

Fat Wife 1071

Chapter 1071 The Loser Will Give Gold Bars

Qiao Mei slowly made her way to the backyard. At this moment, she looked so dazzling that everyone's attention was focused on her.

"We're just talking about you! Come and hold off your mother-in-law. If you don't come soon, your mother-in-law is going to praise you to the skies!" Xia Xiu said with a smile.

"Whatever Mother says definitely makes sense~" Qiao Mei said as she sat obediently beside Xu Lan.

Xu Lan looked at everyone proudly and said, "See! My daughter-in-law is the best! Qiao Mei, ignore them. They're all just jealous of me."

This was the first time Xia He had seen so many different types of expressions on Xu Lan's face. She looked as if she simply wanted to keep Qiao Mei by her side and to sing praises of Qiao Mei to everyone she met!

"Hmph! I'll definitely be able to find a daughter-in-law like Qiao Mei! Just wait and see! When my son gets married, don't be too shocked!" Liu Fen said indignantly.

"If Xia Yu and Xia Yuan can find you daughters-in-law who are better than Qiao Mei! I'll give them gold bars when they get married!" Xu Lan said in a fit of pique.

Everyone looked at Xu Lan out of surprise. This was the stingiest woman in the family. Although Xu Lan looked like a generous rich lady, she was actually very stingy. She would not spend a single cent unnecessarily and would only buy necessities.

It was especially difficult to convince Xu Lan to give an expensive gift to anyone. No one had ever managed to get anything from Xu Lan.

"You say it yourself! Don't regret it and go back on your word later!" Liu Fen said.

"Yes, I said it. There are so many witnesses! Why will I lie to you?" Xu Lan said with a laugh.

"Then... how big is the gold bar that you intend to give? Don't just get a tiny one. Otherwise, what is it good for!" Liu Fen said disdainfully.

"Am I that kind of person? Don't worry, I won't forget about your two precious sons. Besides, are you sure you can find a better daughter-in-law than our Qiao Mei! Maybe you will have to give me a gold bar instead!" Xu Lan said.

Xia Yu was a serious person and he actually resembled Xia Mao a little. Being a very quiet person, he did not like to talk much. He was very hardworking and had already achieved many of his goals, but he just could not get his head around this topic called love. He had never been in a relationship before and he had not even met a girl he was interested in.

Liu Fen often suspected that Xia Yu was secretly dating but did not want to tell his family about it. It was not until later that she realized all Xia Yu did every day was to go to work and return home to study. She had to accept the fact that Xia Yu was not interested in dating at all. If Xia Yu could find a girl he liked, it would be as rare as finding an iron tree in bloom!

Xia Yuan had a completely different personality. He was a sociable person and could get along with everyone. He had so many girlfriends that he lost count of them. However, Liu Fen was never satisfied with any of his girlfriends. He finally managed to find a girl of equal social status last year, but he messed it up in the end.

Her two sons really gave her a headache. If they could find her a daughter-in-law similar to Qiao Mei, she would be happy even if the girl only had half of Qiao Mei's capabilities! That would still be a much better situation than now!

Everyone chatted and laughed, trying to imagine and make up stories about the kind of girls whom Xia Yu and Xia Yuan would marry in the end. They even discussed whether their future children would be boys or girls! As it went on, the things they talked about became more and more far-fetched.

"Do you think I should just run a kindergarten in the future? Look, my eldest daughter has two children and my second daughter has three. If Xia Yu and Xia Yuan have two children each, then an old woman like me will have to take care of nine children! I'll be exhausted!" Liu Fen said in shock.

"Shouldn't you be happy about that! My Xiang Chen told me that he won't get married until he's 28 years old! Nowadays, everyone gets married at around 20 years old. By the time they are 28 years old, their children are already in school! Yet my son only wants to get married at that time! It's so worrying!" Xia Fang said sadly.

"Your Xiang Chen is a promising young man. He might even become a professor in the university like what Xia Wen used to do! Or he could even go overseas to further his studies. You should feel satisfied. Xiang Chen is already considered an obedient child!" Xia Xiu comforted her.

"He's still not as outstanding as Eldest Sister-in-law's children. Her eldest is in politics, her second is so good-looking and her third is in the army and has a capable and beautiful wife. If I'm half as lucky as Eldest Sister-in-law, I'll even laugh in my sleep!" Liu Fen said enviously.

Chapter 1072 Look For The Tan Family

"What's so good about that! Don't spout nonsense! At my age, I still don't have a grandchild yet!" Xu Lan said.

Xia He quickly grabbed Xu Lan's hand and placed it on Qiao Mei's stomach as she said, "Yes you do! Here! Look, isn't your eldest grandchild here?"

She was worried that someone would mention her divorce again. Ever since she divorced Kong Lu, people around her kept asking questions about it. Whenever she happened to meet someone she knew, there were numerous questions thrown at her. Many people were anxiously waiting to introduce a partner to her.

To put it nicely, they were worried about her future happiness. To put it bluntly, they were just eyeing the Xia family's prestige and wanted to build a relationship with the Xia family by having Xia He marry into their family.

"That's right, I'm about to become a grandmother soon! My happy days are coming!" Xu Lan said with a smile.

Tan Jing was the only person who sat silently at one side. Ever since Tan Jing arrived at Qiao Mei's house, Xu Lan had not even looked at her once or even said a word to her. Everyone kept praising Qiao Mei for being a good daughter-in-law, but no one made any mention of Xu Lan's other daughter-in-law, Tan Jing.

All of them treated her like she was invisible. Other than Xia Wen who would occasionally come to check on her, everyone else avoided her like she was a sewage rat.

"Mother... I'm not feeling so well. I'll go into the room and rest for a while," Tan Jing went over to Xu Lan and whispered.

Xu Lan flicked her hand nonchalantly and did not even speak to Tan Jing. In her heart, Xu Lan still felt disgusted with Tan Jing. It was not because of the issue about having children, but because Tan Jing had really gone overboard in the way she treated Xia Wen some time ago. It was time to suppress the Tan family's arrogance and let them know who had the upper hand in this in-law relationship.

The Xia family had helped the Tan family so many times over the years, both openly and secretly. However, not only were they ungrateful, they even belittled the Xia family time and time again, almost causing the Xia family to get into trouble. If Zhou Hua was considered a danger to the family, then Tan Jing was not far behind her.

"Hey! Eldest Sister-in-law, is there still no good news from Tan Jing this year? Have you asked Xia Wen to go for a checkup? Can it be Xia Wen who has a problem?" Liu Fen asked softly.

"There's nothing wrong with Xia Wen. He secretly came to look for me before. We did a checkup for him and concluded that there's nothing wrong with him," Xia Fang said.

"It's not like I can talk about this issue. Previously, I wanted to bring Tan Jing to see Xia Fang, but before I could elaborate, she said that I was blaming her even though it was not even important to Xia Wen. So I stopped caring about it," Xu Lan said.

Liu Fen stole a glance at the figure of the departing Tan Jing and said unhappily, "I just know the problem is with Tan Jing! How can our Xia Wen be the problem! Seriously, she has wasted Xia Wen's time for so many years! Is she going to let Xia Wen remain childless for the rest of his life?"

Xu Lan shook her head resignedly. Her children had their own lives to live. She could not interfere in this matter and did not want to say anything more. Xia Wen was not a child anymore and knew how to decide for himself. It was not as if she could force Xia Wen to get a divorce and find another wife!

A child was the fruit borne out of love between a couple. If there was no love, it was better not to have a child. Otherwise, the child would have a tough life after being born.

Tan Jing did not go very far. She stood quietly around the corner and listened to the people in the courtyard talking about her. She just knew that everyone could not stand her! All of them despised her for being infertile! She knew that the moment she left, everyone would definitely talk about her.

After eavesdropping for a long time, Tan Jing made up her mind. She left Qiao Mei's house without looking back and did not even tell anyone where she was going. She went to the entrance of the alley and took the bus all the way to the Tan family's house.

After what happened today, she had made up her mind to adopt that child. As long as she had a child, she would be able to gain a foothold in the Xia family. As long as this child's surname was Xia and he acknowledged Xia Wen as his father, his bloodline did not matter.

The only thing Tan Jing desperately wanted to do now was to prove that she could be as useful as Qiao Mei, so that Xu Lan would value her and see that she could also contribute to the Xia family.

She could let Xia Wen have descendants too! As long as the child was related to either the Tan family or the Xia family, it should be enough right?

When Tan Jing reached the main door, she kept pounding the door knocker. The deafening sound could be heard from a long way away.

"Who is it! It's the new year, do you have to do this! Why are you knocking so incessantly! Are you trying to drive us to our graves!" Jiang Yi said angrily.

Chapter 1073 Considering Adoption

"Mom! Open the door! I'm back!" Tan Jing shouted through the crack in the door.

Jiang Yi opened the door excitedly, but she realized that there was only Tan Jing standing in front of her. She stepped outside and looked around, but she did not see any car on the street. There was no one on the main street.

"Mom, what are you looking for?" Tan Jing asked curiously.

"You're back alone? Where's Xia Wen?" Jiang Yi said with a frown.

Tan Jing had left in a hurry and did not even bother to tell Xia Wen. Anyway, no one in the Xia family cared about her. She reckoned that even if she did not go back tonight, no one would notice.

"He's not here. I'm back by myself. Can't I come back to my own house?" Tan Jing asked.

"You little asshole, what nonsense are you talking about! It's up to you whether you want to come back or not! What has it got to do with me!" Jiang Yi grumbled.

If Xia Wen did not come back with Tan Jing, then what was the use of her coming back alone! In the past years when Xia Wen came with Tan Jing for the new year visit, he would come with a truck full of things. The trunk would be packed so tightly that there was no space at all. Since Tan Jing came back alone this year, it meant that there was none of the good stuff. Therefore, Jiang Yi did not welcome her at all.

After Tan Jing entered the house, the Tan family members had the same reaction as Jiang Yi. They first looked at Tan Jing, then looked behind her excitedly. Finally, their eyes were filled with disappointment.

"Where's Xia Wen? Why isn't he here?" Tan Hu questioned.

"He's busy, so I'm back on my own," Tan Jing said.

"Then did Xia Wen's driver send you here? Or did you make your way here yourself?" Tan Hu continued to ask.

"Can't I come back on my own?" Tan Jing said as she looked at Tan Hu calmly, as if she was already used to such treatment.

Tan Hu curled his lips in dissatisfaction and said, "What's the use of you coming back when Xia Wen isn't here! You even come back empty-handed! You have a big family here! Yet you come back without bringing anything with you! You're really shameless."

Tan Jing could not be bothered to argue with Tan Hu. She grabbed hold of Jiang Yi and went to another room in silence, then she said, "Which family's child did you mention to me the last time? Are they closely related to us? What's their background?"

Jiang Yi found it a little unbelievable. Tan Jing had rejected her immediately back then and there had been no news after that. Why did Tan Jing suddenly come to ask about this matter today? Could it be that the Xia family was very satisfied with this child? Or was it the Xia family's idea to adopt a child?

That should not be the case. Qiao Mei was about to give birth to the Xia family's first great-grandchildren, so why would they agree to Tan Jing adopting a child at this juncture? It was going to be hectic looking after Qiao Mei's two babies, so why would they want to add on another burden?

"Xia Wen has agreed?" Jiang Yi asked.

Tan Jing hesitated for a moment before nodding. She would just take it that Xia Wen had agreed. She should be able to make the decision on this matter! As long as she brought the child home, Xia Wen would not be so heartless as to send the child away. She would act first and worry about it later. It did not matter if Xia Wen blamed her after that. By then, the child would be theirs and the Xia family members would no longer be able to look down on her.

"It's good so long as Xia Wen agrees. You don't know this child. He belongs to a relative from our hometown. They have seven or eight children and they really have no money to feed everyone, so they came to ask me if I have any way to help them sell the child. I immediately thought of you then. See how

good I am to you! I think of you even in such a situation! Otherwise, I would have helped them sell the child long ago!" Jiang Yi said proudly.

"Sell? Is this child of unknown origin? I thought it's meant to be an adoption? How did it become selling the child?" Tan Jing said fearfully.

No matter how much Tan Jing wanted a child, she could not do anything illegal. If Xia Wen's promotion was affected because of her, the rest of her life would be ruined! If that was the case, she would rather go to the orphanage. It was better to adopt a totally unrelated child than to have a child of unknown origin.

"No, but you have to give the family some money for food. It's not easy for them to bring up the child too. Now that they're giving their child to you, shouldn't you buy some food for them?" Jiang Yi changed the narrative suddenly.

Tan Jing felt much more at ease after hearing this explanation. She asked a few more questions before she felt completely at ease. However, she still did not know if she had any affinity with this child, or if he had a good temper and personality, or if he was willing to return to the Xia family with her.

If the child was very mischievous, then it would be too much trouble! In that case, she would prefer not to take in such a child.

Chapter 1074 Choosing The Child

"If you agree to this matter, then bring 1,000 dollars to me the day after tomorrow. I'll get that family to send the child over and we'll do an exchange. Then it'll be considered done," Jiang Yi said calmly.

An amount of 1,000 dollars! Tan Jing looked at Jiang Yi in shock. An amount of 100 dollars was already considered a huge sum of money to her. If Jiang Yi even dared to ask her for 1,000 dollars, she did not believe that those people were not selling the child.

"I can't give them so much money, but I can buy enough groceries for their family to eat their fill for the first half of the year. I will not agree to anything else. There are so many children out there and I can adopt any of them," Tan Jing said.

"Do you think you can call the shots? You think you can get a child if you feel like it or call it off if you change your mind. You don't get to do things like this! Are those children out there related to us by blood! Go and ask Xia Wen to send the money over. Otherwise, I'll expose everything you said to me and we'll see who's the one who'll be disgraced," Jiang Yi said mockingly to Tan Jing.

Jiang Yi was already so old, so why would she care about her reputation? If reputation was important to her, then she would not have clung to Tan Jing and the Xia family like a leech for so many years.

Was there not a saying?

Shameless people were invincible.

Since Jiang Yi was behaving so shamelessly with Tan Jing, therefore Tan Jing did not think there was anything wrong with turning her back on her mother. Was this about behaving shamelessly? She could do that too. After all, did she even command any more respect nowadays?

These people who called themselves her family members had nothing but money on their minds. Everyone in the neighborhood knew that Tan Jing was infertile. At this moment, the Xia family was starting to treat her coldly, Xia Wen was drifting away from her, and she had no one to rely on and no job to speak of.

Since she was already a person who had nothing, she was not afraid of anything. At most, she would just fight it to the death with Jiang Yi.

"I don't have any money, I only have my life left. If you don't give me this child, I'll go to the police and report you for abducting and trafficking children. Let's see who's the one who'll suffer then!" Tan Jing said with a smile.

"Are you crazy! You actually want to send your own mother to jail! How can there be a daughter like you!" Jiang Yi roared.

"I don't just want to send you to jail, but the rest of the family too! Tan Hu is still gambling outside. Isn't Tan Bao having an affair outside? I recall that Tan Shi is going to be of marriageable age soon. If people

find out that he has family members with criminal records, will there be any nice girls who will want to marry him? If I can't live a good life, then none of you can have a good life too!" Tan Jing said fiercely.

Among all her family members, the only person she did not mention was Tan Yue. Tan Yue also had a hard life and went through similar experiences as Tan Jing when she was young. Even after getting married to Zhou Nan, she still had a tough life. She had already given birth to three daughters after four years of marriage. Zhou Nan said that as long as she could not give birth to a son, she would need to continue to give birth until the Zhou family had a successor. He did not even care about whether Tan Yue's health could take it.

"I want to see this child tomorrow! If you don't bring me the child, don't blame me for doing what I need to do!" Tan Jing said.

Jiang Yi said nervously, "Even if we inform the family tonight, the child won't be able to get here until the morning of the day after tomorrow. Do you think he can travel by rocket!"

"Fine, then let's do it the day after tomorrow. I'll buy some groceries for this child's family but I won't give them anything else. Isn't it your intention for a child from the Tan family to get a share of the Xia family's assets? Don't think that I don't know what you're thinking. If you want money, then you should behave nicely. Otherwise, none of you can have a good life!" Tan Jing said.

Tan Hu stood outside and heard everything that was being discussed in the room. Tan Jing needed a child to fight for a share of the Xia family's assets and it must be a child from the Tan family.

If so, then why not his son, Tan Xue? If the stakes were the Xia family's assets, he was willing to give his own son to Tan Jing. They were biological aunt and nephew! This familial relationship was definitely much closer than one with a distant relative! Even if it ended up with Tan Jing only getting a small share of the assets, she would at least treat his son well.

Tan Hu immediately turned around to pull Xu Xiang out of the house. The two of them sneaked into the woodshed for a chat.

"What are you doing! I'm stewing vegetables in the pot! Your mother will scold me again if the dish gets burnt! Let me go back!" Xu Xiang said as she struggled.

Chapter 1075 Sell The Child For A Fortune

"Lower your voice! Sister-in-law is in the kitchen and can help out! That wretched girl Tan Yue is also there. So what if you come out for a while!" Tan Hu said unhappily.

Xu Xiang broke free from Tan Hu's grip and rubbed the spot where he grabbed her. He was a strong man but did not seem to know his own strength. Fortunately, she was hardy enough to withstand it.

"What exactly do you want! Just say it! I must go back soon! Your mother will never reprimand you but if she sees that I'm not around, she will definitely scold me," Xu Xiang said.

"I want Tan Jing to bring up our kid," Tan Hu said as he looked at Xu Xiang seriously.

Xu Xiang thought that Tan Hu was joking with her and said laughingly, "Even if you find your elder sister disgusting, you shouldn't go to this extent. Is it because she can't have children? But she married well! She doesn't have to worry about her future even if she doesn't have children in this life. Don't hurt your elder sister like what your mother does. Tan Xue still needs her help in the future!"

"What I mean is I want to give him to Tan Jing. He will become Tan Jing's child," Tan Hu repeated.

Xu Xiang's smile froze on her face. She could not believe what she just heard. What was Tan Hu talking about? Giving Tan Xue to Tan Jing so that Tan Xue's surname would become Xia and his name would be Xia Xue? She had thought that Tan Hu was joking with her, but now it seemed that he was serious about it.

"Are you crazy! That's our son! We only have one son! Are you drunk! Do you know what you're saying!" Xu Xiang said angrily.

"Listen to me! Listen to me carefully!" Tan Hu grabbed hold of Xu Xiang tightly and said, "I just heard Mom and Tan Jing talking about how Tan Jing is going to adopt one of the children in the extended Tan family. The child will become Tan Jing's child and will get a share of the Xia family's assets in the future."

Even if it was a tiny share of the Xia family's wealth, it would be enough for Tan Hu and Xu Xiang to live well for the rest of their lives! Moreover, Tan Xue was already at an age where he could understand and remember things, unlike a young child. When Tan Xue grew up, they would be able to collude with him to slowly empty out the Xia family's assets. At that time, the Xia family's assets would all become Tan Hu's assets.

If they gave Tan Xue to Tan Jing, she would definitely have to give them some benefits. Otherwise, once they instructed Tan Xue to run home to them, Tan Jing's plan would completely fail.

In that case, they not only did not have to pay for Tan Xue's living expenses anymore, they could even make money out of him.

This was such a good deal! It was a business with guaranteed profits and no losses! So why not?

"I definitely won't agree! Are you even human! I think you must be a beast! Do you really think I don't have any support from my maternal family! He's my own flesh and blood. Even if I die, I won't give Tan Xue to Tan Jing. You'd better give up on this idea!" Xu Xiang pushed Tan Hu away forcefully and pointed at him as she scolded him.

"We can still have more children! But there's only one chance to do this! Don't tell me you're not tempted by the Xia family's assets at all!" Tan Hu said.

Xu Xiang indeed loved money and she was definitely interested in the Xia family's assets, but she would never sell her son to achieve her goal. Her son was her lifeblood. When she was giving birth to Tan Xue, she almost bled out and died on the operating table. It was not easy for her to have this child, so she would never hand him over to Tan Jing!

Tan Hu's last bit of patience was exhausted. He stared at Xu Xiang with bloodshot eyes and said fiercely, "Are you saying you're not going to do as I say?"

Xu Xiang said stubbornly, "Yes! If you want to send my son away! I... I... I'll divorce you! At most, I'll return to the Xu family and stay there forever! I won't sell my son for wealth!"

Seeing that Xu Xiang was unmoved by either force or persuasion, Tan Hu completely lost his patience. He rushed forward and started to beat Xu Xiang up. He even used the firewood next to him to hit Xu Xiang's back viciously. The scrawny Xu Xiang could not withstand such a beating at all and curled up on the ground as she groaned in pain.

"Ah!!!"

"B*tch! How dare you talk back to me! How dare you shout at me! How dare you feel so smug and refuse to listen just because I talk to you nicely! B*tch, I'll beat you to death today! Then I'll give Tan Xue to Tan Jing! I'll rub it in your face even after you die!" Tan Hu said angrily.

Chapter 1076 Take A Look At My Son

Xu Xiang's screams of pain very quickly attracted the attention of the people in the house, but no one moved and everyone acted like they did not hear her. They all just went about their own business. Only Tan Yue frowned slightly and seemed sympathetic.

All her brothers had the habit of hitting women. Even her father, Tan Bo, beat up Jiang Yi in his younger days. Tan Yue had witnessed all these incidents, but she could not and did not dare to do anything. If she went forward to stop them, they would beat her up as well. They did not care who they beat up during the process.

Tan Jing went out to go to the toilet. When she passed by the woodshed, she took a look inside. Xu Xiang already looked as if she was on her last breath. If this continued, she would very likely be beaten to death by Tan Hu.

"Cough, cough." Tan Jing coughed lightly twice before walking away rapidly. Tan Hu's hands stopped moving and the mad glint in his eyes gradually disappeared.

Tan Hu took a deep breath and threw away the piece of firewood in his hand. He said, "Pfft! I feel disgusted even when I hit you. I wanted to discuss it with you nicely but you have to make me do this. Anyway, I'm just informing you about this matter. In a while, I'll go and ask Tan Jing about adopting Tan Xue. You won't be able to change this fact even if you die."

With that, Tan Hu left the woodshed without looking back and went into the house to look for Tan Jing. He must speak to her about this matter as soon as possible. Otherwise, once the other child was here, Tan Xue would no longer stand a chance.

Xu Xiang lay on the ground in pain and could not speak. Tears flowed down from the corners of her eyes silently. All she could do now was to pray that Tan Jing would not accept Tan Xue.

"Eldest sister, come out with me for a while. I have something to tell you," Tan Hu said fawningly as he stood beside Tan Jing.

Tan Jing looked at Tan Hu in puzzlement. Tan Hu had never addressed her as eldest sister before. He already considered himself to be respectful if he called her by her full name. It was as odd as the sun rising from the west.

"What's the matter? Can't we talk here?" Tan Jing asked.

"Here..." Tan Hu looked around and whispered to Tan Jing, "There are too many people and it's not convenient. Eldest sister, just come out with me to say a few words. It'll only take five to six minutes."

She knew that Tan Hu would not dare to hit her as he knew that the Xia family would help her if he did that. At most, he would just threaten her, which was not a big deal. Therefore, Tan Jing was not worried about going outside with Tan Hu.

When they reached the door, Tan Hu just looked at Tan Jing and wondered how to tell her about his idea. After all, he had found out about her desire to adopt a child only because he eavesdropped on her conversation. Now that he was asking someone for help, he must behave appropriately.

"Are you going to say anything or not? If not, I'm leaving," Tan Jing said impatiently.

"I am! I am! It's... I heard that you're looking to adopt a child from the Tan family?" Tan Hu asked tentatively.

"Yes, there is indeed such a thing," Tan Jing admitted openly.

Tan Hu said happily, "What do you think of my Tan Xue?"

Tan Jing was a little shocked. She had never considered Tan Xue. Putting aside the child's character, there was only one boy in their branch of the Tan family. Her third brother, Tan Bao, had a daughter and her fourth brother was not married yet. If she took Tan Xue away, Jiang Yi would kill her!

"He's your only child. Are you willing to give him to me just like that? Aren't you afraid that Mom will scold you?" Tan Jing asked.

"I'm not afraid. He's my son and I can do whatever I want. There's no problem. Eldest sister, you should consider my Tan Xue. My son is really very obedient and sensible. He's definitely better than any of those relatives' children!" Tan Hu said.

Tan Jing thought for a moment and said, "I don't really have any say in this matter. It's up to Xia Wen to make the decision. Even if I think highly of Tan Xue, I can't just bring him home. I have to discuss it with Xia Wen. You should wait for me to ask him first."

If she rejected Tan Hu right now, they would definitely get into an argument. It was easier to push the issue to Xia Wen. Tan Hu probably would not dare to go straight to Xia Wen to offer the child to him.

"Alright, I'll ask my brother-in-law about it in the future," Tan Hu said.

The Xia family still had not sent anyone to look for Tan Jing by evening time. They did not even call the house to check if she was there. Feeling in low spirits, Tan Jing looked out of the window at the brightly lit houses outside.

Even in a wolf's den like the Tan family, there were so many couples. Tan Hu and Xu Xiang, Tan Bao and Wang Meng, and Tan Yue and Zhou Nan were all in pairs. Even though life was tough, each couple went through the hardships together.

Chapter 1077 An Encounter

She thought about how although she and Xia Wen had been together for so many years, it seemed that she was alone most of the time. Xia Wen would always be busy with the Xia family's matters and did not have much time for his own family. The two of them rarely went out for a meal on their own. In the past, they would have lunch together with their colleagues in the school canteen and then go back to the Xia family residence for dinner.

It was as if they stopped spending time together as a couple after they got married. After a while, the two of them found themselves having less and less common topics to talk about.

Tan Jing did not want to stay at the Tan family's house any longer. After saying a quick goodbye to Jiang Yi, she slowly walked down the main street and missed the last bus in the end.

All the shops in the vicinity were closed for the new year holidays and she had nowhere to go since she did not have any money on her. She had no choice but to wander to a small park nearby. She found a bench to sit on and quietly stared into the distance.

Suddenly, Tan Jing heard a clicking sound. She turned around and saw a very young man holding a camera and taking a photo of her. The man seemed a little shy and surprised to be discovered.

"Hello, I just thought that you looked very pretty just now and couldn't help but take a photo. If you don't feel comfortable, I can give you the film. This way, you don't have to worry about your photo being displayed in public," the man said softly as he walked forward in a gentlemanly manner.

This was the first time in more than 10 years that a man had said she looked pretty. She felt so aged and haggard, so how could she be good-looking? This man must be joking with her.

Tan Jing laughed self-deprecatingly and said resignedly, "Sir, you should give me the film. I don't think I'm as good-looking as you say. I hope you can ask for permission before taking someone's photo next time. Personally, I don't really like taking photos."

The man earnestly took out the film from the camera and handed it to Tan Jing. He kept a warm smile on his face as he did that, as if giving his entire roll of film to Tan Jing was no big deal.

Film was a single use item, so it was something very precious. Most people only have a few family photos which they displayed at home. These photos were usually taken at the photo studio during festive seasons when the entire family was around. The portable camera that he was holding was even rarer as it was an imported item. Film was equally expensive and not readily available.

"Don't you... feel sad about removing your film? Are you giving it to me because you don't have any other photos inside?" Tan Jing asked curiously.

"Compared to the price of the film, aren't your feelings more important? I'm a freelance photographer and I like to take photos of scenery everywhere I go. I place more importance on the unique and beautiful sight which I managed to capture just now. The image is already imprinted on my mind, so the film is already useless to me. Take it as my compensation to you," the man said.

This man was glib-tongued and all his words were very pleasant to the ears. Tan Jing was very curious about the man's background and why he was such a person. He even said that she was a unique sight? It was already good enough if she did not look like a mess.

"Don't make fun of me. Just remove the part with my image. There's no need to give me the entire row of film. This thing is not cheap," Tan Jing said.

The man nodded and took out a pair of small scissors from his pocket. He gently pulled out the film and slowly cut out the part with Tan Jing's image before placing it in her hand.

"Look, you're really beautiful," the man said with a smile.

Even though it was not a developed photo, she could still vaguely see the image on the film under the light. It was a picture of her sitting alone on the bench with an indescribable sense of disillusionment. It was well-taken and really looked very beautiful.

"It indeed looks good. Your skills are quite good," Tan Jing praised.

"No, it's because you're very good-looking to begin with. What I did was to capture your beauty in that moment," the man said.

Tan Jing stared into the man's eyes for a long time and felt that his eyes were so clear that they did not look tainted by the secular world at all. It seemed to be a common trait among artists. They all had their own unique perspective on the world.

"My name is Cheng Gu. May I know your name?" Cheng Gu asked as he stared into Tan Jing's eyes.

Tan Jing blushed slightly. This was the first time she had met such an intense man. She whispered, "Tan Jing."

Chapter 1078 Do You Have Any Wish

"It means serenity. Your name suits you. When I saw you just now, I also felt that you're serenely beautiful. Why are you here alone so late at night? There are no more public buses," Cheng Gu asked.

This was the first time someone had praised her in this manner. However, she also found it weird that this stranger was strolling around here and behaving so abnormally. Generally, only elderly men and women would take walks in this place and only during the day. Most young people did not want to live in this area.

Tan Jing looked at Cheng Gu warily and asked, "What about you? Why are you here alone?"

"I live in the city and I'm here today to visit my parents. I was on my way back to the city when I caught a glimpse of this place. Since the moon is so bright tonight, I got out of the car to take some photos. I never expect to run into you in this way," Cheng Gu said gently.

"Then where's your car? Where did you park?" Tan Jing asked.

Cheng Gu pointed at a white car in the distance and said, "That's my car. If you don't believe me, I can show you my driver's license. It's in the car."

Seeing that Cheng Gu was so calm and collected, Tan Jing did not suspect anything else. After all, he was just a stranger. After this chance meeting today, they might never see each other again. It would not matter to her at all.

"Why are you sitting here alone so late at night? Is there something troubling you?" Cheng Gu probed.

"Me? I didn't manage to catch the last bus, but indeed I haven't been doing too well recently. It's not a big deal. It's just some family issues. Your family probably has your issues too," Tan Jing said sadly.

Cheng Gu lowered his head shyly and said, "I'm not married yet... But it's obvious to me that you're unhappy. There's no light in your eyes."

Not married yet! Tan Jing looked at Cheng Gu in surprise. He was probably only slightly younger than Xia Zhe, so how was he not married yet? Could it be that there was something wrong with him... Or could it be that there was something wrong with his family...

"I thought that you're already married. People your age probably already have kids who are in kindergarten. Don't your parents nag at you to get married?" Tan Jing asked with a smile.

"I haven't met anyone I like yet. My parents are more open-minded and don't ask for too much from me. They just let me be. The two of them should be anxious for me to get married, but they probably just talk about it behind my back and they don't really force me," Cheng Gu said.

"Then you have to treat your future wife well after you get married in the future. Don't let her down. No matter who the girl is, it's not an easy thing for her to marry someone. Don't let her suffer within your family, do you understand?" Tan Jing said solemnly.

"I swear that I will love her fully and give her everything unconditionally. I will never let her down!" Cheng Gu looked into Tan Jing's eyes earnestly and asked, "What about you? Have you been let down?"

Facing such a frank and sincere person, Tan Jing looked away as she did not know how to answer Cheng Gu's question. Whatever Cheng Gu said just now, Xia Wen had also said the same thing to her before.

After they got married, Xia Wen had never done anything to let her down. It had always been her own family who brought her endless trouble. It was only this year when the problem had intensified that Xia Wen quarreled with her.

If not for Qiao Mei's appearance, they would have continued to live their days in a muddled manner. It was only after seeing how Qiao Mei lived her life and how everyone treated Qiao Mei that Tan Jing realized that she was living an abnormal life and that it was not a good situation to be in.

"I can't say for sure, but you're right about one thing. I'm not happy at all right now. I'm very unhappy, as if there's no happiness in my life at all and that I don't have anything to be happy about. I don't even know what I can do to make myself happy. I guess there's nothing," Tan Jing said helplessly.

Cheng Gu looked at Tan Jing sadly. It was a very regretful thing for such a beautiful person to be crushed and destroyed by the triviality in her life.

"Then is there anything you want to do, elder sister? I can consider helping you fulfill your wish," Cheng Gu said.

Chapter 1079 Send Me Home

"You? How are you going to help me fulfill my wish? What if I want the stars in the sky?" Tan Jing felt that Cheng Gu had spoken so immaturely because he was still too young. It was already good enough that a stranger took the time to chat with her, and he had even given her a piece of film with a beautiful image. How could she even dare to hope for anything else?

"That's right. As long as you ask for it, I will definitely fulfill your wish. Even if you want the moon, I can get it for you. What do you want to do the most at this moment? Tell me and I'll help you fulfill this wish. As long as it's something I can do, I'll help you," Cheng Gu said seriously.

Tan Jing looked into Cheng Gu's eyes for a long time. He looked very serious and did not seem to be joking with her. Tan Jing asked in bafflement, "Why do you want to help me? We don't even know each other. What do you get out of helping me, or are you up to something?"

Unexpectedly, Cheng Gu relaxed and smiled. It was not wrong for Tan Jing to feel a sense of hostility towards him. It would be strange if Tan Jing did not feel suspicious at all. He was not concerned about Tan Jing feeling suspicious of him because he was being truly sincere. He was not doing this without anything in mind.

"I just feel that you're a nice person. I want to help you feel happy and find your happiness again. There was a period of time when I encountered many issues and I even thought about committing suicide. I'm still alive and well now because someone helped me back then, so I hope I can help you too," Cheng Gu said.

Tan Jing was skeptical. She looked at the time and then at Cheng Gu's car and said, "Then send me back to the city. I won't be able to get a ride now. It might make me feel happy if you can send me back."

"You're not afraid of me now? You dare to take my car!" Cheng Gu said jokingly.

"Why not? So are you sending me back or not?" Tan Jing asked happily.

Who cares if it is safe or not! Who cares if it is a stranger or someone I know! None of this is important at all!

The most important thing now was to be happy. She wanted to become happy and enjoy happiness!

If Cheng Gu sent her back to the city, she would be able to go home, take a hot shower and have a good night's sleep. This was what she felt like doing the most. It was probably the simplest form of happiness.

Even if Cheng Gu brought her to a remote place to sell her or kill her, that would be even better! She would not have to go back and face those people from the Xia family, nor would she have to be threatened and scolded by the Tan family again. Everything would come to an end and she would no longer need to live such a bitter life.

Sometimes, being alive was worse than being dead. She would prefer a quick death and get it over with.

"For sure. As long as elder sister asks for it, I'll do it," Cheng Gu said with a smile.

The two of them chatted and laughed as they got into the car. Cheng Gu deliberately talked about the embarrassing things that happened to him when he was in school, which resonated with Tan Jing a lot.

Along the way, Tan Jing spoke a lot about her childhood and recalled all the happy things that happened in the past. As she talked, she quickly forgot all her recent troubles.

As Tan Jing looked at Cheng Gu's side profile, she felt a sense of security. This sense of security was completely different from what she felt with Xia Wen. When she was with Xia Wen, it felt like she did not need to be afraid of anything because he would always help her out. However, with Cheng Gu, she felt a sense of warmth that could heal the pain in her heart.

Tan Jing did not tell Cheng Gu her real address. Instead, she chose to drop off at the entrance of another neighborhood one kilometer away. It was safer for her this way and Cheng Gu would not be able to find her if he came to this neighborhood in the future.

"This is where I live. Thank you for today," Tan Jing said.

"Elder sister, I hope you will become happier in the future. See you next time," Cheng Gu said with a smile.

Tan Jing shook her head and smiled without saying anything. This was probably the last time they would see each other. It was impossible for them to contact each other again in the future.

As a married woman, how could she become close to a stranger who was a bachelor? She was just asking to be criticized! If there was any gossip about her, her position in the Xia family would be even more precarious. At this moment, everyone in the Xia family valued Qiao Mei a lot and was also very willing to nurture Xia Wen to take over Xia Mao's position in the family. If anything went wrong at this time, Xia Wen definitely would not let her off.

Cheng Gu watched Tan Jing's figure disappear into the neighborhood before he drove off. Tan Jing hid in a dark corner and stared blankly in the direction where Cheng Gu had gone, the piece of film still clenched tightly in her hand.

Chapter 1080 Panda Eyes

"Really... we won't meet again... But thank you so much for today..." Tan Jing said regretfully as she looked at the piece of film.

It took Tan Jing two hours to make the one-kilometer journey home. Along the way, she stopped frequently to look at the scenery in the city late at night and observe the people rushing by. It made her feel very happy and fulfilled.

After returning home, she took a quick hot shower. Then, she tossed and turned as she lay on the bed. Cheng Gu's face kept appearing in her mind and she seemed to keep hearing what he said to her.

Was there really a need to do all these things she was doing now? Did she feel happy now?

Perhaps she would have a good life after adopting that child. She guessed that she would be very happy then. She and Xia Wen did not lack anything except a child. Once they had a child, they would be able to secure his position as the next heir of the Xia family. At that time, whatever Xia Mao had would belong to Xia Wen. In the future, it would be up to Xia Wen to decide how and where they should live.

Right. As long as she had a child, she would be able to defeat Qiao Mei. The Xia family would also think highly of her and she would then be able to answer to the Tan family.

All this while, everyone looked down on her because she could not have a child. Once she had one, the Xia family would not be able to pick on her anymore.

Tan Jing fell asleep while thinking about this. No one in the Xia family noticed that Tan Jing had gone missing. Even Xia Wen did not notice it. It was only at bedtime that Xia Wen realized that Tan Jing was missing.

"Xiao He! Have you seen your sister-in-law?" Xia Wen asked with a frown.

Xia He tried her best to recall everything that happened during the day. She did not recall having seen Tan Jing earlier, or even during the entire day... Tan Jing did not have much of a presence, so Xia He really could not recall anything.

"You can go and ask Aunt and the others. I was inside the room all day! I basically didn't come out much. You can also ask Auntie Fan. Eldest Sister-in-law should have gone to the kitchen to help out during the day," Xia He said.

Xia Wen did not act rashly and checked with Xia Xiu and Xia Fang. Based on Tan Jing's character, she would not do anything reckless. She must have either gone back home to rest or to stay at the Tan family's house.

Tan Jing had been reluctant to spend the new year with the Xia family, so it was possible that she decided to go home in the end. Xia Wen tidied his clothes and decided to go back to his room to sleep. How could a living person just mysteriously disappear in this courtyard house?

The most hidden place in this courtyard house was probably the well in Qiao Mei's front yard. That well was covered with a huge stone slab and it was impossible to lift it without the help of two or three burly men. With Tan Jing's strength, it would be impossible for her to move it.

He decided to stop worrying and just let her be. She was not a child anymore and had her own judgment. It was not good for him to control her too much.

Xia Wen lay on the bed and slowly closed his eyes. Recently, he had also been reflecting on his relationship with Tan Jing. After all, the Tan family was her maternal family and it was not her choice to be born in that family. Tan Jing also had her own difficulties, but the thing was that she should never have hurt other people.

People who had been hurt before should better understand the feelings of people who were in the same situation. Everyone should be supporting and taking care of one another, not getting jealous and starting fights.

Xia Wen was the eldest brother and the eldest male of his generation in the Xia family. He had to bear the responsibility of taking care of the entire Xia family. If he could not take good care of Qiao Mei, then he should not be a member of the Xia family anymore as he would feel too ashamed to face Xia Zhe.

Even so, the Tan family could not be allowed to continue with their arrogant behavior. This time, they must be taught a lesson. Xia Wen could not take the initiative to reconcile with Tan Jing at the moment. Otherwise, once the Tan family found out, they would think that they could always revert to their old habits in the future. He wanted to let the Tan family know that Tan Jing was not favored in the Xia family now. This was so that the Tan family would refrain from looking for her so frivolously in order to protect her position in the Xia family.

Everyone had their own worries throughout the night. The next morning, Xia He slowly walked out of Qiao Mei's bedroom with her eyes looking like panda eyes. Xia He did not know what was wrong with Qiao Mei last night, but she had snored the entire night without a pause.

Qiao Mei had fallen asleep the moment her head touched the pillow. The speed at which she fell asleep was jaw-dropping. Xia He had sat there and stared at Qiao Mei the entire night. She was a light sleeper and would wake up at the slightest sound.