

Fat Wife 681

Chapter 681 Exhausted To Death In Three Days

As soon as He Ning arrived at Wang Qin's house, there was a frown on his face. He instantly felt that the 100 dollars was a huge loss to him.

"Come in and take a look! I've already tidied up this room," Wang Qin said warmly.

Huo Gao went in with the luggage to clean the brick bed first. Then, he tidied up the surface items and changed all the bedsheets and blankets.

He was originally a doctor, but he had become He Ning's nanny on this trip. When they returned, he would definitely ask He Ning for more money! He definitely could not work for nothing.

"I gave you so much money, so you have to treat me well. I want to eat meat for every meal," He Ning said nicely.

Wang Qin was stunned for a moment before she agreed to He Ning's request. She had originally wanted to serve He Ning dishes like cabbages and potatoes and just make do.

If she wanted to buy meat, she had to exchange for meat coupons. This way, she would not make as much money as she had calculated at the beginning.

"No problem. I'll definitely make the best food for you," Wang Qin said.

"I want to eat by myself. I won't eat with your entire family. There must be at least three dishes and a soup every day. All my leftovers have to be thrown out and I don't want any repeat dishes. The dishes must be different every day. I only eat breakfast and dinner every day. You don't have to worry about my lunch," He Ning said indifferently.

Wang Qin could only agree to He Ning's request. After all, she was paid 100 dollars a day! If she served He Ning well, it would not be a dream for her to earn 3,000 dollars a month! After deducting the money from buying meat, there would still be a lot left. Then, her entire family would be able to go to the county city to live a good life!

She no longer wanted to look after such a big family in this dilapidated village. Ever since Qiao Yu returned, she had no status at home.

Even her elder son did not talk to her anymore. It was Qiao Zhuang who taught her son to do that. On the surface, Qiao Zhuang was very polite to her and did not ask her to do household chores. She also still had a say at home. In reality, Qiao Zhuang had long wanted to chase her away.

She was an experienced accountant. Even if she went to the county city, she could still make a living. Qiao Fu was also smart and strong. He could work at any factory. Her elder son was about to grow up and would soon be able to earn money to support the family. Her younger daughter did not need a lot of money.

She had endured all the humiliation in order to save money to settle down in the county city. Now that there was He Ning, her wish was about to come true.

Before she left, she must see Qiao Mei's reputation ruined, and she also wanted to return all the hardships and grievances she had suffered to Qiao Mei!

"Don't worry, I'll make whatever you want to eat. However, we're in a remote village and there's nothing much that's very good here. Please bear with me," Wang Qin said.

He Ning nodded and went into the room to get ready to rest. Before he entered, he even told Wang Qin that it was time to make dinner. Wang Qin went to the pork seller, Wang Wu's house to exchange for some meat and then to her own vegetable field to pick a lot of vegetables.

It was her first time cooking for He Ning, so she must make a few of her best dishes to let He Ning know that it was not a loss to him to spend this amount of money! If he felt happy and wanted to stay for a few more days, then she could get more money.

"How many days are we going to stay here?" Huo Gao said awkwardly as he looked at the spider webs on the roof.

He Ning frowned and thought for a moment before saying, "Let's stay for five days first. I'll try to get the ginseng from Qiao Mei within five days."

Huo Gao had thought that he would only be in Foshan Village for three days. He reckoned that his wife would definitely reprimand him when he returned home this time.

Being with He Ning, he could be exhausted to death in three days.

"It's not so easy to get a 100-year-old ginseng. Have you thought about what to do if Qiao Mei really doesn't have it anymore?" Huo Gao asked.

They had to make plans for this matter early. They could not just wait until Qiao Mei found the 100-year-old ginseng before they returned to the capital, right? There were still many issues waiting for them in the capital.

"There's no hurry. It's rare for me to come out and relax. Don't worry, I'll give you more money. When we get back, get your wife to come to my house to take something. Just take whatever you like," He Ning said indifferently.

Huo Gao nodded in satisfaction. Such compensation was acceptable to him. It would appease his wife's anger and earn him money at the same time. It was like killing two birds with one stone.

"I'm talking about ginseng. I'm not asking for what you said," Huo Gao said politely.

He Ning stared into Huo Gao's eyes and said, "If you don't want it, take it that I haven't said anything."

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Huo Gao quickly said, "Yes, yes, yes! I want everything you give me!"

Only a fool would not want it!

Not long after, Wang Qin was done cooking and brought the food to He Ning. There were three dishes and a soup. She would not make more than what he asked for. It would be such a waste of money!

“Are you satisfied with what you see? These are all my specialties. Potato stewed with kidney beans, braised pork, egg soup and stir fried eggplants,” Wang Qin said nervously to He Ning.

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The taste of these dishes was far inferior to what Qiao Mei made. Just the smell of Qiao Mei’s cooking was enough to make people drool. Wang Qin’s dishes did not have any fragrance at all.

He Ning and Huo Gao were really tired from walking all day. If they continued to be picky, they would probably starve to death.

“Alright, you can leave now. I’ll ask you to come and clean up after we’re done eating. This room belongs to us now, so you can’t come in as you like. You won’t be able to explain yourself if we lose anything. I’m doing this for your own good,” He Ning said.

Wang Qin noted everything He Ning said. This person was now their family’s “money tree”. Whatever he said was right and must be done.

“I’ll leave now. Please eat well,” Wang Qin said obsequiously and left the room.

He Ning put down his chopsticks after a few bites. Huo Gao was not picky and ate heartily. After eating, Huo Gao placed the table outside the door. When Wang Qin saw it, she would definitely come and clean it up.

After a good night’s sleep, He Ning brought Huo Gao to Qiao Mei’s house early the next morning and quietly squatted at the door.

“Do you think we’ll succeed by squatting here? My legs are going numb from squatting,” Huo Gao said as he grabbed his legs and grimaced.

They had been crouching here for half an hour for the purpose of freeloading a meal at Qiao Mei's place. He Ning did not seem tired at all. Instead, he was full of energy and kept staring at Qiao Mei's chimney. As soon as smoke started to rise, He Ning intended to rush in immediately.

"Why not? We'll just wait here. Do you think they'll just let us watch from the side while they eat?" He Ning said.

Qiao Mei lay on the brick bed and kept thinking about the matter of He Ning asking her for ginseng. Although the issue of He Mei plotting against her had already come to an end, it was a fact that He Ning had also harmed her previously. If she did not take revenge, it would be difficult to vent the hatred in her heart.

However, ginseng was something which she could have as much as she wanted, and she could grow it to whatever age she wanted. In the ancient fable, whatever Ma Liang drew with his magical pen would become real. Similarly, Qiao Mei could casually produce a thousand-year-old ginseng with a wave of her hand.

There was really no need for her to turn down an offer of money. The money that He Ning gave her now would be worth tens of times more in the future. When the time came, she could even earn hundreds of millions.

Given that He Ning was sending her so much money, she probably could also ignore some of He Ning's previous actions.

As soon as Qiao Mei entered the courtyard, the small plants came to report to her and told her the exact location of He Ning and Huo Gao. Recently, she could communicate with the plants planted at home. Through the undercurrent of the golden energy net, Qiao Mei could hear the conversations of plants within 300 meters at any time.

Qiao Mei washed the pumpkins as if nothing was going on, then she washed the cucumbers and other items. She then placed them in the basket.

Qiao Mei looked out of the fence and then at the big basin of dirty water. She had an idea.

"It's almost noon. Why isn't Qiao Mei cooking at home? If you ask me, we might as well go back and eat the food that Wang Qin makes. At least we'll still have something to eat. I'm about to starve to death now," Huo Gao said as he rubbed his stomach aggrievedly.

He Ning was also hungry, but he was unwilling to compromise and make things difficult for himself. He had no choice but to force himself to eat yesterday's meal. If he had to eat that kind of food again, he would rather die.

"I want to eat the food that Qiao Mei makes," He Ning said stubbornly.

Huo Gao said angrily, "The chef at home has cooked for you for more than 10 years. I think the standard of her cooking is similar to Wang Qin's, and you also ate it."

"That's different. It's not like you haven't tasted Qiao Mei's cooking before. After eating it, you feel that other dishes don't taste good anymore," He Ning said helplessly.

As soon as he finished speaking, the two of them were instantly drenched in dirty water. Huo Gao was further away and dodged when he felt water on his head. However, He Ning was not so lucky. He was totally drenched and there were even a few rotten vegetable leaves on his head.

Chapter 683 What A Sin

"Oh my, why are you here?" Qiao Mei covered her mouth and said in surprise.

He Ning fell to the ground and suppressed the anger in his heart. The thing he hated the most was having dirt on his body, not even dust.

"Didn't you see us?" He Ning said through gritted teeth.

He looked as if he wanted to skin Qiao Mei alive. In the village, there was no place to buy clothes. Even if they went to the county city to buy new clothes, the fabric would not be as good as what He Ning was wearing.

"You guys are squatting under my fence so early in the morning. How would I know where you are? If you have something to say, why don't you come in instead of sneaking around outside the door?" Qiao Mei said.

He Ning was rendered speechless. He really could not blame Qiao Mei for this matter. If not for the fact that he was greedy and wanted to eat the food Qiao Mei made, he would not be in such a sorry state now.

If he went back to change now, he would probably not be able to come back in time for breakfast at Qiao Mei's house. If he did not go back, he could not tolerate the mud and sand on his body.

"I see that you're making breakfast, so I'm going to let Huo Gao stay and help you. We're all friends," He Ning said with a smile.

Huo Gao looked at him in shock. This fellow was selling him out with just a few words. He was a doctor, not a cook! If being He Ning's doctor meant that he had to even take care of the patient's daily living, it would be better if he had not agreed to come with He Ning!

If he had insisted that He Ning's bodyguards followed them, he would definitely have an easier time now!

Qiao Mei looked at Huo Gao and then at He Ning. It would be a waste not to accept free labor. She had already splashed dirty water on him, so it was nothing much to allow him to stay for a meal.

"Alright, he can stay and chop firewood." After saying that, Qiao Mei brought Huo Gao into the backyard. One wall in the backyard was lined with firewood that Xia Zhe had chopped before he left.

Huo Gao looked around the backyard in confusion and asked, "Isn't there firewood? What do I need to chop?"

"Those are not for use. You have to chop new ones. Just pile them on the wall next to this wall when you're done. Make sure you fill up the entire wall space!" Qiao Mei said.

Filling up the entire wall space! Huo Gao froze on the spot.

Did he hear wrongly... The entire wall space needed to be filled...

He would probably need to chop the firewood for two days and two nights. He was a doctor, not a cook! Not a cook!

Qiao Mei did not care about what Huo Gao was thinking at all. Since He Ning had asked him to stay behind to cover the cost of the meal, he had to do the job well. Firewood was a consumable item. Even with the pile that Xia Zhe had chopped and lined along the other wall, they would still use it all up one day.

"Thank you for your efforts. You can do it!" Qiao Mei cheered Huo Gao on and ignored his unwilling look as she happily returned to the house to cook.

Today, she was making pumpkin porridge, scrambled eggs with cucumbers and stewed tofu with cabbage. Auntie Dong had sent the tofu over last night. Every Wednesday and Saturday, there would be a small carriage secretly coming to the village entrance to sell things. Everyone could grow things like potatoes and sweet potatoes themselves.

Even if they did not grow it at home, they could exchange what they had with other families. However, for food made with extremely complicated processes like tofu, everyone could only buy it.

Moreover, it was not cheap!

Previously, when Qiao Mei taught Auntie Dong how to grow bean sprouts for sale, Auntie Dong had made a lot of money. Therefore, from time to time, she would send some delicious food to Qiao Mei for extra nourishment.

Today was a lucky day for He Ning.

Huo Gao looked at the tree stump on the ground in the backyard and the ax in his hand helplessly. He had only used an ax to chop down medicinal herbs before, and this was his first time chopping firewood.

Huo Gao raised his ax high and aimed. With a bang, the ax was stuck firmly in the wooden stake that was used to stabilize the firewood, and the firewood that was about to be chopped flew to the side.

"What sin have I committed... In my past life, I must have killed people like flies. That's why in this life, I'm He Ning's personal doctor. With my ability, I can even open a hospital on my own! Sigh... what a sin!" Huo Gao complained and started working diligently again.

After Qiao Mei finished cooking, she stayed in the courtyard to bask in the sun. Qiao Qiang also did some Tai Chi in the courtyard. This was something Qiao Mei had taught him. She said that the old men in the capital all knew how to do the exercise. They would practice one set every morning and another set at night, and it helped to train up their physique.

Now that he was old, he could not practice the fist techniques to kill and subdue enemies that he had learned in the army. It was better to practice Tai Chi techniques to cultivate his body and mind.

Chapter 684 Hiding The Truth

"Mei Mei, do you think that kid will come back?" Qiao Qiang asked.

Qiao Mei gently swayed in the rocking chair and said, "Yes, he will. He has already left his helper behind to do manual labor. How can he run away?"

"That's true. This set of fist techniques of yours is really useful. Every time I finish, I feel that my muscles and bones have loosened up a lot," Qiao Qiang said as he rubbed his shoulders.

Qiao Qiang would go to the back mountain to walk a few rounds every day. Although he did more exercise than those old men who took walks in the capital, he did not exercise his upper body at all. It was better for him to practice Tai Chi at home. It was safe and reassuring.

Not only did He Ning change into a new set of clothes, but he even took a shower. Wang Qin was kept very busy so that He Ning could take a shower at home. Not only did she have to sacrifice the storeroom at home for this purpose, but she also had to bring out all the items at home that could contain hot water in order for He Ning to take a shower.

Their family usually bathed in the big river in the village. Ever since they discovered that there was a hot spring on the mountain, they would go there to take a shower.

In summer, they used big water storage bags that could hold 10 liters of water in one bag. The bags were completely black and every summer afternoon at two o'clock, the water in the bags would be heated up and they would be able to take a shower.

They would simply close the main door and put up a cloth covering, and no one would be able to see anyone who was taking a shower at home. This was how they had done it for so many years.

However, He Ning was different. He insisted on taking a shower inside the room, which stumped Wang Qin. After He Ning was done and making his way to Qiao Mei's house in a grand manner, Wang Qin's entire family had to go to the storeroom and use basins to remove the water that had accumulated on the ground even before they made breakfast.

This storeroom could no longer store food.

"You wastrel old woman! Now that you let this storeroom be used for bathing, what are we going to eat in the future! Look at these potatoes. Sigh! They're going to sprout!" Qiao Fu said angrily.

Although Wang Qin's heart ached for the losses as well, He Ning was full of hostility at that time. She did not have the ability to reject him even if she wanted to.

"Why didn't you say anything just now! Now you sound so capable! Who am I doing this for? It's all so that our family can move to the county city as soon as possible! He gives us 100 dollars a day!" Wang Qin said.

At the mention of 100 dollars, Qiao Fu fell silent. Although he did not know where this person came from, the 100 dollars a day was paid on a daily basis and he felt at ease upon collecting the money.

If the man wanted to pay cumulatively at the end, then it was definitely a scam.

"Alright, alright. We can't let our father and the others know about this. Otherwise, this money won't be in our hands," Qiao Fu said cautiously.

It was not as if Wang Qin did not think of this problem. Even if they did not tell Qiao Zhuang now, news would still quickly spread like wildfire as time passed. They could not hide it even if they wanted.

"With that old woman Dong in the village, the entire village will know about this sooner or later." Wang Qin sighed.

Wang Qin and Auntie Dong had always been on bad terms. Back then, the higher-ups had issued a notice that they wanted to add a new position in the village, known as the director of women's affairs, specializing in managing the reproductive issues and population migration in the entire village.

At that time, everyone felt that Auntie Dong was the most suitable candidate. Not only did she know everything about all the families in the village, but she also knew all kinds of gossip and rumors. If there was anything going on, she was definitely the first one to know.

Just as Auntie Dong felt that the position was hers, Wang Qin joined in the discussion, saying that since Auntie Dong was uneducated, she could not write the summary report, so she could not take on this position.

There was indeed nothing wrong with this reasoning and it left Zhao Liang with no choice. It would be easy to nurture a new director of women's affairs, but it was very difficult to teach Auntie Dong to be able to read and write in a short period of time.

From then on, Wang Qin and Auntie Dong became enemies.

"So what if everyone knows. We're all cadres in this village after all. When the time comes, you can just say that you're just helping him and did not take any money from him," Qiao Fu said.

Wang Qin looked at Qiao Fu in admiration. She did not expect this man to be so useful at critical moments! This was a good idea! Not only would it improve her reputation, but she could also hide the fact that she was getting paid.

"You're still the smartest! It's been hard on you, my husband, to have to help me clean up this mess," Wang Qin said coquettishly.

Qiao Fu blushed and said shyly, "No need to use the word help. You're also doing this for our family."

Chapter 685 A SmallToken

He Ning walked into the courtyard in high spirits with a bag in his hand which looked to be quite heavy.

"Are you guys waiting for me?" He Ning said.

Qiao Qiang said with annoyance, "You still have the cheek to come here."

"In the past, my little niece had created trouble in the capital and caused Qiao Mei to be frightened. Although it was not my intention, it's only right that I take responsibility for it. I apologize to you for this matter," He Ning said as he lowered his head slightly.

Qiao Mei smiled mockingly. What a scheming person. What a good way to put it.

He made it sound like it was all He Mei's fault and that it had nothing to do with him. Back then, that was not how he behaved when he made use of Wang Yong and the old widow to deal with her.

"Then where did you send Wang Yong and the old widow? Wasn't this incident instigated by you?" Qiao Mei asked innocently.

He Ning raised his originally lowered head. He had almost forgotten about these two people and he did not expect Qiao Mei to still remember them.

Those people were in the hands of the Xia family. Xia Xiu personally tied them up and sent them to the He family house to demand an explanation from He Ning.

He had lost to Qiao Mei because he had underestimated his enemy. In order to reassure the Xia family, He Ning found a random mountain area and threw the two of them there for labor reform. He had

promised the Xia family that they would stay there for three years, but later on, he secretly sent Wang Yong and the old widow back to their original place of residence.

Qiao Mei had heard all the rumors from their village. With Auntie Dong around, it was difficult not to know about the happenings in the surrounding eight villages.

"I punished them," He Ning said vaguely.

He could not possibly capture Wang Yong and the old widow and punish them again. That would be a total disregard for human lives. This was not his territory, so it was better not to cause trouble.

Qiao Mei did not expect He Ning to do anything. She was able to carry out her own revenge and just wanted to remind He Ning not to think that he did this matter flawlessly. In the end, she would get back what he owed her.

"Come in and eat. Don't stand here," Qiao Qiang said impatiently.

He Ning quickly nodded and went to the backyard to ask Huo Gao to go into the house for their meal. The simple dishes were more delicious than what Wang Qin made at home. Even though there was no meat, it even smelt better than meat.

This made He Ning even more determined to seize Qiao Mei... No, no, no! His idea was to seize Xia Zhe!

However, He Mei's face was now ruined and He Guo would not be able to return in the next few years. This lineage was definitely out of the question. He Wei also did not have a daughter, so he could only choose among the other relatives of the He family.

It was all He Mei's fault for being a disappointment and messing up his plans. She could stay in that godforsaken place for the rest of her life! He would only consider letting He Mei return when he was in a good mood.

After He Ning finished eating, he opened the bag he brought with him. It was filled with rolls of banknotes. Qiao Qiang did not even look at them as he leaned against the brick bed and listened to the radio.

Qiao Mei did not care about what was in the bag at all. What she was concerned about was what He Ning wanted from her.

"This is a small token. Take it as a deposit. It's a total of 50,000 dollars. I'll get someone to send the rest here overnight," He Ning said.

"I'm not interested. You should take it back," Qiao Mei said.

He Ning found it strange. Could it be that Qiao Mei found the deposit too little?

He would be schemed against if he brought too much money with him. It seemed that he needed to inform the capital to send the money over faster.

"Name your conditions and I'll try my best to satisfy you," He Ning said seriously.

"It's not that I don't agree, but we only have ginseng that's 10 plus or 20 plus years old. I'm afraid you won't like it." Qiao Mei took out the box she had prepared in advance and handed it to He Ning.

He Ning opened it and took a look. He could tell that these ginsengs were all inferior goods without even needing to show them to Huo Gao. After taking medicine for so many years, he could already be considered half a doctor.

"It's indeed not what I want, but I can accept it," He Ning said as he patted the box.

Although these ginsengs were not that good, they were still many times better than ordinary ginsengs of the same age available on the market. The smell of this ginseng was similar to the 100-year-old ginseng from back then.

"If you insist on having 100-year-old ginseng, it's not as if I don't have any, but we have to go and dig it out. So you have to give us time," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

He Ning looked at Qiao Mei in shock and asked, "Dig it out? Are you saying that you've already discovered the location of the ginseng?"

Chapter 686 Pay Close Attention To Details

"You must be joking. It's not as if this back mountain belongs to my family. Does it mean that if I say something is mine, then it's mine?" Qiao Mei said with a smile.

There were many mountains near the village. Among them, there was a big mountain behind Qiao Mei's house. Usually, the villagers would not walk around near her house. Although there was no rule about who owned the mountain, everyone had a tacit understanding.

With one's home as the center point, the mountain area within the radius of one kilometer was considered one's private territory. No one else would go near it when picking wild vegetables and mushrooms.

Otherwise, anyone could enter someone else's house and even secretly hide on the mountain to peep at their private life. That would be breaking the law!

Outside that radius, it was considered a public area where everyone could enter and exit. When Qiao Mei was not around, Qiao Qiang had gone up the mountain to walk around and found many small ginseng seedlings that had just grown out. Even if he dug them out, they were not worth much.

These were actually scattered by Qiao Mei when she had nothing to do. She now had many high-quality ginseng seeds left behind by the 1,000-year-old ginseng king. The quality of those seeds was top-notch, but she also had many other seeds of varying quality. Qiao Mei found them to be useless, so she casually gave them some energy and scattered them all over the ground.

Even if someone discovered them, not everyone knew how to pick ginseng. There were less than three people in the entire village who were able to dig ginseng out in an intact state.

"You're right. Then how do you know that there's a 100-year-old ginseng in the back mountain?" He Ning asked curiously.

"It's a guess. Maybe there is one?" Qiao Mei said.

He Ning gave Qiao Mei a thumbs up in admiration. He did not expect it to pan out this way. If they could find one, then he could be considered quite lucky.

"When are you going? Huo Gao and I can go with you," He Ning said.

What He Ning wanted was Huo Gao to go with him. After all, he was a Chinese doctor. It was said that this mountain had good feng shui. If they could find other precious medicinal herbs, they would be able to make a profit during this trip. If they could find the 100-year-old ginseng themselves, they would be able to save a lot of money.

Huo Gao did not think so. He Ning definitely would not be able to endure walking on such a steep mountain path. He got tired so easily that he would be out of breath even when walking on flat ground. He would die faster if he climbed the mountain path!

"You guys can forget about it. You'll just be a burden if you go. You should just wait at home. I'll let you know if there's any news," Qiao Qiang said.

He Ning nodded in agreement with what Qiao Qiang said. After Qiao Mei cleared the crockery and cutlery off the table, she came back and took a look at Huo Gao before saying to He Ning, "Which one of you will be washing the dishes?"

He Ning pointed at Huo Gao silently. Huo Gao sighed resignedly and followed Qiao Mei out to tidy up the courtyard and wash the crockery and cutlery.

More money! I must get more money! I must make He Ning go bankrupt after this assignment!

Huo Gao angrily swept the courtyard with the broom, taking this opportunity to vent his anger.

He Ning continued talking to Qiao Qiang without caring if Qiao Qiang responded to him or not. Whether by accident or design, he told Qiao Qiang everything that had happened to the Liang family in recent years.

He spoke about the people involved in the Liang family's promotion, named the people who did not support the Liang family behind their backs, named those who had always been determined to help the Liang family, and listed down the number of people in this generation of the Liang family who were officials or enlisted in the military. He told Qiao Qiang everything in detail.

Qiao Mei listened with relish from behind the door. He Ning's success was not due to luck. Qiao Mei was impressed with his memory and observation skills. Even Xia Wen was probably not as meticulous as He Ning.

"You don't have to tell me these things. I'm not a member of the Liang family and I have nothing to do with them. If you mention the Liang family again, don't blame me for chasing you out without cherishing the relationship between your grandfather and I," Qiao Qiang said with a dark expression.

"That's not what I meant. I just want to tell you about the situation in the capital over the past few years," He Ning said with a smile.

Qiao Qiang did not care about the situation in the capital at all. He had long been an outsider and there was no point in knowing so much about the capital. Now, he just wanted to live quietly in this village and be Qiao Mei's grandfather. He wanted to live a few more years and watch his great-great-grandchildren grow up. That would be enough.

As for issues concerning the Liang family, the He family or the Xia family, he did not want to know at all and did not care to know. He only wanted Qiao Mei to be safe and sound and did not care about anything else.

Chapter 687 Take The Rice Bucket Away

"If you have the time to tell me about those aristocratic families in the capital, why don't you tell me what you did to Qiao Mei and whether the matter of Qiao Mei's baby being harmed has anything to do with you." Qiao Qiang snorted coldly and left the room.

He Ning smiled awkwardly in the room. What was done was done. If he had known from the start that Qiao Mei's culinary skills were so good and that she was also very good at growing flowers, he would not have laid his hands on her at all.

Qiao Qiang did not walk far before turning back. He looked at He Ning coldly and said, "Is there anything else you need here now?"

"Nothing! Nothing at all!" He Ning said.

"If there's nothing else, you should go back quickly. It's not good for our family's reputation if you stay here with that 'rice bucket' you brought with you. It won't sound good if word gets out. If there's nothing else, you shouldn't come again," Qiao Qiang said disdainfully.

Huo Gao was the "rice bucket" that Qiao Qiang was referring to. While he despised He Ning for shamelessly coming to Qiao Mei's house to freeload, he ate more than He Ning. If not for the fact that there was not enough rice in the pot, Huo Gao would have eaten everything in their house.

It was not Huo Gao's fault. The main thing was that although Wang Qin used a lot of ingredients in her cooking, it did not taste good and was worlds apart from what Qiao Mei made.

He Ning had no choice but to leave Qiao Mei's house dejectedly with Huo Gao. Qiao Qiang also left on his bicycle.

The results of the previous chess competition were out. Qiao Qiang did not win. In the end, it was the old man from the neighboring village who won, so now he had to go to the neighboring village every week to continue playing chess.

Qiao Qiang even asked Qiao Mei to check with Xia Wen in the capital about getting him a book on chess. He wanted to learn chess well and defeat those old men so that they had to come to his house to play chess.

Qiao Mei had some free time and wanted to go to Li Gui's house to take a look. She had not completely forgiven Li Gui, but because of what happened yesterday, she was worried that the children would be traumatized.

Zhang Miao had been lying on the brick bed all this while. Even if the sky collapsed outside, she could not react. After taking her medicine regularly, she could already move her limbs slowly. Qiao Mei believed that it would not be long before she could get down from the bed and start her rehabilitation exercises.

The other children were not too affected as Zhang Wei had protected them. Tomorrow was the official first school day for these children, so Qiao Mei fried some melon seeds for them.

Although this was not something rare and basically every family knew how to fry melon seeds, Qiao Mei's melon seeds were just different from those from other families. She used her own secret ingredients and they were very fragrant.

Whoever ate Qiao Mei's melon seeds would definitely not like other melon seeds anymore!

"Have you prepared everything you need for school?" Qiao Mei walked into the courtyard and said to the three naughty children.

Zhang Wei was the first to step forward and report to Qiao Mei, "Pencils, erasers, books and water glasses!"

They only had tea jars here. Those big tea jars were big enough to use as bowls and it was very troublesome to carry them to school. When Qiao Mei was in the capital, she had bought water glasses for the children, Li Gui and Qiao Qiang.

In a small county city like theirs, there was no such fashionable thing. It was almost guaranteed that these children would attract everyone's attention as soon as they went to school.

Anyway, there was no need to worry about anyone coveting these things. Only the Zhang siblings had them. If anyone dared to steal it, Qiao Mei would break their legs.

"What did you eat this morning?" Qiao Mei asked.

Zhang Wei was stunned for a moment and did not say anything. Zhang Qin did not know what to say and hid behind Zhang Wei to look at Qiao Mei quietly.

Qiao Mei knew at a glance that they either had not eaten anything again or had only eaten a potato or a sweet potato. After Old Madam Li plundered everything edible at home, Qiao Mei had thrown a tantrum at Li Gui until now.

There was nothing left at home at the moment and Li Gui was too embarrassed to go and look for Qiao Mei. In addition, Li Gui was not in good health and was currently lying weakly on the brick bed, unable to move.

Qiao Mei patted Zhang Wei's shoulder and said, "You're the man of the household now. You have to learn to bear the heavy burden of the family. Elder sister can't be by your side all the time. You have to learn to take good care of your younger siblings and mother. The most important thing is to take care of yourself too."

Zhang Wei nodded solemnly. He was no longer the kid who only knew how to enjoy life. Since he had chosen to leave Zhang Qin to live with Li Gui, he must work hard.

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688 Owing Too Much

"Elder sister, don't worry. I've also learned how to cook now. The food that Zhang Qin and I make is delicious!" Zhang Wei said with a smile.

Qiao Mei nodded gratifyingly and said, "You can take whatever you want from the storeroom, including meat. I'll put a notebook and a basket inside for you. Although you can take whatever you want, you have to note it down and use your results to offset it. What do you think?"

It was a small matter for Zhang Qin, but Zhang Wei's results were the worst among his siblings. He also had the worst comprehension ability. If he had to pay for stuff with his results, he might as well do manual labor.

"Elder sister... how am I going to pay for it..." Zhang Wei asked nervously.

!!

“It’s only counted when you take an exam. If you do better than usual, you’ll be rewarded. If you do badly, you’ll be punished. When the time comes, I’ll write it down in the notebook. Then you can do the math yourselves,” Qiao Mei said.

Zhang Wei gritted his teeth and agreed. It was just an exam! It would not be a problem for him!

Moreover, Chen Hu had also told him that if his results were not good, he would not be able to join their team. He had to be developed in all aspects to be able to join them.

“Alright, you guys can go to the storeroom. Take whatever you want to eat. I’ll teach you how to cook later,” Qiao Mei said.

The children left the house happily. At this moment, Li Gui slowly walked out of the house with her jacket draped over her shoulders. She stood beside Qiao Mei, not knowing what to say.

She held onto a pillar and slowly sat opposite Qiao Mei. She took out more than 30 dollars from her pocket and placed it on the table. “Early this morning, Hai Hua came to look for me with the money that they managed to find. I had already cut ties with my mother. I heard that my second brother had also left and gone back.”

Qiao Mei remained indifferent and continued to sit there looking at Li Gui coldly. She had long expected such an outcome, but it was a pity that Li Gui did not believe her at all.

“Mei Mei... I know I made a mistake this time. And it’s a huge mistake. Can you stop being angry with me?” Li Gui pleaded.

Qiao Mei turned her head to the side and said softly, “What’s the use of me being angry? In the end, I’m the sinner who stopped you from doing what you want. I should go along with everything you want so that you can be happy.”

“No, no, no! It’s not like that! The fact is that I didn’t believe what you said. If I had believed you, I wouldn’t have ended up like this. It’s all my fault! I shouldn’t have pitied them. I brought this upon myself! I deserve it!” Li Gui reached out to slap herself.

Qiao Mei stopped her immediately. How could a daughter watch her mother being hit, even if it was her mother hitting herself.

“It’s good that you know your mistake. There’s no need to hit yourself like this. If you have the strength to hit someone, you should make use of it to recuperate well,” Qiao Mei said.

Li Gui nodded repeatedly. She knew that she owed this eldest daughter of hers too much. She had now completely seen through Old Madam Li’s character. From now on, she would no longer care about Old Madam Li.

She only wanted to take good care of her children and let them live out their lives in peace. Nothing else was important.

“Keep this money,” Li Gui said as she pushed the money in front of Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei took a few glances before stuffing it back into Li Gui’s hand, saying, “Forget about this. You still have to buy medicine for Zhang Miao next month. Use it to buy the medicine.”

Li Gui also knew that without this sum of money, Zhang Miao would still face the situation of running out of medicine next month. She would take it that she borrowed this money from Qiao Mei and put it down in her notebook. When she had money, she would pay Qiao Mei back.

Qiao Mei helped Li Gui back into the house and then secretly walked towards the back mountain behind the house. Back then, she had taken all the ginseng on the mountain with her, leaving behind only the low-grade ones. This time, she had to secretly plant a few more ginsengs. Otherwise, the truth would be exposed when Qiao Qiang went into the mountain to search tomorrow.

Qiao Mei chose to first go and see if the cave she camouflaged had been discovered. The grass in front of the cave was still very lush and looked better than before.

It was probably related to the 1,000-year-old ginseng she had left behind. She did not expect that growing good quality ginseng could also change the nutrition of the surrounding soil.

In the future, she would use this cave specially to cultivate ginseng. When the time came, it would not be a problem to cultivate ginseng that was more than 10,000 years old.

Chapter 689 Prep For Work

However, Qiao Mei did not want to do that. She already felt that the existence of a 1,000-year-old ginseng was against the laws of nature. A 10,000-year-old ginseng would probably turn into a spirit!

Qiao Mei had also made a new discovery. She refined the 1,000-year-old ginseng and extracted all the liquid out of it before putting it into the small canning jar she brought with her. The dark green liquid looked like freshly squeezed spinach juice.

Qiao Mei had tried this method when she was in the capital. However, at that time, she used grapes. As there was no way to finish all the grapes at home, in order to maximize the usefulness of the grapes, Qiao Mei decided to extract all the liquid from the grapes. When she put it in water, it would become grape juice!

Now, she drew inferences from that experience and applied this discovery to the ginseng. Not only could it bring out the medicinal effects of the ginseng, but it was also portable. The current level of medical care was still limited. The hospitals in small county cities could not be compared with the hospitals in the capital. If Qiao Qiang was sick and did not have any medicine to treat his illness, it would be more convenient to have this concentrated ginseng juice as a backup.

When Qiao Mei had time, she would extract a few more and get someone to forge a few necklaces when she returned to the capital. At that time, everyone in the family would be able to wear one that contained 1,000-year-old ginseng juice.

This would cover emergency situations. It could also be used as a family heirloom to be passed down to future generations.

She just did not know if this thing had an expiration date. It would be terrible if it turned bad.

"Little baby ginsengs, grow up quickly!" Qiao Mei sprinkled a handful of 100-year-old ginseng seeds on the ground and kept growing them. Then she extracted them and put the ginseng juice in another canning jar.

Qiao Mei only stopped when the canning jar was half full. At this moment, the canning jar was filled with light green liquid which was much paler in color than the 1,000-year-old ginseng juice.

It seemed that the color was related to age. The ginseng juice emitted a faint fragrance, and the fragrance on Qiao Mei's body also became even more obvious.

There were still three 100-year-old ginsengs left on the ground and Qiao Mei continued to grow them. When the ginsengs were almost 1,500 years old, they stopped growing. At this moment, the ginsengs were already showing signs of withering, as if they were reaching their limit.

Qiao Mei gently sprinkled some of the 100-year-old ginseng juice on them. After that, the ginsengs emitted a sparkling green light and looked even better than before.

"This is really good stuff. It can actually bring plants back from the dead!" Qiao Mei looked excitedly at the three ginsengs that looked lush again.

Qiao Mei licked the remaining ginseng juice on her hand and instantly felt refreshed. The feeling of tiredness had completely disappeared. Now, she would not feel tired even if she had to walk 10 kilometers.

Qiao Mei looked at the yellow jade bangle on her wrist again. Ever since she received this bangle from Xu Lan, she had been wearing it. Initially, this bangle was still a little turbid, but now it had changed a little. Under the sunlight, its color looked much better than before and the turbidness had disappeared.

"What will happen if I soak this bangle in the ginseng juice... Won't I be able to create top-notch yellow jade!" Qiao Mei looked at the bangle on her hand excitedly and fantasized endlessly.

After Qiao Mei absorbed all the energy from this kind of jade stone, the color and quality of the jade stone would decrease greatly. If she could use the ginseng juice to nurture the jade stone, then she only

needed to get an imperial green jade stone of any quality. As long as it was the correct color, she would be able to turn the jade stone into top-notch imperial green jade.

She did not expect to be able to discover another way to get rich!

However, this method was really too wasteful of ginseng. No one would believe her even if she told them. They would even investigate the origins of the ginseng that she had.

She could only use this method to preserve these jade stones so that she could collect them.

Qiao Mei sealed the canning jars and put them into her bag. She then took out a couple of seeds and planted them at the place where Qiao Qiang had to pass through. She kept growing them and exchanging energy with them. After they reached the age of 100 years old, Qiao Mei stopped.

She would just wait for Qiao Qiang to go up the mountain tomorrow and find them for himself. If he really did not see them, she would give him more hints.

There was a lot of grass around the ginsengs that were withering as they could not withstand the energy. Qiao Mei sprinkled some of the ginseng juice on the ground and very quickly, the grass thrived again.

If the area surrounding the ginseng was bare, it would definitely arouse Qiao Qiang's suspicion.

Chapter 690 Family Meeting

She also did not want to create an environment where nothing other than ginseng could grow in this mountain in the future. This would also cause unnecessary trouble for the village.

However, she should learn to control the range of her energy in the near future. She must be able to lock her energy on one plant and not hurt other innocent plants.

Qiao Mei continued to walk deeper. Ever since she harvested many pumpkins from the hot spring, many people had gone there to pick pumpkins. In order not to make anyone suspicious, she also brought some pumpkin seeds and prepared to plant them there.

There were many pine trees and hazelnut trees on this mountain. It was almost winter and she wanted to sprinkle some ginseng juice under the trees to exchange for more pine cones and hazelnuts so that the children could sell them on the black market.

She wanted them to earn some money so that they did not have to live a life where they had to keep going to her storeroom to ask for things. It would not be a good thing for the children's psychological development over time.

Even though she was their elder sister, she was more like their mother by now.

She just did not know if the two little fellows in her stomach would be obedient. She hoped that if she had a boy, he would be as brave and outstanding as Xia Zhe, and if she had a girl, she would be as quirky as her.

In the capital, everyone in the Xia family had gathered together on a rare occasion. Furthermore, Xu Lan had informed them one by one and even said that they must be present.

It seemed almost as important as the new year. It was only during the new year that she would make it so grand. They all wondered why she had asked all of them to go back.

Xia Jun walked into the house unhappily. He had made arrangements to fly kites with his old comrades today. He was naturally angry that he had been called back for no reason.

In order to make it more convenient, Xu Lan had asked them to go to the house she lived with Xia Mao, and did not choose Xia Jun's house to be the venue.

The moment Xia Jun entered, he noticed that the coffee table and the floor were covered in knitted items. It looked like a street stall. Did Xu Lan not know that everyone was coming back today? He wondered how anyone could sit down with such a mess.

"What are you doing! You're making such a mess. Are you setting up a stall at home!" Xia Jun said in annoyance.

Xia He hurriedly walked forward to support Xia Jun and said, "Grandfather, Qiao Mei knitted all these herself. Look, there's a name on that one!"

When he heard that it was made by Qiao Mei, Xia Jun's attitude took a 180-degree turn. Earlier, he was still glaring angrily, but now he was smiling and holding the item with his name on it lovingly.

There was even a hidden pocket woven into the vest that Qiao Mei had made for him. Back then, he had told Qiao Mei that when Wu Min was still around, she would always sew a small pocket at the chest area on the left side of his clothes.

He was always worried that someone would accidentally take the wrong set of clothes, and that if he lost his money, he would not have money to eat. Later on, he kept 100 dollars wrapped in plastic and put it in this pocket in case of emergencies.

However, after Wu Min died, there was no one else to do this for him. He did not expect Qiao Mei to still remember it.

Xia Jun kept rubbing the small pocket as tears welled up in his eyes.

"Grandfather, you're so touched!" Xia He said in shock.

"Your grandmother used to sew this type of pocket for me. I told Qiao Mei once, but I didn't expect her to remember it. I... just miss your grandmother," Xia Jun said emotionally.

Xia He laughed when she heard this. She felt that this was a good thing. It proved that Xia Zhe had married a good wife and that the Xia family had an empathetic daughter-in-law.

Xia Wen and Tan Jing received a pair of black and white gloves each. Liu Fen received a vest as well. Xia Mao received a dark blue sweater that matched Xu Lan's dress. Xia Fang received a scarf. Qiao Mei had even prepared a gift for Xia Xiu. Like Xia Fang's, it was also a scarf.

Everyone was very happy to receive the gifts except Tan Jing, who had a worried expression on her face. When she first married into the family, she had also bought gifts for everyone. At that time, Xu Lan had

thrown them aside without even looking at them. Those items were probably no longer at home anymore.

Xu Lan currently wore the clothes that Qiao Mei made for her every day. Even now, she was twirling the hem of her dress in front of Xia Mao, constantly praising Qiao Mei.

They were both daughters-in-law, so why should Qiao Mei be loved and valued by the entire family, while she was constantly criticized and scolded because she did not have children after getting married.

She was happy that Qiao Mei's babies were gone. She felt that no one could have a perpetual smooth sailing life. It was only right that Qiao Mei got into an accident. Without the children, everyone would like her much less.