

Fat Wife 211

Chapter 211: Meeting His Aunt

Xia Zhe took out a few tattered dollar notes from his pocket and placed them in Qiao Mei's hands one by one. "I've given you all my money every month. I borrowed this from Zhao Wu and the others. Take it, in case you need to buy things on the way."

Qiao Mei actually had a lot of money in her bag, but she felt a sense of warmth when she saw Xia Zhe giving her the money and telling her seriously to use it to buy things she needed on the way.

Qiao Mei took out a small square handkerchief and wrapped up the money. "Don't worry, I won't go hungry."

After thinking about it, Xia Zhe still felt worried and when he packed for Qiao Mei, he put in all the useful army supplies that he could think of. When the soldiers in the cookhouse knew that Qiao Mei was leaving, they all came to see her.

"Sister-in-law, here are some dried vegetables that we made ourselves. You can eat it on the way!"

"And me! Sister-in-law, I secretly brought this waxed sausage from home. There's not much left though, if you don't mind!"

"And me, and me!"

"Sister-in-law, take these steamed buns with you!"

Everyone spoke one after another and there were so many gifts that Qiao Mei could barely hold them all in her arms. When Xia Zhe saw this scene, he could not believe that these soldiers were actually all such enthusiastic people.

Usually, Xia Zhe was unsmiling and looked very serious. Everyone felt that Xia Zhe was very fierce, and given that his combat skills were top-notch, no one dared to provoke him and they did not dare to speak when they saw him. They even nicknamed Xia Zhe the "Living King of Hell" because he was especially

strict and ruthless when it came to training soldiers. However, all the soldiers who were trained by him would turn out to be very capable.

“Alright, alright, I can’t take so much with me. I’ll just take the steamed buns. You can all bring back the rest of the things. I’m just going to the capital and will reach there very quickly. Don’t worry!” Qiao Mei shouted above the noise.

Everyone was relieved to hear that.

“Alright, you can all go back now,” Xia Zhe said.

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Seeing that Commander Xia had given an order, everyone took their things and went back. Only the squad leader said smugly on the way, “See, my steamed buns are the most useful. Hahahahaha!”

Qiao Mei looked at the departing soldiers and felt a little reluctant to part with them. After being together for so many days, she already had some feelings for them.

Xia Zhe said darkly, “Come back here. Stop looking.”

Qiao Mei placed a pile of steamed buns beside her backpack.

“Everyone is so warm-hearted,” Qiao Mei said to Xia Zhe with a smile.

From everyone’s behavior, it was obvious that Qiao Mei had been well liked by everyone during this period of time. There were even many people who privately talked about finding a wife like Qiao Mei, who was beautiful, kind and an exceptional cook.

The next morning, Xia Zhe sent Qiao Mei to the car. As the railway was damaged by the earthquake, they could only travel by cars. The ride would be bumpy and Xia Zhe was worried about Qiao Mei going to the capital on her own.

This car was an internal transport vehicle. Other than transporting equipment, there were also three other army comrades sent to the capital to report back on this mission. Xia Zhe was less worried, knowing that Qiao Mei would be traveling with them.

After arriving in the capital, they would stop the car by the roadside for Qiao Mei to get off. Xia Zhe had already called his aunt in advance to inform her of the exact location.

After a bumpy ride for a whole day, they arrived at the capital. Xia Zhe's aunt was already waiting at the meeting location.

The other guys helped Qiao Mei out of the car and she waved towards the back. "Goodbye! Thank you!"

As soon as Xia Fang saw Qiao Mei, she knew that this girl was Xiao Zhe's wife. A beautiful girl who came down from a military vehicle could not be the wrong guess.

With her fair skin, lively eyes and slender figure, it was no wonder that Xiao Zhe did not inform his family and just got married straight away.

If his aunt knew what Qiao Mei looked like in the past, she might have a new understanding of Xia Zhe.

Qiao Mei carried her bag and looked around. She immediately saw Xia Zhe's aunt, Xia Fang, who looked about 40 years old. One look and she could tell that Xia Fang was a lady from a wealthy family as she had a very elegant aura.

"Hello, are you Xia Zhe's aunt?" Qiao Mei asked daintily.

"Yes, I'm Xia Zhe's aunt. My name is Xia Fang. You must be exhausted. Come, let's go back to my house," Xia Fang said as she quickly took the backpack from Qiao Mei's shoulders.

"Aunt, let me do it," Qiao Mei said.

"It's alright, let's go home." Xia Fang carried the backpack and took the bus home with Qiao Mei.

Chapter 212: Crazy Woman

Xia Fang's house was in a good location at the edge of the city center. It was a nice area where one might not be able to buy a place even if one had the money. The buildings in the district were all four stories high and there was also a lot of greenery around.

Xia Fang was the chief physician of the obstetrics and gynecology department at the city hospital and many people knew her. This was a house allocated by the hospital, and most of the people in this neighborhood were colleagues from the same hospital.

Along the way, many people saw Xia Fang with a beautiful girl and they all tried to find out which family had such a beautiful daughter.

"Our Xia Zhe, Xiao Zhe's wife!" Xia Fang repeated this sentence to many people along the way, smiling so widely that her eyes could barely open.

In their younger days, Xia Mao and Xu Lan were both too busy to take care of Xia Zhe. When Xia Zhe was young, Xia Fang was the one who took care of him most of the time. Moreover, Xia Fang's place was close to Xia Zhe's school. As time passed, everyone living in the area knew Xia Zhe.

"Xia Zhe's wife?" A middle-aged woman suddenly rushed over from the crowd and questioned Xia Fang.

The middle-aged woman looked at Qiao Mei fiercely, almost like she wanted to tear Qiao Mei apart and swallow her alive.

Xia Fang frowned and shielded Qiao Mei behind her, preparing to leave.

"Don't go! Tell me who she is!" the woman said fiercely as she grabbed Qiao Mei's arm.

Qiao Mei felt some pain from the grip, but as she did not know what this person's background was, she thought that it was better not to make any move since she had only just arrived in the capital.

Xia Fang immediately got angry when she saw what was happening. She pushed the woman away and said, "Yes! So what if she's Xiao Zhe's wife! Don't harass her here! Can you afford it if you hurt our Xiao Zhe's child!"

Child? Xia Zhe actually had a child with her?

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The woman's expression became even more weird and Qiao Mei became wary when she saw this. She was not afraid that this woman would attack her, but she was more concerned that her child would be hurt. Qiao Mei held her stomach and did not make a sound.

Xia Fang saw the red mark on Qiao Mei's arm and then the look in the woman's eyes. Xia Fang stood in front of Qiao Mei to prevent the woman from looking at Qiao Mei.

"What right does Xia Zhe have to get married! He's an ungrateful bastard! He said that he would be with my Xiao'e! Why did he get married once he left! How can he not keep his word!" The woman dropped to the ground and cried as she bent over.

Qiao Mei widened her eyes when she heard that.

I'm the other woman?

Qiao Mei could not help but feel a little uncertain. Back then, she had indeed tricked Xia Zhe into bed, and it never crossed her mind that Xia Zhe might have a fiancée.

"Don't listen to her nonsense!" one of the neighbors stood next to Qiao Mei and said.

"Her Xiao'e and Xia Zhe are not in a relationship at all. They can't even be considered classmates. They're just playmates in the same courtyard," the neighbor said.

"That's right. What does your Xiao'e have to do with Xia Zhe? It's clearly your Xiao'e who chased after him and refused to give up after being rejected."

"You still have the cheek to cry here. Every time Xia Zhe comes here, you act like this."

Everyone talked after one another and explained the matter clearly. The story was that Xiao'e had taken a fancy to Xia Zhe, but Xia Zhe did not like her and rejected her, but Xiao'e refused to let it go.

"How long has it been since your Xiao'e was rejected? Xia Zhe has already been a soldier for more than 10 years. Why are you still thinking about him?"

"That's right, that's right. Your Xiao'e just had her engagement broken off a few days ago. Don't tell me she's thinking about Xia Zhe again after knowing that he's coming back?" A few neighbors started to expose the ugly truth.

"Pfft! What nonsense are you talking about!" The woman cursed at them as she remained bent over the ground. Everyone around her was talking and she did not know who to scold. She looked like a person who had lost her mind.

"My Xiao'e has made a pact with Xia Zhe before. They have an agreement..."

Before the woman could finish speaking, Xia Fang interrupted her and said, "Don't be so shameless. When did our Xia Zhe make a pact with your daughter? Please don't think that our family is as shameless as yours."

"That's right. Of all people, you choose to pick on Xia Zhe. You should hurry home and stop embarrassing yourself here."

"That's right, that's right!"

“What a joke!”

The neighbors spoke one after another. It seemed that this woman had offended everyone a lot. Otherwise, no one would say such things about her.

Chapter 213: Endless Quarrel

“Zhao Ni! Just shut up! Don’t you think your Xiao’e has embarrassed herself enough! Why must you make a fuss until everyone knows about it!” Xia Fang pointed at Zhao Ni angrily and scolded her, “Have some self-respect!”

“Pfft! What a snob you are! What’s wrong with our Xiao’e! Back then, your Xia Zhe still begged to marry our Xiao’e! In the blink of an eye, he doesn’t seem to know her anymore! How heartless!” Zhao Ni sat on the ground and wailed. Xia Fang was so angry that her hands trembled, but she did not know how to deal with Zhao Ni.

“Listen carefully! Our Xia Zhe is married. He did not have any previous relationship with your child at all. They didn’t even talk much!” Xia Fang explained.

“Let’s go back.” Xia Fang did not want to waste her breath and steered Qiao Mei towards the direction of her house.

Zhao Ni quickly stood up to stop them from leaving.

After a long day of traveling, as well as not having absorbed the energy of surrounding plants for a long time, Qiao Mei already felt a little tired.

“Don’t go! Make yourself clear! When is Xia Zhe coming back!” Zhao Ni glared fiercely at Qiao Mei.

“So what if he’s back, anyway our Xia Zhe is already married. Get out of the way!” Xia Fang pushed away Zhao Ni, who was standing in the way, and walked away with Qiao Mei.

Zhao Ni sat back on the ground and pointed at Qiao Mei. "Look at how poor she looks! Xia Zhe has only taken a fancy to her face! She looks like she came from the countryside! A marriage can still end in divorce! We're not afraid! Just you wait!"

When the neighbors standing around saw Xia Fang leaving and that the drama had ended, they all went home as well.

Seeing no one around anymore, Zhao Ni also left while still cursing on the way.

Her Xiao'e had a miscarriage and a broken engagement. From then on, Zhao Ni became completely shameless. As long as someone looked at her, she would scold the person and say that the person looked down on her.

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In the past, Zhao Ni had married well and her husband was the deputy director of the hospital. She had always been a full-time wife at home taking care of her husband and children. She used to be very arrogant and looked down on everyone. Now, she was like a shrew and did not resemble her previously dignified self at all. Even her daughter, who was once a nice good girl, became influenced by her.

The neighbors all lamented and thought that it was such a waste of a good kid like Xiao'e.

However, Zhao Ni's current situation was also caused by her children. It was always the parents who had to pay for their children's debts.

Xia Fang brought Qiao Mei home. Xia Fang's house was on the fourth floor, which was the highest floor. The house occupied an area of more than 120 square meters and had an exquisite timber floor. There were beautiful white porcelain tiles in the kitchen.

There was a large color television, a large refrigerator, a washing machine, a radio, and a sewing machine. Xia Fang had all the most advanced items at home. Just the large television alone made Qiao Mei marvel with wonder.

Not only did she have these things, but the top floor also came with a loft. There was a small skylight that allowed one to see the starry sky at night. Xia Fang loved flowers and plants and planted many flowers in the loft, all of which were blooming beautifully.

“Xia Zhe’s wife, come sit down and drink some water. You must be tired from the journey.” Xia Fang had not been idle since she entered the house. She kept bringing food and drinks for Qiao Mei, afraid that Qiao Mei would be too tired.

Qiao Mei obediently took the cup and took a few sips. She looked at Xia Fang with her big eyes, making Xia Fang’s feel as if her heart could melt.

“Xia Zhe has nothing to do with that person’s daughter. The two of them just grew up in the same compound. Xia Zhe’s school is close to here, so he basically comes to stay with me during his school days. Her child is also from this compound, so the kids know each other since they play together,” Xia Fang said nervously as she looked at Qiao Mei.

Qiao Mei listened quietly to what Xia Fang said and did not take anything to heart. She knew that Xia Zhe must have suitors in the capital, but she just did not expect them to be so aggressive.

Xia Fang was also puzzled. She wondered why Qiao Mei did not look angry, and whether it was because she did not care about their Xia Zhe.

Did she really not care, or was she just magnanimous? Or did she have other plans?

Xia Fang had all these thoughts in her head.

“Ah, that girl has to be around 26 or 27 years old, right?” Qiao Mei said.

“Yes, she’s 26 this year,” Xia Fang nodded and said.

Xia Zhe was three to four years older than her. When Xia Zhe left back then, Xiao’e had been chasing after him relentlessly. Even now, her mother was still thinking about Xia Zhe.

Chapter 214: Divorce and Abortion

Qiao Mei smiled and thought that she had to remember this. When Xia Zhe came back, she had to ask him why he had so many outstanding romantic businesses.

At the thought of this, Qiao Mei could not help but laugh audibly.

When Xia Fang saw that not only was Qiao Mei not angry, but actually looked quite happy, she became uncertain. Was it that Qiao Mei did not like Xia Zhe and now intended to get a divorce?

It could not be so. Their Xia Zhe could be considered handsome and had a good family background. How could she not be satisfied?

Could it be that Xia Zhe had done something unfaithful!

Xia Fang's heart was in turmoil and all kinds of thoughts crossed her mind. She did not know what Qiao Mei was thinking.

"Then she was married before? And had her engagement broken off?" Qiao Mei said as she looked at Xia Fang curiously.

Xia Fang did not hide anything from Qiao Mei and told her everything she knew.

Xiao'e's actual name was Qian'e and she was a student from a girls' school in the capital. She had originally taken a liking to Xia Zhe and then it had gone on for a few years. In the beginning, she only liked him secretly. It was only when Xia Zhe joined the army later that she started behaving badly.

She would go to Xia Fang's house every other day and even went around telling people that Xia Zhe liked her and was going to marry her when he returned from the army.

Everyone saw her frequent visits to Xia Fang's house, so they thought that what she said was true.

Xia Fang told everyone in private that this was not the case, but before the earlier rumors could be clarified, Qian'e went around chatting with everyone again, hinting that Xia Fang's clarification was fake.

Xia Zhe was a person who did not like to talk much. Xia Fang had asked him privately if he liked Qian'e and Xia Zhe made it absolutely clear that he did not. Therefore, Xia Fang had always refuted the rumors forcefully.

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In the end, this matter reached the ears of Xia Zhe's mother, Xu Lan. She was a person who cared very much about family background, so she became even angrier when she heard such news.

Xu Lan was not someone to be trifled with. She went straight to Qian'e and asked her to stop making a fuss or it could be considered slander. Qian'e stopped what she was doing after that.

However, there was no proper closure to the matter. After that, Qian'e never got married and when she was 24 years old and still single, she gained a reputation for being the old spinster in this area. Zhao Ni could not stand the embarrassment and found Qian'e a partner from a family which was of equal status to them. It was only then that Qian'e did not go to Xia Fang's house again and did not think about Xia Zhe anymore.

She did not even greet Xia Fang even when they bumped into each other on the street. She behaved in a very arrogant manner, as if she had found a powerful backer.

Her partner's family background could be considered to be not bad. His family was in business, which was a background that was looked upon favorably.

Xia Fang did not take further notice as she was not too interested in such things. She would not have been able to imagine that three months after that coincidental meeting, she would see Qian'e in the hospital and accompanied by her mother, Zhao Ni, instead of her husband.

At that time, Xia Fang was not the chief physician yet. That day, all the other doctors had scheduled surgeries and were very busy, so they had recalled her to the hospital for an emergency operation.

She did not expect to have to perform surgery on Qian'e.

Qian'e was found to have an ectopic pregnancy and was bleeding profusely. She was already on the verge of going into shock given that she was anemic and weak, and was brought to the hospital too late. In order to save Qian'e's life, Xia Fang had no choice but to remove her uterus.

It was Xia Fang who performed the surgery on Qian'e even though the mother-daughter duo's initial plan was to keep the matter a secret from Xia Fang. At that time, Zhao Ni had an especially awkward expression on her face.

Later on, Zhao Ni went to the man's house to demand an explanation. The man refused to admit that the child was his and even tarnished Qian'e reputation by saying that Qian'e was a promiscuous person.

Yet, this matter was settled in less than two days after that. Xia Fang did not know what the man offered Zhao Ni to make her agree to a compromise, making her daughter a sacrifice.

Given that Xia Fang did not panic during this surgery and made decisive judgments, she was promoted to the chief physician as a result.

"This was something that happened many years back. This Qian'e is also really pitiful. She's still young but she already can't have children." Although Xia Fang had a bad impression of Qian'e, she still felt an overwhelming sense of pity for the girl.

It was only now that Qiao Mei understood the entire matter. It turned out that Qian'e had nothing to do with her husband, Xia Zhe. It was solely Qian'e and her family blowing their own trumpet. Throughout the entire matter, Xia Zhe had never been concerned about them.

Qiao Mei clenched her fists in anger and remained silent. Xia Fang did not understand why Qiao Mei only became angry after hearing the story.

Chapter 215: New Clothes

If Qian'e was Xia Zhe's ex-girlfriend, Qiao Mei would still feel a little ashamed and feel that she owed Qian'e something. However, it turned out that it was Qian'e who bullied Xia Zhe because he was an upright person who did not like to talk, and she kept bullying him! She even went around spreading rumors!

"Just because Xia Zhe doesn't like to speak and explain himself, she keeps clinging onto him!" Qiao Mei said angrily.

Xia Fang laughed out loudly when she heard what Qiao Mei said. So this kid was angry on Xia Zhe's behalf. How cute.

"Don't be angry. Let's ignore her. I'll take a look at you now," Xia Fang said as she pointed at Qiao Mei's stomach.

Before Qiao Mei came, she already heard from Xia Zhe that his aunt was the chief of the obstetrics and gynecology department and a very good doctor.

Qiao Mei hurriedly replied, "Yes, alright." She obediently listened to Xia Fang's instructions and did not contradict her at all.

A pregnancy examination was actually very simple and not an advanced procedure at all. The entire process was simply to check on the pregnant woman's body measurements, her height, her weight, whether her joints were sore and the extent of her morning sickness.

Xia Fang's house had all the equipment to do these tests. Qiao Mei now weighed 130 pounds and she was 172 centimeters tall. Everything was fine and within normal ranges.

"It's not bad. Keep it up. Everything's fine, going by how you look." Xia Fang nodded, unable to contain her joy.

Qiao Mei finally knew how much weight she had lost. If she was not pregnant, she would definitely be even slimmer.

“Mei Mei, you can rest in this room. This is where Xia Zhe always stayed. Even though he has been a soldier for the past few years, I still clean his room often and I haven’t touched anything,” Xia Fang said.

Xia Zhe’s room was the secondary bedroom, and it could be considered a very large room. The floor area was more than 20 square meters and in the room, there were bright and clean windows, a simple white large closet, a study desk by the window, and a bookcase filled with all kinds of books. The walls were also hung full of Xia Zhe’s awards and medals.

She could tell that Xia Fang had taken good care of this room and cleaned it regularly.

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There were also a lot of clothes on the single bed and it was obvious that they were women’s dresses and pants.

“Mei Mei, come quickly. These are all the new clothes I’ve prepared for you. See if they suit you. If not, we’ll go out and buy more.” Xia Fang pulled Qiao Mei over to the bed.

There were around 10 pieces of clothes covering the entire bed.

After Xia Fang received Xia Zhe’s call and knew that Qiao Mei was coming to her house, she carefully asked about Qiao Mei’s figure in detail and went to the shops to find things that would be useful for her.

She even bought new bed linen, and made sure that they were the best and most comfortable ones available. She had always treated Xia Zhe as her child and now she was treating Qiao Mei as her own as well.

“That’s a lot!” Qiao Mei looked at the clothes on the bed in surprise.

Qiao Mei reached out to touch the material. As soon as she did, she knew that these clothes were of the best quality and were not cheap. It was a trend nowadays to demand for quality and this piece of clothing would have cost around 30 dollars.

She did not know how much it would cost to buy so many clothes. There were not only clothes but also shoes of various styles.

It would probably add up to around 500 dollars.

That would be equivalent to 10 months of grandfather's salary!

It was obvious that Xia Fang doted on Qiao Mei a lot.

Qiao Mei had been with the troops for so many days and was covered in dust and dirt. If not for her beauty and the fact that she had a natural body fragrance, she would have been despised by everyone she met.

It also explained why, during the earlier interaction downstairs, Zhao Ni had said that Qiao Mei looked poor, as if she came from the countryside.

"Aunt, is it possible to take a shower at home? I would like to take a shower." Qiao Mei looked at the new clothes and she did not reject aunt's kindness. She had more expensive gifts than that in her bag.

However, she was covered in dust at the moment and it would be a waste of effort to change into new clothes. She had to take a shower first.

Xia Fang quickly brought Qiao Mei to the bathroom and said, "Look at me, I was so busy that I forgot to let you wash up first."

The bathroom was also very big. In her memory, most of the houses in this era were apartment buildings and the bathroom in each house was only big enough to accommodate just one person and it was difficult for one person to even turn around in it.

Otherwise, there were no bathrooms at all and people had to share communal bathrooms and kitchens. Anyone who had their own bathrooms were considered to be living very well.

Qiao Mei looked at the fixtures and fittings in the bathroom and could not help but marvel that the capital was indeed an amazing place. The washbasin and water heater in Xia Fang's house were imported appliances and looked expensive.

Chapter 216: Maternity Wear

"Come Mei Mei, don't get scalded. I'll teach you." Xia Fang's tone was very gentle and she did not look down on Qiao Mei at all.

She slowly taught Qiao Mei how to use the appliances and brought her a new towel and toothbrush, as well as newly bought comfortable underwear.

Xia Fang held on to the underwear as she looked Qiao Mei up and down.

"Did I... buy too small a size? Perhaps you can make do with it for now. I can go and buy new ones now, it's just nearby," Xia Fang said.

Qiao Mei looked at her chest and thought that it did look a little bigger than before. Perhaps it was because of the pregnancy.

"No need for that, Aunt! I brought many new ones!" Qiao Mei said as she held back Xia Fang.

She was afraid that if she spoke too slowly, Xia Fang would head out to buy another pile of clothes.

Qiao Mei returned to the room and opened her backpack. She took out all her clothes and put her underwear at the bottom of the stack.

Xia Fang casually picked up the light blue dress made by Qiao Mei and unfolded it. There was nothing really special about this dress. It was just a simple tailored dress with a circle of white floral patterns embroidered on the side.

Xia Fang had never seen such a design before and found it novel.

“Mei Mei, is this a popular design from where you came from?” Xia Fang asked curiously.

“No, Aunt. I made this myself. It’s maternity wear,” Qiao Mei answered patiently.

Maternity wear??Xia Fang looked at the pure cotton clothing that she was holding in her hands. The more she looked at it, the more she liked it. She did not expect Qiao Mei to be skillful enough to be able to make her own clothes.

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Xia Fang looked at Qiao Mei with even more affection in her eyes.

The clothes she bought had excellent workmanship and were made of various types of fabrics. They were beautiful and durable, and the styles were varied.

Being a doctor, she naturally knew that pure cotton fabric was the best for pregnant women. However, she was afraid that Qiao Mei would misunderstand her intention, so she bought the most expensive and best ones.

Qiao Mei watched Xia Fang fondle the dress lovingly as if she could not bear to part with it. Although Xia Fang did not say anything, her eyes revealed her fondness for it.

In her heart, Qiao Mei secretly planned to make a beautiful dress for Xia Fang so that she could also have something pretty to wear.

Qiao Mei took her toiletries and a set of new clothes and went to take a shower. She finished washing up very quickly and came out with a change of clothes.

Her hair was in a neat braid and she had tied a white ribbon bow at the end of her hair. She wore the light blue maternity dress and looked refreshed and unique.

The way she was beautifully dressed, she did not look like a girl from the countryside at all. People would believe it if they were told that she was from a rich family.

No wonder their Xia Zhe got married quietly and without informing anyone, and even already had a child!

This was another person who felt that Xia Zhe had married Qiao Mei because he was blinded by his lust for her. Only Qiao Qiang and the couple knew about what exactly happened back then.

“Come and eat, Mei Mei. I’m not a good cook, so just make do with it,” Xia Fang said embarrassedly.

There were a total of 12 dishes, including fish, meat and seafood. It was as if they were celebrating a festival. Qiao Mei thought that if this was still not good enough, then she did not know how to define good anymore.

Qiao Mei shyly sat down to eat and rushed to wash the dishes when they had finished.

Xia Fang did not try to stop her. It was a workday and she should be at work, but she had taken a day off for Qiao Mei. However, the hospital had called her just now to ask her to go back for an emergency case, so she had no choice.

“Mei Mei, I have to go to the hospital. There’s a patient I have to see. You have to remember not to open the door no matter who comes by. We all have our own set of keys,” Xia Fang said as she packed her things.

Qiao Mei nodded obediently.

“Also, on the shelf at the door, there’s a keychain with a lamb toy attached to it. That’s your key. Wait for me to come back and then I’ll show you around. Otherwise, I’m afraid you’ll get lost. Also, don’t use anything dangerous, like knives or such...” Xia Fang nagged at Qiao Mei as she hurriedly packed up.

Qiao Mei looked at Xia Fang and could not help but smile. She had thought that Xia Fang would be a rigid person like Xia Zhe, and did not expect her to have such a nice temper.

When Xia Fang did not hear Qiao Mei's reply, she looked up and asked, "Mei Mei, do you remember everything I said?"

When she looked up and saw Qiao Mei's bright smile, Xia Fang could not help but smile back as well.

"I hope you remembered everything. Don't forget anything. I really have to go before it's too late." Xia Fang put on her shoes and went out.

"Yes, yes. Off you go," Qiao Mei waved goodbye and returned to the room to unpack her luggage.

Chapter 217: Coming to the Door

After sending Xia Fang off, Qiao Mei returned to the kitchen and hummed a tune as she cleared the crockery and cutlery. As there was a water heater in the house, the water was warm and not cold at all.

In the past, there was no such advanced equipment in the village. She guessed that her grandfather, Qiao Qiang, had probably never seen such an electric appliance before. Even in the county city, there were not many families who would be able to afford it.

What she did back at home was to boil water in the big cooking pot and then use the cold water in the well to neutralize the temperature of the water. The water in the well was cold even in summer. Qiao Mei really disliked not being able to find a good solution to get warm water. After all, no matter how well the big cooking pot was scrubbed during washing up, it was impossible to guarantee that there was no oil at all after that.

Given the situation, it was inevitable that there would always be some oil in her bath water, even though it was just a thin layer and not a lot.

"When there's a chance, I'll think of a way to bring one back and ask grandfather to install it for me. I can't let go of such a good thing." Qiao Mei was still thinking about how to connect the pipes in the village when she heard someone pounding on the door.

Qiao Mei stood at the kitchen door and looked out before she stopped herself.

Before Xia Fang left, she had told Qiao Mei not to open the door for anyone. Besides, if the visitor was really looking for Aunt, the visitor would go off to look for her at the hospital if there was no one at home, and would not knock for too long.

Unexpectedly, not only did this person continue to knock on the door, but the knocking became more forceful, as if the person would smash a hole in the door if it was not opened.

Qiao Mei frowned slightly and wiped her hands clean before opening the door.

As soon as she opened the door, she saw an aggressive woman who looked a little older, with not very good skin. She even had very serious dark circles under her eyes and she was quite thin.

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“Who are you and where’s Auntie Xia Fang?” the woman said disdainfully.

“She went out. If you’re looking for her, come back tomorrow.” Qiao Mei rebuffed the woman the moment she heard her asking for Xia Fang. She was about to close the door when the woman stopped her.

“I’m not here to look for Auntie Xia Fang. Go ask that country bumpkin to come out,” the woman said.

Country bumpkin?

Could she be talking about me?

Qiao Mei smiled and said, “Maybe I’m the country bumpkin you’re looking for.”

The woman looked at Qiao Mei in disbelief. According to her mother, the person who came was a poor villager. The person in front of her did not look like a woman who did farming in the countryside.

“You must be Qian’e,” Qiao Mei guessed.

“You know about me?” Qian’e looked at Qiao Mei and asked.

“Yes.” Qiao Mei nodded. After hearing the whole story from Xia Fang, she felt as if she knew enough about Qian’e.

However, the unexpected thing was that Qian’e misunderstood what Qiao Mei meant and thought that Xia Zhe had told Qiao Mei that she was Xia Zhe’s fiancée.

“You knew about me but you still married Xia Zhe! Shameless thing!” Qian’e suddenly became irritable.

Qiao Mei had a puzzled look on her face. She found herself unable to understand what Qian’e was saying.

The surrounding neighbors came out to see who was causing the commotion. When they saw that it was Qian’e, most of them came to help Qiao Mei while some people remained watching from the side.

“Xia Zhe’s wife, ignore this crazy woman and hurry back into the house,” said an elderly female neighbor in the crowd.

“Pfft! Who are you calling Xia Zhe’s wife! I’m Xia Zhe’s girlfriend!” Qian’e yelled loudly when she heard this.

Qiao Mei looked helplessly at the woman in front of her who had come to cause trouble. As she could not teach the woman a lesson, she clenched her fists in anger and blamed it all on Xia Zhe for going around incurring “romantic debts”!

“You! You must have used some tactics to get Xia Zhe to marry you! What’s your name! How many people are there in your family! Who allowed you to marry Xia Zhe!” Qian’e threw out a lot of questions, almost like she was checking up on all of Qiao Mei’s ancestors.

“My name is Qiao Mei. As for your other queries, you can find out for yourself since you’re so capable.” Qiao Mei rolled her eyes and paid no heed.

Qian’e stomped her feet in anger, and Qiao Mei then asked, “Who are you? What’s your designation? Are you the director of the women’s community in this apartment complex?”

“Hahahahahaha!” The neighbors who were watching the commotion burst out laughing.

For a woman to become the director of the women’s community in her apartment complex, she needed to have a happy family, to have given birth and raise children, as well as to be married. It’s not a position that anyone could take up.

“You! I’m Xia Zhe’s fiancée! You stole my man!” Qian’e pointed at Qiao Mei and said.

The neighbors standing around could not take it anymore.

Chapter 218: Berating Qian’e

“When did you become Xia Zhe’s fiancée!”

“How shameless! You were previously married, yet you still want to meddle with someone else’s wedded bliss!”

“That’s right. You got divorced and still want to become a nuisance to Xia Zhe’s family. How shameless!”

“You liked Xia Zhe so much back then, but in the end, you still went with Ma San! Now that he doesn’t want you anymore, you come looking for Xia Zhe again after the divorce.”

After Qiao Mei listened to the neighbors around her talking over one another, she understood the whole story even more clearly. So the man who divorced Qian'e was called Ma San.

"Look at how beautiful Xia Zhe's wife is. Then look at yourself!"

"Oh, so this is Xia Zhe's wife from the countryside. She's too beautiful!"

"That's right. No wonder Xia Zhe got married without telling anyone. If it's me, I will also definitely hold on tightly to someone so beautiful."

"What a pity. Xia Zhe's wife! If you have a younger sister, please introduce her to my son."

"Hahahahaha, why do you keep thinking about your own family!"

The neighbors began to praise Qiao Mei for being beautiful and even wanted to propose marriages for Qiao Mei's sisters. They thought that given Qiao Mei was so beautiful, her female relatives must all be pretty as well.

Moreover, even if they looked down on Qiao Mei's countryside background, she had already married into the Xia family. If their sons married Qiao Mei's relatives, they would be considered a relative of the Xia family in the future.

None of them would want to give up a chance of both having a beautiful daughter-in-law as well as being related to the Xia family.

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The more Qian'e listened, the more jealous she became. What was so good about Qiao Mei that everyone would praise her!

The neighbors usually did not talk much about Qian'e. After all, she had lived in the same compound as them since she was young, and everyone had watched her grow up. When she was younger, she had many talents and knew how to dance and play the piano.

Back then, many people praised Qian'e and even wanted to propose an arranged marriage between her and their sons.

Yet, Qian'e was really pitiful now. She not only had an abortion, but she also got divorced. In the future, she would not even be able to get pregnant. It would be difficult for her to marry into a good family in the future, and her reputation was affected as well.

She was originally such a good kid. If Zhao Ni had not insisted that Qian'e get married, it would not have led to the current situation.

Zhao Ni not only did not educate her child well, but she even allowed Qian'e to live in her own fantasies and continue wasting her life away. Now, Qian'e was even becoming a nuisance to Xia Zhe and his family.

Such people were the most infuriating type. When they did not lead a good life, they wanted others to suffer too!

"You gossiping women! What has it got to do with you! Are you done dealing with your own family matters! You're spouting nonsense! If you behave like this, you'll all go to hell when you die!" Qian'e pointed at the neighbors standing around and cursed at them.

People did not want to hear the word "die" nowadays. Now that life was good and everyone was starting to enjoy life in their old age, Qian'e actually cursed them to die!

This caused everyone to be unhappy and they all started to reprimand Qian'e.

"Beat her up! She actually believes in feudal superstitions!"

"Go to her unit and report her!"

“Yes! Report her!”

“She’s absent from work during office hours! Report her and get her laid off!”

“Fire her!”

Qian’e could not withstand everyone’s insults and beatings and ran all the way downstairs, almost falling over on the way.

Qiao Mei took the key that Xia Fang had given her, locked the door and followed everyone downstairs. After all, she was still pregnant and it was safer to walk at the back of the crowd.

Otherwise, it would be easy for Qiao Mei to get accidentally injured during any commotion.

After all, everyone was feeling indignant because of Qiao Mei. Being the protagonist, if she closed the door and let everyone stand up for her without being there, all the neighbors would become bitterly disappointed in her.

When they reached the courtyard outside, Zhao Ni was on her way back from buying groceries and saw Qian’e being beaten up. She hurriedly threw away her groceries to one side and went forward to stop them.

“What are you doing!” Zhao Ni hurriedly ran over and pointed at everyone.

No one was afraid. Seeing that Zhao Ni had come, they stopped beating up Qian’e and went to reason with Zhao Ni.

“Your daughter is superstitious. We’re going to report her!”

“Yes!”

“She even framed Xia Zhe’s family. How shameless!”

“She also skipped work during office hours! Let’s report everything!”

Everyone started listing down all the things that they thought Qian’e had done wrong while Qiao Mei listened from the side. In just a short while, there were already more than 10 items to report. It was more than she could count with two hands.

“I’m not spouting nonsense! I’m Xia Zhe’s girlfriend!” Qian’e shouted.

Chapter 219: I Have Evidence!

“Who are you fooling! Bring out the evidence!” The elderly female neighbor looked at Qian’e mockingly.

Qian’e stopped hiding behind Zhao Ni and stood in front of the elderly female neighbor. “Of course I have evidence!”

Upon hearing that Qian’e had evidence to prove that she was Xia Zhe’s girlfriend, Qiao Mei immediately became interested. She walked up and asked, “What evidence do you have? Tell us about it.”

“I have the love letter Xia Zhe wrote to me back then!” Qian’e glared at Qiao Mei and said.

Qiao Mei looked Qian’e in the eyes, with a look of disbelief on her face.

Xia Fang had already said that Xia Zhe clearly told his family that he did not like Qian’e. She believed Xia Fang.

Besides, Qian’e had her engagement broken off and even had an abortion during that time. If Xia Zhe knew about this, he would not behave so indifferently if he had any feelings for her.

Furthermore, when he knew that Qian'e was going to get married, he would have come back to fight for her hand. He could not possibly watch Qian'e suffer like this.

To say that Xia Zhe liked Qian'e??Qiao Mei really did not believe that.

"Then show it to me and we'll see if it was written by Xia Zhe," Qiao Mei said.

Qian'e panicked a little, seeing that this village girl was actually not intimidated by her. Qian'e put on airs and said, "You're a country bumpkin from the countryside. Can you read?"

"How do you know that I can't read? Even if I really can't read, it can't be that all these people here can't read as well. If you say you have it, then bring it out for us to take a look," Qiao Mei said, then she smiled and looked at the neighbors around her.

"That's right, that's right. All of us can read. Bring it out!" the neighbors echoed.

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"Don't tell me it's all in your dream. This love letter is engraved in your mind so you can't take it out!" Qiao Mei looked at Qian'e mockingly.

"Hahahahahaha!" The neighbors standing around burst out laughing.

"You!" Qian'e pointed at Qiao Mei and could not even say a word. She was so angry that her face turned red.

Qian'e did not expect Xia Zhe's new wife to be so sharp-tongued that she could choke people to death with her words. In addition, she did not kick up any fuss either. She could make people speechless with just a few words.

Feeling stressed, Qian'e said anxiously, "The love letter is in my house! It's very precious to me! How can I have it with me everywhere I go!"

"Then is your house in this compound, and is it far?" Qiao Mei looked at Qian'e and asked her.

For a moment, Qian'e did not know how to answer. Seeing that Qian'e did not say anything for a long time, Qiao Mei looked at the neighbors beside her.

"It's in this compound. It's that building!" The elderly female neighbor even pointed it out to Qiao Mei.

"That's right, it's just on the third floor. A round trip will only take five minutes!" someone shouted from the crowd.

"Alright, you can walk slowly. I'll give you 10 minutes. Go get the letter and we'll all wait for you," Qiao Mei said with her arms crossed.

Qiao Mei knew that Qian'e would not be able to produce the letter. It was not possible that Xia Zhe could write such a thing to Qian'e. If they really had any feelings for each other, things would have happened long ago. There was no need to wait until now, when everyone was not that young anymore.

Furthermore, with Xia Zhe's stubborn temper, there was no way that he would give up if he really wanted to marry someone. Qian'e definitely did not have any evidence in her hands.

Qian'e stared daggers at Qiao Mei, wishing that she could cut Qiao Mei into pieces.

"What's wrong, is 10 minutes not enough? Or is there really no such letter, or are you unable to imitate Xia Zhe's handwriting in these 10 minutes?" Qiao Mei looked at Qian'e curiously.

"Exactly!"

"Looks like she really doesn't have any evidence. She's just bluffing here!"

When the neighbors saw how nervous Qian'e looked, they could roughly guess what was going on. If the letter was real, it would not just be Qian'e who would rush home to retrieve it to prove her innocence and that what she usually said was true. Even her mother, Zhao Ni, would have done the same.

Moreover, she would not have waited until now. If she really had received any token of love, she would have produced it and made it public long ago.

"!! I just forgot where I put it! I have to look for it! I can definitely give it to you!" Qian'e said as she looked at Qiao Mei.

"Oh, didn't you say that Xia Zhe's letter is oh so precious to you? Why aren't you able to find it now?" Qiao Mei pretended to look at Qian'e in confusion.

When Zhao Ni saw how aggressive Qiao Mei was and Qian'e not being able to say anything to refute her, she stood up for her daughter and said, "It's up to you whether you believe it or not! Xiao'e, let's go!"

Chapter 220: Pregnancy Discovered

Zhao Ni grabbed Qian'e and turned to leave, but there were many neighbors around them and they were surrounded.

"Oh, you're intending to leave. If you go back now, you might produce a stack of letters tomorrow. You may even say that Xia Zhe's father wrote to you." Qiao Mei sighed and continued, "Who knows if you've hidden away Xia Zhe's notebook and you may even be able to imitate his handwriting. Since you missed him so much, you must have stared at his things while thinking of him all these years."

Qian'e did not say a word given that Qiao Mei had hit the nail on the head. Even Zhao Ni looked a little embarrassed. Zhao Ni was the one who usually cleaned the rooms at home and she had previously spotted Xia Zhe's notebook with Qian'e. Furthermore, there were several notebooks, not just one, and Qian'e also possessed Xia Zhe's used stationery.

Qiao Mei could roughly guess what Qian'e was thinking just by looking at her. After all, she used to be a lawyer and had seen many instances of handwriting being imitated. Although technology was not that

advanced during this period of time, with a lot of practice and hard work, it was still possible for two sets of handwriting from two different people to look almost indistinguishable.

“How did this child end up like this!” an old granny in the crowd said regretfully.

“How can you do this!”

“You really have a lot of tricks up your sleeves. How did you become so evil!”

“Sigh, the old Xiao’e used to be so nice. Look at her now...”

Qian’e could hear all kinds of voices in the crowd talking about her. She was already used to everyone scolding her, but now there were actually people who felt sorry for her.

Most of the people in the crowd who felt sorry for Qian’e were the old people who had watched her grow up. They felt that the current Qian’e was the victim of circumstances, and it was fate that had played tricks on her.

“You think she’s pitiful! Then aren’t Xia Zhe and his wife pitiful? What if Xia Zhe’s superiors hear the rumors and feel that there’s something wrong with Xia Zhe’s character! Then Xia Zhe’s career will be ruined!” an old man with a walking stick shouted angrily from within the crowd.

After he spoke, everyone fell into deep thought. Compared to Qian’e, they felt that Xia Zhe was the child who showed the most promise in this compound. If Xia Zhe could not become a soldier or get promoted because of all this gossip, it would really be too much.

“That’s right! It’s really not easy for Xia Zhe! It’s only because Xia Zhe’s wife is highly principled and keeps an eye on the big picture that she doesn’t bother to argue with you! Who do you think you are! You’re still talking nonsense here!” the elderly female neighbor spat on the ground angrily and said to Qian’e.

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Qiao Mei smiled happily when she saw that everyone showed so much care and concern for Xia Zhe.

Her sweet smile made people feel happy when they saw it. Everyone had always liked Xia Zhe very much, and everyone now extended their affection to his wife.

Qiao Mei felt a little tired after standing for a long time. She had not rested for the entire day and she rubbed her waist to try to ease the soreness.

“Oh! Xia Zhe’s wife! Are you pregnant!” the elderly female neighbor said in surprise.

This compound was full of doctors and it was easy for them to tell at a glance if she was really pregnant. Previously, they had all been staring at Qian’e and so they did not observe Qiao Mei closely.

When she first arrived, she was dressed simply and was covered in dust and dirt, so no one paid much attention to her. Now that she was wearing an elegant maternity dress, they could see the obvious bulge at Qiao Mei’s stomach.

Qiao Mei blushed and nodded in embarrassment. The anger on everyone’s faces quickly disappeared. This was joyous news!

Qiao Mei touched her stomach and said, “It’s probably about three months.”

“How nice!” The neighbors looked at Qiao Mei with big smiles.

When Qian’e heard that Qiao Mei was pregnant, she said furiously, “You’re pregnant!!!”

Qiao Mei subconsciously took a step back. Looking at how Qian’e was almost going crazy, it seemed that Qian’e really had a psychological problem.

Everyone purposefully stood in front of Qiao Mei to protect her. They were concerned that Qian’e would go crazy and wanted to fight it out with Qiao Mei. If anything should happen, none of them would be able to bear the responsibility.

Zhao Ni's face was also filled with disbelief. She looked at Qiao Mei mockingly and said, "Don't tell me you used some despicable trick on Xia Zhe to get yourself pregnant!"

When Qian'e heard what Zhao Ni said, her eyes lit up.