

Fat Wife 81

Chapter 81: Bumper Harvest of Fruits and Vegetables

Even some of the late-maturing plants, such as string beans and celery, were ready for harvest by now.

She was already experiencing some early symptoms of pregnancy, but the fortunate thing was that she did not have nausea. Instead, she had a very good appetite and wanted to eat everything in sight.

In order to be able to eat fresh fruits, she had also planted some fruits in the courtyard. There were strawberries, mulberries, grapes and cherries.

The strawberries in the courtyard had grown out densely and one could see a field of red fruits at a glance. It was also a gratifying sight to see the bunches of grapes hanging off the branches and the mulberries growing so well until it seemed that the supply was endless.

These fruits made Qiao Mei feel even happier than before.

Qiao Qiang stood in the courtyard and looked at the fruits growing all over the courtyard, feeling perplexed.

Aren't there too many fruits this year? We eat them every day, but we just can't seem to finish them all. The fruits just keep growing.

The vegetables in the courtyard were also growing exceptionally well.

The storeroom, which was originally used for growing bean sprouts, now had bamboo poles hung up all over with the seemingly endless supply of grapes hanging densely on them. This place was now used to dry the grapes into raisins. When the raisins are ready, they would make a delicious snack.

Qiao Mei was bored and even used the grapes to make some wine.

She made the wine specially for Qiao Qiang who liked to drink but had gastric problems. Every time he secretly drank a few mouthfuls of liquor, he would have a bad stomach for a few days.

Qiao Mei made this wine so as to satisfy Qiao Qiang's cravings.

This wine was made with the energy from the jade pendant, so it was naturally filled with spiritual energy and would be beneficial to health. Even if it could not help to nourish Qiao Qiang's stomach, it should not make him feel uncomfortable, right?

After harvesting the vegetables and fruits in the front yard, she walked to the backyard and started feeding the livestock there.

The chicks and ducklings had grown big and fat, and the piglets had also grown up well. They could eat a big bucket of food every meal and they played in the pen all day long, so they had all grown a lot bigger.

Qiao Mei even demarcated a zone for these livestock. Their activity zone was an area which was marked out and surrounded with fences, and they seemed intelligent enough to know that the zone was their territory and they should not leave it on their own.

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Qiao Mei suddenly felt hungry. She took a big bucket and a big fishing net, together with a small bag of raisins, and walked towards a pond.

The fishes nearby liked to eat these raisins. As long as she threw some into the pond, she would always be able to get a net full of fishes.

Qiao Mei came back with a big bucket of fish and reached in to scoop out two big ones. She would cook these two fishes later. As for the remaining fishes, she would use half of them to make a nourishing soup for herself and make the other half into dried fish snacks to send to Xia Zhe.

Qiao Mei stood on the spot and smiled, thinking that Xia Zhe would be very happy to receive the dried fish snacks.

“Mei Mei, come out and see who’s here,” Auntie Dong came by and shouted into the courtyard. There was a hint of weirdness in her voice.

Qiao Mei looked up and saw Auntie Dong walking in with two people. As they approached her, she saw an old lady in her sixties and a slightly younger woman.

The old lady’s clothes were neat and her hair was shiny.

The woman next to the old lady stared at Qiao Mei unblinkingly and sized her up as if she was appraising an item.

Aiyo, this Qiao Mei was not as fat and tanned as rumored. Although this girl had a slightly muscular body, she would not be considered fat at all.

Her skin was also fair, almost as white as tofu.

She looked good too.

She had a high nose bridge and big bright eyes that shone attractively. She also had a beautiful oval-shaped face and moist red lips.

By now, Qiao Mei had already lost a lot of weight.

She had a shapely figure with curves in the right places. Although she looked a little bloated due to her pregnancy, her figure still looked very good at a glance.

Chapter 82: Not an Easy Target

Sun Ying was feeling a little regretful now. If she had known earlier that Qiao Mei had grown up to be so good-looking, she would definitely have introduced her to the eligible boys from her maternal family and not let an outsider gain the advantage.

Qiao Mei asked curiously, “Auntie Dong, who are these two people?”

Auntie Dong blinked at Qiao Mei and her voice sounded different from before. "Don't you recognize them? They're your grandmother and aunt-in-law! But then again, you were only a few years old when you last met them. It's normal that you've long forgotten about them and can't recognize them now."

Sun Ying could tell what Auntie Dong meant. Wasn't that a veiled way of blaming them for not coming to visit Qiao Mei over the past few years?

"Mei Mei, I'm your aunt-in-law. It's fine if you've forgotten about me. Now that you've met me, you won't be able to forget me in the future." Sun Ying smiled and pushed the old lady beside her towards Qiao Mei. "This is your biological grandmother."

"It doesn't matter if you don't remember anything. You'll remember us once we come here more often in the future."

After saying that, she looked around the courtyard. In this large courtyard, there were lush green vegetables and ripe fruits all over the place. It was a delightful sight to see bunches of grapes hanging on the vines.

"Oh, so it's my grandmother and aunt-in-law. Then what are you two doing here?" Qiao Mei looked at them and asked curiously.

Auntie Dong, who was standing next to her, smiled and said, "They said they were here to visit their relatives."

"Oh," Qiao Mei replied coolly.

She had now recalled her memories of these maternal relatives. Her grandmother and grandfather were still alive and she also had three uncles whose names were Li Dong, Li Xiong and Li Tao. She also had an aunt named Li Juan.

Her mother's name was Li Gui.

There was nothing ordinary about the members of this family, all of them were very calculative people.

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“We should get your second aunt-in-law to come over and take a look another day. Only your youngest uncle isn’t married yet.” Sun Ying was still sizing up the spacious courtyard.

Qiao Mei stood where she was and sighed softly.

Her family now consisted of only her, who was a married woman, and a sickly grandfather. It was normal for other people to be eyeing a place with such a big courtyard.

“Well, grandmother and eldest aunt-in-law, you two haven’t visited me for so many years, so why are you here to see me now?” Qiao Mei asked suddenly..

They were caught off guard by her words.

They really did not expect Qiao Mei, who looked mild and gentle, to be so sarcastic.

But neither of them was easy to deal with.

After being stunned for a moment, Old Madam Li spoke up. She smiled at Qiao Mei and said, “The two of us don’t have any other intentions. It’s just that we haven’t seen you for so many years and wanted to come and visit you and Old Master Qiao.”

“Isn’t it a little late to come and see me? It’s been more than 10 years since we last met, and now you want to come and visit me? Is it because you heard from others that our village has set up a factory and become rich now?” Qiao Mei did not bother to mince her words.

Sun Ying’s expression immediately darkened and she said with a scowl, “Listen to what you’re saying. Our Li family isn’t the kind of people who are money grubbers, right? We’re here with good intentions. Being your maternal relatives, of course we have to visit you now that you’re married and pregnant.”

“Alright, you’ve already seen me. Can you go back now? Grandmother and aunt-in-law, then I won’t invite you both in. You can return home already.”

Qiao Mei smiled brightly.

Sun Ying was at her wit’s end. She stood rooted to the ground with a long face and did not speak.

Old Madam Li, who was by her side, quickly came to smooth things over. She smiled and patted Sun Ying. “Look at yourself, so old already and yet still taking a child’s words to heart. I can’t believe you’re not ashamed of yourself.”

Then, she smiled at Qiao Mei and said, “Mei Mei, you don’t know how happy we are to hear that you’re pregnant. Your eldest aunt-in-law is especially happy and has even brought eggs for you to build up your health. Look!”

Chapter 83: Two Eggs

As she spoke, Sun Ying showed everyone the eggs that she was holding tightly in her hands.

In her hands, there were two eggs the size of her palms.

There were still chicken feathers stuck to the eggs.

Qiao Mei was stunned for a moment, not knowing what to say.

Then Qiao Qiang, who had been in the house, walked out of the door.

He had not seen any member of the Li family for a long time and did not quite remember them. When he returned back then, he heard that the Li family had abandoned Qiao Mei at Qiao Zhuang’s house.

If not for Zhao Liang, the village officer who was chief of the cadre, taking a tough stance and asking Qiao Zhuang's family to take Qiao Mei in, she might have already starved to death.

Neither family was willing to take care of Qiao Mei.

Qiao Zhuang's family did not take good care of Qiao Mei and left her so hungry that she was emaciated. The Li family was equally heartless and had not visited Qiao Mei even once for more than 10 years.

Without saying anything, Qiao Qiang made his way over with his walking stick and looked at the two sudden visitors from the Li family who were standing in the courtyard.

He had an unfriendly look in his eyes.

In the courtyard, the two Li family members immediately lost their imposing manner from earlier and suddenly appeared timid.

"Mei Mei, we came all the way here from afar. Can we get a drink?" Old Madam Li asked.

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Qiao Mei's eyes flashed as she pondered and then she said, "Alright, come in!"

These two people were her biological grandmother and her aunt-in-law.

During this time, the people in the village valued relationships. If she did not let the two of them in, the people in the village would probably turn around and scold her, regardless of how she had suffered in the past.

Therefore, if Qiao Mei wanted to avoid being talked about, she had to endure the situation for a while.

Once they showed their true colors, no one would be able to criticize her.

Auntie Dong had a close relationship with Qiao Mei, so she also followed them into the house. She felt that these two people did not seem to be here for anything good, but looked intent on getting something.

She was afraid that Qiao Mei would be at a disadvantage since she was still young.

These two people came by often when Qiao Mei was much younger. Every time, they came with nothing but would leave with a bunch of things. They just liked to take advantage of others.

After the two Li family members made their way in, they smirked when they saw the sewing machine and new bedding in the house.

“My goodness, is this a sewing machine? I heard that this thing can be used to make clothes very quickly and that clothes made on it are comfortable and have no thread knots. You still have a lot of fabric and thread here. Why don’t you make something for your grandmother now?”

Sun Ying spoke out.

Old Madam Li pretended to decline with a wave of her hand, but her gaze never left the sewing machine.

Auntie Dong found herself looking down upon the two people and she curled her lips. These two were really weird. She had never seen such shameless people who acted as if they were so upright.

“I have to start making dinner. Have a seat here.”

Qiao Mei was not in the mood to care about them and she turned around to leave.

Behind her, Sun Ying said, “Go, Mei Mei. We’ve walked a long distance and we’re already hungry. Your grandmother hasn’t had meat for a long time and has lost a lot of weight. The fishes in the courtyard would be good nourishment for your grandmother.”

Qiao Mei left without looking back.

It was just two fishes. As long as they did not cause trouble at home, it did not matter.

“What exactly are you doing here?”

Qiao Qiang could not help putting on a harsh tone as he frowned at the two people.

Upon hearing Qiao Qiang’s words, Old Madam Li got down from the stool and reached out to wipe the nonexistent tears from the corners of her eyes. She said, “Oh grandfather of the child, it was not our choice not to come and visit Mei Mei for the past few years. We really wanted to but we couldn’t. Moreover, Qiao Mei’s father passed away so early back then and I couldn’t bear to let my daughter be a widow for the rest of her life, so I asked her to remarry.”

“In short, it’s all solely my fault. Please don’t blame the entire Li family.”

Chapter 84: The Bean Sprout Business

“When we sent Qiao Mei to Qiao Zhuang’s house, we did give them a sum of money and even left them the house. We have done everything that was possible.”

“Whatever happened after that was all Qiao Zhuang’s family’s fault. You can’t blame our Li family. Mei Mei’s grandfather, you have to make a clear distinction about this.”

At this point, Sun Ying also nodded.

Qiao Qiang was completely not interested in listening to her shirking her responsibility. These two people did not feel any sense of guilt at all, even until now. Did they think that just by giving Qiao Zhuang some money and the house, they could leave Qiao Mei in the lurch?

What a joke!

“I don’t want to talk about the past with you. I want to ask you, why are you here at the Qiao family house today?” Qiao Qiang continued to speak with a cold expression.

“If you are here today to take a look at Mei Mei, then you can go back now. Your village is only an hour and a half’s walk from here. If you go back now, you can still have lunch at home.”

After Qiao Qiang finished speaking, he became even angrier.

The distance could be covered by an hour and a half of walking, but the Li family members had not even come to visit Mei Mei once. It was really too much of them.

Old Madam Li and Sun Ying could not sit still anymore. The two of them hesitated for a moment before they decided to speak.

“It’s like this. We heard that this village is in the bean sprout business now? The earnings are more than 10 dollars a day. Is that right?”

Sun Ying’s eyes were bright as she looked at Qiao Qiang and spoke.

It was so profitable to be able to earn more than 10 dollars a day. After all, they could barely earn 40 to 50 dollars a year as an average villager. Moreover, even to make that small amount of money, they had to do very tiring work every day.

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In the village, regardless of whether they worked or not, they had to use up the village’s work points because they needed to buy food to survive.

Work points were the points given to a person by the village based on the amount of labor and time that one put in. With these points, one could get one’s salary at the end of each year.

However, based on how the work points were distributed, it averaged out to everyone getting very little.

When the Li family heard that a factory had been set up in Datian Village and that almost every family that produced bean sprouts could earn more than 10 dollars, they became very excited.

Qiao Qiang did not speak when he heard this.

Sun Ying then looked at Auntie Dong.

Auntie Dong just turned her gaze to one side. She did not respond affirmatively but she did not deny it either.

The fact about setting up a bean sprout factory in the village was supposed to be a secret. However, it was difficult to control loose lips in the village. In addition, many villagers' daughters-in-law came from other villages and they might have also spilled the beans when they visited their parents' homes back in the other villages.

It was impossible to hide the news.

Just as the villagers were feeling worried, a strange thing happened. No matter how the daughters-in-law from other villages taught their families to use the same method to grow bean sprouts, the bean sprouts they produced were never as good as those made in Datian Village.

The bean sprouts produced at the other villages were not bitter and astringent, but they did not look good either. Naturally, the supply and marketing cooperative did not want to buy these.

This piece of news surprised everyone.

However, there were also rumors that the bean sprouts growing in Datian Village were so fresh because the water quality in the village was good.

Auntie Dong's behavior seemed to have confirmed this matter.

Old Madam Li finally could not sit still. She walked up to Qiao Qiang and begged, "Child's grandfather, I'm going to shamelessly ask you for a favor today. Please talk to the village officer, Zhao Liang, and let him know that our Li family wants to move to this Datian Village."

"The water quality in this village is good, so the bean sprouts grown here are of good quality as well. If we move to our Datian Village, we can also help Qiao Mei, right? It's not easy for a girl to be pregnant alone."

Qiao Qiang did not even look at her. He picked up the tea on the table and drank it as he said, "Don't even think about it."

It was a very heartless statement.

He rejected the request in a very direct and blunt manner.

Chapter 85: Absolutely Not Allowed to Move

He was not in good health now and did not know when he would die. He definitely did not want the Li family to move here as it would be equivalent to inviting wolves into the village.

He did not want her family to come and bully Mei Mei.

No matter what Old Madam Li said in front of him, he did not speak again. He savored the tea that Xia Zhe sent and did not respond at all.

Soon, Qiao Mei finished cooking and the two of them left after having dinner.

"The two of them left just like that?" Qiao Mei looked at the two back views in confusion and disbelief.

These two people were never like this when she was young. This time round, they left right after dinner, and took only a large bunch of grapes from the courtyard and a handful of strawberries.

It was much better than when she was young.

In her memories, when she was young, these two Li family members would start going through the things in the house the moment they came over. When they left, they would carry away bags of items, and they behave completely like bandits.

Qiao Mei's father was also unhappy about it and had reprimanded them.

However, they just ignored him and still ransacked the Qiao family house all the time. The Li family was actually the reason why Qiao Mei's parents were always on bad terms.

In any case, the Li family was extremely greedy.

They did not seem like people who would let others off easily.

Determination flashed across Qiao Qiang's eyes. He would not let these two people do whatever they wanted at his house. He would let Qiao Mei take good care of herself in peace during her pregnancy.

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In the future, there would be Xia Zhe to protect Qiao Mei.

"Did you tell Xia Zhe that the dried fruits you sent him last time would taste very delicious when mixed together?" Qiao Qiang asked.

He often saw the young couple writing to each other and found it very interesting. From time to time, he would participate and add a sentence or two.

When Qiao Mei heard Xia Zhe being mentioned, she nodded happily. "I told him."

At the moment, they had an abundance of fruits at home. She had no way of sending fresh fruits, so she made them into dried fruits and packed them into bags to send to Xia Zhe.

When these different dried fruits were put together, they made a very delicious and nutritious snack of dried fruit mix. Qiao Mei was the one who taught Qiao Qiang to eat it in this way.

As for Xia Zhe, he sent her a packet of Camellia tea from the mountains in return.

Camellia tea was very fragrant and had a long aftertaste. It was a very delicious tea and Qiao Qiang liked it very much.

Xia Zhe also mentioned in the letter that he had picked these tea leaves from the nearby mountains and asked the local people to help him process them.

Qiao Mei then wrote back to ask him to find her the camellia tea plant as she had a use for it.

Right now, Xia Zhe was digging for saplings on the mountain.

If she wants it, I have to satisfy her wish. She is already pregnant with my child. Why can't I do this for her?

“Have you thought about what foodstuff to send him this time?”

Qiao Qiang asked out of curiosity.

Qiao Mei just laughed and said, “This time, I plan to make him some of my special dried fish snacks. This way, he can eat it as a snack or with his meal.”

“Sure.” Qiao Qiang nodded in satisfaction. Qiao Mei made some yesterday and it was indeed very delicious. If she sent it over, Xia Zhe would definitely like it.

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The two Li family members made their way home leisurely.

At home, everyone was waiting for them. No one in the family went to work today. When they heard the news about neighboring Datian village, they were all very excited and did not feel like going to work.

“Mom, how did it go?” Li Dong, the eldest son, could not help but ask.

The youngest son, Li Tao, took a look at the expressions of the two people who had returned and knew that they did not succeed. He did not say anything.

The second son, Li Xiong, curled his lips and said unhappily, “I knew it. They surely won’t agree to our sudden request. I don’t think Qiao Mei and Qiao Qiang are good people.”

As for Old Madam Li, her smiling face suddenly darkened upon entering the house, and she hinted to Sun Ying to close the door behind her.

Then, she looked at Li Xiong and glared at him. She scolded, “You think you’re the only one with a mouth, you’re the only one who knows how to talk. If you’re so smart, why don’t you get Qiao Mei to also allow you to earn some money?”

Chapter 86: Earning Money Is Real

Li Xiong lowered his head and stopped talking.

His mother was a very fierce person. She pretended to be nice and kind in front of outsiders, but in front of her own family, she was completely her true self.

In the past, she had kept all the things that her eldest daughter sent back home. She did not give a single one of those things to Qiao Mei and yet here she was, trying to use her connection with Qiao Mei for benefits.

“So, is it true that a family can earn more than 10 dollars a day?” Li Tao asked in surprise.

If one can make more than 10 dollars a day, wouldn't that be 300 to 400 dollars a month?

The two people who just returned home, Sun Ying and Old Madam Li, nodded in silence.

In an instant, the expressions of the Li family members changed.

This was such a huge sum of money. Who wouldn't be tempted by it?

Li Shun, Li Dong's second son, could not help but say, “Grandma, please think of a way quickly. What should we do now? How can we move to Datian Village!”

He was currently saving up to get married. Given that his family was poor and the circumstances were less than ideal, and the fact that his grandmother was a mean person, there was no matchmaker who would find a wife for him.

In addition, no one would fancy being related by marriage to their family.

If their family could earn 300 to 400 dollars a year, it would definitely be easy for him to find a wife.

At this moment, Old Madam Li walked to the back room and everyone followed her.

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Old Madam Li sat on a stool and slowly drank a glass of water.

She then looked at everyone and said, “Eldest granddaughter-in-law, bring the child with you to Datian Village tomorrow and chat with her about your experience with pregnancy and giving birth.”

Since their sudden visit had turned out to be useless, then wouldn't they be able to build rapport by paying continuous visits for a few months?

By then, wouldn't it be easy to get the Qiao family to help them with their move to Datian Village?

"Okay," a woman whispered from the back of the crowd, near the door of the room.

She was Zhao Hong.

She was currently pregnant and had a high baby bump, and holding on to a child's hand.

The eldest son, Li Dong, had four children. There were two boys and two girls. His eldest son, Li Jian, was married to Zhao Hong, who had given birth to a girl and was now pregnant with another baby.

She was not valued at home because she had only given birth to a girl.

At home, no one cared about her existence and she had to do the same type of work as everyone else. She did not dare to speak up and her status was very low.

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The next day, Zhao Hong cleaned up the little girl's face and walked out of the house with her.

Qiao Mei did not know her at all.

After she stammered through her self-introduction, Qiao Mei let her in.

"Come in. You must be tired after walking so far. Come in and have a glass of water." Qiao Mei saw that she was pregnant and did not make things difficult for her.

Although she did not like the people from the Li family, she would not go to the extent of making things difficult for a pregnant woman.

It was an hour and a half's walk and it would have been tiring to walk so far.

Seeing that Qiao Mei had such a good temper, Zhao Hong heaved a sigh of relief and led the little girl into the house.

Furthermore, she felt that Qiao Mei was quite easy to get along with. She was not fat, but fair and gentle, and was quite good-looking.

Zhao Hong walked into the house and looked at the sewing machine, piles of fabric and all the new furniture, as well as fruits on the table. She felt really envious.

Qiao Mei was really lucky.

Qiao Mei brought out two plates of fruits for the little girl. There were grapes and strawberries on them.

In her other life, she had liked children very much. However, because she could not have children, she would get sad when she saw cute little kids. Therefore, she usually would not take the initiative to approach children.

But things were different at the moment.

She was in good health now. If Xia Zhe proved himself to a good father in the future, she could consider having a few more children.

Then there would be no need for her to be envious when she saw someone else's children.

The fruits filled up the plates. The grapes looked plump and juicy, and the strawberries were rosy red with water droplets on them, all looking extremely tempting and very delicious.

Chapter 87: The Girl Is Useless

However, Zhao Hong could not help but wave her hand and refuse. She said, "This girl doesn't need to eat such good food. It will be a waste of fruit."

It was not easy to get fruits in this season.

Even adults did not get to eat it often, let alone children. They may never even get to taste it.

The little girl looked at the fruits in front of her with longing in her eyes.

She looked so eager to eat some.

When Qiao Mei heard this, she took another look and realized that Zhao Hong was not pretending to be polite but expressing her real opinion. Her gaze turned cold and her attitude changed.

"What's wrong with being a girl? Aren't you a girl? Didn't you give birth to this child?" Qiao Mei rebutted.

Zhao Hong clearly felt the change in attitude and could not help but feel the need to 'educate' Qiao Mei. She said earnestly, "Don't you understand? It's useless to raise this little girl. When she's young, she can't do any work. When she is finally able to work, she can only do light work. How can she compare with a boy who has more strength?"

"Besides, no matter how well you treat her, she will still have to get married in the future. Once she gets married, she won't be your family member anymore, but someone else's family member. In the end, isn't it all for nothing?"

Qiao Mei was stunned and suddenly could not speak.

How could they do their calculations in this manner? The value of the relationship between relatives was measured by the amount of work done and the benefits a person could bring to the family?

Was there no trace of kinship at all?

Zhao Hong touched her protruding stomach lovingly before continuing, "A boy is different. From the beginning to the end, he is your family member. He can do heavy work and then he will find a wife who can then do chores for the family. This makes a boy the blessing of the family."

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"The money earned by the family will not be enough for him to spend. He will need his parents to pay for the betrothal gifts and the wedding, and he will use up the family's money. Is this the benefit of having a son?" Qiao Mei retorted.

Zhao Hong was speechless and looked uncomfortable.

That is what everyone says. Why should she just chide me? I don't see her refuting anyone else. Is she mocking me for having a daughter?

"The more sons there are, the more grandchildren there will be. Then the more prosperous the family will get and the richer the family will be," Zhao Hong spoke again, insisting on her point of view.

Without thinking, Qiao Mei replied, "Then when your grandson earns money and you're about to die, what benefits can you get? You might as well treat your daughter well. She might be able to provide for you in the future."

Zhao Hong pouted indignantly, but she had nothing to say.

The logic seemed to be fitting, but it also seemed a little wrong. She felt that they could not agree with each other and she did not want to stay here anymore. She could not win an argument against Qiao Mei, but she did not dare to go home.

When she returned home, she would definitely be caught by Old Madam Li and get a tongue-lashing.

Seeing that she was pregnant, Qiao Mei served her lunch at home before asking her to go. She dismissed her and said, "Don't come over in the future. I know that Old Madam Li asks you to come, but we don't get along so it's useless for you to come over."

Qiao Mei looked fair and gentle and her voice was soft.

Zhao Hong, who had had her fair share of Old Madam Li's tongue-lashings, was not afraid at all. Instead, she made up her mind to return tomorrow.

Zhao Hong carried her child and went home.

When she got home, she told her family that they got along very well and Qiao Mei even served her a meal.

The next day, Zhao Hong brought her child along for another visit.

She felt that being at Qiao Mei's house was such a great thing. She did not have to work or be scolded, and she could also eat fruits and enjoy a very delicious meal. It was so wondrous.

Qiao Mei spoke more with her and told her not to come over again. She still let her in though, and after serving her a meal, she warned her not to come anymore and that the Qiao family did not welcome her.

However, Zhao Hong came around again on the third day.

This time, in the face of Qiao Mei's reprimand, she looked as if she had gotten used to it. It was like the situation could not get any worse for her and she was not afraid at all. In the end, she left happily after eating her fill.

Chapter 88: Kind and Smart

Qiao Mei smiled and did not take it to heart.

She had already done everything she could and given the woman two chances. There would not be a third chance and she would no longer tolerate it if the woman came again.

Qiao Mei brought a basket of fruits to Auntie Dong's house.

Thereafter, Zhao Hong came around again but this time, Qiao Mei was not at home. Instead, she had gone up the mountain with Qiao Qiang.

Zhao Hong stood at the entrance of the courtyard and looked inside.

She did not see anyone when she looked through the crack in the door and she prepared to walk in.

Auntie Dong immediately walked out from one side and stopped her with a loud exclamation. "Who are you? Why are you barging in without a word? Aren't you behaving like a thief?"

"Auntie, I'm Qiao Mei's relative. I'm here for a visit," Zhao Hong explained with a smile.

"Relative, you come here for a visit empty-handedly?" Auntie Dong sized her up and asked.

Nowadays, who would visit someone without bringing something?

It was unheard for someone to barge into a house empty-handedly, like what Zhao Hong was doing. This was also against social rules.

Zhao Hong stammered, "My family doesn't have money. Qiao Mei's family is rich now and doesn't lack anything..."

She said it as if it was an entirely natural thing to do.

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Auntie Dong was left speechless by it. What does your family's wealth have to do with whether you bring anything with you when you visit someone? The gift that you bring is a token of your appreciation for the host. How can you have the cheek to sit for a long time in someone else's house without bearing any gifts?

Isn't this just trying to sponge off others?

Auntie Dong did not want to take the effort to educate her given that the two of them did not know each other at all. "Look, you've been coming over for the past few days. Is your Li family pestering Qiao Mei's family now? You're coming to visit now that you all know Qiao Mei's family is earning money now? How shameless of you."

"Besides, you bring your child here every day as well. Do you also want the Qiao family to raise your child for you?"

Auntie Dong had no intention of being polite at all. Zhao Hong's face turned red all the way to the tips of her ears. She was so dumbstruck that she could only stand on the spot and fiddle with her fingers.

"Qiao Mei is not free today so you can go back quickly. You won't be able to see her even if you wait here," Auntie Dong said.

At the same time, Zhao Hong was cursing Auntie Dong in her heart for being a busybody. If not for this busybody, she would already be in the house and might even be eating grapes now.

Zhao Hong was insistent and said in a low voice, "I'll just wait here. No matter what, I need some rest since I've walked for one and a half hours."

Although Auntie Dong had already blatantly pointed out what Zhao Hong was thinking, Zhao Hong still wanted to have a meal at Qiao Mei's house. The food here was really delicious.

Zhao Hong was unwilling to leave just like that.

“Then come with me to my house.” Auntie Dong glanced at Zhao Hong’s stomach and sighed.

Qiao Mei was really too kind.

She knew that Zhao Hong would definitely be unwilling to leave, so she asked me to let her stay for a while and to also serve her a meal at home so that the child in her stomach would not starve.

However, there was really no need to tolerate the behavior of this kind of relative. She should be made to starve so that she would know it was not right to go to other people’s houses to be a freeloader

Zhao Hong squeezed out a smile and agreed.

I am really hungry and also wanted to sit for a while. Although I do not like Auntie Dong, I am fine to take a rest at her place.?

After having a meal at Auntie Dong’s house, Zhao Hong still did not want to go back even though it was getting dark.

It will be even better if I can take the opportunity to stay over at Qiao Mei’s house.

Unfortunately, Auntie Dong did not give her any chance. She said unhappily, “Look at you, you still can’t bear to leave even when it’s dark now. What are you trying to do?”

“You want to eat at someone else’s house and now you want to sleep at someone else’s house? Do you want Qiao Mei’s family to raise the child for you? Tomorrow I’ll go over to your place to ask whether this is because your Li family can’t even afford to raise a child?”

“This is not right. Back then, your Li family refused to adopt Qiao Mei and now you want Qiao Mei to raise your children for you. Isn’t this a joke?”

She did not mince her words and stated all the facts in a blunt manner.

Auntie Dong also got especially angry and her voice became louder and louder until it could be heard beyond the courtyard.

Chapter 89: Let Her Mother Go Over

It was just after dinnertime and all the families were enjoying the breeze in their courtyards.

Many people came out to take a look when they heard the commotion.

“What’s going on?”

“What Li family? Is it Qiao Mei’s grandmother’s family?”

“Eh, isn’t this Zhao Hong, the granddaughter-in-law of the Li family from the neighboring village? Why is she in our village?”

“Aiyu, did she get chased out by the Li family?”

Someone recognized Zhao Hong and asked bluntly.

Zhao Hong’s face was very red and she did not say anything.

The voice in the crowd continued to say, “Even if she is chased out, there’s no need to go to Qiao Mei’s house to beg for food, right? They’re not even related!”

“That’s right, that’s right! This is quite awful.”

These taunts made Zhao Hong’s face turn red. She felt really awkward, especially since there were people she knew in the crowd.

She picked up her child and walked out the door.

It was dark when she returned to her place. Next to the big tree at the front door, she gave herself a hard slap to make her face swell up instantly. Then she smeared some dust from the ground on her body and messed up her hair before she dared to walk into the house.

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The Li family was not surprised that Zhao Hong had returned in such a miserable state.

They heard that Qiao Mei had always had a bad temper and it was common for her to raise her hands at people. It was already a very good thing that she only took action after so many days.

Old Madam Li cursed fiercely, "You useless thing, you can't even build a good relationship with her like I told you to."

"Is there any way to make Qiao Mei accept our family?" Li Dong did not care that his wife had been beaten up. He only wanted more money.

Old Madam Li looked at Zhao Hong and said angrily, "What did Qiao Mei say?"

"She said... no one from the Li family is allowed to go over, except for Li Gui. She won't let anyone else in. If anyone still dares to go over, she will beat them to death with a big stick."

Zhao Hong sobbed audibly, but did not dare to speak too loudly, and wiped her tears off with her hand.

"This is not too bad!" Li Dong said happily.

At least this niece of his still acknowledged Li Gui as her mother and was willing to let Li Gui visit her. This was not such a bad thing.

"Alright, then I'll go to the county to look for her mother tomorrow," Old Madam Li nodded and said.

After Li Gui remarried, she followed her husband to go and work at the food factory in the county. It was quite easy to find her now.

Actually, Old Madam Li often went to the county to look for Li Gui. Sometimes, she would go to her house and sometimes to her workplace. From time to time, she would bring back some items or money.

Sun Ying hesitated for a moment and slowly said, "Then if she comes back, won't the things we're hiding be exposed? If she..."

Before she could finish, the old lady stopped her with one look.

Back then, Old Madam Li would go over from time to time to ask Li Gui for money using Qiao Mei as an excuse. She would say that Qiao Mei was fat and tanned, always fighting and causing trouble, and also lazy and unwilling to work.

And that Qiao Mei even came to the Li family house and chased Old Madam Li around for food.

Li Gui felt responsible for her daughter. From time to time, she would take out some money to subsidize the Li family's expenses. Although her husband would beat her up every time she gave her family money and other things, she would still pass Old Madam Li some money.

"If she knows, she knows. I'm her mother. Isn't it only right for her to give me some money and stuff?"

Old Madam Li spoke nonchalantly.

Although she had indeed lied to Li Gui, it was her right to take these things as Li Gui's mother. She was the one to ask Li Gui to remarry early, otherwise how could Li Gui have such a good life in the county?

She deserved everything she got and there was nothing to be afraid of even if Li Gui knew the truth.

Li Tao could not help but interrupt the conversation. "What if she isn't willing to help? What if she finds out that we never passed Qiao Mei any of her gifts, and all the things were taken by us instead? Once she mends her relationship with Qiao Mei, will Qiao Mei be willing to help us?"

Under such circumstances, no one would be willing to help, right?

However, Old Madam Li just smiled. She knew her own daughter well. If she could not control Qiao Mei, she would just control her daughter. When the time came, wouldn't everything be fine as long as she could control her own daughter?

Chapter 90: My Daughter Is Married?

"Li Gui has a soft character. She probably won't ask Qiao Mei why she came to snatch food from the Li family house. She also won't talk about the gifts she has given Qiao Mei all these years. So the two of them might not get to know everything."

"Anyway, so what if they know? Why would I be afraid?"

Old Madam Li picked up her teacup and smiled, as if victory was already in her grasp.

Li Tao nodded and smiled in satisfaction.

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The next day, Old Madam Li went to the county to look for Li Gui.

Li Gui worked in a food factory in the county, but she was not treated well there because she used to be a villager. Moreover, she was not an official employee yet.

When Li Gui saw her mother coming by again, she sighed heavily and felt especially uncomfortable.

Why is my daughter such a person?

Sigh, my daughter became like this all because I remarried too early and did not bring her up well.

While Li Gui was lost in her thoughts, Old Madam Li had already come up to stand in front of her.

Li Gui took out the remaining \$1.30 from her pocket and handed it all to her mother. She sighed and said, "This is all the money I have left. I don't have much this month. Now that the children are in school, the expenses are high and I can't seem to save any money."

She did not even have this bit of money at first. "Please reading on She had set aside the money meant for her dinner over the past few days just to have this bit of savings that is slightly over one dollar.

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She had four children at home now, two boys and two girls. Naturally, a lot of their money was spent on the children.

It was a remarriage for both her and her husband. The children he had with his ex-wife would even come and ask her for money from time to time. If she did not give it to them, they would punch and kick her and even scold her.

There was helplessness written on Li Gui's face and her entire being was filled with misery.

It was like there was not a single ray of sunshine in her life. She was only in her thirties now, but she looked like an old lady in her fifties or sixties.

On the other hand, Old Madam Li was filled with disdain.

Even though she received money every month, she very much looked down on her daughter who was only a factory worker despite living in the county.

Her daughter had such a good environment but she made such a hard life for herself. How useless!

Old Madam Li put the money into her pocket and nodded at Li Gui. "Let me tell you a piece of good news. Qiao Mei's family has got money now, so you don't have to support her anymore."

Li Gui was stunned for a moment, then she became a little happier. "Is it because Qiao Mei's grandfather received more subsidies?"

"No, no!" Old Madam Li shook her head and whispered to Li Gui, "Do you know about the bean sprout business in the city now?"

Li Gui nodded. Of course she knew that.

The news had spread in the city about the particularly delicious bean sprouts being sold in the supply and marketing cooperative. There was always a queue to buy the bean sprouts and it would be sold out every time. Someone from the Zhang family managed to buy it once.

She had tasted it and it was indeed delicious.

"The bean sprouts are from the factory in Datian Village. They supply to the supply and marketing cooperative every day and now, every family can earn more than 10 dollars a day. That is a lot of money in a year! I heard that it was Qiao Mei who taught the villagers how to grow the bean sprouts!"

These words caused Li Gui to be stunned for a moment.

Qiao Mei teaching the villagers how to grow bean sprouts?

She remembered that when she used to grow bean sprouts at home, Qiao Mei would watch her at the side.

Now that she has grown up, she also knows how to grow bean sprouts?

“Why... Why would she teach the villagers how to grow bean sprouts? Isn't she lazy and bad-tempered?” Li Gui asked in confusion.

Old Madam Li paused for a moment and said with a guilty conscience, “She's grown up now and is different from before. Now that she's married and pregnant, she's naturally a better person.”

“What? She's married and having a child? Why didn't you tell me before? I don't even know anything!” Li Gui said in shock.

Old Madam Li got even more tongue-tied.

This was because she had deliberately hidden the fact. She was afraid that Li Gui would not be willing to give her money anymore if she knew that Qiao Mei had gotten married.