children's injuries to threaten Li Gui.

"Quick, ask them to come with me. Don't block my way!" Old Madam Li said stubbornly.

"These children's parents are Li Dong and me, not Li Gui. Even if they're sick, Li Gui won't feel sorry for them! Mother!" Zhao Hong said.

"So what if they're not her children? How can she leave them in the lurch!" Old Madam Li said.

"Mother! These two children really can't walk anymore! Li Gui didn't pity these two children the last time! She definitely won't this time round! Isn't her own child also sick! Why would she care about my children!" Zhao Hong said.

Old Madam Li thought about it carefully and felt that it did make sense. However, these two children were the only ones who were sick and no one else was feeling unwell.

"Mother... what if you say you're sick?" Zhao Hong said vaguely.

Old Madam Li started to roar angrily again, "Are you cursing me to die! You asshole! Am I an eyesore to you being alive! Have you wanted me dead for a long time!"

"No! No! What I mean is that you pretend to be sick to trick Li Gui into coming back," Zhao Hong quickly explained.

This was a good idea!

She was Li Gui's biological mother! How could Li Gui not come back! If Li Gui did not come back, she would say that Li Gui was unfilial! Then she could go to their village to kick up a fuss.

If she was sick, she would definitely be able to get money for treatment! She must ask Li Gui to bring more money!

This way, she would not have to tire herself out and could make Li Gui bring the money over obediently. This was a good idea!

“Not bad, not bad. Your idea is very good. I didn’t expect you to be enlightened after being beaten up yesterday! Then you can be the one to go and relay the message. Just say that I’m going to die of illness and I urgently need money. Ask Li Gui to bring money quickly to send me for treatment,” Old Madam Li said happily.

Zhao Hong quickly agreed to Old Madam Li’s request. Without even eating, she went to the village to apply for a pass. By the time she reached Foshan Village, it was already dusk.

After walking for a day, coupled with the fact that she was injured and did not have any food or water, she was already dizzy and could not see the road ahead clearly. She found a big tree by the roadside and held on to it for support as she panted heavily.

Auntie Dong had just returned from the county city. There was an event at the black market in the county city today and many people secretly brought their things to sell there. The crowd was three times bigger than usual!

She had sold all the things she brought there today and made quite a bit of money. For the first time, Auntie Dong bought herself a red headband and decided to doll herself up a little.

Before she could enter the village, from afar, she saw a person holding onto a tree motionlessly. Not long after, the person fell down under the tree.