

Fat Wife 801

Chapter 801 Just A Little Hardship

Xia Wen stayed in the study for more than an hour before he sorted out his thoughts and returned to his room. Tan Jing was still combing her hair in front of the dressing table.

After Xia Wen entered, he did not say a word. He just took a shower, packed his clothes, sorted out the things he needed to wear tomorrow and read in bed. He did not even look at Tan Jing.

"Don't you have anything to say to me?" Tan Jing asked Xia Wen calmly.

Xia Wen closed his book and looked at her quietly. They had been married for so long, but this seemed to be the first time he looked at Tan Jing so seriously. It was as if all these years of marriage had been a torture for Tan Jing and made her into a different person.

"I don't know where to start. There's too much going on," Xia Wen said.

Tan Jing still did not think that she had gone overboard. She just wanted Qiao Mei to taste a little hardship and suffer like her.

"You must be terribly disappointed in me. You must think that I'm a vicious woman who only knows how to bully others and that my family is not good enough to be of help to you. Do I embarrass you?" Tan Jing said with tears in her eyes.

"When have I ever said anything about your family? Have I even said anything once? Have I ever rejected them when they came to me for help all these years?" Xia Wen questioned.

Tan Jing shook her head, but she still felt that Xia Wen was blaming her. There was nothing to discuss about this matter. Tan Jing just sat there quietly and cried.

Xia Wen sighed and walked over to hug her. "You're the daughter-in-law of the Xia family and Qiao Mei is also the daughter-in-law of the Xia family. What good will it do you to hurt her? Has she ever hurt you?"

Tan Jing suddenly pushed him away and roared, "It's because she's pregnant! All of you care about her and have so much concern for her! Have all of you considered my feelings! That's right... we're all daughters-in-law of the Xia family. Why are all of you so nice to her! Have I done anything wrong!"

"My parents are old and they like children. They might not have paid attention to what they said and hurt you unknowingly, but has Qiao Mei ever harmed you? Why would you hurt someone who has never harmed you!" Xia Wen said with a frown.

"I didn't harm her... I just wanted her to taste a little hardship... This way, we'll be the same... I never thought of harming her..." Tan Jing said as she cried.

Xia Wen patted her back and did not say anything. Gradually, Tan Jing got tired of crying and fell asleep in Xia Wen's arms.

Qiao Mei settled the children and Li Gui in their rooms one by one and then brought the softest blanket to Qiao Qiang's room.

"Grandfather, you can sleep here first. I haven't bought anything for the back part of the house yet. Let's make a list of what we need tomorrow and then we can go shopping," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Qiao Qiang did not show any dissatisfaction with Xu Lan and had kept quiet to save the Xia family from embarrassment. Actually, there were also still many facets of the various relationships which Qiao Qiang did not know about, so it was not appropriate for him to flare up on the spot.

He did not expect the Xia family to be not as nice as Qiao Mei said, and that there were also people with ulterior motives around.

"Tell me, does Xia Wen's wife treat you well?" Qiao Qiang said.

Nothing could escape Qiao Qiang's eyes.

"Grandfather, she has a hard life too. Don't take it to heart. I believe eldest brother will handle it well," Qiao Mei said comfortingly.

Qiao Qiang did not think so. He was a good judge of character and he could tell that this person would do even more outrageous things sooner or later. If the Xia family did not punish her, then she would definitely become unscrupulous in the future, and might even commit murder and arson.

He did not expect it to be chaotic in the capital as well. Everywhere they went, there were nasty people. It seemed that peaceful days were hard to come by!

"You're too kind-hearted. She bullies you to this extent and you still don't take it to heart. When Xia Zhe comes back, I'm going to have a good talk with him. This brat's family matters have caused you to suffer!" Qiao Qiang was so angry that he knocked the floor with his walking stick, almost lifting up the tiles on the ground.

"Grandfather! This floor tile costs 30 cents apiece! Slow down!" Qiao Mei said as she looked at the floor tiles with heartache.

Qiao Qiang looked at the heartless Qiao Mei and felt even angrier. It seemed that he had to settle this matter himself. This soft-hearted Qiao Mei would not be able to do anything.

"Fine, fine, fine. I won't knock it anymore. You should go in quickly. You've been running around all day and didn't have much rest. Go to bed early," Qiao Qiang said.

Qiao Mei agreed and silently closed the door before returning to her room. The furnishings looked the same as before. It appeared that Xia Wen had put in a lot of effort to do up the house.

Chapter 802 - 802 Friendship Between Sisters-in-law

802 Friendship Between Sisters-in-law

Back on the same bed after a long time away, she still felt a little different. She missed Xia Zhe very much. They had not contacted each other for a long time. The last time she spoke to him was when he first went back to the army unit.

She had heard that he was going on a very dangerous mission this time. This mission was confidential and no information could be revealed. She had not received any news about Xia Zhe for a long time and wondered if he was doing well.

Qiao Mei sighed deeply and thought that she should ask Xia Mao and the rest tomorrow if they had heard anything.

Without the chickens and ducks at home making noise in the morning, everyone woke up much later than usual. Li Gui was the first to get up and she swept up the fallen leaves in the courtyard and cleaned the windows. After doing this, she did not wander around for fear of causing any trouble.

“Mom... why are you up so early?” Qiao Mei walked out of the house leisurely.

“I’ve gotten used to it after so many years. Aren’t you going to sleep for a while more? Where’s the kitchen? I’m thinking about making some breakfast,” Li Gui asked carefully.

Qiao Mei waved her hand and said, “Mom, the entire courtyard house is ours. The front part belongs to Xia Zhe and the back part is the house we exchanged in return for my grandfather’s ginseng. The whole place is ours and the kitchen is in the room on the left after the main door. Let’s go out this morning to buy some groceries.”

Li Gui knew how valuable that ginseng was. Previously, Qiao Mei had told her that she wanted to use the money from selling the ginseng to buy a house. It was obvious that this courtyard house was worth a lot of money.

Qiao Mei first went to look at Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao. The two children were sleeping soundly and did not need anyone to help them into the wheelchairs yet.

She took the bamboo basket and wanted to go to the bun shop at the entrance of the alley to buy breakfast. As soon as she opened the door, she bumped into Xia He.

“What a coincidence. Where are you going?” Xia He asked with a smile.

“I’m going to buy breakfast. Have you eaten? Come in and eat with us,” Qiao Mei said.

Xia He lifted up the groceries that she was holding. There were two big bags full of meat and vegetables that were bought early in the morning. There were also all kinds of seasonings. It was Xu Lan who went out to buy all these.

She even specially instructed Xia He not to say that she had just bought it. She asked Xia He to just say that they had bought too much groceries yesterday and wanted to share it with Qiao Mei.

“Let’s go back in. I have brought so much groceries with me. These are all leftovers from yesterday. Mother asked me to send them over early in the morning. If I don’t do it, she’ll argue with me!” Xia He said resignedly.

Li Gui took the groceries from Xia He and said, “I’ll go and cook. You guys chat and the food will be ready in a while. You’re... Xia He, right? Stay for a meal.”

“Sure! Thank you, Auntie!” Xia He said with a smile.

Xia He held Qiao Mei’s hand and sat down on the rocking chair. She looked like she wanted to gossip with Qiao Mei about what happened at home last night. Her room was only one wall away from Xia Wen’s room, so she heard everything even if she did not want to.

However, Tan Jing really had gone overboard yesterday. If Xia Fang had not stopped her, she would have already taught Tan Jing a lesson on Qiao Mei’s behalf to vent her anger!

“Yesterday, Mother reprimanded eldest sister-in-law in the living room for a long time and even made her cry. Later on, Mother and Father had a meeting with eldest brother. After eldest brother returned to his room, the two of them quarreled again. It was really satisfying!” Xia He said.

“Eldest brother already apologized to me last night. I’m not taking anything to heart. I know how good he is to me,” Qiao Mei said.

Between both her sisters-in-law, Tan Jing and Qiao Mei, Xia He still preferred Qiao Mei. Tan Jing had married into the Xia family for so many years and never really got close to them. Qiao Mei had only joined them for half a year and was already well-liked by the entire family. Moreover, Qiao Mei had also helped her a lot with the matter of her divorce.

Qiao Mei did not persuade her to bear with the situation like everyone else. Instead, Qiao Mei wanted her to live an exciting life for herself. So what if she lost her relationship with Tan Jing? Having Qiao Mei as her sister-in-law was enough.

"It's not easy for eldest brother either. It's good that you understand," Xia He said.

Qiao Mei went into the house and brought out a plate of seeds. She gently placed it on the stone table and said, "Don't worry, this matter will at most be a conflict between eldest sister-in-law and me. It has nothing to do with eldest brother and I also won't say anything to Xia Zhe. The relationship between the two brothers won't be ruined because of the issue between eldest sister-in-law and me."

Chapter 803 Change

"By the way, do you have any news about Xia Zhe? I haven't heard from him in a long time and I'm a little worried about his safety," Qiao Mei asked.

Xia He shook her head. She truly did not know anything about this matter. Although she and Xia Zhe were both soldiers, she was in the art troupe and did not know anything about Xia Zhe and the news on his end.

"Xiao Zhe and I are from two different troops. I have no right to know about these things. You don't have to worry. Father should know where Xia Zhe is, but he can't tell the family too much. When Father was in the army, Mother also didn't know what Father did every day. There was once when she had no news for more than two years, and Mother was so anxious that she almost went to Grandfather to demand for Father to be back. If he hadn't returned soon after, she might have hung herself," Xia He said with a smile.

This incident happened when Xia Zhe was only more than a year old. At that time, Xia Zhe was still too young to remember anything. Xia Jun and Xia Mao went out on expeditions all year round. There were only Xu Lan and Wu Min around to take care of the three young children. Furthermore, Wu Min had to take care of her other two sons as well. The house was always in a mess.

That period of time was also the most difficult for everyone, but everyone turned out safe and sound and nothing major happened.

"Alright, then I can only wait for news patiently," Qiao Mei said disappointedly.

For some reason, now that she was getting on in her pregnancy, her longing for Xia Zhe became more and more intense. She used to be busy every day and did not have time to think about Xia Zhe at all. She would only think about him when she was about to go to bed. Nowadays, whenever she had some free time, she would miss him terribly.

"Mother says that we will all have dinner at your place today. She says that she'll prepare the dishes herself and will also ask the helper to come over," Xia He said.

Qiao Mei quickly stood up to tidy up. This announcement was too sudden.

pàndá-ñovêl.cóM "There's no reason for you to come to my place to eat and have to prepare the meal yourself. I'll go buy more things now," Qiao Mei said.

Xia He quickly pulled Qiao Mei back and said, "Wait! Just sit at home. This whole thing was arranged by grandfather. As if there's anyone who can dissuade grandfather. You should just wait at home obediently. If you help with the work, then I'll be in trouble."

Qiao Mei had no choice but to listen to Xia He and sit down obediently. The grapevines had already withered during this season, leaving only a row of shelves behind and making the courtyard look very empty.

"Do you have time recently? I want to go shopping and buy things for the house," Qiao Mei asked.

"Sure, I don't have much to do now. It's quite relaxing and I only have programs at the end of the year. I just need to show my face once in a while. I can't be bothered to go there because it's so annoying," Xia He said with a frown.

She really could not be bothered to deal with Yang Xin and the two Zhou sisters. One of them felt that she wanted to snatch the position of the principal dancer, while the other two felt that she was simply out to seduce men.

In order to avoid trouble, it was better not to go to the art troupe. Anyway, there was a dance studio at home. It was freer to be by herself and she would not feel restrained.

Xia He found it strange that ever since Qiao Mei faked the miscarriage, Xu Lan seemed to have become a different person. Usually, Xu Lan would not go to the dance studio to teach Xia He movements and techniques. Now, Xu Lan actually went to look in on Xia He often and pointed out many of her shortcomings. Xu Lan even wanted to help with the song arrangements, which really gave Xia He a shock.

However, in essence, Xu Lan still had the same temperament. If Xia He did not do well and did not train properly, she would still be beaten up and punished. This side of Xu Lan had never changed.

"Is there anything else that makes you unhappy? Tell me about it so that I can feel happy," Qiao Mei said as she looked at Xia He gloatingly.

Xia He slapped Qiao Mei's shoulder gently. Only Qiao Mei could joke with her like this.

"I'm not unhappy. I'm waiting to become an aunt!" Xia He said as she looked tenderly at Qiao Mei's stomach.

It did not take long for Li Gui to prepare breakfast. She woke all the children up and went to ask Qiao Qiang to come over. Everyone ate in the courtyard and it was a very lively session.

"It's not very well made. Xia He, I hope you don't mind," Li Gui said embarrassedly.

"What are you talking about? It looks, smells and tastes good. I can't be happier! I think Qiao Mei inherited her good culinary skills from Auntie," Xia He said.

"Alright, hurry up and eat. If you continue to praise us, the food will get cold!" Qiao Mei said.

Chapter 804 - 804 Checkup

804 Checkup

Xia Fang arrived at Qiao Mei's house when everyone finished eating. She brought along a metal box filled with the latest equipment from the hospital. It was the lightest type and most convenient for use during emergencies outside the hospital.

Early in the morning, Xia Fang went to look for Liu Yang to approve the request. At first, Liu Yang had refused. After all, this set of equipment was very expensive. If it was damaged, he would not be able to pay for it with his life.

However, when he heard that it was for Qiao Mei, he approved it without even looking at the form. When Xia Fang left, she told him that he had no principles. Liu Yang even boasted shamelessly that as long as it was a matter concerning Qiao Mei, it was not a problem for him to stake all his assets.

“Mei Mei, come into the room with me. I want you to do a checkup,” Xia Fang said.

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Xia He helped Qiao Mei back into the room. Xia Fang carefully observed and measured Qiao Mei’s stomach before recording the data. Currently, they could only do a superficial checkup. For a proper checkup, she still needed to go to the hospital.

“Everything looks good now, but you have to find time to go to the hospital with me for a comprehensive checkup tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. You’ve already missed the best timing to check if there’s any abnormality, but it’s still not too late to take a look now. You have to take it seriously this time,” Xia Fang said sternly.

Qiao Mei was not worried about what Xia Fang said at all. In the original owner of the body’s memories, these two children were just a little malnourished. Everything else was normal and there were no problems.

If she could successfully give birth in such a difficult place as the village, there would not be any problems in the capital. Moreover, she was eating so well now. The children could only be overnourished, not malnourished.

However, she heard from the other women in the village that it was not a good thing to have children who were overnourished. If the babies grew too big, it could become difficult to deliver them. It was better to find time to go to the hospital for a comprehensive checkup.

“Alright, I’ll listen to Aunt,” Qiao Mei said obediently.

Xia Fang pointed at the two little girls sitting in wheelchairs in the courtyard and asked, “What’s wrong with them? Do they have inherent issues? Do you want to bring them to the hospital to take a look? Your Uncle Liu is very good at treating pediatric patients.”

Xia Fang liked little girls the most and had always dreamed of having a daughter. Therefore, she always felt an affinity with little girls from other families and could not bear to see the children suffer.

Xia He and Xia Fang were not outsiders, so Qiao Mei told them about what happened in the village.

“The elder girl is Zhang Qin and the younger girl is Zhang Miao. Zhang Miao was kicked by her biological father and had a few broken ribs. She has already recovered, but she just needs to walk around more often for rehabilitation training. Zhang Qin was pushed down the mountain by my second uncle’s son. Fortunately, she only sprained her ankle and is fine,” Qiao Mei said.

The two of them widened their eyes in disbelief. They had never heard of such things happening. Even though there were many aristocratic families who fought both openly and secretly against the Xia family, no one had ever been injured badly.

“That’s not all. As you all know, my grandfather has a younger brother. We have a very deep feud with one another now. After I returned to the village, my eldest uncle ambushed my grandfather on the mountain and smashed a big hole in grandfather’s head which needed many stitches. He even wanted to harm me. A big tree suddenly fell on my eldest uncle’s body and he had to amputate his legs,” Qiao Mei said lightly.

Xia He said in exasperation, “This kind of person deserves it! Then how is Grandpa Qiao now? Does he need to get a checkup? Will he have a concussion? Did he go to the hospital for a checkup after the accident?”

When she was a young girl who was still learning how to speak, it was Qiao Qiang who brought her around to play. At that time, Xia Mao and Xia Jun were busy and Xu Lan also had performances nationally. Xia Wen had gone to summer camp, so she and Wu Min only had each other for company at home. At that time, Wu Min’s health was getting worse by the day. Qiao Qiang would come by with a lot of delicious food and play with Xia He every day.

Therefore, she liked Qiao Qiang very much and always remembered how nice he was to her.

“He’s fine now and almost fully recovered. He doesn’t feel particularly uncomfortable anywhere. He had done a checkup at the county city. They said it’s nothing serious,” Qiao Mei said.

Xia Fang frowned and asked, “Is there anything else? Has their family been punished?”

“That’s not the end! Later on, in order to avenge my eldest uncle, my second uncle came to our house in the middle of the night to set fire, and he even poisoned all the chickens and ducks in the courtyard. Fortunately, I found out in time and knocked him out with a stick. After that, it was Zhang Qin’s turn to get injured,” Qiao Mei said.

Chapter 805 - 805 Pretending Not to See

805 Pretending Not to See

Ever since Qiao Mei started talking about how Qiao Zhuang’s family had tried to harm them, Xia He and Xia Fang had not relaxed their furrowed eyebrows. They did not expect to hear of such scary incidents in the countryside.

“Then what about now? Have they been punished?” The more Xia He thought about it, the more worried she became. She said firmly, “No, I have to talk to father and tell him to get them convicted! We can’t let such people get away with it!”

“It’s alright. My second uncle has been sentenced to jail for 20 years. Also, unless their children leave that city, they won’t be able to go to school for the rest of their lives,” Qiao Mei said.

Evildoers should be punished accordingly.

However, Xia He felt that these people should be cut into pieces before her anger could be vented. If Qiao Mei had not discovered Qiao Gui that day, it was very likely that she would only be looking at the corpses of Qiao Mei and Qiao Qiang now.

“Don’t worry. From now on, you have us to protect you in the capital,” Xia Fang said.

Qiao Mei went to Xia Fang's side and hugged her arm as she said, "I just know that Aunt dotes on me the most~"

"Elder brother is already looking into the matter of you wanting to buy a house. You should get some news by this afternoon. Mother also helped out," Xia He said.

Xia Fang looked at Xia He in shock before her expression quickly returned to normal.

Back then, Wu Min did not discuss the matter of this house with anyone. In her will, she wrote that this house could only belong to Xia Zhe. Back then, Tan Jing had some opinions on this matter and had urged Xu Lan to fight for the ownership of this house.

Xia Wen was also a son of the Xia family, so why should this house only belong to Xia Zhe? However, Xia Wen did not care about these things at all. Instead, he felt that they should respect Wu Min's last wish.

However, Tan Jing repeatedly told Xu Lan that their small house was not big enough and that the surroundings were too noisy. She spoke about how good it would be to stay in the courtyard house. At that time, Xu Lan indeed had the intention to make the situation fairer for everyone.

Xia Fang had always put a stop to this matter. She spent a lot of effort to protect the house for Xia Zhe. Without her, this house would no longer solely belong to Xia Zhe since long ago.

She did not expect Xu Lan to be willing to help Qiao Mei find a house now. It was really rare.

At first, Xu Lan was also very unwilling. She thought that Qiao Mei had brought Li Gui and so many other people to the capital so that they could occupy Xia Zhe's courtyard house. When the children grew up and got married, they would all want a share of the house.

She had not even lived in this courtyard house before, but Li Gui had beaten her to it. If not for the fact that she felt Li Gui was an easy person to get along with when they met on the first day, she would have told Qiao Mei about her thoughts long ago.

Now that she knew Qiao Mei wanted to buy a new house, she felt even more uncomfortable. After all, Qiao Mei was the daughter-in-law of the Xia family. Buying a house was not a small matter and it was such a pity to spend so much money.

However, on second thought, this money did not belong to her. Qiao Mei had earned it herself. As a mother-in-law, she had no right to get involved in this matter so long as Qiao Mei did not spend the Xia family's money. In the end, she just pretended not to know.

"Aunt, do you know of any nice houses nearby?" Qiao Mei asked.

"You should ask your Grandpa Zhou about such matters. He lives here and definitely knows more about such things than us," Xia Fang said.

Qiao Mei had also thought of asking Zhou Sheng for help, but she kept in mind that he was already so old and she really did not want him to spend time on her issues. It was better for her to look around herself.

"I haven't had time to visit Grandpa Zhou after I come back. I'll go and see him in a few days," Qiao Mei said.

While everyone was chatting, Xia Jun's hearty laughter could be heard from outside the door. He was really in high spirits due to the recent joyous events. After knowing that Qiao Qiang had come to the capital, he ate more than usual in the morning and walked faster than before as well.

"Where is he! Is he still lazing around in the house!" The main door was not closed and Xia Jun went straight into the courtyard to look for Qiao Qiang.

Qiao Qiang walked out of the house and said, "Chief, you're still the same as before. You haven't changed a bit."

"Why are you calling me chief! I'm already retired! Just call me by my name. We've been brothers for so many years. If you call me chief, you're not treating me like a brother!" Xia Jun said as he pretended to be annoyed.

Chapter 806 Giving Oxygen

Back then, Xia Jun's combat ability was outstanding and his rank was much higher than Qiao Qiang's. In the beginning, the two of them trained with their local troops before they joined the same army unit. During that time, Xia Jun had even been Qiao Qiang's leader for a period of time!

Qiao Qiang had always remembered how Xia Jun rendered help to him, so he had always called him "Chief".

"Then... you're older than me. I'll call you big brother then!" Qiao Qiang said with a smile.

"Sure! I had something on yesterday and didn't manage to pick you up. Hope you're not angry with me over that?" Xia Jun asked.

"I'm not angry. It's good enough that you come to see me." Qiao Qiang quickly invited Xia Jun into the house to chat. They had not seen each other for so many years and there was so much to talk about. The two brothers wanted to catch up properly.

Not long after, Xu Lan arrived at Qiao Mei's place with Xia Wen. There were also many people behind her, each of them carrying many things of various sizes.

Qiao Mei did not find these things very valuable. After all, with the Xia family's status, they did not lack food stamps and meat coupons at all. Moreover, they also had their own supply of seasonal vegetables which they could have whenever they wanted.

"Xia He! Your sister-in-law is pregnant! Hurry up and get up so that Qiao Mei can sit down!" As soon as Xu Lan entered the courtyard, she saw Xia He lying comfortably on the recliner in the courtyard while Qiao Mei stood at the side.

Qiao Mei quickly explained, "Don't blame elder sister. If I sit for too long, my waist will hurt, so I just want to stand for a while."

Only then did Xu Lan's expression look better. For Qiao Mei's sake, she decided not to berate Xia He.

"Eldest brother, why isn't eldest sister-in-law here?" Qiao Mei asked.

At the mention of Tan Jing, Xu Lan's face instantly fell. She had informed everyone of the family gathering today, but Tan Jing's family suddenly called and asked her to go back home. They said that it was an urgent matter. Even though Xu Lan looked very unhappy, Tan Jing still went home on her own.

There was nothing that Xia Wen could say. After all, he could not stop her if the Tan family called and asked for her. It was already good enough that they did not ask him to go back with her.

"She has something on today and can't come. There's always a next time," Xia Wen said.

Qiao Mei did not really care about this matter at all. It always felt awkward whenever they met, so it was actually better that she was not around.

Everyone sat in the courtyard and chatted happily. They told Qiao Mei about all the things to take note of in the late stages of pregnancy, as well to prepare herself mentally for childbirth and also what she should have on hand.

Xia He had never given birth before, but one did not have to go through something to know about it. She knew many people who had given birth before. In addition, Old Madam Kong always nagged at her, so she naturally amassed a great deal of knowledge after hearing so much.

"I still remember that when I gave birth to Xia Zhe, I almost lost my life! At that time, it was your aunt who delivered the baby for me!" Xu Lan said.

"That's right. At that time, my eldest brother was so frightened that he almost cried and knelt down to pray. That was the first time I saw my eldest brother so scared!" The memory was still fresh in Xia Fang's mind.

"How did this happen?" Qiao Mei asked fearfully.

At that time, Xu Lan was already unconscious and only Xia Fang knew all the details. Xia Fang said slowly, "At that time, eldest sister-in-law had to perform everywhere. Even though she was pregnant, she still had to go on tour all over the country with the art troupe while in the late stage of her pregnancy. She had to be in charge of supervising the reviews. Later on, all of us advised eldest sister-in-law not to tire

herself out, but she did not listen. It was only when eldest sister-in-law was seven months pregnant that she really could not take it anymore and rested at home."

After giving birth to Xia He, Xu Lan's body had become weaker and she was no longer as strong as before. From time to time, she would feel dizzy. In addition, she often went to the art troupe to monitor their progress during her confinement period, so she did not recover properly.

By the time she was pregnant with Xia Zhe, she already felt obvious discomfort. However, for the sake of her career, she still chose to continue working. By the time she was seven months pregnant, she could not move around anymore.

She had to be given oxygen at home and had to have someone take care of her daily living. She was already very thin and weak because she worked too hard. Coupled with the fact that she could not manage to eat at the later stage of the pregnancy, she lost a lot of weight.

It was Xia Zhe's good fortune that he was born. He was a premature baby and Xu Lan would probably have died if she waited until full term. Fortunately, the Xia family was very open-minded. To save Xu Lan, they would have chosen to give up Xia Zhe.

Chapter 807 - 807 Preferring Boys Over Girls

807 Preferring Boys Over Girls

There were many families in Foshan Village who chose to save the children and not their mothers. Some people were even worse. No matter how hard and tiring it was for a pregnant mother, she still had to take care of the entire family's daily needs and also to work in the fields. Otherwise, she would get beaten and scolded. These people had the idea that as long as the child was fine, nothing else was important.

Hearing this, Li Gui became quite emotional. It was still fine when she was pregnant with Qiao Mei and she did not suffer. However, giving birth to the four children in the Zhang family weakened her a lot. These children were two years apart in age from one another. Basically, for eight years, she went through a non-stop cycle of confinement, pregnancy and giving birth. Actually, she did not even go through confinement. Once she gave birth, she had to do housework, including using cold water when washing up.

She had many illnesses which arose from that time.

“Xia Zhe is very healthy now. He doesn’t look like he was born prematurely,” Qiao Mei said.

Generally speaking, premature babies were very fragile and needed to be looked after with care. Some children were also very weak and sickly from birth. It would actually be more accurate to say that based on health conditions, Xia Wen looked more like a premature baby than Xia Zhe.

It was said that in winter, Xia Wen would have a persistent cough. Sometimes, it would get so bad that he would cough up blood. This was a common occurrence.

“At that time, under the care of Xia Zhe’s grandmother, Xia Zhe recovered very quickly. Ever since he was young, Xia Zhe had his diet strictly controlled. The fact is that Xia Zhe had chosen a great time to be born. At that time, the Xia family had started to prosper and did not lack food or clothes. The ones who suffered the most were Xia Wen and Xia He,” Xu Lan said.

Xia He quickly shook her hands and said, “You can say that my eldest brother has a hard life. I don’t have a hard life! I grew up getting fed by everyone.”

“Our Xia family is no longer living those tough days from before. When my eldest grandsons are born, they will definitely live a good life and can have whatever they want! We definitely won’t treat them badly!” Xu Lan said as she looked at Qiao Mei’s stomach with a smile.

At this moment, Li Gui frowned slightly. Could it be that Xu Lan favored boys over girls? Ever since she came to the capital, she kept hearing Xu Lan speak about her eldest grandsons and had never heard her talking about a granddaughter. Did that mean that if Qiao Mei did not give birth to a boy, the Xia family would despise her?

When she gave birth to Zhang Qin and Zhang Miao in the Zhang family, no one in the family was happy and they kept cursing her.

Qiao Mei could tell that Li Gui was worried. She looked at Xu Lan playfully and asked, “Mother, what if it’s two granddaughters?”

“Then they’ll enjoy life even more. The boys in our family have the lowest status. When we were young, Xia Zhe and I suffered a lot. Whatever good stuff is given to Xia He first. We don’t have the right to use it at all,” Xia Wen said as he walked out of the house.

Xu Lan nodded and said, “I just feel that girls are precious and there are many things to worry about. They should be cherished and protected carefully. It’s different for boys. I just need to send them directly to your father and ask him to watch over their training. Just hand them over to the army and let them serve the country. Boys have thick skin and don’t need to be raised too preciously.”

When Li Gui heard this, she felt much better. It seemed that the Xia family was really nice to Qiao Mei and did not hold any prejudice against her. Qiao Mei’s life was much better than her own and she felt at ease seeing Qiao Mei happy.

Xia Wen called everyone to gather for the meal. At first, Li Gui and the others stood at the side uneasily, not knowing where to sit. In the past, whenever there was a banquet, Li Gui and her two daughters were not allowed to sit at the table and could only eat leftovers in the kitchen.

“Come and sit down, in-law! Sit beside me so that we can have a nice chat!” Xu Lan smiled and pulled Li Gui to sit down.

The four children sat with Qiao Mei and the entire family finished their meal while chatting and laughing. Xia Jun and Xia Mao left first because they had to go back to the army unit. Xia Fang also returned to the hospital to prepare for a surgery that night.

“Mei Mei, there’s some news regarding the house you want to buy. There are four houses nearby. Do you want to take a look?” Xia Wen said.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia Wen in surprise. She did not expect Xia Wen to get back to her so quickly. She had thought that it would take at least a week or two to find some options. It looked that she had still underestimated the Xia family’s capability.

“Have you contacted the owners? Can we go today?” Qiao Mei asked.

Xia Wen took out the information he had prepared. It stated the condition of each house and how far they were from Qiao Mei's courtyard house. One of the houses was located along the alley at the back door of the courtyard house and was very close to Qiao Mei's house.

Chapter 808 Choosing A House

Qiao Mei nodded in satisfaction. The prices and locations of these houses looked alright. If the houses were in good condition, she would buy all of them and keep them for her children so that they could each get a house when they grew up.

"Eldest brother, it's such a pity that you're not a detective!" Qiao Mei said as she looked at the information.

She did not expect Xu Lan and Xia He to laugh out loud at such an ordinary sentence. Even Xia Wen could not help but smile.

Qiao Mei looked at them in confusion and asked, "Why? Did I say something wrong?"

"Back then, eldest brother was a scout in the army and he was the best scout!" Xia He held her stomach and laughed loudly, not caring about her image at all.

"This means that I have a good eye for people and I have good judgment!" Qiao Mei said stubbornly.

No one had anything to say in rebuttal. After all, Qiao Mei had taken a fancy to Xia Zhe at first sight. In the beginning, Xia Zhe had still struggled to disagree!

Thinking of the situation back then, Qiao Mei could not help but blush. It was a good thing that only the two of them knew about this. If more people found out, it would be so embarrassing.

"Then let's go and take a look," Xia Wen said.

Xu Lan did not intend to join in the fun. She still had to go to the art troupe. She had not gone there to check out the arrangements during this period of time and did not know how things were going.

Qiao Qiang stayed at home to spend time with the four children while the other four people walked over to look at the houses. The first house was only two streets away from Qiao Mei. It was neither too close nor too far.

As soon as she pushed open the door, she could feel that the courtyard was covered in dust. It looked like it had not been lived in for a long time. The courtyard was about the same size as Qiao Mei's and the place was maintained quite well. It would be habitable once it was cleaned up.

"How much is this one?" Qiao Mei asked.

"The owner of this house told me that the minimum price is 30,000 dollars," Xia Wen said.

An amount of 30,000 dollars! Li Gui's eyes widened. This house looked about the same size as her house in the village, but it actually cost so much money. She did not even use so much money when she built her house back then.

"30,000 dollars is a little expensive, but this house is quite well-kept. I'll think about it." Before Qiao Mei left, she took a few more glances and memorized how the house looked.

The other two houses nearby were in shambles and there was also a lot of trash inside. Qiao Mei did not even want to consider these two at all. Finally, she arrived at the last house, the one along the street outside the back door of Qiao Mei's back part of the courtyard house.

The location of this house was not very good. The corner of the street opposite was where everyone stored their trash. Although there was not much smell at the moment, no one knew what it would be like during the heat of summer.

When they entered the courtyard, they found a part of it still occupied by household waste. There was also still a lot of furniture in the house. Although the style of the building was old-fashioned, it was maintained quite well. The original owner of the house must have cherished these things very much. This house was not as big as the previous three houses with just six rooms. The front yard was quite standard and there was still some land in the backyard that could be used for planting.

"Eldest brother, how much is this house? Are the property rights to the house straightforward?" Qiao Mei asked.

"In the past, many people lived here. The owner had rented it out. Later on, when there was a check on non-local household registers, all these people could not produce their identification documents and the owner chased them away out of fear of inviting trouble. The house was left vacant after that. The property rights should clearly be with the owner and have nothing to do with the people who rented the house. The owner says that he wants 10,000 dollars and that he will bring all the furniture in the house with him, so he'll only leave an empty house for us," Xia Wen said as he looked at the information in his hand.

As long as the property rights were clear, it would not be too troublesome. This way, it would be easier for them to complete the sale and purchase. As for the furniture, they could always buy their own.

Qiao Mei held Li Gui's hand and asked, "Which of these four do you prefer?"

After all, she was buying a house for Li Gui. Even if it would be under Qiao Mei's name, they would still need to go along with Li Gui's preference.

"Are there only these few?" Li Gui asked softly.

This surprised Qiao Mei. None of these houses were satisfactory?

"You don't like any of them? If you don't like anything around here, we can still look at those further away. It's fine," Qiao Mei said.

Li Gui quickly waved her hands and explained, "No! I just think it's too expensive..."

Chapter 809 Lunatic

"It's fine, I actually intend to buy all four! Just tell me which one you like." Qiao Mei patted Li Gui's shoulder to reassure her.

After thinking about it, Li Gui still felt that the last house was better. It was close to Qiao Mei's house and six rooms were definitely enough for her and the four children to live in. It would even be enough when the children got married in the future.

"Then let's get this one. I'll pay you rent every month. Take it that I'm renting it from you," Li Gui said.

Xia He and Xia Wen had thought that Qiao Mei was buying a house for Li Gui. Seeing Li Gui's attitude, they had a much better impression of her.

They did not know if their family was cursed when it came to relationships. Xia He's mother-in-law and Xia Wen's mother-in-law were both not easy to get along with. Before they met Li Gui, they were already worried that Li Gui would be an arrogant and domineering person.

After all, Qiao Mei was raised by Qiao Qiang and Li Gui did not participate in Qiao Mei's upbringing at all. It was all thanks to Qiao Qiang that Qiao Mei was brought up so well. Therefore, they were not able to judge Li Gui's character.

It appeared that Li Gui was much better than most of the other people they knew. Xia He was also especially fond of her. Perhaps it was because she felt like she had met her own kind. After all, there were still very few divorced women in this era.

Qiao Mei had told Li Gui about this matter on the train, worried that Li Gui would talk too freely and touch on topics that Xia He found sensitive, like asking questions about her marriage and having children.

The Xia family knew everything about Qiao Mei's family. Every once in a while, they would send someone to check on Qiao Mei and see if she needed any help.

"Eldest brother, I want this house and the first house we saw. The sooner we sign the contracts, the better," Qiao Mei said.

Xia Wen had already drawn up the contracts. As long as the owners agreed, they could sign immediately. The property rights to these two houses were very clear and the sale and purchase process would be simple.

Ever since Qiao Mei married into their family, they had become more particular about matters of the law. Their family now had a specialized legal consultant who would handle any important matter, like drafting of contracts and agreements. They just needed to check if there were any mistakes in the most basic details.

Qiao Mei would always find time to impart more knowledge about the law to them. Under her influence, everyone started to become keen in learning.

"We can do it tomorrow. I'll contact the owners when I go back later and ask them to prepare the relevant documents and sign the contracts with us tomorrow," Xia Wen said.

Qiao Mei nodded. She did not have much money on hand. The limited edition denominations that He Ning had given her back then were now stored in the bank. She had to quickly call He Ning to ask for money.

There was no telephone line nearby and there was no way to install a phone at home. If she wanted to make a call, she had to go to the public phone at the entrance of the alley.

The capital was not like the village where one could install a phone at will. The procedures in the capital were much more complicated than those in Foshan Village. She could only think about this matter in the future.

Qiao Mei went to the public phone booth and dialed He Ning's phone number. When the call got through, she said, "Give me 400,000 dollars."

He Ning simply hung up the phone with a puzzled expression on his face. He did not even ask who the other party was.

"Who called? Why did you hang up?" Huo Gao asked as he sat at the side.

"I don't know. It must be a lunatic. The moment she spoke, she asked me for 400,000 dollars. In this day and age, everyone must be really crazy about money. A scammer can even ring me up," He Ning said as he shook his head helplessly.

Qiao Mei looked at the phone receiver in shock. He Ning actually hung up on her in order not to give her money!

Was He Ning trying to go back on his word!

My 1.28 million dollars could not disappear just like that!

Qiao Mei angrily dialed He Ning's phone number again. This time, she did not quote the amount immediately. Instead, she chose to identify herself first.

"I'm Qiao Mei. Can you give me 400,000 dollars tomorrow? Give me a portion first," Qiao Mei said angrily.

After He Ning heard this, he realized that the lunatic just now was actually Qiao Mei.

"400,000 dollars is too much. I don't have that much money. I only have 150,000 dollars now," He Ning said.

"Are you lying to me? Before I came to the capital, you told me that you had already raised half the amount of money. Now you're telling me that you don't have the money?" Qiao Mei asked.

He Ning was speechless for a moment. He just wanted to find an excuse to eat at Qiao Mei's house a few more times. If he gave her less money each time, he would be able to make more trips to her house. Then he could at least get free food a few times.

Chapter 810 Choosing A Room

"Why would I lie to you? I can only raise 150,000 dollars now. I'm not lying to you," He Ning said calmly.

Qiao Mei was skeptical. However, He Ning had spent a lot of money to save He Wei and He Li, and also given Zhou Hua a big sum of money earlier. He had also paid up when he bought her ginsengs previously. In total, he had spent more than 500,000 dollars. In this era, there were not many families who could fork out so much money.

In any case, 150,000 dollars was definitely enough to buy the houses and furniture. She would let He Ning pay her back slowly. It was not as if she did not charge interest.

"Alright, get someone to send the money to me tonight." Qiao Mei hung up after saying that.

Qiao Mei guessed that even if she asked He Ning to send someone over, he would definitely be the one to deliver the money personally in the end. After all, he would not miss out on any chance to ask for free food.

However, contrary to what Qiao Mei had guessed, He Ning did not make the trip personally. Instead, he asked Huo Gao to hand the money to Qiao Mei. Huo Gao was also deeply curious about why he did that and felt that it was not in line with He Ning's usual style.

He Ning said enigmatically, "This is called making the enemy let down their guard."

He knew very well that if he still shamelessly went to Qiao Mei's place to freeload on food and drinks, there would not be a next time.

The next day, Xia Wen brought the owners of the two houses to Qiao Mei's place early in the morning. The procedures were completed very quickly and the process was very smooth. At this time, there was no rule on how many houses a person could buy. As long as one had money, one could buy as many houses as one wanted.

No one suspected anything. After all, the Xia family was a prominent and well-to-do family and it was not a strange thing for them to be able to fork out 40,000 dollars. Moreover, they did not explain why they suddenly wanted to buy the houses. Perhaps it was to give one to each of the three children in the family?

The next step was to renovate the houses. Qiao Mei hired someone to help clean up the house and sell the unusable furniture, as well as to repair the damaged parts in the houses.

These two houses had been in disrepair for a long time. Xia Wen found a professional painter to repaint them and the houses looked much brighter after that. The furniture was all ready-made ones bought at the mall. He did not know what Li Gui liked so he bought them according to Qiao Mei's preferences.

Qiao Mei's pregnant stomach was getting too big for her to move around. Xia He was the one who kept an eye on the renovation and clearance works done by the professionals. It took three full days for them to finish cleaning up.

Li Gui and the four children moved to the new house happily. The distance between this house and Qiao Mei's house was the same as when they were in the village. They now knew they had to avoid arousing suspicion. Recently, there had been quite a lot of gossip in the alley and they had all heard some of it.

Although they liked living with Qiao Mei, they still had to keep a distance from her.

"Which room do you like?" Qiao Mei stood in the courtyard and asked the four children.

Zhang Miao sat in the wheelchair and looked at Qiao Mei in confusion. "Elder sister, don't we live together?"

When they were in the village, they had always slept on the same brick bed as Li Gui and had never been separated. Moreover, they were not allowed to like or dislike anything. They could only use whatever they were given and could not ask for anything they did not have.

"You're all getting older and should have your own space. Everyone gets their own room. The two rooms on the left belong to Zhang Wei and Zhang Chao, and the two rooms on the right belong to Zhang Miao and Zhang Qin. You can stay in whichever room you like. Everything inside is the same," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Zhang Miao was a little disappointed. That meant she could not sleep with Zhang Qin anymore. She had never slept separately from Zhang Qin in her life. However, Zhang Wei was very happy. He yearned to have his own space.

This was the difference in mentality between the older and younger children.

The children all returned to their respective rooms to sort out their things. Each room had a huge bookcase, a table with a matching chair, a big closet and a double bed. They could add their own things in the future.

"Mei Mei, I'll definitely pay you rent for this house. I'll... give you 100 dollars a month, is that alright? When I have more money in the future, I'll give you more," Li Gui said to Qiao Mei.

They had just arrived in the capital and did not know the local prices at all. Moreover, Li Gui had not found a suitable job yet. Back in the village, the four children could go up the mountains to pick wild vegetables to help subsidize the family's expenses. Now that they were in a place with busy traffic and with the children still so young, she did not dare to let them go out alone.