

## **Fat Wife 811**

### Chapter 811 Good Idea

"It's fine. You can pay me when you have money. Mom, have you thought about your plans for the future?" Qiao Mei asked.

When Li Gui was still in the village, she had already started to think about the kind of work she could do after going to the capital. She did not have any special skills and only knew how to farm and do manual labor. She did not know anything else. If there was really no other way, she could collect recyclables to sell first. At the very least, this could subsidize her family's expenses.

"I'm sure I can find work. I'm strong and there will definitely be people who want to hire me. Don't worry," Li Gui said casually.

She did not want Qiao Mei to worry, nor did she want Qiao Mei to ask the Xia family for help. She had already caused Qiao Mei enough trouble by coming to the capital. She wanted to prove that she could continue living well on her own.

"Mom, do you think we can sell the seeds we grow in the village?" Qiao Mei said.

Li Gui was also thinking about the same thing. If not for the fact that she had to come and take care of Qiao Mei, and also needed to stay away from Qiao Zhuang's family and their malicious schemes, she would definitely stay in the village and plant the seeds diligently.

"Of course we can. Those seeds originally came from the capital! I noticed that there's some land in the backyard, so I'm thinking about planting some here. Even if there's no place to sell them, it's good to have some to eat at home," Li Gui said as she brought Qiao Mei into the living room.

The land in the backyard was definitely not as big as what they had in the village. The entire backyard could probably only produce 300 pounds of seeds. When they sold the seeds for one dollar a pound in the village, it was a special deal cut by Qiao Mei. Under normal circumstances, 300 pounds of seeds could at most make 40 dollars after deducting the cost, which was not even enough for one month's expenses in the capital

At the thought of this, Li Gui sighed helplessly. However, Qiao Mei looked at Li Gui with satisfaction. She had wanted to do this business since she came to the capital, but she had not thought about where she could do it. She had intended to rent an empty plot of land in the suburbs and grow the seeds in large quantities. However, to do that, she needed to take her time to find that right place and could not be too hasty.

It was very good that Li Gui had such ideas. After being by her side for so long, Li Gui had become bolder and even knew how to think of ways to do business.

"Then where do you want to sell it?" Qiao Mei continued to ask.

Li Gui had not thought of this yet. When she was moving things with Xia He these few days, she saw someone selling corn and tea eggs outside the shops at the entrance of the alley. She wondered if it was the shop's own business.

When she lived in the county city, she knew that every small alley would have one or two people setting up stalls. These people would sell things that they made. No one in the county city cared about these things. As long as no one reported it and no one gathered around to cause trouble, people would not deliberately make it hard for others to make money.

"I... I don't know. The capital is different from where we come from. I haven't thought about it yet." Li Gui lowered her head in embarrassment.

She was actually afraid of causing trouble for Qiao Mei. The capital was such a big place and she was sure that people were definitely not allowed to set up stalls at will. If she brought the seeds around with her and tried to sell on the go, she probably would not be able to make any sale. Besides, she could not simply carry all the seeds on her back. She had to continue to think of other ways.

If she was discovered and arrested, she would be sent to the police station and the Xia family would have to come and help her. This would really be embarrassing for Qiao Mei. People were not allowed to do private business now, so it would not be not a small matter if she was arrested.

"I'll ask about this. Don't worry," Qiao Mei said.

Based on her memories from her other life, the economy would open up this year and the commoners could start their own small business. There would not be any issues.

However, Li Gui's worries were not unreasonable. Although Qiao Mei had a lot of money, money was not omnipotent. In some cases, it was more important to have reliable people around.

After the two of them were done with their discussion, Li Gui took the food stamps and meat coupons that Qiao Mei had given her and wanted to go to the nearby market to buy vegetables. She intended to cook up a feast tonight to celebrate their move to their new home. Li Gui had even invited Xia Wen and Xia He to come by so that everyone could have a good time together.

"Qiao Mei! Come quickly!" Xia He had reached Li Gui's house with a big bag of things and she was finding it difficult to enter.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia He in shock and said, "Are you moving in? Why did you bring so many things? Didn't eldest brother come with you?"

Qiao Mei quickly walked forward. Xia He placed the bag on the ground and wiped the sweat off her forehead. She pointed at Xia Wen in the distance with a gloating expression.

"Over there!" Xia He laughed loudly at how miserable Xia Wen looked.

At this moment, Xia Wen was carrying one burlap bag over his shoulder and dragging another one behind him. He looked very miserable and every step he took seemed especially difficult. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he looked like a refugee.

Chapter 812 Medicinal Wine

"Are you my biological sister or not!" Xia Wen said helplessly as he slumped at the door.

"What's in all these bags?" Qiao Mei asked curiously.

Xia He opened the bags excitedly. There were many old clothes that the three of them had worn when they were young and which were still in very good condition. Xu Lan had wanted to buy new clothes for the four children, but she was worried that it would appear too pretentious and Li Gui would be too

embarrassed to accept the gift. Therefore she only bought a few new pieces and then stuffed all the old clothes in as well.

"Mother wants to give these to the children and she insists that I bring them over. It has been such a difficult journey," Xia He said.

Xia Wen sat on the ground and patted the bag beside him. "These are the textbooks which the schools in the capital are using at the moment. The children can't go to school immediately and have to learn at home. We can enroll them during springtime. When I have time, I'll come and teach them using these textbooks."

The pace of teaching in the county city was worlds apart from that in the capital. Zhang Wei was in the fifth grade of the elementary school in the village, but he would barely be able to keep up in the third grade in the capital.

Zhang Wei and the others would also be a little older than the other students in their respective classes when they went to school. Qiao Mei wondered if they would be ostracized and hoped that they would be able to adapt to life here.

"Thank you, eldest brother and elder sister. Just put these things aside and let the children choose for themselves. My mother has gone to buy groceries and will be back soon." Qiao Mei invited Xia He and Xia Wen into the house. They had not had time to buy furniture for the courtyard yet.

"I see you've cleaned up this house very well these past few days. It's completely different from how it looked when we first saw it," Xia Wen said as he looked around.

Xia He straightened up and said to Xia Wen, "Of course! I'm the one who cleaned up everything in this house!"

Qiao Mei took out three small bottles from the room. She handed two to Xia He and the last one to Xia Wen. The liquid in the small bottles emitted a dark green light and looked similar to pesticide, but it was actually wondrous medication.

"This bottle is for mother. Please help me bring it back to her later. This is the medicinal wine I made with 100-year-old ginseng. It's very nutritious. We all have a bottle each," Qiao Mei said.

Xia Wen looked at the small bottle suspiciously. Although he had never seen medicinal wine made with ginseng, this dark green liquid did not look like anything nice.

Could it be that it had gone bad during the process? It might even have mutated!

"Qiao Mei... can we really drink this... Why don't we ask Aunt's cousin? He's very good with Chinese medicine," Xia Wen said with a frown.

Without saying another word, Qiao Mei put two drops into the water and poured it out into two small teacups for Xia Wen and Xia He to try. With just two drops, they could smell the fragrance of the water.

This was the first time they had encountered water that smelt like that. Qiao Mei only put two drops, but it already made the water so clear. After drinking it, they immediately felt refreshed. The soreness in Xia He's shoulders from carrying the things just now instantly felt much better, and Xia Wen's headache also eased a lot.

"This is really effective! It's so magical!" Xia He looked at the small bottle in her hand in shock.

"You can't take too much. After all, it's very nourishing. If you have a headache or a fever, you'll feel much better after putting one drop into your drinking water. If your life is in danger, you can drink it directly," Qiao Mei instructed.

After all, this was the essence extracted from the 1,000-year-old ginseng. If a normal healthy person drank it all at once, it would probably be so nutritious that the person would bleed from all seven orifices.

Actually, she had prepared a big bottle for Xia Zhe because she was worried that Xia Zhe would get injured in the army. She could only wait and see if she could ask Xia Mao to give it to him.

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

Xia Wen looked troubled. Over the past few days, the Tan family members had been coming over to his place non-stop. They did not stay for dinner and would just chat in the house. When they saw him come home, they would leave in a hurry with strange expressions on their faces.

If Tan Jing did not say anything, he would not ask too many questions. After all, this was the Tan family's own matters and it was better to avoid unnecessary trouble. If there were any matters that Tan Jing could not handle, someone from the Tan family would naturally come looking for him.

Most of the time, it was either about money or asking the Xia family to recommend jobs to the Tan brothers. Tan Jing was the eldest daughter of the Tan family and she had three younger brothers and a younger sister. These four people were all living off the two elders of the Tan family.

If not for the two elders who had rented out their land and collected rent every year, the entire family would have starved to death.

#### Chapter 813 Learning To Cook

Tan Jing's father, Tan Bai, was born in an official's family in the city. Later in his life, he had been sent to a village by his superiors to gain work experience. He met Jiang Yi in the village and fell deeply in love with her. Soon, he married Jiang Yi and chose to stay in the village.

In the beginning, life was very difficult. When Tan Jing was 14 years old and wanted to continue with her studies, Tan Bo and Jiang Yi had stopped her from doing so. They wanted her to go to the county city to work, so that she could contribute to the family's income and take care of her younger siblings.

Tan Jing had to go to work and she studied part-time before she managed to enter the university. Before she got married, she had suffered a lot.

"Something has cropped up in the Tan family recently and she has to stay at home to take care of her parents, so she won't be able to come to your place these two days. We can arrange to meet after this matter is settled," Xia Wen said politely.

Qiao Mei did not ask further. These were all Xia Wen's family matters. If Xia Wen needed help, he would tell her himself.

Li Gui bought a lot of groceries and walked around the market for a long time. She asked around at all the shops about the prices of all kinds of groceries so that she had an idea about the differences in prices in the future.

The things in the capital were twice as expensive as those in the village. A bit of vegetables already cost 20 dollars, and she had not even bought meat yet. All in all, she spent more than 50 dollars.

When the meal was ready, Xia He pulled Qiao Mei aside and asked, "Do you secretly put some special seasoning in the food you make? Why is it that although your mother makes the same dishes as you, the ones you make seem to taste better?"

"It's a secret!" Qiao Mei said with a smile.

Xia He grabbed Qiao Mei's arm and said, "Just tell me. I've been learning how to cook recently."

Qiao Mei looked at Xia He in shock. She did not expect that a person who did not even go into the kitchen previously had already started to get acquainted with the kitchen. Could it be that she had met someone she liked?

"This doesn't seem like your style. I thought you would never go into the kitchen?" Qiao Mei asked.

"It's all because I want to live alone. To tell you the truth, I've been thinking about your advice to buy my own house. If I save up over five to six years, I think I will be able to buy a house of my own. After all, a rented place is still not my own home. It's too expensive for me to go to restaurants every day. If I want to save money, I have to cook my own meals," Xia He said.

In five to six years' time, house prices would already have increased. At that time, it would not be a good time to buy a house anymore. However, Qiao Mei could not just suddenly offer to lend Xia He money to buy a house.

"That's quite good. It seems that you've really made up your mind and won't turn back," Qiao Mei said.

Turn back? There is no turning back.

That situation was really an abyss! If she still lived with Kong Lu, then she would really be making life difficult for herself. The Kong family's place was the real living hell, so it was better to stay as far away from them as possible.

If she could become the principal performer of the capital's art troupe, she would be able to earn more than 180 dollars a month. She would also get an additional bonus for every performance. In addition, Kong Lu would be returning her 8,000 dollars, so she would definitely be able to buy a house within five years.

However, Xia He was used to being extravagant and could not control her spending at all. When she needed something, she still tended to get the best things. She would still need to plan properly if she wanted to save money.

"Come, come, come! Let's eat!" Li Gui said as she brought in the last bowl of soup.

There were a total of 7 dishes and 1 soup served at this sumptuous meal. In the past, back in the village, the family had to rely on Qiao Mei's help to be able to have a meal which included meat and vegetables. Now, Li Gui did not feel any heartache about eating pork ribs and braised pork at all. This was the first time the children saw Li Gui being so generous.

After everyone had their fill, they went home one after another. Xia Wen had drunk some liquor and could not drive, so he called one of Xia Mao's guards to come and send him home.

As he walked down the corridor of the old low-rise apartment building, he could hear different voices coming from inside every house. Some were arguing and some were laughing. When he reached his door, he could not hear anything.

Xia Wen thought that all the relatives from the Tan family had left. However, as soon as he pushed open the door, he saw his three brothers-in-law and sister-in-law, with their families, sitting at the dining table and waiting to eat. Tan Jing was the only one busy in the kitchen. Tan Bo and Jiang Yi had already started eating.

"You... are all here," Xia Wen said.



Everyone had strange expressions on their faces. Tan Jing was so shocked that her face turned pale and she said in a trembling voice, "Um... oh you're back... Didn't you say that you won't be home for dinner tonight? Why are you back at this time?"

Chapter 814 Local Pork

Xia Wen looked at everyone expressionlessly and said, "Am I back at the wrong time?"

"How would we dare to say that? Come in quickly," Xu Xiang, the Tan family's eldest daughter-in-law, said obsequiously.

This person was their Tan family's God of Fortune. If they made Xia Wen angry, their entire family would not have any money in the future. Tan Jing was of no help to them. All these years, Tan Jing had always dragged her feet when they came to ask her for help. In the end, they found it most efficient to look for Xia Wen.

In the beginning, the Tan family did not go overboard. They knew that they should talk to Tan Jing first and ask her to raise the issues with Xia Wen. After all, in the first few years of their marriage, Xia Wen doted on Tan Jing very much. As long as Tan Jing wanted something, Xia Wen would try his best to help her.

The Tan family took advantage of this and kept asking the Xia family to help make things easier for them. They either wanted help with finding jobs or getting preferential treatment with the authorities.

However, the Tan family's three sons were all people with grandiose aims but puny abilities. Even when Xia Wen found them the easiest jobs, none of them were willing to take it up. They even said that Xia Wen did not put in any effort to help them, that other sons-in-law could find jobs for their younger brothers-in-law that paid more than 100 dollars a month but Xia Wen found them jobs that were tiring and tough and only paid 70 dollars a month.

In this era, it was already a lot to be paid 70 dollars a month. As a university professor, Xia Wen's pay was only 80 dollars a month.

Xia Wen did not stand on ceremony and sat down at the dining table. He picked up the chopsticks beside him and started eating.

He was sure that Tan Jing definitely did not buy the meat herself. She usually could not bear to spend the money on meat and would always go to get some from the Xia family's house. Some time ago, Qiao Mei sent them a lot of meat from the countryside. At that time, Xu Lan had asked him to get rid of the meat. She said that pigs in the countryside were all sickly and had not been through proper treatment.

Currently, people were not allowed to sell pork from pigs that they raised themselves. The authorities were concerned about the pigs not being vaccinated properly and that the viruses from the pigs might spread to humans.

Xu Lan was especially particular about this. Although she liked Qiao Mei very much, she would never be able to enjoy the pork that Qiao Mei sent over.

Xia Wen was so busy that he forgot to deal with it and had stuffed it into the freezer at home. Jiang Yi must have found the meat when she looked into the fridge today.

"This pork is really delicious. Mother, what do you think?" Xia Wen asked.

"Of course it's delicious! Tan Jing even told me that there's nothing in your fridge! How can she not know that such a big piece of meat is in there!" Jiang Yi said as she rolled her eyes.

Xia Wen nodded and continued, "Mother, if you think it's delicious, then eat more. This is pork that my sister-in-law brought from their village. It's especially fragrant."

Jiang Yi was so shocked that she jumped up.

"What! This is local pork!" Xu Xiang said in a panic.

Xia Wen did not move at all and ate with relish. Originally, he also minded the fact that the meat was local pork, but now that he ate it, he felt that it was even more fragrant than the store-bought meat. If he had known that the meat Qiao Mei gave them was so delicious, he would have stewed it long ago and not let these people from the Tan family benefit from it.

"Hurry up and spit it out! Are you trying to kill my son!" Tan Yue, the Tan family's youngest daughter, quickly grabbed her child's throat to make him spit it out.

Everyone in the room kept trying to throw up. One had to know that once one ate contaminated pork, one would definitely die. The seriousness of the illness was one issue, but the other issue was that they did not have the money to go and see a doctor.

After Jiang Yi finished throwing up, she quickly walked up to Tan Jing and gave her a hard slap. "Useless thing! How dare you poison us! If we get sick, we won't let you off!"

"Mother, there's no need to be so agitated. This is good meat and nothing will go wrong. Weren't you eating very happily just now?" Xia Wen said.

Jiang Yi could not flare up at Xia Wen, so she could only vent all the resentment in her heart on Tan Jing. Tan Jing felt very aggrieved by the unreasonable scolding. However, what she cared about was not Jiang Yi scolding her, but the fact that Qiao Mei had given the pork to Xia Wen. She never knew about this.

They usually ate in the school canteen where meals were free of charge so that they could save a bit of money. She did not know what was stored in the fridge at home.

"If everyone doesn't want to eat it, I'll eat it myself," Xia Wen said with a smile.

The few people behind him exchanged glances. They looked at one another and did not want to be the first to speak. They were just waiting to see who would lose patience first.

#### Chapter 815 Rumors

Xia Wen only stopped eating when he felt that his stomach was about to burst. He had already eaten enough at Qiao Mei's place. However, this pork was simply too delicious and he really could not stop eating.

"Is there anything else? If not, I'm going to rest," Xia Wen said.

Tan Bai cleared his throat and said solemnly, "Son-in-law, did your family buy two new houses recently? How's your sister handling the renovations?"

Xia Wen immediately understood why the Tan family had been swarming at their house like flies for so many days. It turned out that they were all eyeing the houses.

However, this was something that the Xia family had not told anyone. Other than the two owners who sold the houses, only the Xia family members knew about it. Xia Wen turned around and glanced at Tan Jing.

Tan Jing lowered her head and did not dare to look Xia Wen in the eyes. She was not the one who leaked the news, but she did not deny it. She was simply too ashamed to deny anything.

Back then, she had been very dissatisfied with Xia Zhe monopolizing Wu Min's front part of the courtyard house. With all this talk about Xia Zhe being the Xia family's son, but the fact was that Xia Wen was actually the eldest son of the Xia family! In terms of seniority, Xia Wen should have priority!

Now that they had also taken back ownership of the back part of the courtyard house, Qiao Mei was the only one living in such a big courtyard house. Even if she had children in the future, the back part of the courtyard house would still be left to Qiao Qiang alone. That did not seem to be the best use for the house.

Although Qiao Mei was the owner of the back part of the courtyard house, she was Tan Jing's sister-in-law. She should rent it to them!

"You're really well-informed. Our family did buy two courtyard houses, but they don't belong to my younger sister. My sister is just helping with the renovation works," Xia Wen said.

When everyone heard this news, their eyes lit up. Since these two houses did not belong to Xia He, then it must mean that they solely belonged to Xia Wen!

It appeared that the Xia family still knew how to compensate their eldest son, Xia Wen. For so many years, Xia Wen had done his best for the Xia family and it was only right for him to get these two houses!

If there were only two people living in a big courtyard house, there was definitely still a lot of space available. They could move in together and it could be considered as them helping Xia Wen's family to liven up the living space!

"Oh my, then you have two courtyard houses now! I said before that Xia Wen is still valued in the Xia family! My eldest son-in-law is still the best!" Tan Bo said with a smile.

Zhou Nan, the youngest son-in-law who was coaxing his child, felt extremely awkward. Xia Wen was the one who helped him find his current job. It was already common for Tan Bo to praise Xia Wen and mock Zhou Nan for being incompetent, but he still found it uncomfortable every time he heard it.

Tan Yue did not notice Zhou Nan's discomfort at all. She felt that what Tan Bo said was the truth. She always felt that Zhou Nan was inferior to Xia Wen and that Tan Jing had married well! If she was the one who married into the Xia family, she would definitely live a better life than she did now!

"These two houses are not mine either. It's my sister-in-law who bought them," Xia Wen explained.

"That woman from the countryside? Why does she have so much money? That's not what Tan Jing told us!" Jiang Yi turned to look at Tan Jing and said, "Didn't you tell us that one of these two houses belongs to you!"

Everyone fell silent. Seeing Tan Jing being berated by Jiang Yi, Xia Wen still felt sorry for her. He looked at Tan Bai and asked, "Although my sister-in-law is from the countryside, her home there is a treasured piece of land with good feng shui. She dug up some ginseng and managed to make some money selling them. That's how she has money to buy the houses."

"Oh my! Why does she need so many houses! She can't live in all of them!" Jiang Yi complained.

Xia Wen had thought about this issue previously and had even considered whether he should ask Qiao Mei not to buy so many houses because she would be targeted by people with ulterior motives. However, on second thought, Qiao Mei was pregnant with two children. Even if the children had to stay by Qiao Mei's side when they were young, when they grew up and got married in the future, she could give each child a house.

He just did not expect that before any Xia family member kicked up any fuss, the Tan family members had already come knocking on the door.

Since the soft approach did not work, he would use harsh words.

"Xiao Wen, you also know how big our family is. Now that Tan Yue and our second son, Tan Bao, have children, it's so noisy every day. The two of us older folks really can't take it anymore. Do you think you can find a place for them to stay?" Tan Bai said nicely.

"This is not a difficult issue. Let's see what kind of price he can afford. Recently, I've been helping my sister-in-law to look for houses so I know of many places that are very good and I can recommend them to you," Xia Wen said.

Chapter 816 - 816 Money Is a Touchy Issue

816 Money Is a Touchy Issue

Tan Bai quickly waved his hands and said, "We're not buying one. How can we afford to buy a house?"

"Oh! So you want to rent a house?" Xia Wen asked.

"We're not renting a house either. I just want to ask if your sister-in-law has any spare room for them to move in. We don't have any money yet, but we'll definitely pay her back when we become rich in the future," Tan Bai said.

That was certainly some grand wishful thinking. He would be embarrassed to talk to Qiao Mei about letting the Tan family move into her newly purchased house.

Tan Jing quietly raised her head and looked at Xia Wen expectantly. If he agreed, then the two of them could also move into Qiao Mei's new big house together. The day before yesterday, she had secretly gone to take a look after she got off work. That house was no different from the one Qiao Mei was living in now. It was extremely big. If they could all move in, the Tan family could live in the back part and she and Xia Wen could have the front part to themselves.

“Then how much rent are you going to pay my sister-in-law every month? How will you bear your share of the monthly electricity and water bills? My sister-in-law’s house is newly renovated. If the house is damaged and the furniture is damaged, how are you going to calculate these expenses?” Xia Wen said.

When Xu Xiang heard this, she immediately became unhappy. She pointed at Xia Wen and said, “Money, money, money! Why are you always talking about money! We’re relatives. Shouldn’t relatives help one another? Money is such a touchy issue!”

Relatives? Xia Wen curled up his lips mockingly. What kind of relationship did they have with Qiao Mei?

As much as they wanted to say there was a connection between them, there was really nothing. At most, she was Tan Jing’s sister-in-law. If they were willing to pay rent, he might be able to talk to Qiao Mei about it. After all, it was such a big house. If Qiao Mei wanted to rent it out, he could ask her to consider the Tan family.

“You’re a family with me, but not with Qiao Mei. We have to make these things clear, otherwise I won’t be able to discuss the issue with her. I’m still not that shameless that I can ask to live in someone’s big house for free,” Xia Wen said.

“Who are you calling shameless!” Xu Xiang roared at Xia Wen.

Xia Wen smiled gently and said, “Why are you so worked up? I remember that your parents forked out the money for you to build your current house. I think my family also contributed a lot of money then. Why don’t you return that amount of money to us first so that my family can lend the money to Tan Bao and Tan Yue. After all, we’re a family. We should repay what we borrowed.”

Tan Hu, the Tan family’s eldest son, grabbed hold of Xu Xiang, who was about to go forward and argue with Xia Wen. After all, this matter had nothing to do with their family. Their family had their own house and it was big enough for them to live in. They must not get themselves into trouble. If Xia Wen got angry, they would also be affected.

“In that case, ask your sister-in-law to lend us the money. We will definitely return the money to her in the future. She must still have a lot of money left after buying these houses,” Jiang Yi said.

Xia Wen asked again, "Then how do we calculate the interest?"

"Do we still need to pay interest? Even if we're not close relatives with her, we're still in-laws of the Xia family. Shouldn't she not ask for interest on your account?" Jiang Yi said disdainfully.

Xia Wen knew that he did not have any say. If Qiao Mei put the money in a fixed deposit account in the bank, she would be able to earn a few hundred dollars a month. There was no need for her to go to work at all. She just needed to wait for the bank to pay her interest every month. Moreover, Qiao Mei had even more money locked away in the bank vault. He knew all these because he was the one who made all these arrangements for her.

"I don't borrow money to pay for my expenses. If you find it tough to live at home, then come and stay at my place for a few days. We can still fit quite a number of people in my living room. It's fine as long as you don't mind staying here. I can also help take care of the children. I like being with children the most. It's fine for all of them to come to my house," Xia Wen said with a smile as he looked at Tan Yue's children.

Tan Jing stood by the kitchen and was stunned. What did Xia Wen just say...

He liked children... he said he liked children...

For so many years, every time she asked Xia Wen about this matter, he would avoid answering her. However, she knew that Xia Wen wanted a child of his own. Every time Xia Wen passed by the children's park downstairs, he would stay there for a long time and watch the children playing with a smile on his face.

Xia Wen finally admitted that he liked children.

"How can we live in your house!" Tan Yue whispered.

Seeing that there was no way to negotiate the terms, they did not dwell on it. At most, they would think of a way to resolve it themselves and not ask Xia Wen for help.



“Let’s go! We won’t beg you, alright!” Jiang Yi said as she smacked the table.

Chapter 817 - 817 Exquisite Choker

817 Exquisite Choker

Xia Wen did not stop them from leaving. He maintained a smile on his face until they all left. After closing the door, he silently collected the crockery and cutlery and cleaned up the house. He was not the kind of person to let Tan Jing do all these things alone.

Tan Jing continued to stand at the kitchen door in a daze and looked at Xia Wen sadly. The man in front of her liked children. Xia Wen despised her for not being able to have children, but he had not said it to her explicitly just to save her the embarrassment.

Even after Xia Wen tidied up the house, Tan Jing still stared at him blankly like a statue.

“You... should rest early,” Xia Wen said after some hesitation.

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“So you like children?” Tan Jing asked calmly.

Xia Wen did not want to lie to Tan Jing. He really liked children very much and had been very envious of other people with children for so many years. However, he would not blame Tan Jing for all these things. This kind of thing was about fate. Back then, Xia Zhe had gotten Qiao Mei pregnant after one night. That was fate at work.

“Yes, I like children, but it doesn’t matter if we have children or not. You should rest early.” After saying that, Xia Wen went into the bedroom.

Tan Jing leaned against the door frame and slowly collapsed to the ground. Xia Wen finally admitted it himself.

It was all Qiao Mei's fault! If Qiao Mei had not married Xia Zhe and entered the Xia family, she would not have ended up in this state!

If not for Qiao Mei's pregnancy, Xia Wen would not have liked children so much. Her family also would not have come to ask for the house, let alone curse her for being an infertile woman.

A fierce glint appeared in Tan Jing's eyes. She must definitely make Qiao Mei pay the price.

The next day, they both went to work as usual. However, Tan Jing and Xia Wen began to interact less. Xia Wen did not find it strange at all. Tan Jing needed to work on her own issues. Over the years, they had already quarreled too many times over the matter of having children.

Every time, Xia Wen would be the one to comfort Tan Jing and help her deal with the Tan family's matters so that she would not feel burdened. This time, he would let Tan Jing calm down on her own.

Xia He came to Qiao Mei's place to hang out as usual. For some reason, during this period of time, she really liked spending time here. She always felt a sense of familiarity and leisure in this courtyard.

"Qiao Mei, I'm here!" Xia He quickly walked into the courtyard with a big roast chicken.

"Roast chicken! How do you know I want to eat it! I've been talking about eating it for the past two days!" Qiao Mei's eyes were bright, as if there were stars hidden in them.

Actually, she was not just craving roast chicken. She craved everything and just wanted to take a bite of every dish.

Perhaps it was because her babies were greedy. She would not admit that she was the one who wanted to eat it!

"Aunt asked me to come and ask you to go to her place for a checkup in the afternoon. She said we should also bring Grandpa Qiao and your mother along, and the children as well. I don't think Zhang Miao is walking that well," Xia He said worriedly.

Qiao Mei also noticed this. Perhaps it was because the girl had been bedridden for a long time and was not used to walking anymore. Those children had probably never undergone a physical examination before and it would be good for them to get checked out.

“Alright, let’s do as you say.” Qiao Mei smiled sweetly.

Xia He mysteriously took out a red brocade box from behind her. There was a gift for Qiao Mei inside. Recently, Kong Lu had returned her a lot of money. She had been thinking about what to give Qiao Mei, so she bought this necklace. It was even made of gold and jade! It had cost her a lot of money.

“What is this?” Qiao Mei asked.

“I noticed that you like jade more, so I went to the antique market to buy you a gold and jade necklace. See if you like it,” Xia He said.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia He obsequiously and said sweetly, “Oh my~ I like anything that elder sister gives me~”

Xia He was so shocked by this that she quickly sat back and said disdainfully, “Just behave normally. I want to beat you up when you look like this. Hurry up and open it.”

It was a choker. The shop owner said that it was an item from more than 500 years ago and was a piece of real antique. There were figures of a dragon and a phoenix made of golden threads on it. In the middle, there was a black ink jade the size of a pigeon egg and of excellent transparency.

Qiao Mei gently touched the piece of jade on the choker. The energy was strong and they were mutually attracted to each other. This thing was definitely of excellent quality, second only to the necklace from Wu Min.

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She must treasure such a thing well and include it in her daughter's dowry in the future! Although she was not sure if it was really from 500 years ago, it would definitely be worth a few million dollars in the future. If it was well-preserved, it might even be worth tens of millions.

"How much money did you spend? Don't tell me you bought me a choker with all the money that Kong Lu returned to you?" Qiao Mei asked in disbelief.

Xia He touched her head in embarrassment. Qiao Mei was right. Kong Lu sent her 4,000 dollars this time and the choker had cost her 3,600 dollars.

However, she was willing to spend any amount of money on Qiao Mei!

Qiao Mei was worth her efforts!

"It's fine. I'm making a lot of money now plus I don't have any family to support, so don't worry about me. I even bought two longevity locks for your babies," Xia He said proudly.

Actually, the longevity locks were a gift from the seller when she bought this choker. They were certainly not as valuable.

In the afternoon, all of them went to Xia Fang's hospital together. Xia Fang had worked overtime for a few days so that she could take a break today and do a proper checkup for Qiao Mei.

Xia He brought the others for their physical examinations. Xia Fang brought Qiao Mei to the obstetrics and gynecology department for a full-body checkup. The report came out very quickly. The babies were very healthy and she could give birth at full term without any negative impact.

"I'm relieved to see that you're fine. The two babies are doing very well," Xia Fang said.

Qiao Mei pretended to be curious and asked, "Then are my babies two boys or two girls?"

Xia Fang smiled and did not say anything. According to the rules, she could not release the information. Even if Xu Lan asked, she still would not say anything. No matter if the babies were boys or girls, they were the Xia family's treasures. Once they were born, the truth would be revealed.

The full medical report would only be out in a few days and Xia Fang would pass it to Qiao Mei when it was ready. Since it was rare for everyone to be gathered together today, they went to a nearby state-owned restaurant for a meal and then took a walk home together.

"Elder sister, can you stay with me tonight?" Qiao Mei said charmingly.

For some reason, she kept feeling a sense of emptiness in her heart recently. Although Qiao Qiang was just living nearby in the back part and Li Gui came to chat and take a stroll with her every day, she still felt uncomfortable.

It was as if something was missing. Perhaps her life was too dull.

"I'm not busy at work recently so I have time to accompany you, but you have to teach me how to cook!" Xia He said with a laugh.

"It's just cooking! No problem! The goal is just to produce edible food right?" Qiao Mei said jokingly.

Xia He really felt like teaching Qiao Mei a lesson for teasing her. However, Qiao Mei's body was already much clumsier than before. Everything could wait until after she gave birth.

"Sure, sure, sure. Whatever you say is fine." From afar, Xia He could see a group of people sitting at Qiao Mei's main door. They looked a little familiar and she asked curiously, "Look... who are those people at your door? Why are they all sitting at the door and not leaving?"

Qiao Mei had never seen these people before, but they looked like they were here to cause trouble.

"Mom, bring my younger siblings home through the street at the back," Qiao Mei said.

Li Gui went forward and grabbed Qiao Mei's sleeve. "Come home with me through the back door. What if they do something to you?"

"That's right, Auntie is right. Let's all use the back door," Xia He echoed.

Qiao Mei did not want to hide. Whatever needed to happen would happen. If these people were really here to cause trouble, they would have to confront one another head-on sooner or later.

"Let the children go back first. I'm fine. They won't do anything to me in broad daylight," Qiao Mei said.

Li Gui had no choice but to bring the four children home first. She would come back to look for Qiao Mei after she sent them back.

The Tan family members had been sitting outside Qiao Mei's house for the entire afternoon. The scorching sun was so hot that they almost fainted. They did not drink even a single drop of water because they wanted to extort a sum of money from Qiao Mei.

"Hey! Look and see if that pregnant woman is Qiao Mei!" Xu Xiang said excitedly as she pointed at Qiao Mei in the distance.

Tan Yue did not know Qiao Mei, but she had seen Xia He before so she confirmed it.

"That's right! It's Qiao Mei! We've finally waited till she's back!" Tan Yue said happily.

Tan Bai and Jiang Yi stood up and dusted themselves off as they looked expectantly at Qiao Mei who was walking towards them. Since Xia Wen did not want to help them, then they would solve the problem themselves!

Chapter 819 Helping Relatives

"Why are you sitting at the door of my family's house?" Qiao Mei asked gently.

The Tan family members looked at one another. This was completely different from what they had imagined Qiao Mei to be. Tan Jing had told them that Qiao Mei was good at bewitching people and was a petty person, that she had a bad temper and would throw a tantrum easily.

Could it be that Tan Jing had lied to them? Qiao Mei looked so gentle and it was obvious that she was easy to bully!

"You must be Qiao Mei. We're your in-laws! You've never met us before, but we've long wanted to come and visit you!" Jiang Yi went forward excitedly to hold Qiao Mei's hands as she spoke in a friendly manner.

Xia He frowned and slapped Jiang Yi's hand away. She finally remembered who these people were. The Tan family was still as shameless as ever.

She used to rarely return to the capital and only met the Tan family members when Xia Wen got married. Later on, the Tan family members even came to look for her a few times. After so many years, the Tan family still seemed to be stuck in a rut.

"If you want to talk, just talk. Don't grab her. If anything happens, you won't be able to bear the responsibility," Xia He said coldly.

Jiang Yi said unhappily, "You're Xia He, aren't you? I'm your sister-in-law's mother after all. Why don't you have any manners! How can a woman be so fragile just because she's pregnant? I've given birth to so many children, but I still can work!"

Qiao Qiang's expression was also quite unhappy. He did not expect Xia Wen's wife to have this type of maternal family. He really did not know how Xia Jun allowed Xia Wen to become related to such a family.

Qiao Mei also stopped pretending to be gentle. Nowadays, she could not bear to hear anything bad about her babies.

"I'm unable to help you. Go and talk to my eldest brother," Qiao Mei said with a sullen expression.

"Hey, hey, hey! We have something to discuss!" Jiang Yi said as she blocked Qiao Mei.

Tan Yue looked at the increasing number of onlookers and whispered, "Um... can we talk inside?"

Qiao Mei did not want to blow this matter up. After all, Xia Wen treated her very well.

"Come in," Qiao Mei said coldly.

As soon as the Tan family members entered the courtyard, they could no longer hold back their feelings. This was the first time they had seen such a luxurious courtyard and they thought it was decorated like a palace. When they entered the main hall, it was as if they had never been out of their own house before. They looked around everywhere and touched everything, and even wanted to enter Qiao Mei's bedroom to take a look.

"Hey! Where do you think you're going!" Xia He said as she pointed at Jiang Yi.

Jiang Yi walked back embarrassedly and looked longingly in the direction of Qiao Mei's bedroom. She had heard that Qiao Mei liked to collect antiques and she could tell that the jade bangle on Qiao Mei's wrist was worth a lot of money. If only she could go into the room and steal something, she would be rich.

"Alright, sit down. Just say what you want to say," Xia He said.

Since Jiang Yi still had a favor to ask, she did not mind Xia He's attitude. She turned around and said to Qiao Mei obsequiously, "I'm your sister-in-law's mother. I'm here to visit you and see how you're doing."

Xia He snorted disdainfully. How could so many people come to pay someone a visit without bringing anything? It would already be a blessing if they did not steal anything on their way out.

"As you can see, I'm in good health. You can leave now," Qiao Mei said in a direct manner.



The smile on Jiang Yi's face froze. She did not expect Qiao Mei's attitude to be so cold. Tan Bai coughed twice and said, "Erm, we're here because we have a favor to ask of you. I wonder if you can help us."

Without thinking, Qiao Mei blurted out, "No, I don't have the ability to help you."

"How can you reject us when you haven't even heard our request! Don't you have any manners!" Tan Yue said unhappily.

Xia He could not take it anymore and snapped, "You're the ones begging us now, not the other way round. Not only do you have such a bad attitude when you come to ask for help, but you also don't bring anything with you. Do you visit someone empty-handed just because you think that you're an elder?"

"You! We're not doing well so we have no choice," Jiang Yi said pitifully.

"We're here this time to ask if you're going to live in the house you bought some time back? If you're not, can you help us out?" Tan Bai said.

Qiao Mei and Xia He looked at each other and smiled. Trouble had come as they expected. The house would definitely attract people who eyed it covetously.

Chapter 820 High Rent

"So do you intend to rent my house?" Qiao Mei asked.

"We don't have money, but we can give you an IOU! When we have money in the future, we'll definitely pay you back!" When Jiang Yi saw that Qiao Mei's attitude was still rather gentle, she quickly tried to act pitiful.

Qiao Mei nodded in satisfaction. She already intended to find someone to rent that house. An empty house would become inhabitable if it was left vacant. No matter how well a house was built, it could not maintain its structure if it was not looked after. The annual maintenance fee for an empty house would also be quite high, so it made more sense to rent it out.

However, she was worried about renting it to the Tan family. Putting aside whether the Tan family had money or not, even if they did have the money for the rent, Qiao Mei did not want to be acquainted with such a family.

Otherwise, in the future, they would use the excuse of being relatives to come to her place every few days to ask for something. She had seen this kind of thing many times. Back then, Qiao Yu had done that to her all the time.

"An IOU is fine. Then how many rooms do you plan to rent? Or do you intend to rent the entire house? The rent is different for individual rooms and the entire house. Let me know your preference," Qiao Mei said.

When the Tan family members saw that Qiao Mei was so amiable, they definitely eyed the entire house. If they could all move in to enjoy life, it would definitely be more cost-effective than renting rooms.

"Then we'll rent the entire place!" Jiang Yi said happily.

Xia He gripped Qiao Mei's arm nervously to indicate to Qiao Mei that she should think it through before speaking. Qiao Mei smiled at her and patted her hand gently to reassure her.

"Alright, there's 12 rooms in that house. The rent for each room is 100 dollars a month, so it's 1,200 dollars a month for 12 rooms. I'll give you a discount by letting you use the courtyard for free," Qiao Mei said with a smile.

When Xia He heard this, she sat back on the chair and smiled as she watched the show. If the rent was 1,200 dollars a month, even 10 of her could not afford it. Moreover, the Tan family members were all unemployed and relied on the two elders of the Tan family to support all of them. They definitely could not afford such an amount.

"It's so expensive! You're simply robbing us!" Tan Yue said angrily.

"How am I robbing you? I spent a lot of money to buy the house. During the renovations, we put in the best and latest items. There's even an oven in the kitchen and a large color television in the main hall.

I'm quoting a cheap rent because you're relatives. Otherwise, I would have asked for 120 dollars per room!" Qiao Mei said.

Qiao Mei was right. That house was very close to the commercial street. Upon leaving the alley, there was a bus stop nearby. There was also a large market at the entrance which sold things at low prices, so it was a very convenient location.

The rent was actually not as expensive as Qiao Mei had quoted, but it would still be around 40 dollars per room. During this time, the rent for most rooms was about 10 dollars, and the better ones would cost 25 dollars. For a house like Qiao Mei's that had its own courtyard and in a convenient location that was close to transportation, the rent of 40 dollars was considered reasonable.

She quoted a rate of more than 100 dollars just to scare off the Tan family.

The Tan family members looked at one another. Actually, they did not care how much money Qiao Mei quoted. All they cared about was the house. As long as Qiao Mei let them live in the house, did it matter if they did not pay in the end? They were all relatives, so how could she have the cheek to chase them for money?

"Sure! Then when are we signing the agreement?" Jiang Yi asked.

"There's no hurry. The rent will be more than 10,000 dollars a year. You have to use your current property and land as collateral. Otherwise, I won't feel at ease," Qiao Mei said nonchalantly.

"You still want our house!" Tan Yue looked at Qiao Mei in shock.

Tan Jing had said that this woman was just a country pumpkin from the village, so how did she know about collaterals and agreements?

She had Xia Wen to help her when she bought the house, so Xia Wen was definitely the one who did up the agreement. They did not expect Qiao Mei to know how to handle such things. They assumed that she was just a nouveau riche.

They thought that Qiao Mei was just a rich and brainless woman so they were not scared of her at all.

"That's right. Otherwise, if you owe me rent for 10 years, that will be close to 150,000 dollars. I also need the money. If you don't use your house as collateral, I won't be able to seek recourse if you go back on your word. Moreover, if you owe me money, you'll also need to pay annual interest. Let's go with the rate of paying 130 for every 90," Qiao Mei said.

That was the loan sharks' way of charging interest! Was Qiao Mei crazy?! Even if they sold everything they had, it would be impossible for them to pay her back.

"Are you kidding us? Aren't you afraid of going to jail?" Tan Yue questioned.