

Switched M 201

Chapter 201 I Need to Speak with Manager Sun about Something

Lin Chuxia came over early in the morning to interview the little lady about her engagement feelings as soon as possible.

Also, she wanted to find out what method Su Wensong used to make her have an epiphany all at once.

But when she entered the Bun Shop, she didn't see Sun Lanlan; there were two new servers at the window selling buns, and Granny Sun was making buns in the back kitchen.

A young man was bustling about in the main hall, a new addition that Su Wensong had transferred to their shop.

Seeing Lin Chuxia, everyone respectfully greeted her as Mr. Lin.

Lin Chuxia told them to carry on with their work and was just about to ask Granny Sun where Sun Lanlan had gone when she saw a certain little lady coming in through the back door, her eyes still smiling.

This is the Su Family's wing room, and the back door of the Bun Shop leads directly to the Su Family's courtyard.

Lin Chuxia coughed heavily and looked at Sun Lanlan with a teasing gaze.

The moment Sun Lanlan saw Lin Chuxia, her smile grew even wider, and she even raised her wrist to show off the jade bracelet to her.

"Does it look good? Granny Su gave it to me."

Lin Chuxia had seen this jade bracelet before; when she wanted to buy a yard urgently for her cooked food business, Su Wensong had taken out this bracelet for her to sell.

This thing was clearly the Su Family's heirloom.

Lin Chuxia pulled her to a side seat, propped her chin on her hands, and after a while, said, "Indeed, good spirits come with happy events, just look at your radiant face; even I, a woman, am moved by it. But Lanlan, you're smiling a bit too cheaply."

"I'm not," Sun Lanlan stubbornly denied, but the smile on her face never stopped.

Lin Chuxia started to reveal her past, "I don't know who was the one who told me that all men are bastards, that money is almighty, it's better to earn money than to want a man. Said they had no intention of considering marriage now, that making money comes first..."

"You're going to die."

Having her past dug up, Sun Lanlan angrily reached to pinch Lin Chuxia's arm but was dodged with a laugh.

Lin Chuxia caught her wrist and reminded her to be careful, "This is the Su Family heirloom, it's meant to be passed on to the Su Family's daughter-in-law, are you really sure?"

Sun Lanlan looked at the bracelet and nodded.

"Speaking of which, your change of heart this time is a bit sudden," which caught Lin Chuxia off guard.

She thought that Su Wensong would have to go through a marathon of love pursuit.

"Chuxia, I have to thank you."

"Thank me?"

Sun Lanlan nodded, "It's you who made me see my own heart clearly."

That day, when Lin Chuxia mentioned Su Wensong to her, her initial reaction was rejection.

But when Lin Chuxia asked her to think about the way Su Wensong usually treated her, for some reason, the details of the past half a year they spent together all popped into her mind.

She hardly slept that night.

She thought of the day Su Wenmao came to the shop to cause trouble, the first time she learned that Su Wensong had such an unfortunate past.

Returned from the countryside, his job snatched away, and those people coming to his door to bully and insult him.

In that moment, she was unexpectedly furious, wishing she could beat those people up.

Later, when she heard that people from the Su Family side were coming, she rushed out immediately each time, not wanting those people to hurt Granny Su and Su Wensong again.

Also, when Granny Su gave her the red scarf, there was a hint of joy in her heart, and a bit of loss too. She didn't know what she was feeling lost about at the time.

Then, someone came to make trouble in the shop, and when that person raised a stool to smash her head, her mind went blank. She thought she was done for and that at the very least she would be seriously injured.

In that critical moment, a familiar figure appeared. He kicked the man away, and the falling stool was also deflected by him.

At that moment, her heart nearly stopped for an instant. Seeing Su Wensong fighting with the man, she felt the blood in her body boiling.

It wasn't until Cai Jun called out to her repeatedly that she regained her senses.

She had never really thought about what was going on with herself until that night, when she realized that someone seemed to have already moved into her heart.

Even when Lin Chuxia told her that Su Wensong wanted to date her, her initial reaction was to refuse, but deep down she was delighted.

The more delighted she was, the more she avoided it, fearing that his feelings for her were only out of pity.

Until the next day, Su Wensong came to her in person. They talked a lot that day, and only then did she realize what they had missed out on in the past half year.

"By the way, the issue with Liu Dahui has been settled. He was sentenced to three years."

Bringing up Liu Dahui, a hint of hatred flashed in Sun Lanlan's eyes.

Such a lowly person deserves to be shot.

Lin Chuxia also thought the sentence was too light. Though Liu Dahui was the instigator, he had not caused any actual harm; still, it was because of the crackdown that he was given a heavy sentence.

"What about the other two guys?"

Sun Lanlan sneered coldly, "Those two were charged with hooliganism, one sentenced to eight years, the other to ten. Both were under Liu Dahui's orders. After the verdict, their families went to the Liu Family, demanding compensation."

"It serves them right. The Liu Family didn't cause trouble for your family, did they?"

Lin Chuxia knew all too well the nature of Liu Dahui's family.

"You guessed it right. Yesterday, Liu Dahui's second aunt, Er Shunzi's mother, led the Liu Family people to our house, hoping we'd speak to the police on their behalf for a lighter sentence. Before they could finish talking, my three brothers kicked them out."

The two continued talking when Qin Lihua walked in.

She usually managed a bun shop in the city and seldom came here.

Seeing Lin Chuxia there too, especially sitting so close and chatting so intimately with Sun Lanlan, a hint of something strange flashed in Qin Lihua's eyes.

She approached them directly, first calling out to "Auntie Four" and then to Sun Lanlan, "I have something to ask Manager Sun."

Sun Lanlan didn't have much feeling towards Qin Lihua; she hadn't taken her seriously even when she knew Qin Lihua was with Cai Jun, not to mention now that she was engaged to Su Wensong, she cared even less about the past.

Nodding her head, "What is it?"

Lin Chuxia stood up, "You two talk, I'll head back to the office."

But Qin Lihua stopped her, "Auntie Four, I also have something to discuss with you, don't leave yet."

Lin Chuxia saw her demeanor and roughly guessed what it could be.

Sure enough, the next moment Qin Lihua said to Sun Lanlan, "First of all, congratulations Manager Sun. I heard you and Factory Director Su are engaged, and it won't be long before I can celebrate at your wedding, right?"

Sun Lanlan admitted graciously, "Indeed, these days we're discussing the wedding. Once we set a date, we'll send invitations to our colleagues."

Qin Lihua's face showed a moment of discomfort. She took a deep breath and continued, "Then thank you, Manager Sun. I came today to ask for your help. Could you persuade Cai Jun not to resign?"

She looked towards Lin Chuxia, "I was going to see Auntie Four about this, but then I thought it over. Cai Jun's resignation is because of Manager Sun. To unring the bell, you need the ringer, so I came to you."

Chapter 202: Malice

Sun Lanlan chuckled lightly, "Whether Cai Jun decides to stay or leave is his own business, how can I persuade him?"

"But you clearly know why he resigned; he just didn't want to make things look bad. Since you're engaged to Factory Director Su, it shouldn't be a problem for him to work in the shop, right? Why can't you tolerate him?"

This was the news she heard yesterday when a newly transferred waitress mentioned that Factory Director Su went to Manager Sun's house to propose.

Her first reaction was disbelief.

Sun Lanlan clearly liked Cai Jun, and what kind of person is Su Wensong? The director of Xiyang Food Factory. When her second aunt proposed to match-make them, she disliked him for being older, but she had to admit that Su Wensong was very impressive.

How could such an impressive person settle for someone's leftovers?

Originally, she wanted to ask Lin Chuxia directly for help, but knowing Cai Jun's temperament and considering the Sun siblings, even if Lin Chuxia spoke up, he would not return.

Therefore, once Qin Lihua confirmed that Sun Lanlan was indeed engaged to Su Wensong, she directly sought out Sun Lanlan.

Sun Lanlan laughed sarcastically at her words, "First of all, I haven't excluded anyone. Cai Jun's resignation has nothing to do with me. If anyone has made things ugly, isn't it him? Accusing me now doesn't make any sense."

"But if you go and persuade him, he might come back to work."

"Why should I persuade him?"

If it weren't for the fact that Qin Lihua is from the Qin Family, which required giving some consideration for Lin Chuxia's sake, Sun Lanlan really wanted her to get her mind cleared.

However, Qin Lihua didn't see a problem with her stance.

Cai Jun resigned clearly because of the Sun siblings. Sun Lanlan has Factory Director Su, so why can't she tolerate their happiness?

Yes, she just can't stand their happiness.

"You're the manager; don't you know why he resigned? If you are innocent, you should have kept him."

Just as Lin Chuxia stepped forward to say something, she was stopped by Sun Lanlan.

Qin Lihua is Qin Yang's niece, and some things shouldn't be said by Lin Chuxia.

"I am clear in my conscience. It's probably someone else who should feel guilty, Qin Lihua. You shouldn't be coming to me now; the customers will be arriving soon. You should go back."

She directly ordered her to leave.

Cai Jun's resignation was also unexpected to her. Xiaxia had already arranged other work for him, just to spare them the discomfort of being together.

It was Cai Jun who couldn't overcome his own mental hurdle. Although he said he was visiting her third brother during the Spring Festival, what was the reality?

He felt guilty about something he did and couldn't face continuing working here; why should she go persuade him?

Qin Lihua watched Sun Lanlan's merciless expression, a trace of resentment flashing in her eyes.

Initially, she thought both she and Cai Jun having jobs would lead to a happy life ahead. But now Cai Jun had resigned, and even insisted she resign. She didn't want to farm, nor live a hard life.

And yet, Sun Lanlan, soon to be a factory director's wife, still wouldn't let them go.

"I know you've always been upset that Cai Jun and I are dating, but Manager Sun, think about it. If it wasn't for me and Cai Jun being together, you wouldn't even have a chance with Factory Director Su. Or are you still thinking about Cai Jun, not wanting him to come back because you care that he's with me, and wanting revenge? Are you with Factory Director Su just to oppress him, not truly sincere?"

Lin Chuxia squinted slightly, Qin Lihua's words were full of malice.

The next moment, she saw Su Wensong entering from the back door of the Bun Shop.

Seeing the malice flashing in Qin Lihua's eyes again, she... said that after seeing Su Wensong.

At this moment, Sun Lanlan had her back to Su Wensong.

Just as Lin Chuxia was about to remind Sun Lanlan not to fall for Qin Lihua's trap, Sun Lanlan had already spoken.

She looked at Qin Lihua and sneered, "From this perspective, I really should thank you. Without you, I wouldn't have been able to see people clearly. Not only could I not see Cai Jun's true colors, but I also realized that my feelings for Cai Jun were merely not of disgust..."

"You admit it, you finally admit it, it's because you still have lingering feelings for Cai Jun that you won't let him continue working in the shop..."

Qin Lihua looked towards Lin Chuxia and then at Su Wensong, her glance carrying smugness and resentment.

Sun Lanlan sneered again, "Are you saying your brain and your ears are bad? Just because I'm not disgusted, it means I have lingering feelings? Are you so eager to label yourself as someone who steals others' partners?"

Qin Lihua's expression stiffened suddenly, followed by annoyance.

But before she could retort, Sun Lanlan continued, "I, Sun Lanlan, am not going to waste so much effort over an insignificant man. Of course, my thanks to you also let me understand my own feelings and make a choice that I won't regret."

She understood her feelings for Cai Jun clearly, but it made her realize her feelings for Su Wensong were different.

However, she didn't say this out loud.

She felt that anything she said now would seem insincere; she was not going to prove anything to a madwoman. She would show everyone over time.

She was with Su Wensong not because of a man whose surname was Cai or Liu, but because he was a person worthy of her trust, someone she realized she could have feelings for deep in her heart.

Although she didn't say it out loud, everyone present understood.

Especially Su Wensong, looking at Sun Lanlan's back, his eyes filled with surprise.

He had thought, even if Sun Lanlan still had feelings for Cai Jun, he wouldn't mind. He would treat her well, and someday, she would have a place for him in her heart.

But, he hadn't expected it so soon...

Qin Lihua didn't believe her words at all, "Nonsense, if you don't care about him at all, then call him back, or let him work somewhere else. There are so many positions in your aunt's factory, why must you force him to leave?"

"He wasn't forced out," a man's voice came from behind. Sun Lanlan turned her head and saw Su Wensong walking briskly towards her.

He came to stand by her side, protecting her.

"That night after the incident happened, Mr. Lin called everyone to the office to minimize the impact. Not only were a few of you living in the courtyard, but there were other workers as well. Even so, Mr. Lin immediately protected your dignity and had Cai Jun propose marriage, while also notifying me to transfer Cai Jun's job. Before Cai Jun resigned, he had been transferred from the Bun Shop to the Food Factory, and he should know this personally if nothing went wrong."

Watching Qin Lihua's slightly changing expression, Su Wensong continued, "You didn't communicate with Cai Jun but instead came here to blame my fiancée. Don't you think you owe my fiancée an apology?"

The last sentence was delivered with a hint of sternness. Qin Lihua shuddered and looked up at him.

This was the first time she looked directly at Su Wensong and realized that this man possessed a demeanor that common folks did not.

Whether it was because he was the factory director, it inspired both respect and aspiration.

Especially since his skin was whiter than that of an average man.

Chapter 203: Are You Looking to Complain to a Man?

She remembered that when Su Wensong first came, he wasn't so pale, only slightly paler than her dad and her brother, and somehow, he had become as pale as Cai Jun.

Behind the lenses, his eyes were sharp, yet the glasses made him look particularly gentle.

Qin Lihua couldn't help but remember that during Chinese New Year, her second aunt had once told her mom that she wanted to match her with Su Wensong. If she had agreed when her second aunt mentioned it, would she have become the factory director's wife?

Under Su Wensong's gaze, Qin Lihua had no choice but to lower her head, "I'm sorry, Manager Sun, I was too anxious."

Before Sun Lanlan could reply, Qin Lihua turned to Lin Chuxia, "Auntie, I know you care about me the most, and since you are willing to transfer Cai Jun to work at the food factory, please let him come back, you said it and he will definitely listen."

The expression on Lin Chuxia's face looked unpleasant, but for the sake of her calling her 'auntie', she replied, "You should have persuaded him before coming to us, Lihua, it's his choice, I have no right to intervene. He's an adult, he has the right to decide his own life, and likewise, he can be responsible for his choices."

Until Qin Lihua left, looking devastated, Lin Chuxia's expression was still not pleasant.

"I initially thought she was quite obedient, I didn't expect her to repeatedly cause such trouble. Tonight, I must write a letter to Qin Yang, I can't deal with his niece anymore."

Sun Lanlan laughed, "Are you looking to complain to a man?"

"What's wrong with that? You have a fiancé to protect you, can't I complain to my man?"

Lin Chuxia glanced at Su Wensong, and then Sun Lanlan also remembered Su Wensong's previous two fiances.

Both of their faces couldn't help turning red, and Sun Lanlan even gave Su Wensong an annoyed look.

He, however, started laughing.

These two were simply unbearable to watch.

But seeing their rapid progress, Lin Chuxia was happy too.

Sun Lanlan knew that in the end, Lin Chuxia was standing up for her, so she said, "No matter what, Qin Lihua is a member of the Qin Family, she has no faults in her work, and if you fire her as her aunt, it would be hard to explain to the Qin Family."

"But if I don't fire her, I can't get this out of my chest, Lanlan, you don't know, she clearly saw Su Wensong coming and still she spoke that way."

If her affair with Cai Jun was out of uncontrollable emotions, her performance just now completely exposed her character issues.

"I know, but I am honestly grateful to her from the bottom of my heart. If she hadn't interfered like that, maybe I would have ended up with Cai Jun. Just for this, I can forgive her little schemes."

Before, she hadn't noticed it, but now just thinking about being married to Cai Jun, Sun Lanlan felt a chill all over her body.

She almost wanted to put Qin Lihua on a pedestal and burn incense for her.

Seeing there was no issue anymore, and the two ladies seemed to have some secrets to talk about, Su Wensong found an excuse and left.

Watching his retreating figure, Sun Lanlan said, "Furthermore, she always said I had lingering feelings for Cai Jun, right? Let her see clearly, I'll live a happy and beautiful life with Old Su to show her, if you fire her now, she might think I am petty and unable to tolerate them, and she might hold a grudge against us for a lifetime, I'm not afraid of her grudging me, I'm afraid she misunderstands my relationship with Old Su."

"Oh my my..."

Lin Chuxia exaggeratedly contorted her mouth, "What kind of relationship do you and Old Su have? Lanlan, I just discovered how thick-skinned you are, oh dear, the world's really declining..."

Sun Lanlan didn't care, Lin Chuxia was her best friend, isn't it normal for best friends to share their feelings?

"Just allows you and your Qin Yang to be all lovey-dovey? I won't envy you ever again."

Sun Lanlan said this while shaking her wrist, which is a signature gesture of a Su Family daughter-in-law.

Lin Chuxia genuinely felt happy for her cheerful demeanor.

Lanlan, you must find happiness in this lifetime!

.....

After leaving the Bun Shop, Qin Lihua stormed home furiously.

She was not in the mood for work at all right now, thinking that Cai Jun would soon be farming, and she might have to farm as well, her mind was a complete mess.

Meanwhile at Qin Liang's family, Ma Suyun had just arrived.

Although they had divided their family property, every year at planting in the spring and harvesting in autumn, Ma Suyun would seek help from the main house.

Her husband Qin Wen really lived up to his name, weak and incapable, all the household chores relied on her; how much could she really do?

And Qin Liang and his wife were not only good at working, Qin Jianjun and Qin Jianye, the two younger men, were even more capable than Qin Wen.

As she entered the courtyard and saw Qin Liang and Qian Chuncao busy working, Ma Suyun started smiling.

"Are big brother and sister-in-law busy? Do you have time this afternoon? I just bought some seeds, and I want to plant them this afternoon. I was thinking about getting Qin Wen to take a day off, but as you know, it's not easy to get leave from his work."

In the past, no matter if it was Qin Liang or Qian Chuncao, they would have said: Why take leave? It's just lending a hand, work is more important.

But after Ma Suyun finished speaking, the two kept busy with their tasks and did not respond to her.

It was Qin Liang who finally looked up and asked, "This afternoon?"

Ma Suyun nodded repeatedly, "This afternoon."

"That might not be possible," Qian Chuncao took over the conversation, her smile not quite reaching her eyes, "Not to hide it from you, but we haven't even started planting our own land yet. After all, you only have one person's land to deal with, our family has to manage land for five people, how could we have time to help others?"

Ma Suyun was stunned, "But don't you also have more people?"

"The number of people we had was indeed not few in the past, but this year Jianjun and Lihua both went to work, Jianye is also studying, just your big brother and I are planting land for five, that's a much bigger burden than just you alone planting for one. We were even thinking about asking for your help later. Since you're also busy, my husband and I will just have to manage slowly on our own."

Qian Chuncao even rolled her eyes discreetly after speaking.

Ma Suyun, listening to her casual words, grew suspicious; she was not foolish. She could tell her sister-in-law was doing this on purpose.

"Sister-in-law, did I offend you in some way? We've always farmed together in the past, how come you suddenly don't want to deal with it this year? Don't bring up Lihua and Jianjun working because if they wanted to come back to farm, it would only take a word. It's not like Qin Wen who has a hard time taking leave from a government job. If you feel awkward, I can talk to your sister-in-law myself."

Hearing about asking her children to take leave, Qian Chuncao also lost her temper.

Let's not talk about the daughter's work, but her son had this job because he shamelessly reached out to his younger brother and sister-in-law. Now that his job was finally showing promise, and his brother and sister-in-law had even made his position permanent ahead of time, it was a critical period—he should be taking initiative, not taking leave to go farming. How foolish would that be?

"If you want to ask for leave, ask for your Qin Wen. Whether it's government or private, just because your Qin Wen works doesn't mean others are just messing around, right? To be honest, your Qin Wen might not even earn as much as my son."

Chapter 204: The Fight Begins

Once the son gets promoted, the base salary is 40, and with the business he pulls in, there's also commission and bonuses. My sister-in-law is not stingy at all. When has Lihua ever just taken her salary home?

Qin Wen, a cashier, earns a measly fixed salary, and she looks down on her own daughter and son?

Although the last sentence wasn't loud, Ma Suyun heard it loud and clear, and it struck right at her sore spot.

In the past, she used to brag among her sisters-in-law because Qin Wen was the one with a steady payroll job.

Now, Qin Han and Qin Wu both work as couples and earn money, the eldest brother and his wife may not have jobs, but their children are all working, and Qin Jiang is even going to be the deputy factory manager in the village.

In the end, it seems like her Qin Wen is the least impressive of all.

Each and every one of them, what's so great about working for themselves? And they dare to look down on her?

No wonder they used to help her with the farming, and now they just wash their hands of it. Do they feel they no longer need them?

"Big sister, your words are so heartless. My family's Qin Wen works at the Hardware Company and has always helped out our family. Don't forget, it was Qin Wen who helped Jianjun get the bike voucher when he wanted to buy a bicycle, and also Lihua, if it weren't for me, could she have found such a perfect match?"

Had this not been brought up, it might have been fine, but mentioning it made Qian Chuncao incredibly angry.

"Ma Suyun, don't think I don't know what's going on in your mind. Are you really thinking about my daughter's best interest? If it weren't for the fourth son's wife, I still wouldn't know what you'd have done."

Ma Suyun couldn't take it anymore, "How could I not be thinking about your daughter's best interest? Without me, you would match her with some farmer from the village, could he be better than her current match? I have been wholeheartedly helping you, and now you're accusing me instead."

"Wholeheartedly helping us? That's for your own benefit, don't think I'm unaware of that. You and Qin Yang, as a couple, feel inferior and are using my daughter as a pawn in your games, Ma Suyun, who would've thought you as an elder..."

"Who said I was competing with them?" Ma Suyun raised her voice sharply, "It was your daughter who told me she liked Cai Jun, I was kindly helping her..."

"Enough, we cannot afford your kindness. If you have that much spare time, better go and educate your own daughter. Oh, right, in order to educate your daughter, you first need to have one, don't you? I say, Suyun, you've been married for almost two years now, right? How come there's still no news? Are you thinking too much and exhausted? I heard that mental exhaustion isn't good for conceiving children."

Qian Chuncao said this with utmost seriousness, and Ma Suyun's face flushed red with anger.

She knew that after being married for so long without children, people gossiped about her behind her back, but those talks were always behind her back, and she pretended not to know, taking it as envy because Qin Wen worked for the county.

She couldn't believe that someone had the audacity to say it to her face, and that person was her own sister-in-law.

She was so angry that she rushed up to her.

Qian Chuncao was not to be outdone; she had long since wanted to square things with Ma Suyun, who never does any real work and always makes trouble, even almost ruining her daughter's reputation.

The sisters-in-law tangled and fought with each other. Qin Liang, as the eldest brother-in-law, didn't dare to pull his own wife away or to favor his brother's wife, and could only try to calm things from the side.

But the two had both been holding back anger for too long and the fight only got more intense, even startling the elders in the house.

When Qin Lihua returned, she saw her mother and sixth aunt fighting in the courtyard.

She couldn't help but get involved.

If it wasn't for her sixth aunt's bad advice, she wouldn't have lost so much face, becoming the gossip of the entire factory.

If she had spoken with her fourth aunt earlier, her aunt would definitely have helped her, and the situation wouldn't have ended up like this.

Even more so, if that day, her second aunt had suggested that she and Su Wensong get matched, and it hadn't been for her sixth aunt's scornful mockery at the side, she might now be the factory manager's wife.

Everything was ruined by Auntie Liu in her lifetime.

.....

Chuxia Lin came home in the evening to find only Mr. Qin, Mrs. Qin, and Little Zhuangzhuang at home. Her eldest brother and sister-in-law had finished work but weren't there.

They did occasionally eat together nowadays, especially Chuxia Lin. Tired of the food from the Bun Shop, she liked to freeload off her mother-in-law's cooking.

Of course, she did not skimp on living expenses each month, and even if she hadn't given any money, Mrs. Qin enjoyed having the family eat together.

She served herself a bowl of porridge and, eating the home-cooked dishes fried by Mrs. Qin, asked about Qin Han and his wife.

Mrs. Qin sighed, "Today, during the day, Mom Jianjun and Qin Wen's wife got into a fight. So when your elder brother and his wife get back they'll call everyone together to mediate."

"They got into a fight? Over what?"

Chuxia Lin thought about it; the couples of Qin Liang and Qin Wen seemed to get along quite well, since they were brothers after all. Even when there were disagreements, they'd usually show some respect.

If a fight had broken out, it must be serious.

"Who knows? I heard that Qin Wen's wife went to ask Qin Liang's couple about farming, and one way or another, it escalated into a fight. Later on, Lihua came back and even joined her mom beating her aunt. Things got so intense, nobody could pull them apart. In the end, Qin Wen's wife had her head busted open and that's when they stopped."

Mrs. Qin sighed again, "I mean, what can't be talked out? They didn't have to get so violent."

Hearing that Qin Lihua was involved, Chuxia Lin had a guess about the nature of the dispute.

She passed a steamed bun to Mrs. Qin, "We can't intervene in this, let's just eat. When elder brother and sister-in-law come back, we'll understand what happened."

Mrs. Qin figured that made sense. They started eating, but before they'd finished, Qin Han and his wife returned.

Just as Chuxia Lin had guessed, although Qin Lihua had an engagement with Cai Jun, the matter with these two was ultimately somewhat disgraceful.

And the reason Qin Lihua took the initiative to pursue Cai Jun was all because of Ma Suyun's incitement from behind the scenes.

Qian Chuncao had been convinced that Ma Suyun led her daughter astray, and had been harboring this grievance. Because of the issue with Cai Jun's resignation, Qin Lihua also began to resent her Auntie Liu.

Today's incident was like laying all their cards on the table.

"Qin Wen insists on not letting it go, demanding 200 yuan as compensation from my elder brother, and my sister-in-law doesn't want to pay a cent. Now, the injured is still lying in the hospital. I think this issue will be tough to resolve."

200 yuan was no small sum; previously, they could not earn that much even from selling vegetables for a whole season.

Qin Wen was really asking for the moon.

Mr. Qin weighed in, "Let's not interfere with them anymore. Life is what you make of it. I've long noticed that Qin Wen's household is always restless, and Mom Jianjun is quite stubborn. Even the village chief can't handle this."

Everyone present knew the severity; with the brothers at odds like this, not only would they not work the fields together, but they might not even speak when they met.

As for Ma Suyun, she didn't expect things to escalate to the point where she completely offended her elder brother and sister-in-law.

Chuxia Lin didn't follow up on the outcome of the matter. Qin Han and his wife were busy working at the Bun Shop every day and didn't know much about the situation either. It wasn't until the third day that Qin Jiang sought out Chuxia Lin.

Out of Qin Yang's several brothers, aside from Qin Wen, Chuxia Lin had the least contact with Qin Jiang.

Though Qin Jiang was indeed a bona fide farmer as well, he was different from those other brothers who also farmed the land.

Chapter 205: Make Her Get a Divorce

Qin Jiang always appears well-groomed and clean in front of others, even when he is farming.

It's the same as his home, always neat and tidy.

Probably has something to do with the fact that he's married to Xu Yun, the primary school teacher.

A man of refined appearance, he doesn't talk much usually.

He came to Lin Chuxia about the village chicken farm; previously, the village agreed to provide chickens to Lin Chuxia's food factory once they were ready for market.

But, in the end, it was just a verbal agreement between the village chief and Lin Chuxia. Now the chickens were already half-grown, Qin Jiang, as the deputy director of the chicken farm, didn't go directly to Lin Chuxia's office but came to her home instead.

In the past, whenever it was about the bun shop and food factory, they went directly to Qin Han, since Qin Yang was out of town and hard to reach.

Communication was more straightforward between the brothers.

Now representing the village chicken farm, it was inappropriate to pass messages through his brother.

And being Qin Yang's brother, no matter what others thought, his internal scale always tilted towards his family's side.

Without his younger siblings' food company, how could he have become the deputy director of the chicken farm?

"I'm not entirely sure what the village chief specifically discussed with you, and after giving it some thought, I decided to come over and hear your opinion."

Lin Chuxia had a good impression of Qin Jiang; previously when Qin Lihua and Cai Jun had their small engagement discussion, they talked about the chicken farm matter.

Now that Qin Jiang had come to her personally, she understood that this uncle was likely to side with her.

She spoke straightforwardly, "Let's stick to the original agreement. The village chicken farm's chickens will be purchased by Xiyang Food Factory at market price, provided that quality is assured. We'll need to prepare an additional contract for this, which Xiyang Food Factory will draft. I'll have Factory Director Su contact you directly to sign the contract. Of course, if there are any issues with the contract, you can discuss them directly with me."

Qin Jiang smiled slightly and nodded, "Then I'll trouble my sister-in-law, and there's one more thing. The village chief would like to sit down with you and Factory Director Su."

He glanced at Lin Chuxia, his voice carrying a hint of resignation, "I've heard that the village wants to build a pig farm too."

This was to give Lin Chuxia a heads-up that the village chief was likely approaching her again regarding sales channels.

Lin Chuxia was not at all bothered by the village chief's little scheme, "You go ahead and arrange it, third brother."

Qin Jiang breathed a sigh of relief internally.

Indeed, his sister-in-law was someone capable of big things and also took great care of her family members.

Looking at Lin Chuxia and then thinking about his own younger brother and his wife...

After discussing matters with Qin Jiang, Lin Chuxia planned to visit the bun shop. Yesterday, Qin Han came back and mentioned that someone came to their bun shop inquiring about learning the craft.

At that time, Qin Han thought it was a competitor coveting their secret recipe, so he brushed it off with a few words without taking it seriously.

Lin Chuxia asked if it was a local person, and Qin Han said it sounded like a Northwest accent, which reminded her of someone.

If she wasn't wrong, that person would visit again today.

She went directly to the bun shop from home, passing through the night market.

To call it a night market, it wasn't only active at night.

Originally, when it was the production team era, this market was set up in the evening for the convenience of the locals.

Back then, people could bring their home-raised chickens, ducks, or chicken and duck eggs to sell.

The excess vegetables from their gardens were also brought here for sale.

After the market opened up, this place became even more bustling, with buying and selling going on all day long.

As I passed the vegetable market, a quarrel was breaking out up ahead.

The voice sounded familiar, and peering through the crowd, there was Lin Jiayi, her belly swollen with pregnancy.

Lin Jiayi was now over six months along, her stomach was sticking out prominently, yet she hadn't gained much weight elsewhere.

Moreover, she had darkened considerably and developed spots on her face, which made her look particularly haggard.

Right now, she was hysterically shouting at Li Guangyuan.

Lin Chuxia could tell that Li Guangyuan was probably selling vegetables at a stall, something they had done in their previous life, and only for half a year before they found a new opportunity.

Although Li Guangyuan was not cut out for big ventures, he was quite adept at selling vegetables; if he had earnestly continued, he might not become rich, but a comfortable life was still within reach.

It's just that Lin Jiayi might not be satisfied with that.

With this thought, Lin Chuxia also remembered the gossip she had heard from Sun Lanlan recently.

Before Spring Festival, through Mother Lin, Lin Jiayi had married Li Hongmei to a family from a distant relative.

Mrs. Li was getting on in years, although she favored her two daughters, some things were beyond her capacity now.

For instance, with this family, despite what the matchmaker and Lin Jiayi had said, the reality was that Mrs. Li had only met the man and thought he seemed honest. Considering Li Hongmei's sharp nature, marrying such a man wouldn't be losing out, so she agreed.

But less than two months into the marriage, Li Hongmei started running back home, crying and complaining to Old Mrs. Li that they had been deceived; that family was nothing like what Lin Jiayi had described.

The pigs they raised were sold by her mother-in-law at the start of spring, and they didn't see a penny; even the harvest from their fields wasn't theirs to touch.

It was then that Old Mrs. Li realized the kind of family Lin Jiayi had married her daughter into; they had a massive fight, with Old Mrs. Li insisting that Li Guangyuan divorce Lin Jiayi, regardless of the child in her womb.

Lin Jiayi thought that even if Li Hongmei discovered that the family wasn't good, what's done was done - she should just hold her nose and accept it. She never expected Old Mrs. Li would push for a divorce.

Now pregnant with Li Guangyuan's child and not having become the wealthy lady she hoped, how could she consider divorce?

Fortunately, Li Guangyuan couldn't bear to part with Lin Jiayi and the child in her womb either.

After much persuasion and Lin Jiayi crying that she was also deceived, Old Mrs. Li's anger was finally appeased.

But after this incident, the covert support Old Mrs. Li had given her daughter became blatant. She even told Li Guangyuan to give half of the money he made from selling vegetables to Li Hongmei, claiming it was what they owed her.

Sun Lanlan couldn't help but criticize this.

In the end, Li Hongmei's marital family was merely poor, not abusive; it boggled her mind how Old Mrs. Li could be so blatantly biased. For her daughter's sake, she was willing to give up on her unborn grandson.

People say rural folks prefer boys over girls, but Old Mrs. Li's actions showed no signs of that.

Sun Lanlan was unaware, but Lin Chuxia, who had lived a lifetime, understood perfectly well.

Of course Old Mrs. Li wouldn't favor boys over girls, because Li Guangyuan wasn't her biological son; her two daughters were.

During the years of famine, Li Guangyuan's parents had starved to death. Old Mrs. Li and Old Man Li had been married for many years without children. When they saw Li Guangyuan, an orphan, they thought to take him in so he could care for them in their old age.

Only Li Guangyuan was young at the time, and starving nearly out of his wits, any woman with milk was like a mother, and he had largely forgotten his past.

Chapter 206: Sense of Crisis

It was quite a coincidence; after raising Li Guangyuan and enduring the tough years, Old Mrs. Li suddenly became pregnant and gave birth to Li Hongmei and Li Dongmei consecutively.

There was this belief among the older generation that these two children were brought forth by Li Guangyuan, so Old Mrs. Li never gave up on him, keeping him by her side all along.

Besides, she had given birth to two daughters in a row. Had there been even one son, it's likely that Li Guangyuan wouldn't carry the Li surname any longer.

These were things she later learned by chance. Old Mrs. Li had always valued the two daughters even more than the son, which was quite unreasonable in the rural setting.

Lin Chuxia didn't linger, cutting through the crowd and heading straight for the Bun Shop.

Lin Jiayi didn't even notice Lin Chuxia behind the crowd. She was angrily pointing at the woman next to Li Guangyuan, questioning their relationship.

She had specially made stewed meat to deliver to him today, only to find their own stand deserted, while Li Guangyuan was busy helping that woman.

She knew that woman—a widow not yet thirty, raising a child on her own by selling vegetables for a living.

Last year, when they were selling vegetables, she had seen men courting that woman, and even heard that one man was caught by his wife knocking on the woman's door in the middle of the night and got a thrashing.

At that time, she had mocked the man for his lack of ambition. The young widow, though not old, had dark, sun-and-wind-battered skin from selling vegetables every day.

To think that such a person could entice him away, how desperate was he?

And what about now?

Today, she saw her own man chatting intimately with that woman, even helping her sell things.

In the face of Lin Jiayi, Tian Cuixia was calm and composed, indifferent even to the pointing and whispering of the onlookers, still warmly inviting them to buy vegetables.

The more Tian Cuixia behaved like that, the more infuriated Lin Jiayi became, stomping her feet in anger.

Surrounded by so many people, Li Guangyuan felt somewhat embarrassed and pulled Lin Jiayi aside to a quiet corner.

Lin Jiayi was truly furious and shook off his hand.

"Why are you pulling me? You aren't ashamed of what you're doing, yet you're embarrassed by what I'm saying? Li Guangyuan, do you think you've been fair to me?"

Li Guangyuan glanced away and comforted Lin Jiayi, "I've already told you, there's nothing between her and me. You're making such a scene; it's as if we really do have something. Jiayi, don't you know me? I was just lending her a hand because I felt sorry for her, seeing her with a child."

"You say you feel sorry for her because she has a child, and you're lending her a hand. Lend it long enough, and what's next? Going to help her raise the child?"

Lin Jiayi felt a sense of crisis welling up inside her.

Ever since Li Hongmei realized what the Ma family was like, she frequently returned to complain to the old lady.

She had thought that marrying the sister-in-law off far away would bring peace, but who knew that their mother-in-law was so biased towards her daughter, stirring up chaos at home just to side with her daughter.

She even considered asking Li Guangyuan to divorce her.

She was also adored at her own home, but no matter how much doting she received, it was no match for her brother Lin Jiadong.

She had thought that if one day Old Mrs. Li found out what the Ma family was like, at most she would burst into angry rants and be done with it.

But now, both the old lady and the sister-in-law saw her as a thorn in their side, especially when the sister-in-law returned to her mother's house, making her life utterly unbearable.

She had hoped to find some peace by bringing the meal over, but instead, she saw Li Guangyuan with another woman...

If the home cannot accommodate her, what if Li Guangyuan develops feelings for someone else...

Lin Jiayi grew more and more afraid as she thought about it.

She didn't want to divorce; she hadn't yet lived the life of a rich wife.

Counting the time from her past life, Li Guangyuan would soon become wealthy, just another three to five years, and she would be a rich wife.

Li Guangyuan saw her tears falling like raindrops and also worried that getting upset might affect their child's health.

"Don't cry, I really was just giving her a hand. Besides, there are so many people in the market, what could I possibly do with her? You know, our village is far from the county, it's not easy for me to come all the way from the village to sell vegetables. Waking up so early every day, by the time I get here, sometimes there's no place left. Tian Cuixia lives in the county, she can save a spot for me. I'm doing it for our business, even if I don't help her, someone else will, and wouldn't our family still suffer the loss in the end?"

"Really?"

Lin Jiayi's tearful eyes were adrift, and upon hearing Li Guangyuan's explanation, she felt there was some truth to it.

"Really, do you not know what kind of person I am? Rest assured, how could that kind of woman compare to you? You are carrying my child, everything I do now is for you and the child."

Looking at his earnest expression, Lin Jiayi was finally persuaded by Li Guangyuan, but for some reason, her heart still felt empty and unsettled.

Leaving the vegetable market, she clutched the 10 yuan Li Guangyuan had given her, wandering aimlessly down the street.

When she lifted her head, she saw Qin's Buns Shop not far away.

It seemed that no matter the time, the Bun Shop was always bustling with people, clearly doing great business.

Thinking about the meager earnings from Li Guangyuan's vegetable stall, struggling under the sun and wind and having to please even a widow.

They should have a shop like that too, and be the bosses.

Lin Jiayi stared at the Bun Shop for a while, squeezed the 10 yuan in her hand, and continued to walk head down.

When Lin Chuxia arrived at the Bun Shop, she saw Zhang Guilan and a new waitress bustling about.

She glanced at the hall and asked, "Where are Chen Chunhua and Qin Lihua?"

After the new year, the business at the Bun Shop had gotten even better, and even after hiring two more waitresses, they still seemed short-handed.

"Lihua got into a fight a couple of days ago and injured her face, so she hasn't been here. Chunhua was supposed to have today off, but I discussed with her to take a day off later. She said she had matters to attend to at home, so I didn't insist. The shop is only busy for a while; if we work deftly, it'll soon pass."

Speaking of Qin Lihua, Zhang Guilan sighed.

These past days, her and her husband had been repeatedly called by their uncle to mediate.

Normally, such mediations should be done by the elders, with both their father-in-law and elder uncle being available. Probably because they felt that Qin Han, who is in charge of the Bun Shop, had a more influential voice, and adding their elder uncle to the mix – one pressing, one persuading – seemed optimal for solving problems.

However, after two mediations, far from reconciling, every time the families of Qin Wen and Qin Liang met, it was like a standoff between enemies. There was no reconciling them.

"I think my eldest brother and his wife have firmly decided not to make amends with Qin Wen's family. Qin Wen is also being stubborn, clearly his daughter-in-law is in the wrong, yet he refuses to admit this error. If things continue like this, the two families probably won't be able to speak to each other in the future."

Zhang Guilan glanced at Lin Chuxia and held a suspicion—that Qin Wen's stubbornness in not admitting fault might be due to blaming Qin Liang's family for their close relationship.

With Jianjun and Lihua both working here, Qin Wen might feel betrayed by his brother, and considering the issues involving Qin Lihua and Cai Jun, he wouldn't easily swallow his pride as the matters also relate to the Bun Shop.

Chapter 207: Apprentice

He won't bow his head, and Qin Liang's couple wouldn't bow their heads either.

Speaking harshly, the eldest brother has two sons and a daughter, all of whom have grown up. Nowadays, not to say that each of them has great achievements, but earning wages by working in the factory is already much better than the average person.

Although Qin Wen has job security, he's been married for two years without a child. For farming, he always relies on Qin Liang's family's help.

In the village, manpower is strength.

Moreover, the couple's temperaments are both somewhat...

Even if the eldest brother still cares about brotherly affection, I estimate the eldest sister-in-law would never easily let go.

Lin Chuxia guessed that this matter wouldn't be settled lightly, but it had nothing to do with her.

"Lihua is resting these days, tell the others not to take time off either, I have announced there will be overtime pay at the end of the month."

After she finished with this matter, her gaze was drawn to a young man with a scruffy beard in the corner.

The man had not only a half-grown beard, but his skin was also darker than average.

What attracted Lin Chuxia's attention was not his appearance, but the fact that this man sat in the corner without eating anything, always watching the customers in the lobby, even her and Zhang Guilan.

Zhang Guilan, following her gaze to the man, lowered her voice a bit.

"It's that person, he came to our bun shop asking if we'd take apprentices; before, your elder brother shunned him, but who knew he'd be so persistent, coming again today and has been sitting here for half the day already. Both your brother and I suspect he's a spy sent by some other bun shop, just trying to get our steamed bun recipe..."

Lin Chuxia smiled and gave Zhang Guilan a reassuring look, "It's not that exaggerated, let me go take a look."

The man straightened up subconsciously when he saw Lin Chuxia approaching, his dark eyes sizing her up.

Lin Chuxia let him look, and said only when she was close, "I hear you want to be an apprentice at our bun shop?"

The man stood up, speaking with a strong Northwest accent, "I heard from my brother that the steamed buns from Qin's Buns Shop in Ancheng County are delicious. I plan to open a bun shop, and my brother recommended me to come here to learn the craft. He said this place takes on apprentices, but when I came here yesterday to ask, the boss said they don't."

He referred to Qin Han as the boss.

"What's your brother's name?"

The man looked at Lin Chuxia, recalling the female comrade his brother met on the train.

On a sudden inspiration, he said, "My brother is Jia Yuanliang, and I'm Jia Yuanliang."

.....

Qin Han saw his sister-in-law chatting with that spy-like man for a couple of hours, and in the end, she even brought the man before him.

"Big brother, this is Jia Yuanliang, he's come to learn the craft at our bun shop; arrange something for him. These days he'll follow and learn how to make buns in the kitchen, and take care of his accommodation too, it's too expensive to stay in a guesthouse."

As soon as Jia Yuanliang heard Lin Chuxia was also taking care of his accommodation, he repeatedly expressed his gratitude.

Truthfully, he had been hesitant before coming here, which was why his brother had to talk to him so much before he finally came.

Once in Ancheng County, he eagerly inquired about Qin's Buns Shop, and when he found out there really was such a famous bun shop, he was somewhat relieved.

However, after questioning the boss at the bun shop yesterday, he felt like he had a bucket of cold water poured on him.

Fortunately, he didn't give up easily; he guessed correctly that this woman was the real boss of the bun shop, and the one who had shared a train journey with his brother.

Over these two days, he not only tasted the flavor of the buns but also observed the operational process of the bun shop, and saw that the customers filled the hall.

Jia Yuanliang felt like he was on a roller coaster ride.

If he also opened such a bun shop, would he even have to worry about not making money?

Yet Qin Han pulled Lin Chuxia aside, "Sister-in-law, who is this person? Are you really letting him learn the craft of our bun shop?"

Whether it was the ready-to-eat products from Xiyang Food Factory or the buns from Qin's Buns Shop, both had secret recipes, even their employees were not clear about the specific components; it was Lin Chuxia who distributed the prepared spice packs to the bun shop and the food factory.

It was also because of this, Qin Han knew the importance of the secret recipe.

Thinking back, the food factory offered three full-time positions to trade with Lin Chuxia, but she didn't make the swap, and now she readily took on an apprentice?

Learning their craft of making buns, wouldn't that mean even the secret recipe would have to be passed on?

Qin Han glanced again at the man nearby; if not for the man's short stature and dark skin, if he wasn't so scruffy-looking and didn't have any particular advantages, Qin Han might have thought that way.

Lin Chuxia gave him a reassuring smile, then turned to Jia Yuanliang first, "Go tidy up your luggage first, the shop will be less busy shortly, I'll have someone take you to the staff dormitory to settle in."

Jia Yuanliang's luggage was all still at the guesthouse; he immediately responded loudly, "Alright."

"By the way, you look travel-worn; when it's convenient, clean up a little, it's important to maintain personal hygiene at all times since we're in the food business, it's unacceptable to let yourself be so disheveled."

Jia Yuanliang grinned, his white teeth striking against his dark skin, seeming a bit embarrassed.

"I was in a hurry; I didn't tidy up after getting off the train. Don't worry boss, I'll take a bath and shave when I get back."

Lin Chuxia nodded and watched him leave, then called over Qin Han and Zhang Guilan to discuss the apprentice matter.

Initially, she thought of spreading Qin's Buns Shop across the country via franchising but considering the current societal situation, high franchising fees were completely unworkable, and without charging franchising fees, her interests couldn't be protected. So, Lin Chuxia thought of a compromise.

Those who come to learn the craft at their bun shop must pay tuition fees, this income is solely for learning the art of wrapping buns and corresponding management measures.

As for the issue of their core seasoning, Lin Chuxia planned to sell spice packs, and the price of these packs would be set very high.

Upon hearing this, Qin Han slapped his thigh in excitement, "This is a great idea, if they pursue the flavor of Qin's Buns Shop, they can only buy our spice packs. If they find it too expensive, they can make their own filling, so how the bun shop business turns out is entirely up to their own skills."

Zhang Guilan added, "Since he's staying, he must agree with sister-in-law's plan. We've been in the business for so long, and we know that to do bun business, you need good taste. It's not enough to just make them look good, customers won't stay. As long as they use Qin's secret formula, even if the spice packs are priced high, it's an absolutely profitable business."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Indeed, but for now, I'm not planning to let them use Qin's brand name. It's just a business transaction for now. If they use our Qin's spice packs, we'll establish a long-term cooperation, even send someone to guide them when they open their shop. After a period of satisfactory inspection, then they can carry the name."

Qin Han and Zhang Guilan both thought the idea was good, to avoid tarnishing their bun shop's reputation.

Chapter 208: Qin Yang's Illegitimate Son

After work, Lin Chuxia had just arrived home when Mrs. Qin came out to greet her.

"Xiaxia, are you back home this late for dinner?"

She had stayed in the office a bit longer today, arranging for Jia Yuanliang's apprenticeship and handling some other matters.

In addition to the Qin Family Village poultry farm, their own farm was also beginning to take shape.

Houzi mentioned that a poultry farm they had partnered with before also inquired about increasing supply. Even one farm had expanded this spring, doubling the number of chickens and asking if they could raise the contract amount.

Chuxia didn't respond to this for the time being. Contracts are annual, and any changes should be discussed after they expire.

Smiling at Mrs. Qin's concern, she said, "Mom, I've already eaten. Have you not eaten yet?"

She had told Mrs. Qin before not to wait for her if she was late.

Mrs. Qin nodded with a smile, "We have eaten. Yangyang sent you a letter today. I'll get it for you."

After saying that, she turned to get the letter, and Chuxia followed her into the house.

A thick envelope, how much had he written?

Seeing Mrs. Qin's hesitant expression, "Is there something else, Mom?"

"It's about your eldest brother's wife, Lihua. I heard her partner resigned? Your sister-in-law came over today, complaining to me for quite a while. It seems Lihua was initially attracted to him working at the Bun Shop, thinking that working together would make life easier. Now that Cai Jun quit, Lihua doesn't want to farm in the countryside. After a lot of back and forth, she wanted me to ask you if Cai Jun could continue working there. I'm not sure what the situation is. I told her to wait for you to come back and I'd ask you."

This issue again.

Chuxia had already guessed what was on Lihua's mind.

"Mom, if my sister-in-law comes to you again, you can say that Cai Jun resigned voluntarily, and the Bun Shop didn't stop him from working. If he wants to come back, considering that he will soon be family, he can go directly to Factory Director Su to report for work."

Whether Cai Jun can continue working is not really up to her. It's fine to give a favor for free; Mother-in-law shouldn't have to worry.

Maybe sister-in-law doesn't see that offering this favor might not be a good thing.

Hearing her words, Mrs. Qin was reassured and moved.

Her daughter-in-law had always been considerate of the Qin family since marrying in, treating this place as her own home and them as her elders, always thinking for their benefit.

Whether it was Lihua starting work before or now, she, as a mother-in-law, had never been put in a difficult position in front of others.

"Mom knows. Hurry back to the room and see what Yangyang has written."

Daughter-in-law is good to them; they should be even better to the daughter-in-law.

Chuxia returned to her room, placed her bag aside, and sat at the desk, turning on the lamp to read the letter.

Both the desk and the lamp were bought by Qin Yang during vacation, worrying that the light in the home office was bad for her eyes.

Chuxia started reading from the first page, where he asked about her recent circumstances, and as she read, her expression became more solemn.

She knew about the child mentioned in the letter; in her past life, he was brought back by Qin Yang, with all sorts of rumors following.

Even Lin Jiayi had suspected that he was Qin Yang's illegitimate child.

An illegitimate child was out of the question, but she also knew the child had been raised by Lin Jiayi for many years, turning out selfish.

Later, the child's mother came knocking, acting like she belonged.

Chuxia wasn't very clear about the specifics but knew it had caused a lot of trouble for years. Jiayi had painstakingly raised the child, only to become estranged due to his biological mother.

What that woman's relationship with Qin Yang was in the end, Chuxia had moved away and never inquired.

Now, holding the letter handwritten by Qin Yang, she understood the course of events.

After combining this with past events, it was clear that the mother and child were planning to rely on Qin Yang, sending the child to him first, then using the child to get closer to Yang.

Feeling relieved at the end of the letter,

Liu Xiaohua and her daughter's issue had made her repeatedly remind Qin Yang not to be too kind-hearted, in fear of this very situation.

It seems it was somewhat effective.

Seeing repeatedly Qin Yang asking himself whether he was wrong, whether he saved the wrong person or did the wrong thing, Chuxia sighed and took out paper to reply to his letter.

She didn't directly answer his question but instead asked, "Do you think you did wrong? If something like this happens again, will you save them or not?"

Chuxia believed that if faced with a similar situation again, Qin Yang would still go to the rescue without hesitation; his upright character wouldn't allow him to ignore someone in danger.

"Qin Yang, you did nothing wrong in this matter. It's the selfish and greedy people who are at fault. You don't have to take on the mistakes of others.

Of course, it's right to save people, but if it's because of their greed and ulterior motives, helping them again would be superfluous kindness.

The child is hers; if the mother doesn't work it out and raise her child, why should others bear the responsibility she should take?

When she uses moral shackles to bind you, what is she as a mother doing?

Even if the child can't be supported, the government has corresponding measures to help. She doesn't actively seek solutions and only thinks about relying on you; I don't think she wants you to raise the child, but rather both mother and child?"

These last words, Chuxia made them clear to him.

Qin Yang was handsome and capable, and as a woman, she knew his charm.

They were living apart, and even if Chuxia trusted their relationship, she still had to be wary of those with ulterior motives.

In matters of the heart, Qin Yang was very straightforward. If she didn't speak plainly, he might never understand.

In the end, Chuxia affirmed Qin Yang's attitude this time and gave him lots of praise and comforting words.

She mentioned some family matters at the end of the letter.

...

The next day was the scheduled contract signing with the village chief. Chuxia had already drafted the contract and went to the brigade office with Su Wensong.

The village chief, secretary, accountant, including the director of public security, and Qin Jiang were all at the brigade office. They warmly greeted Chuxia and Su Wensong upon their arrival.

The Qin Family Village poultry farm was built in the name of the collective, with village chief Qin Shusen acting as the factory director on behalf of the village, and Qin Jiang serving as the deputy director, managing all matters of the poultry farm.

The chief was more like a legal person.

The contract was essentially what had been discussed before, just more specific.

This contract was Xiyang's security, and for the village chief, it was his reassurance. With the contract, the sales of the chicken from their farm were no longer a problem.

Regarding certain detailed demands, such as food hygiene requirements, they never thought to exploit any loopholes.

After all, they were in the food business. Providing sick or dead chickens was just immoral, wasn't it?

As such, the village cadres reviewed the contract without objection, and it was signed right away.

Chapter 209: Investing in a Pig Farm

After signing the contract, the village chief invited Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong to have a meal at his home.

This was not the village chief playing host; there were few restaurants around at that time, and regardless of the guests being fellow villagers or even town officials visiting, meals would ultimately be arranged at home.

Of course, the costs of the meals were still accounted for from public funds.

At the dinner table, the village chief was delighted, showering Lin Chuxia with compliment after compliment to the point that Qin Jiang sitting beside felt somewhat embarrassed.

But, observing his cousin, Lin Chuxia was all smiles and adept in her responses, really embodying the saying, "speak to people in their own language; talk to a ghost in ghost talk."

This prompted further serious contemplation, as she silently learned how Lin Chuxia handled situations.

Once the flattery had simmered down, the village chief also brought up the pig farming venture.

Pig farming wasn't the challenging part for them; it was the sales channels.

Lin Chuxia had been forewarned by Qin Jiang and had prepared, responding to the conversation with humor.

"Uncle Qin, your ambitions are growing bigger and bigger, but the people of Qin Family Village are fortunate to have a village chief like you."

Qin Shusen really enjoyed talking to Lin Chuxia; even after setting up such a sizable factory, she had no airs about her, and even her conversations were pleasant to listen to.

His face was now all smiles, blooming like chrysanthemums, as he waved his hands dismissively, "Oh, look at you, girl, talking about fortune. It was actually your thinking that inspired me. The villagers can't grow gold nuggets on their farmland. Now that the markets have opened up, with personal entrepreneurship in line with national policies, if an individual household can become a millionaire, why cannot our village become a collective household?"

"Of course, it can," Lin Chuxia replied without hesitation, "With a village chief like you, every household in Qin Family Village will be millionaires in the future."

"Let's set it then. Once the pigs from the village pig farm are ready to sell, we will work with Xiyang for processing. Rest assured, uncle will definitely not do anything to undercut you all. The quality of the pork will be up to your factory to decide, and if it's not up to standard, uncle will take them away without a second word."

Qin Shusen had also thought it through. Lin Chuxia supported his work and took good care of his family. With the factory built, he even made Yufeng an official, so even though he was doing work for the village, he couldn't shortchange her.

Lin Chuxia, however, smiled and focused on the specifics.

"I know uncle trusts me, and I trust uncle. But if it really doesn't meet standards, where do you plan to take them? A whole pig farm's worth of pigs is no small amount."

Doing anything comes with risks. Qin Shusen was a good village chief, but he's been constructing one facility after another this year. Despite having Xiyang to back him up, should there be an issue, a village chief like him couldn't bear the responsibility alone.

"Let's not even talk about the chicken farm; just the pig farm alone requires a hefty initial investment, right? I remember the money from Xiyang's land purchase went into building the chicken farm."

Lin Chuxia was genuinely considerate for him.

In the early stages of economic reform, there were many village chiefs with great ambitions like his, but due to lack of experience and overly big steps, ended up achieving nothing and drowned in debt, becoming outcasts of everyone.

A tad embarrassed, Qin Shusen replied, "The chicken farm has been built. The 1000 chicken chicks are growing every day. I'm thinking, once these chicks are sold off, there will be money for constructing the pig farm. If that's not enough, we can do a collective fundraising from the villagers. It's all for the good of the village, and I believe the villagers should be willing to contribute."

It's not without reason Qin Shusen, the village chief, was truly admirable – altruistic at heart.

However, in her past life, Lin Chuxia didn't hear about any collective industry in Qin Family Village.

"Uncle, how about this? Xiyang funds 30% of the investment for the pig farm, and this 30% will be regarded as Xiyang's investment, sharing in the profits or losses accordingly."

It was only last year when the country introduced its first shareholding system company, and many people were still unfamiliar with concepts such as stocks and shares. Lin Chuxia decided to explain it in simple terms.

Qin Shusen's eyes lit up.

He wasn't afraid of raising funds; he feared if anything happened to the factory, and that money would vanish like a burst bubble.

It wasn't a small amount; in that case, even his death would not be enough to atone for it to the entire village.

If Xiyang was to invest, the sales part would certainly not be a problem, and if anything happened to the pig farm, with Xiyang's help, the losses could be shared.

Most importantly, Qin Shusen trusted Lin Chuxia. As long as Lin Chuxia invested in the pig farm, the unlikely event for the pig farm would very likely not happen at all.

Qin Shusen glanced at the secretary, and they almost immediately understood each other's intentions through their exchanged looks.

"That's settled then; Lin, you are a real lifesaver for Qin Family Village."

His words were truly sincere. Although their village, generation after generation, relied on vegetable farming, the market was changing too fast. Just take this year as an example, the first half's vegetable prices were good, but come the second half, it's like all the half-year's hard work went unrewarded.

In the era of the market economy, it is very clear what farmers should or shouldn't grow.

Now, with land allocated to farmers, what they plant is up to them. But when the planting season arrives, it's like groping your way across a river by feeling the stones – what to plant is all down to luck.

Take green beans for example. Planting seeds in each hole, hoping for sprouts to grow, watering, and fertilizing, which isn't free.

When they are half a foot long, poles must be inserted; how much does a bundle of bamboo poles cost?

After the beans are grown, there's the need for disease and pest control, requiring to spray pesticides twice – all this costs money.

And yet, a pound of green beans sells for five cents. The better the yield, the lower the price.

At the end, even the money for the poles isn't recovered.

Old farmers depend on the land to live. In recent years, villagers from other villages also started vegetable farming, eliminating the advantage of Qin Family Village and making it one of the worst-hit by market changes.

I heard that even the vegetable stations in the county are about to be disbanded. If that's the case, what is the future for the vegetable farmers?

Now things look up, with both a chicken farm and an upcoming pig farm in the village, and many village folks working at the Xiyang Food Factory.

Qin Shusen truly sees a bright future ahead.

After the meal was over and everything was discussed, the village chief saw Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong out of the house, making a special request to Qin Jiang to accompany Lin Chuxia and Factory Director Su a bit further.

Qin Jiang smiled helplessly and complied with the village chief as he bid farewell to Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong.

It was clear to everyone from the village chief's well-executed plans.

Yet after these multiple occasions, everyone knew that although the village chief had his own small schemes, he truly had the villagers' best interests at heart. No one minded, and instead, people found the old village chief endearing.

"When can the chickens from the chicken farm be expected to be ready for sale?"

The village chief's house was located at the edge of the village, from where one could see the Qin Family Village chicken farm.

"According to Xiyang Food Factory's requirements, they should be ready in about 70 to 80 days. The 1000 chickens in the factory are now half-grown, and in about 40 days they should be just about ready. We've already arranged to bring in another 1000 chicks to raise in a different coop."

Nowadays, the standard for people's lives was just to eat their fill of good food; there wasn't much emphasis on things like free-range and wild life. The chicken farms of the Qin Family Village, including Lin Chuxia's own farm, raised purebred heavy breed chickens for meat.

Chapter 210: Missing Two Packets of Seasoning

This chicken breed matures quickly and has tender meat, making it very popular in the present market.

By contrast, the free-range local chickens from our home are not as favored.

Lin Chuxia required all the poultry farms to use grain and grass feed, and the maturation time was not short, 70 to 80 days was already quite good.

She remembered that later on, with the involvement of chicken feed and hormones, these broiler chickens could be ready in 40 to 50 days, almost half the time reduced.

However, such chicken meat wasn't healthy. Having been in the food business her whole life, Lin Chuxia hated the involvement of science and ruthless practices the most.

Therefore, she established her own poultry farm, supporting the poultry and pig farms of Qin Family Village, aiming to guarantee food quality from the source.

Lin Chuxia nodded, their food factory's orders had increased recently, and these 1000 chickens from Qin Family Village and the chickens from their own farm could just perfectly meet the demand.

"It's about time for the vaccination, right? Don't forget this," she reminded again.

"We have already made arrangements in the past few days. The village chief directly asked for support from the township leaders, and the township epidemic prevention station and veterinary station will send someone to vaccinate the chickens."

"After all, it's a governmental enterprise - it has its conveniences."

Lin Chuxia joked, and Qin Jiang laughed along.

"The township leaders also pay a lot of attention to Qin Family Village's industry. They have set Qin Family Village as a model. In the last meeting at the township, the village chief specifically called for me," he glanced at Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong, "Actually, the village chief also wanted to invite the leaders from Xiyang, but he felt awkward to mention it."

"What's there to feel awkward about? If there's such a good opportunity next time, just let the village chief mention it," these days, individual enterprises receiving government attention can greatly benefit.

Qin Jiang was also worried that Lin Chuxia would not agree, just like the village chief's concerns.

After all, it is a private enterprise, and the village taking advantage of it to gain a good reputation always seems a bit... shameless.

Hearing Lin Chuxia respond so generously now, he also smiled, "Alright, I'll remember that."

"Third Brother, we're one family. Whatever matters affect the poultry farm, or anything personal, you can speak directly with me. Even if Qin Yang isn't at home, we're still family, and we can discuss and solve problems together."

She knew that the Qin Family siblings often felt awkward to approach her directly.

Qin Jiang looked at Lin Chuxia with a touch of gratitude twinkling in his eyes and nodded, "Okay."

He understood that his position as deputy factory manager was all thanks to Lin Chuxia's influence. Now that Lin Chuxia had spoken in this way, she was giving him the confidence to stand firm in the poultry farm and even in front of the village cadres.

"That's settled then, it's getting late, let's head back."

Qin Jiang needed to go to the poultry farm, and the poultry farm was in the opposite direction to the Xiyang Food Factory.

Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong went directly to the Xiyang Food Factory.

Lin Chuxia first inspected the workers' performance in the workshop. From the beginning, their food factory's buildings were designed with scale in mind, and currently only one-third of them were being utilized.

The rest were still vacant, reserved for future allocation when the food factory expands production.

After walking around the workshop, Lin Chuxia visited Su Wensong's office to check the recent orders and the accounts.

"The scale of the pig farm hasn't been determined yet, but I guess it won't be too small. Later on, see how much money can be pulled together from Xiyang's side."

Su Wensong looked at her with a slight smile, "I'm afraid that the size of the pig farm will ultimately be up to you, right?"

He knew Lin Chuxia too well. If she wanted to be involved, it wouldn't be on a small scale.

Lin Chuxia gave him an approving look, "You know me well."

The pig farm, it's even more profitable than a chicken farm, and she doesn't have to worry about it. She just needs to invest some money and then sit back and wait for the dividends. Why not?

"Right, how's the wedding preparation with Lanlan going? Do you need me to give you a few days off to focus on preparing for the wedding?"

The wedding date for Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan has already been set for early next month, yet both of them are acting as if nothing's happening. Sun Lanlan is still busy in the Bun Shop, and Su Wensong hasn't missed a day of work.

It's easy to handle things on Sun Lanlan's side, with the three Sun Brothers plus Mr. Sun and Mrs. Sun, the whole family can help her out.

On Su Wensong's side, there's only Granny Su, and if he doesn't make arrangements himself, she's really worried that when the day comes, Su Wensong will simply drive their factory's 121 vehicle to take Sun Lanlan and call it done.

She definitely wouldn't agree to that.

Sun Lanlan is her best sister, and as her 'mother's family', she has the confidence to say that her sister cannot be wronged.

Su Wensong knows what Lin Chuxia is worried about, "For now it's not necessary, Mr. Lin, rest assured, I wouldn't wrong Lanlan or anyone else."

How could he not care when he's marrying the girl he likes?

"Then I'll look forward to drinking at your wedding. But here's a reminder, if you dare to treat Lanlan poorly, the Sun Brothers won't just stand by idly, and neither will I."

Su Wensong smiled helplessly, "Mr. Lin, do you understand how much pressure those uncles put on me? Please spare me, don't chant the tight hoop spell on me. If the wedding isn't well done, not only would the three uncles disagree, even my granny wouldn't."

He had already thought about it, he would ask Jia Liang, Houzi, and Pang Yongli to help him out for a couple of days.

As the saying goes, many hands make light work, and money talks.

He plans to spend all the money he saved this year on the wedding.

Lin Chuxia finally felt relieved, "That's fine, just tell me directly when you need to take a leave."

While they were talking, there was a knock on the office door, and Ma Yingzi pushed the door and came in.

Seeing Lin Chuxia there, the tense expression also had a touch of worry.

"What's wrong?"

Su Wensong seldom puts on airs with the old employees, and Ma Yingzi is his brother's wife after all.

Ma Yingzi addressed him as Factory Director Su and Mr. Lin, hesitantly starting, "I don't know what the problem is, but I still feel like I should tell the Director that the last batch of seasoning packets was short by two packs."

Su Wensong frowned slightly, "How could there be fewer, when did you notice?"

The seasoning packets are delivered to the food factory on a fixed schedule and quantity, which are managed by Ma Yingzi.

Recently, they had increased production of ready-to-eat foods, and accordingly, the seasoning packets also increased.

"Could it be that you remembered it wrong, or was there a mistake when adding them during the food processing?"

Although the food factory now operates on an assembly line, it's not uncommon for an error to occur at some stage.

Ma Yingzi shook her head, "I'm not certain, but a couple of days ago my son was sick with a stubborn fever, so I had no choice but to take two days off, and the work during these two days was handed over to Qin Yufeng to manage. Today when I came back and did the inventory, I found we were short by two packets."

She believes she has never made a mistake, but it's not easy to say that directly — wouldn't that be blaming everything on Qin Yufeng?

Xiyang Food's seasoning packets are crucial, and she knows the Old Food Factory has always been coveting their secret recipe.

So upon discovering the issue, she reported it to Su Wensong first thing.

Su Wensong also became concerned and looked towards Lin Chuxia.