

Switched M 211

Chapter 211: Are We Going to Have Another Price War?

The latter seemed unconcerned and light.

The spice packs were indeed key to their cooked food, and her spice pack contained not only spices but also several traditional Chinese herbs, all mixed in precise proportions.

She had processed all the raw materials into powder, so even if she presented the spice pack openly for everyone to study, with the current technology, it was estimated that no one could decipher the formula's proportions.

However, if it were merely an employee's mistake, it might be okay, but if there was an insider in the food factory who stole their spice packs, this issue needed to be seriously addressed.

"Old Su, I'm leaving this matter to you."

The food factory was now Su Wensong's turf; a minor issue like this didn't require Lin Chuxia's intervention; she just needed to wait for the results.

But before she even heard any news from Su Wensong, there was a disturbance at the bun shop.

That day, when she arrived at the bun shop, she saw Qin Han and Zhang Guilan sitting around a table, eating a plate of cooked food.

"What is this?"

Though it was all cooked food, Lin Chuxia could tell at a glance that the plate on the table was different from what Qin's sold.

"You've come at just the right time, sister-in-law," Qin Han pushed the plate of cooked food towards Lin Chuxia, "This is the cooked food from the sales department of the Old Food Factory across the street, try it and see how it tastes."

Lin Chuxia, puzzled, knew they had previously eaten the Old Food Factory's cooked food, but she still picked up her chopsticks and gave it a try.

"This flavor is indeed somewhat similar to our cooked food."

Lin Chuxia put down her chopsticks and spoke indifferently.

"I heard that the Old Food Factory has recently revised their formula. To promote their new product, they've even reduced the price by ten percent, taking away quite a few of our customers."

Qin Han spoke indignantly, not pleased about the situation.

"What do you mean by revised? No matter how much they improve their processing, can the taste be better than our Qin's cooked food? I think it's just the same old trick; they want to wage a price war to attract customers. Haven't they learned their lesson?"

Concern was evident on Zhang Guilan's face, "Are they trying to figure out the formula for our cooked food?"

"Not just trying, but there's something I haven't mentioned yet. A while ago, two spice packs went missing from Xiyang Food Factory; judging by this situation, it seems likely that the Old Food Factory got them and is trying to decipher our food formula."

As Lin Chuxia finished speaking, Qin Han frowned and looked over, "What happened? Weren't the spice packs always carefully managed? How could they go missing?"

"I don't know, Su Wensong has been dealing with this matter these past few days, and there are no results yet."

"It must be someone who stole the spice packs and gave them to the Old Food Factory; it's utterly detestable. Doesn't she think about it? If the Old Food Factory takes our business, it will ultimately be us employees who suffer."

These words came from Chen Chunhua, and Zhang Guilan greatly agreed with her.

"The factory can only give everyone bonuses and benefits if its business is doing well. If we really lose business, not to mention bonuses, it would be good to even keep our jobs. I heard that during the New Year period, the food factory suffered losses, and many employees faced layoffs."

"I think we need to investigate thoroughly and find out who the heartless person is."

Chen Chunhua looked aggrieved; Lin Chuxia glanced at her and said, "Since Xiyang Food Factory was established, Ma Yingzi has been in charge of the spice packs. I've already asked Su Wensong to suspend her from duty while the investigation is carried out."

"Suspended?" Zhang Guilan frowned slightly, "Yingzi and Yongli, her husband, have always been doing well. It shouldn't be Yingzi's doing."

Ma Yingzi and Pang Yongli could be said to be some of their earliest employees. Back when they had just returned to the city and had no jobs, they didn't even have stable meals.

Ever since they came to work at the bun shop, they have been diligent and always took the lead, never complaining about hardship or dirtiness.

When Zhang Guilan and Qin Han first started working at the bun shop, they had interacted with Ma Yingzi for a period and understood her character. They couldn't believe that betraying the company and Lin Chuxia would be something she would do.

"Even if she didn't do it, she was in charge of the seasoning packets, and it's her responsibility that they are missing now."

Zhang Guilan also understood this principle. Without rules, there can be no squares or circles, and for such a big company, there must be regulations.

She just hoped that the investigation would be conducted quickly, and also there was their cooked food business...

"Sister-in-law, is there anything you need your big brother and me to do?"

Qin Han looked over as well.

Now that something has happened in the factory, as the elder brother and sister-in-law, they should lend a hand.

Zhou Hongmei also said, "Otherwise, shall we call the police? The police will surely have a way."

"Call the police? Just for two seasoning packets, will the police care about this?" Chen Chunhua said.

Lin Chuxia shook her head, "Calling the police won't be very helpful, firstly because seasoning packets aren't really valuable, the police might not even open a case, and there's no proof that the packets were lost; they might have just been misplaced or overstocked by the staff."

"It's impossible, the new formula at the Old Food Factory is very similar to ours, they must have stolen our seasoning packets," Qin Han firmly believed it was no coincidence.

But as much as he said, he knew that the police prioritize evidence, so this matter had to be set aside for now.

Lin Chuxia had them adjust the prices of the cooked foods and also offered a ten percent discount.

Qin Han and Zhang Guilan were both tinged with worry.

Was this going to be another price war?

The issue around the Spring Festival was still fresh in their minds, although they had opened other markets for their cooked foods, it definitely impacted the bun shop's business.

"Sister-in-law, there's something else I want to discuss with you," Zhang Guilan stopped Lin Chuxia.

"What is it, Sister-in-law?"

"Here's the thing, we're still getting vegetables from the market station, and you know, Qin Family Village are mostly vegetable farmers, every household grows vegetables, and if we buy directly from the village, it should be much cheaper than from the market station and the night market."

They also use quite a lot of vegetables every day.

Originally, Li Jian was at the market station, Zhang Guilan knew Lin Chuxia got vegetables from there also because of Li Jian's influence.

Now that Li Jian had been transferred, it seemed rather pointless to continue getting vegetables from the market station.

In the past, buying vegetables through Li Jian at the market station was one cent more expensive per catty compared to the market price, but 2~3 cents cheaper than the night market.

Getting them directly from villagers would be even cheaper.

Lin Chuxia shook her head, "Sister-in-law, I know it's cheaper to get vegetables directly from the villagers, but it's not very convenient to operate. Besides, putting the price aside, the quality of the vegetables is not guaranteed."

Vegetables from the market station are carefully selected, and any issues can be directly addressed. If it's from villagers in the village, not only will they feel you are being too picky, but it could also hurt goodwill.

With this reminder from Lin Chuxia, Zhang Guilan immediately thought of this aspect.

"You see, I was just thinking about the issues with our cooked food and was trying to save some costs for our bun shop on the vegetables, let's still get them from the market station then."

"I know Sister-in-law means well."

Lin Chuxia smiled, and glanced in Chen Chunhua's direction, while she was talking with Zhang Guilan, she always felt a gaze from that direction.

Indeed, as soon as she met eyes with Chen Chunhua, the latter hurriedly looked away.

Chapter 212: Make You Serve a Long Sentence

"What's wrong?" Zhang Guilan also looked over.

"It's nothing, Lihua hasn't come to work at the shop yet? It's been so many days."

"I heard she and Cai Jun are having a quarrel. A matchmaker came over a few days ago to discuss the marriage between the two families. Lihua wants Cai Jun to keep working, and Cai Jun wants Lihua to quit her job. Both of them are butting heads, neither willing to give in, and the marriage is being delayed because of this. I think their marriage is going to cause more trouble."

"I'll hire a couple of new people later," Lin Chuxia said.

"Is that really necessary? Isn't Lihua just caught up in her marriage issues right now? Once the wedding details are settled, won't she continue working?"

Lihua is their niece after all, it wouldn't be appropriate to fire her outright, even if she's inconsistent in attending work.

Moreover, even if they need someone to fill in for her shift, one person should be enough, why would they need two?

"There's another thing, your older brother didn't want me to tell you, but a few days ago Lihua approached your brother, wanting Cai Jun to work here. Your brother knows about the job you arranged for Cai Jun, who voluntarily quit, and he outright rejected her. I suspect that the reason she hasn't come to work these past few days is that she's upset with your brother."

At this point, Zhang Guilan sighed, "You see, she seemed like such a good kid before, why would she persist stubbornly in this way?"

This is just a younger generation matter, they aren't her real uncle and aunt, so it's not appropriate to probe too deeply nor to comment superficially.

Lin Chuxia smiled nonchalantly, "Sister-in-law, since you know what kind of person she is, why bother about it? Everyone in life pays for their own decisions, and what Qin Lihua is doing now is just paying for her past actions."

When you sympathize with someone, you unconsciously take on their fate. Restrain the desire to correct others, and avoid recklessly intervening in their karma.

Be righteous in your own world and let nature take its course in others' worlds.

What Qin Lihua does now is her own business, and in the end, whether or not she and Cai Jun work, she only cares about their work situation.

After leaving the Bun Shop, Lin Chuxia went straight back to her office.

When the seasoning packets went missing, she immediately suspected the Old Food Factory's involvement.

After tasting the newly improved ready-to-eat meals from there today, she was certain.

Lin Chuxia firmly believed that a few seasoning packets wouldn't reveal her recipe, but since the food factory was targeting them, she wouldn't let them be disappointed.

At this moment, the employees had gone to work, the small courtyard was quiet, with only Yuan Bao guarding the office door.

Lin Chuxia directly entered her own space.

Speaking of which, other than that spring water, the most important use of her space was the storage room full of seasonings.

In her last years in her past life, she spent most of her time researching these, including readymade meals, beef sauce, chili sauce, mixed rice sauce, bean paste.

Especially her beef sauce and spicy bean paste, which were well-loved by the market and sold both domestically and internationally.

Lin Chuxia spent the afternoon in her office, and only when she heard staff returning did she stretch lazily, looking at the work plans written on the paper, a satisfied smile appeared on her face.

Originally, she thought they were in for a long battle with the food factory, but after just a couple of days, there was a long queue in front of the Bun Shop's ready-meal window, while there were only a few sporadic people across the street.

People were even curiously lining up.

Zhou Hongmei, while enthusiastically serving customers, chatted with them and soon got the details clear.

The Old Food Factory announced a few days ago that they had improved their food recipes, and for those two days, the taste was somewhat better, attracting some customers. But in the last two days, the taste has significantly worsened, even more so than before. You could say it changes day by day.

Those who didn't know any better were still okay, but these regulars who love cooked food are now reluctant to buy from there.

Lin Chuxia had an idea, next time she met Su Wensong, she asked him to keep an eye on the factory's recent activities.

"Mr. Lin, rest assured, we've already made some progress in the last few days, Hou Xiaobao has taken people to tighten management, and Jia Liang has also lent a hand."

Hou Xiaobao and Jia Liang, having roamed the society for so many years, both have their own connections.

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Be mindful of the extent, and route the money through the company's account."

Dealing with such people should not leave any loose ends, and monetary transactions are the most direct.

"I know," Su Wensong had the same intention.

As for their target, they didn't mention it yet, better to wait until they catch them red-handed.

"Also, today someone from the village chief's office came, saying the township chief knows that Xiyang, one of the investors of the pig farm in Qin Family Village, wants to meet you and me."

"Sure," Lin Chuxia smiled, "Isn't Village Chief Qin known for getting things done? See, just a few days ago we spoke about not minding meeting township leaders, and today it's arranged."

Su Wensong smiled as well.

However, interacting with government leaders is inevitable, they really have no reason to avoid them.

Now that individual enterprises have just started booming, businesses like Xiyang's, already having a significant scale, are highly regarded by leaders at both village and township levels.

To further elaborate, when a business like Xiyang's reaches a certain scale, even county leaders will give it some respect.

At the end of the day, individual enterprises don't have the protection of state enterprises; they survive on merit alone.

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In a deep alley, a woman was walking fast. Seeing a man suddenly appear in the distance, the woman stopped, instinctively looked back, and felt the urge to turn and run.

"Sister-in-law Chunhua, how come you're just getting off work? I've been waiting for a long time, eh, Sister-in-law Chunhua, you wouldn't be avoiding me, would you?"

Chen Chunhua forced a laugh, "Brother Kai, I just didn't realize it was you."

Li Kai strode over to Chen Chunhua and stretched out his hand directly, "Did you bring the stuff?"

Chen Chunhua stepped back, her face full of misery, "Brother Kai, this is really difficult, our boss has already found out, I really can't get it..."

"Can't get it? You took the money and now you tell me you can't get it? Sister-in-law Chunhua, are you playing me?"

"No... I mean it, what if I return the money? The boss is threatening to call the police over last time's incident, I can't get arrested."

Chen Chunhua, trembling, pulled out 20 yuan from her pocket and handed it over, but Li Kai took one look and didn't accept it, his lips curling into a mocking smile.

"Sister-in-law Chunhua, when I first approached you, you swore and set the price. Then you gave me a bag of some lousy powder, pretending it was good. Who knows if it was a trap you set up with your boss? I heard Qin's Steamed Bun has also reduced prices recently. What, last time you used this trick to get rid of Director Gao, is this setup using seasoning packs as bait to trap us again, to keep falling for your tricks?"

"No, absolutely not," Chen Chunhua waved her hands continuously, "The Old Food Factory's seasoning is just like that, you know, Qin's cooked food has a secret recipe, the boss keeps it very tight, even those who make the cooked food don't know what the secret recipe really is, they always use these seasoning packs, I really didn't lie to you."

"I originally paid to buy the secret recipe, since you can't get the recipe, then bring some more seasoning packs, or else I'll expose the theft you committed at the factory, and make sure you end up behind bars."

Chapter 213: Is This Still the Mr. Qin He Knew?

The scorching sun was broiling the earth, and Qin Yang quickened his pace.

Before reaching the front gate, he saw Li Wei entering from outside, holding in his hand that letter of his.

"Got it back for you, told you there's no need to come out. On such a hot day, why insist on running all this way? What's the rush?"

Is this the same Mr. Qin that I know?

Think back to a year ago, a letter from home could sit on his desk for an entire day. He'd only open it after work, not wanting it to distract from his job.

And look at him now. Just a moment ago, he was still hunched over, drawing.

Qin Yang hummed indifferently, took the letter, and begun to read it as he walked.

Li Wei peeked over with curiosity, "Ah, I can tell right away it's a letter from your sister-in-law. Such neat handwriting. What does it say? 'Dear...'"

Qin Yang shifted the letter aside and gave him a nudge with his foot, "Go stand over there."

What 'dear'? So cheesy, his wife would never say that kind of low-class stuff.

Li Wei dodged his foot with a chuckle, "What are you rushing for? There's nothing illegal about a married couple's conversation. But speaking of which, you're getting these letters pretty often now, at least two a month, right? You and your sister-in-law get along so well, so you plan on staying apart forever? When I applied last month for my family to come over, you didn't want to apply with me. Your sister-in-law is so pretty, aren't you worried leaving her at home?"

"She's busy over there; it's not convenient for her to come."

Qin Yang also wanted his wife to come over. Before, not going home for a year didn't bother him. Now, just two months away, and it feels like an eternity.

"Why don't you consider transferring back then? Oh right, have you filled in the application for this year's professional title evaluation?"

Qin Yang paused slightly, "Will higher rank really get me more opportunities?"

"Of course," Li Wei's eyes widened as he sized up Qin Yang, "You're not telling me you don't even know about this, are you?"

Qin Yang indeed hadn't paid attention. To him, all jobs were the same; as long as he did his job well, the rank, even the salary, were irrelevant.

Of course, that was Qin Yang before marrying Lin Chuxia.

Since seeing Lin Chuxia's achievements, Qin Yang has been working even harder over the past year.

Even though he knows he can never outearn his wife no matter how hard he works, she has said that what he does is meaningful too.

He wants to be the best in his field, and make his wife proud.

"Do you still have any of those forms left? Get me one."

"Alright, I'll take care of it now."

After Li Wei left, Qin Yang looked down at the letter again.

It was his wife's answer to all his doubts. Actually, he had figured it out by now; given another chance, he would still save the person.

Seeing Lin Chuxia's prediction of his reaction, Qin Yang's lips curved into a slight smile. His wife really understood him.

When he read that her placing the child with him might have been that woman's scheme, he couldn't help but twist his mouth again.

Thinking about everything that mother and son had done, his face darkened to the point it couldn't get any darker.

It was as if he'd been leached upon, utterly disgusting.

Liu Xiaohua and her daughter were like this, and now this woman too harbored such intentions. What would his wife think of him?

Qin Yang was overwhelmed with mixed emotions. If it wasn't for his wife's subsequent assurance of her trust in him, he would have wished to book a train ticket home immediately to properly explain everything to her.

It seems that the good intentions my wife spoke of really shouldn't be taken for granted.

"Very good, very good, Mr. Qin, the parasol tree in your Qin Family Village has indeed attracted a phoenix. Keep up the good work, and let the township know if there are any difficulties. I have high hopes for Qin Family Village."

In the office, the simple and honest Village Chief Qin was bashfully praised by the township leader, Guo Zhenyi.

"It's a fortunate thing for Qin Family Village. As for the chicken farm or the pig farm, it's all thanks to Mr. Lin's strong support, and with the continued support from our township leaders, I will definitely do my best."

As a leader of Ancheng Town, Guo Zhenyi had long heard of Lin Chuxia's reputation, and today was the first time he met her.

A young lady in her twenties, yet with an innate leadership presence, decisive in speech and action, her interactions with others were in no way inferior.

Standing next to the fifty-something years old Village Chief Qin, she seemed to be the one who had lived for over fifty years.

To put it without exaggeration, her demeanor even made him feel somewhat ashamed.

Truly, she had the makings of someone who accomplishes great things.

"I heard that Mr. Lin's husband is Qin Yang from Qin Family Village?"

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Yes."

Guo Zhenyi laughed and said, "I thought so. I still remember when Qin Yang went to university, he was the first prestigious university student from our town since the resumption of the college entrance exam, and even a top scorer, not bad."

Lin Chuxia didn't know much about the township chief, only that he had been in Ancheng Town for many years.

This meeting was just a casual chat. Whatever he said, Lin Chuxia would go along with it.

All in all, the meeting was pleasant for both parties.

After leaving the town government building, Lin Chuxia invited the village chief to have a meal together, and took the opportunity to discuss the pig farming business.

The village chief originally thought that having the pig farm next to the chicken farm would be neat and tidy to look at, but Lin Chuxia gave some suggestions.

The biggest fear in livestock and poultry farming is viral diseases; having two farms too close to each other poses too many risks.

The village chief had not considered this point, but found Lin Chuxia's comment very reasonable and decided to rearrange the location of the pig farm upon returning.

Lin Chuxia suggested that he should apply for a technical expert in breeding from the town to help Qin Family Village set up the pig farm.

With what the township chief had just said, it was the perfect time for them to make such a request.

Qin Shusen slapped his thigh, "Isn't it just that young people like you have sharper minds? Why didn't I think of this? In fact, when we wanted to build the chicken farm, the township chief had mentioned this as well, but I thought since he was a leader, how could we bother him with our affairs? Now I think about it, I was really muddled."

Just like when Lin Chuxia was handling factory matters in the village, he would be glad if she brought up all sorts of requests for the village to address.

"It's too late today; I'll go talk to the township chief tomorrow."

After parting with the village chief, Lin Chuxia prepared to return to the factory with Su Wensong, but before they had gone far, they saw Houzi rushing over.

"Mr. Lin, factory manager, we've caught the person responsible for the seasoning packets. You guessed it right, manager. We've been watching that person these past few days, and today they finally made a move again. Our initial plan was to follow them and draw out their contact person, but the other side was too alert. They sensed something was wrong as soon as the two met and ran off immediately. Now we have only caught the one stealing."

"Where is the person?"

"As per the factory manager's instructions, security has already escorted them to the small courtyard."

Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong immediately went to the small courtyard.

As the two entered the courtyard, they saw someone tied up in the middle, surrounded by people...

Chapter 214: Wronged?

Chen Chunhua also saw Lin Chuxia and immediately began to cry and shout.

"Mr. Lin, I am innocent, I am innocent, I really didn't steal anything from the factory, they are just arresting people randomly, please save me."

Lin Chuxia ignored her cries and entered the courtyard. After instructing Hou Xiaobao to close the gate, she asked, "What happened?"

In addition to them, there were several people from the security department and Ma Yingzi present.

After the food factory was established, the security department was formed, and Sun Liangdong became the head of the security department.

Sun Liangdong stepped forward and said, "Since the last time the seasoning packets were stolen, our security department has been on alert. Speaking of the last theft, we conducted an investigation. Sister Ma was on leave those days, and the items were guarded by Qin Yufeng. During that time, Chen Chunhua visited the factory looking for Sister Ma. According to Qin Yufeng, after learning that Sister Ma wasn't there, Chen Chunhua did not leave immediately and stayed around for a while. At one point, Qin Yufeng was called away, and she suspects that the theft happened during that time."

"You're just making excuses, clearly it's your own mistake in losing the items, and you're blaming me for it. I've visited the factory to see Yingzi so many times, when have I ever stolen anything? I think it's Qin Yufeng who made the mistake, she's afraid of being held responsible by the factory, so she's making me take the blame. You're from the same village as Qin Yufeng, of course, you would speak for her."

At this point, seeing Lin Chuxia, Chen Chunhua seemed to gain some confidence.

Sun Liangdong sneered, "You say I'm biased and framing you, so what about today? Sister Ma purposely left the seasoning packets out, and in just a short while, two packets were missing; this couldn't be Sister Ma's mistake, right? As soon as you got the items, you couldn't wait to meet your contact, and if it weren't for that person being guilty and running away at the slightest disturbance, we would have caught you red-handed by now."

"What do you mean guilty? I don't even know that person, you're just pinning all the blame on me, when in the end you didn't see anything."

Chen Chunhua looked towards Lin Chuxia again.

"Mr. Lin, you must make things right for me. I was really just going to play with Ma Yingzi today, and then they accused me of stealing. I've worked at the Bun Shop for so long, you know my character best, have I ever stolen even an onion from the shop? If I had known, I wouldn't have gone to see Ma Yingzi."

Chen Chunhua grew more and more aggrieved, and finally, she simply burst into tears.

Lin Chuxia looked at Sun Liangdong, "Where are the items?"

Sun Liangdong knew Lin Chuxia was asking about the seasoning packets, and his expression changed slightly, "Mr. Lin, we didn't get the items, when we caught the person, the items were already gone. I suspect she saw our people and threw the items away."

"Did you search the nearby area?"

As the saying goes, catch a thief by catching the loot, even if Chen Chunhua is the prime suspect, evidence is still needed.

At this moment, there was no surveillance, so to make her confess, they needed the stolen goods.

"We searched, but found nothing."

Otherwise, they wouldn't have brought her here; they would have taken her directly to the police station.

Chen Chunhua finally saw an opportunity, "Mr. Lin, listen to this, it's really them framing me. They lost the items and are blaming it on me. If you ask me, they are the ones with dirty hands. You must investigate thoroughly; I fear some people can't stop their old habits of stealing from the factory."

Upon hearing this, Hou Xiaobao's eyes widened, "Who the hell are you talking about?"

Everyone knows what Hou Xiaobao and Jia Liang used to do.

When Chen Chunhua spoke out, others might not take it to heart, but Hou Xiaobao took it seriously.

He now reforms wholeheartedly, working solely for the factory, fearing to disappoint Lin Chuxia.

Chen Chunhua using such accusations against him, Hou Xiaobao felt he couldn't endure it.

Chen Chunhua stiffened her neck, "Whoever is guilty knows it themselves. If you're not guilty, why are you reacting so strongly?"

Hou Xiaobao was about to say something else when Ma Yingzi stopped him.

"Chunhua, I just can't understand why you would do such a thing. Hasn't Mr. Lin been good to us? When you said you were jobless, I recommended you to Mr. Lin, and he gave you a job opportunity. Ask your conscience, don't you earn well at the Bun Shop? Given that we can barely recognize many characters, now our salary is even higher than a worker's. What are you dissatisfied with that you want to harm the factory?"

Ma Yingzi now regretted having a close relationship with Chen Chunhua.

Back when they were processing cooked food in the courtyard, her husband had repeatedly reminded her to keep her distance from Chen Chunhua during work.

It was just that when she had first come from the countryside, all the neighbors looked down on her, and only Chen Chunhua was willing to talk to her.

Even though she felt it was inappropriate when Chen Chunhua came to visit her at work, she didn't have the heart to chase her away directly.

Now that this incident had occurred, she realized she also bore a great responsibility.

Chen Chunhua looked puzzled, "What are you talking about? Of course, I'm grateful to Mr. Lin. Yingzi, you aren't trying to shirk responsibility by blaming me, are you? Can't you see? It's clear they stole the stuff."

"You're lying, it was you who took the things," Hou Xiaobao couldn't stand others falsely accusing him of theft anymore.

It was a past he couldn't bear to look back on and never wanted others to bring up.

The two argued incessantly; suddenly, Lin Chuxia spoke up, "Chen Chunhua, did you really not take the stuff?"

"No!"

Chen Chunhua stated emphatically.

Lin Chuxia nodded and called Yuan Bao over.

Yuan Bao had grown as big as a fully-grown dog and would hang around the courtyard during the day; after work, he would head back to the Qin Family with Lin Chuxia.

Everyone said that this dog was clever, but only Lin Chuxia knew that because of the spiritual spring water, Yuan Bao was not only clever; his intelligence was quite high.

People didn't know why Lin Chuxia was calling Yuan Bao; they saw her rub Little Yuanbao's head then go to her office to retrieve a package.

Those familiar could tell that it was the seasoning used for their cooked food.

"Yuan Bao, come sniff this," Lin Chuxia called Yuan Bao over.

Yuan Bao sniffed the seasoning in her hand, and finally sneezed.

Lin Chuxia rubbed his head again and directed him towards the crowd, "See who has this scent."

Everyone present didn't understand why Lin Chuxia was doing this, but Sun Liangdong's eyes gleamed.

"Mr. Lin, can Yuan Bao really find it? I've heard that some police dogs can solve cases just by scent."

Police dogs were rare, understood even less, and Sun Liangdong had learned about this from reading miscellaneous books.

Lin Chuxia did not answer the question but pushed Yuan Bao, "Go ahead."

Upon receiving the command, Yuan Bao dashed into the crowd.

First near Su Wensong, then quickly Hou Xiaobao, and as he passed by Ma Yingzi, Yuan Bao started barking.

At that moment, the previously tense Chen Chunhua suddenly yelled, "There, I told you! You are framing people. Even the dog knows it was your people who took the seasoning packet. Mr. Lin, you believe me now, right?"

Chapter 215: Forced by You

Lin Chuxia paid her no heed and said to Yuan Bao, "Continue."

Yuan Bao sniffed two more from the security department, and when it got to Chen Chunhua, it began barking wildly.

Chen Chunhua's face turned pale, "Get away, get away, stay away from me, someone take this dog away, I'm terrified of dogs, get out..."

Not only did Yuan Bao not leave, but it also lunged forward to tear at her clothes.

Chen Chunhua couldn't help screaming, but at that moment, no one had the time to care about her as Yuan Bao swiftly tore her clothes and something fell out.

Ma Yingzi stepped forward to take a look, "Mr. Lin, these are our seasoning packets."

Then she peered inside Chen Chunhua's clothes, which were filled with fine seasoning powder.

No wonder the seasoning packets couldn't be found; she had actually filled her clothes with them.

And they were wrapped in plastic bags, hidden under her clothes. Chen Chunhua was already on the plump side, and she was wearing a jacket today, which made it even easier to conceal things.

Yuan Bao had found what Lin Chuxia wanted, tail wagging, it barked twice at Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia waved at it, and it scuttled happily over to her, tongue out, gazing at her with eyes that begged for praise and commendation.

Lin Chuxia suspected that Yuan Bao would be smart enough to help find the items if Chen Chunhua had them on her or nearby.

It turned out to be smarter than she had imagined.

Dazed for a moment, Little Yuanbao couldn't wait any longer and nudged Lin Chuxia's hand with its head while making snorting noises from its nostrils.

Lin Chuxia burst into laughter and vigorously rubbed its head, "Yuan Bao, you're truly amazing."

With the evidence laid out in front of her, Chen Chunhua's commanding demeanor was gone. Her eyes seemed to spit fire as she glared fiercely at Ma Yingzi.

"Are you satisfied now, huh? Are you satisfied?"

Ma Yingzi was confused when Lin Chuxia signaled Sun Liangdong with her eyes, "Go report to the police."

"Don't, please," Chen Chunhua yelled out, "Mr. Lin, I was wrong, please forgive me this once. I was just being foolish."

"Just being foolish? If I'm not mistaken, this is the second time you've stolen from the factory. Wasn't the first time enough for you?"

Chen Chunhua no longer dared to argue, "It really was just foolishness. That person gave me 20 yuan to sneak a pack of the factory's seasoning packets. I thought that with so many packets in the factory, one less wouldn't matter. Mr. Lin, I truly know my mistake. I'm willing to return the 20 yuan to the factory. Please spare me this one time."

"Do you think the factory is short of your 20 yuan? Chen Chunhua, you actually know everything, yet you still do this. Are you not satisfied with your job at the Bun Shop?"

Some time ago, after improvements were made to the cooked food at the Old Food Factory, the Bun Shop purchased some to let everyone try. Chen Chunhua appeared righteously indignant at the time; who would have thought that she was the mastermind behind the trouble.

She clearly knew the consequences of losing seasoning packets, yet she stole them once again for the food factory. Was it really just for 20 yuan?

"I didn't have a choice, I didn't want to. I thought giving them two packets of seasoning would be enough, but they kept asking me for more. If I didn't agree, they threatened to expose the situation. I didn't want this..."

"What about the first time? No one forced you the first time."

Ma Yingzi, realizing she stole factory seasoning packets for a mere 20 yuan, regretted failing to see through such a person introduced to Lin Chuxia.

"Shut up."

Chen Chunhua suddenly shouted, her eyes bloodshot as she stared at Ma Yingzi.

"What right do you have to criticize me? If you say I was forced, then it was you who forced me."

"You knew I didn't like working at the Bun Shop, but you wouldn't help me speak to Mr. Lin. How did you introduce the job to me in the first place? You said we'd work together, but look at what happened. You're over there in the courtyard earning a high salary every month, and you threw me into the Bun Shop and didn't care. I asked you to put in a good word with the boss so I could be transferred over, and you made all sorts of excuses, saying it was for my good. In reality, you're just afraid I'd earn more than you."

"In the end, you're just selfish. If you didn't want to deal with me, you could've just said so from the start, not even bother introducing me to the job. On the surface, you act kind and friendly, better than anyone. But what about really?"

"Don't you remember what it was like when you first came here? Besides me, who would bother with a country girl like you? An ungrateful wretch, a white-eyed wolf..."

Ma Yingzi listened to the accusations and unbelievably took a step back, finally looking at Lin Chuxia in a daze...

...

Chen Chunhua was taken away by the public security. Stealing seasoning packets was indeed not a major crime, for at the time, awareness of intellectual property rights wasn't that strong; it wasn't actual money and its value couldn't be quantified.

This is also why, in these times, some factory security departments had the authority to handle theft of factory property.

If the security department's authority seemed extensive, it was also due to the imperfections of the legal system.

Either way, Chen Chunhua certainly wouldn't continue to work at the Bun Shop.

This served as a warning for Lin Chuxia and her team, prompting Su Wensong to strengthen management in the Food Factory.

Moreover, Lin Chuxia discussed their next steps of the plan with Su Wensong.

There was still some empty space in the Food Factory, and Lin Chuxia planned to bring in machinery for making beef sauce.

It wasn't for no reason; Lin Chuxia learned that Ancheng County's Food Factory mainly produced meat sauce.

They had to ensure their theft of Xiyang's seasoning packets wasn't in vain. Even though Chen Chunhua was incarcerated, the Food Factory hadn't learned their lesson.

Even if Chen Chunhua revealed her contact person inside, the Food Factory could simply put the blame on that individual, claiming it to be a personal act.

Life and work were full of uncertainties, and going with the flow was the best way to avoid being swayed by fluctuations.

This was also why she suspected the seasoning packet issue was linked to Chen Chunhua and yet chose to act accordingly.

If they could find the mastermind and strike back at the Food Factory, that would be ideal. Without concrete evidence to hit back at the Food Factory, she wouldn't accuse others of incompetence.

If this path was blocked, then they would find another way.

In the world of adults, there is only selection, not education. Like eating, the more hardships one withstands, the more one grows.

She wasn't going to expect to do everything perfectly just because she had been reborn once, to not afford any mistakes.

Even after being reborn, she was still a person of flesh and blood, not an immortal.

Moreover, aren't challenges and competition the meaning of life?

When Su Wensong heard Lin Chuxia's proposal, he knew her purpose, and his hands involuntarily clenched.

In the end, as the head of the Food Factory, it was his oversight that such a thing had occurred.

He had also thought about finding the person who stole the seasoning packets and following the trail to deal a blow to the Old Food Factory. Little did he expect to only send Chen Chunhua to the police station, leaving the Old Food Factory virtually unscathed.

For this reason, he even specifically sought out Sun Hao, thinking that even if it meant leveraging relationships, they couldn't let the Old Food Factory get away easily.

But Sun Hao told him that without evidence, indeed, there was nothing he could do.

The frustration was stuck in his chest, not going up or down, and Su Wensong had been stewing over it for several days. Unexpectedly, Mr. Lin had already found a new and imaginative way to strike back and seek revenge against the Old Food Factory.

Chapter 216: Who Blushed?

"Mr. Lin, rest assured, I will handle this matter carefully."

"Alright, you can try reaching out to Director Xu from the machinery factory for the equipment procurement. He has extensive connections."

Suddenly thinking of something after delegating the task, Lin Chuxia added, "Otherwise, I might as well go myself. Your wedding with Lanlan is in half a month, right?"

"Mr. Lin, please let me take care of it. I assure you, the wedding won't be delayed, nor will the work."

Lin Chuxia knew what Su Wensong was thinking about; it was nothing more than guilt over the seasoning packet incident.

Seeing his reaction, she didn't insist further, "Okay, just be quick. The sooner this is resolved, the better."

"Understood, Mr. Lin, you can count on me."

Now that the task had been passed to Su Wensong, Lin Chuxia wasn't as busy. With some spare time, she went directly to see Sun Lanlan.

Sun Lanlan was also aware of the incident at the food factory. She hadn't seen Lin Chuxia for a while and had a good rant upon seeing her.

It was incomprehensible to her. Their bun shop provided better benefits than an average factory, and Lin Chuxia had always reiterated to their management team never to mistreat the employees. Why would someone still betray them from the inside out?

"That day, it was just because I wasn't there. If I had been, I would've slapped Chen Chunhua twice myself."

She crossed her arms and glared angrily, looking truly furious.

Lin Chuxia let out a couple of teasing sounds, "Are you standing up for me or feeling sorry for your Factory Director Su?"

At the mention of 'your Factory Director Su,' Sun Lanlan's face flushed bright red, "What are you talking about? If you keep talking nonsense, I'll ignore you."

"I'm talking nonsense? Why is your face red, then?" Lin Chuxia tilted her head to look at her.

Sun Lanlan was truly embarrassed beyond hiding, trying to remain composed, "No, who's blushing? It's just really hot, and I'm angry at Chen Chunhua."

Though she spoke with defiance, inwardly she felt incredibly flustered.

The bun shop at the train station was actually renting a property from the Su Family, and since their engagement, Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan's interactions had become more frequent.

The shift at the food factory finished earlier, so Su Wensong would almost visit the shop every day to help Sun Lanlan, also as a way to cultivate their relationship.

However, since the seasoning packet theft, Su Wensong had become quiet and reticent. Even when speaking with Sun Lanlan, it was evident that his heart was heavy with troubles.

Sun Lanlan saw this and felt anxious for him.

She knew that Su Wensong cared a lot about what Lin Chuxia thought. He was Lin Chuxia's first employee, and now he was entrusted with managing the large Xiyang Food Factory. He was intent on doing a good job.

Of course, she felt for Su Wensong, but she cared for her sister just as much.

Lin Chuxia was just teasing her. After they had talked enough, she clapped her hands, "Alright, let's not talk about him. Since your Old Su probably doesn't have time to be with you lately, I'll make it up to you. Let's go shopping for new clothes to change out of these, and we'll head to the city."

The weather was getting hotter, and people were already starting to wear dresses.

In her 20 years living with the Lin Family, she had never worn a dress. Even if Lin Jiayi had dresses, by the time she grew out of them, Mother Lin would alter them into tank tops or shorts.

Lin Chuxia would wear the tank tops or shorts that Lin Jiayi didn't want anymore.

In her past life, because of this, once Lin Chuxia had money, she liked to buy herself beautiful dresses—a hobby that lasted until her death.

Reborn and back to her youthful prime, she was even more determined to splurge.

The styles at the department store in Ancheng County were too plain. She had bought what she liked, and today, she planned to look in the city.

No woman doesn't like beautiful new clothes. Sun Lanlan changed out of her work outfit, took care of the shop's affairs, and happily set out with Lin Chuxia.

The two took the bus straight to the department store in the city.

It was the season when new spring and summer collections were arriving. The department store showcased an array of these seasonal clothes, with many new arrivals from the south, making both of their eyes sparkle.

"My mom got some fabric for me the other day and said she made me two outfits as part of my dowry. I was thinking then that instead of getting fabric, it would be better to buy ready-made clothes—you see how nice these designs are, who could make these themselves?" Sun Lanlan pointed to a suit.

"That's Aunt Sun's thoughtfulness for you. We, living in the city, are exposed to new things and adapt our mindsets quickly, but our family members still hold onto old ways of thinking."

As Lin Chuxia said this, she had already instructed the salesperson to bring the suit down.

Sun Lanlan understood immediately, "Oh, I was just mentioning it, I didn't really plan on getting it."

She looked at the price tag; the suit was 80 yuan. Even now that she was earning a salary, she couldn't bear to spend 80 yuan on clothes.

"I'll give it to you," Lin Chuxia offered generously, "Feel this material, it's smooth and soft. It won't crease easily on your body. Try it on."

Sun Lanlan wanted to refuse, but Lin Chuxia put on a stern face, and immediately provoked another laugh from her.

"Xiaxia, having a sister like you is a blessing I must have cultivated over eight lifetimes."

"Are you moved to tears? I've said it before: once your sister has money, I'll cover you. Go try it on. If you miss out here, you won't find it anywhere else."

"Then I should pick out a few more."

Sun Lanlan happily took the clothes to try on, while Lin Chuxia browsed nearby.

Lin Chuxia was holding a skirt to her waist when she heard someone calling her, "Comrade Lin?"

She saw a lean man striding towards her from afar, "I thought you looked familiar, and sure enough, it's Comrade Lin."

Lin Chuxia had already recognized him; it was Director Yang from the department store's procurement department.

Last year when she came to the department store to buy clothes, she had a dispute with a salesperson over a woolen coat, and it was this Director Yang and Manager Zhao who had intervened.

"Hello, Director Yang."

Lin Chuxia greeted him with a nod.

Director Yang rubbed his hands, "Are you here to buy clothes? Our department store has just introduced a range of clothes, all the latest styles from the south. Comrade Lin is beautiful and has a good figure; buying a few outfits would be perfect for promoting our department store."

Lin Chuxia frowned slightly—at that time, it was not common to compliment women directly on their looks and figure, especially to their face.

Thinking about Director Yang's possibly inappropriate relationship with a previous salesperson, Lin Chuxia's expression cooled, "I apologize, Director Yang, but I need to leave for other matters."

"Comrade Lin, wait, don't rush off."

Yang Rui spoke again, but Lin Chuxia frowned, clearly showing impatience.

"It's like this—regarding the membership card service that Comrade Lin mentioned last time, our department store has adopted it. The response has been exceptional. Within just half a year, we've acquired over a thousand members, converting them into loyal customers of our store. It has greatly boosted our sales. Manager Zhao has mentioned many times, the next time we see Comrade Lin, we would like to gift a membership card, and we would also like to invite Comrade Lin for a meal."

Chapter 217: I Will Definitely Help You Have a Son

After saying that, he glanced at his watch, "Mr. Lin, do you have time now? Manager Zhao is in the office, and it's about time. I'll go inform Manager Zhao now, let's have a meal together. Manager Zhao would definitely be delighted to know you're here today."

However, Lin Chuxia didn't know how Manager Zhao would feel about seeing her, and she didn't want to have dinner with Yang Rui at all.

"Sorry, I am busy today."

"Is that so? Then never mind, I'll give you the membership card first, and next time you come, you must show us your grace."

Yang Rui took out a membership card from his suit pocket and handed it over with both hands.

Lin Chuxia took it without refusing and looked at it.

"15% off membership card, the discount rate is the same across the Department Store..."

"Not at all," Yang Rui smiled and explained, "Mr. Lin, the one you're holding is the highest-discount card. A regular member gets 5% off, a senior member gets 10% off, and only VIP members get 15% off. Manager Yang has already said that next time Mr. Lin comes, you should definitely become our Department Store's 15% discount VIP member."

"Thank you very much."

Seeing that Sun Lanlan had already come out in her new outfit, Lin Chuxia and Yang Rui nodded to each other and approached Sun Lanlan.

"How about it? Does it look good?"

Sun Lanlan tugged at her clothes, feeling a bit embarrassed.

Lin Chuxia gave a thumbs up directly, "Extremely beautiful, with this elegance, totally manager level."

"Why don't you try one on for yourself, you are the manager after all."

"Sure, I like that silver-grey one."

Lin Chuxia also picked a set, and pushed Sun Lanlan towards another counter.

"Go check out that red dress; I think it suits you perfectly. Wear it on your wedding and I guarantee it'll knock Old Su dead."

Though the last sentence was spoken softly, Sun Lanlan blushed and protested, "Stop it, no more of that."

Despite her complaints, her eyes glittered upon seeing that dress.

Glancing at the price tag she hesitated a bit, "Over 30 yuan, clothes at the Department Store are expensive and you can't even bargain."

Lin Chuxia waved her membership card, "Who says you can't bargain? 15% off."

"Where did you get this membership card?"

Their Bun Shop often held various promotional events, so Sun Lanlan was already familiar with words like membership discounts.

"Don't worry about it, let's go all out shopping today."

Sun Lanlan nodded vehemently, thrilled about having scored a big advantage today at 15% off.

The two were in great spirits as they picked out clothes, occasionally trying on outfits they liked.

On the other side, Yang Rui turned his head and saw an alert Tang Lili.

"Who is that woman?"

From afar, Tang Lili saw Yang Rui chatting and laughing joyfully with a woman, almost grinning from ear to ear. She rushed over but it was already too late.

She could only see the woman having a graceful figure, looking quite young. Even as the woman walked away, Yang Rui was still smiling stupidly at her departing figure.

"No one, just an old customer I knew," Yang Rui gave a brief explanation because of the last incident.

Tang Lili did not believe it at all, but she also knew that asking further would yield nothing more.

So she changed her tone, "Brother Yang, are you free tonight? It's been a long time since you visited my place, and I even bought your favorite soy beef yesterday..."

"Lili, I really can't get away these days, you know Jiajia is sick, I need to go back..."

Yang Rui didn't finish his sentence before Tang Lili's face changed. "Jiajia, Jiajia, you really treat her like a daughter held in the palm of your hand? Don't forget what you initially told me."

This was still the department store, and Yang Rui, fearing she might make a scene, quickly pulled her into the office.

As soon as Tang Lili entered the office, she shook off his hand and crossed her arms, questioning him.

"When that woman was pregnant, you said you feared it would affect your future and did not want to divorce her. Now their child is already a month old, how long do you expect me to wait? Wasn't it agreed? You divorce her, then I will give birth to a son for you."

Seeing Yang Rui's hesitation, she stepped forward and embraced his waist, her voice becoming much softer.

"Brother Yang, are you really willing to let me keep waiting? That old woman is so dull, I feel sorry for you living with her. Before, it was just you earning money to support the two of you, now it's you alone

supporting a family of three. If I don't care for you, who will? Besides, why are you working so hard out there? Now that woman has cut off your lineage, not even bearing you a son..."

"Lili, stop talking..."

At the mention of a son, a strange look flashed through Yang Rui's eyes.

He had originally planned to break things off with Tang Lili as soon as the child was born, but unexpectedly, his wife gave birth to a daughter.

With family planning being strictly enforced, and him being a formal employee, having a second child would jeopardize his job.

But just as Tang Lili said, what was all his hard work and struggle for if not for the Yang Family?

If his lineage were to end with him, no matter how successful he was, how could he face his parents and elders?

"Brother Yang, I am truly doing all this for your sake. You know our family has secrets for having sons. My parents wanted a daughter after having my three older brothers, which is why I was born. I will definitely help you have a son."

Tang Lili said this as she tiptoed up and kissed the man's lips.

And her last sentence completely stirred the man's nerves.

Faced with the temptation presented right in front of him, Yang Rui responded unreservedly, yet his mind was calculating his own affairs.

Manager Zhao's annual meeting commendation by the city committee leaders would not have been possible without Mr. Lin's contribution.

Recently, Manager Zhao had been mentioning her, wanting to discuss business secrets with her again.

Just that last time was a fluke encounter, and it was even said that Mr. Lin wasn't in this city anymore, so he had to let it go.

Unbelievably lucky, Mr. Lin happened to come to the Department Store to shop and he ran into her.

If he could make this happen, he could even get promoted from his current director position.

At that point, he could raise the issue of divorce, citing irreconcilable differences.

Now holding the procurement channels of the Department Store, with a significant position, who could fault him?

After the divorce, marrying Tang Lili and having a son with her would complete his life.

.....

Chuxia and Lanlan shopped for an entire day, and when they sat on the bus back to Ancheng County, each had two large bags in their hands, their faces displaying satisfied smiles.

"Xiaxia, I haven't had this much fun in a long time. Really, having money is great."

Chuxia chuckled, a fact she had realized in her previous life.

But...

"It's not just about having money, right? I didn't see you this happy when I paid you your salary before."

She glanced at Lanlan's bag, which contained not only her own items but also a set of men's clothes.

Lanlan stubbornly retorted, "What are you talking about? I don't understand. Besides, I just saw you buying things for your Qin Yang and helped myself a little, so what? You can buy things for your Qin Yang but I can't help myself?"

"Alright, alright, whatever you say," Chuxia responded, not arguing, but her face was full of teasing.

Chapter 218: The Cultured Scoundrel

Sun Lanlan fell silent for a moment, glanced around, and then lowered her voice a few decibels, "Xiaxia, to be honest, I didn't know what it felt like to like someone before. Whether it was towards Cai Jun or anyone else, I never felt much. Even when Su Wensong proposed, I only had a slight fondness for him. But having spent some time with him recently, I've realized that I do like him. When you were getting married, I used to fantasize about what kind of man I would marry. Thinking about going to live with a completely unfamiliar family made me feel confused and scared, but now I'm somewhat looking forward to marrying Su Wensong. Whether it's Granny Sun or him, I think living with them would be nice."

Su Wensong gave her enough security, a feeling she never got from Cai Jun.

Back then, when Brother Three helped to match them, whether they were out shopping or working together, Cai Jun took care of her, but that feeling was just because she was a woman, his colleague.

But when she was with Su Wensong, he...

Thinking about how that man treated her with meticulous care made Sun Lanlan's face warm up a bit.

That kind of feeling was something she never felt from her father or brother, she really liked it.

Lin Chuxia held her hand, looking into her clear eyes full of anticipation and longing for the future life.

"Lanlan, you will be happy."

"Yeah, we will all be happy."

...

Back in Ancheng County, it was already getting late, and Lin Chuxia went straight back to the Qin Family house.

Sun Lanlan stayed in the staff dormitory, but concerned about the business at the Bun Shop, she went there directly since it hadn't closed yet.

As she entered, she immediately saw the busy figure inside and couldn't help but smile slightly at the corners of her lips.

Granny Sun, seeing Sun Lanlan carry bags big and small, chuckled, "Oh, Xiao Sun, what good stuff did you buy with all these bags? The clothes you're wearing look really nice; that's why I say the city has better styles than here."

Sun Lanlan was wearing new clothes, which she had felt looked good and hadn't taken off after trying them on.

Hearing Granny Sun's praise, her gaze subconsciously shifted towards the man, with a faint sense of expectation.

Su Wensong had already seen Sun Lanlan, his smile slight and seemingly no different from usual.

Sun Lanlan felt a twinge of disappointment, checked the time, and said to Granny Sun and the other two employees, "Let's tidy up and close for the night."

After everyone finished work, Sun Lanlan went to lock the door of the Bun Shop.

Since it was a wing room of the Su Family's, the door had to be locked from the inside, and then leave through the courtyard gate.

Before she had taken a couple of steps, a large hand reached out first and took the big lock from her hand, "Let me do it."

His slightly rough fingertips brushed the back of her hand, making Sun Lanlan's heart quiver.

Meeting the man's somewhat deep gaze, Sun Lanlan quickly lowered her eyes, "Well... I'll head back first then."

"We've agreed before, no going back alone."

Su Wensong said, bowing his head while locking the door.

"Oh, I forgot."

Sun Lanlan watched his back, her eyes flitting around, finally settling on the bag as she gently bit her lip.

A large hand reached out and rubbed the top of his head, pulling her thoughts back.

Su Wensong was always like this, cold and stern in front of others, but liked to engage in small gestures when they were alone.

Before she agreed to the marriage, Su Wensong came to see her every day, brought her small gifts, dined with her, and then walked her back to the dormitory.

When she finally nodded her head in agreement, he embraced her.

Sun Lanlan still remembered that feeling when Su Wensong hugged her tightly into his arms, his arms tightly wrapped around her, and she could hear the beating of his heart and the scent of his body.

She was pretty scared at the time, just letting him hold her for quite a while.

Then she went back to her dormitory and had a sleepless night, even starting to doubt whether her decision was correct.

Su Wensong normally appears gentle and polished and is usually the most stable in the way he speaks and handles things, but right after she agreed to the marriage, he showed his true nature.

It was like she bought a watermelon, paid for it, and then as soon as she opened it, it turned out to be unripe.

It was neither edible nor discardable.

His behavior immediately reminded Sun Lanlan of a term Lin Chuxia often used, "a faux gentleman."

She thought that it was just a momentary impulse that time, but the next day when he was walking her back to the dormitory and they were alone, her little hand was firmly clasped in a big, strong hand.

That big hand was dry and warm, carrying a force that brooked no argument.

On the third day, he touched her head.

On the fourth day, he pinched her cheeks, oh, and he hugged her again.

From then on, these little gestures were often part of their interaction; Sun Lanlan went from initial unease to feeling perfectly entitled and even a bit of sweetness.

"What's wrong, anything else?"

Su Wensong saw her dazed expression and couldn't help but pinch her little cheek.

Although Sun Lanlan was born in the countryside, she was pampered by her family, her face tender and soft like a peeled egg, soft when squeezed.

He was eight years older than her, and although the term "old cow eating young grass" isn't nice to hear, young grass is indeed tasty.

"There's something, just wait a moment."

Sun Lanlan quickly pulled out two pieces of clothing from her bag, a white men's shirt and a pair of black trousers.

The style was very ordinary and suited Su Wensong's status.

"I bought these for you at the Department Store today, go and try them on to see if they fit."

Seeing the clothes in his hands, a smile flickered in Su Wensong's eyes, "They fit," it was the first gift she had given him, and they sure would fit.

"You haven't tried them yet, go try them on, I'm going to check if everything is taken care of in the kitchen."

Sun Lanlan handed him the clothes and dashed to the kitchen.

She did not come out until she heard Su Wensong say, "Alright."

Since Su Wensong was promoted to factory manager, he had always paid attention to his appearance and grooming; he often wore such clothes, but today felt different somehow.

Sun Lanlan also felt the difference; the man's posture was straight, trouser lines crisp, the white shirt tucked into the waistband showed off his waist and hips...

She remembered the risque words Lin Chuxia shared with her that day, about how to tell if a man is handsome - besides his face, it was by looking at his waist and hips.

At that moment, she hadn't quite understood, but now she got a bit of the meaning...

"I knew it, they fit well, thank you for the gifts."

"What are you looking at?" Seeing Sun Lanlan silent, Su Wensong asked again.

Sun Lanlan suddenly looked up, shook her head, and said, "Nothing," though her eyes couldn't help but sweep over his waist again.

Su Wensong had already noticed her gaze, stepped forward, and asked in a deep voice, "Do you like it?"

"Yes!" Sun Lanlan blurted out instinctively, then suddenly realized what she had said and looked up, "I mean..."

"You can look if you want," Su Wensong continued to approach her, "Lanlan, we are getting married in a week. Even though I'm busy at work and our wedding might seem rushed, believe me, I don't take you lightly at all. You are the one I, Su Wensong, have chosen, the woman who will be my wife and the mother of my children. If you think there's anything I'm doing wrong, just tell me, and I'll change. And about the wedding, I don't have much experience in this area, and also my grandma is old. If you think there's anything missing, discuss it with me in advance."

Chapter 219: Despising Someone From the Core

The two were so close that Sun Lanlan felt her heart was about to jump out of her throat. She shook her head in confusion, "No, it's already very good."

The betrothal gifts had been sent long ago, three batches and one confirmation, and a 600 yuan bride price, which was unique in their Daqing Mountain Village.

Now, the whole village knew that she, Sun Lanlan, was marrying into a good family, not only from the city but also someone who valued her so much.

She had nothing to be dissatisfied about.

"Then, I want to kiss you," his voice was low, carrying a hint of seduction.

"Ah?"

Sun Lanlan hadn't reacted yet when she saw a face enlarged and coming down towards her.

The breath was full of a manly scent, the lips of the other person were a bit cool and soft, and slightly trembling...

She stood there blankly, her eyes wide open, until a big hand covered her view...

Seeing the lights still on at the bun shop, Granny Su came over to see if Sun Lanlan had returned.

Her granddaughter-in-law was very filial, visiting her every day and chatting with her for a while.

Earlier today, when she was going to the city with Lin, she even informed Granny Su.

With the bun shop still lit up so late, she couldn't have not returned yet, right?

Just as she was about to open the door, she saw two people hugging tightly inside.

Her wooden-like grandson was holding the young girl...

Granny Su couldn't bear to watch; after all, she was old now, and seeing her old house "on fire," she really didn't have the heart to cherish and pamper.

However, she felt happy, seeing this, her great-grandson wouldn't be far off.

Not daring to disturb the two, she returned to her room with a smile on her face.

Sun Lanlan felt like she was suffocating, especially because her mouth also hurt a bit.

Finally able to breathe freely, she gasped for air, gently touched the corner of her lips, and noticed a hint of blood.

Looking at the man, the same spot on his lip was also slightly broken.

Su Wensong saw the corner of her lips too, held her face gently and looked at it for a while, his tone full of pity and regret, "Sorry, I'll be more careful next time, it will get better with more practice."

Sun Lanlan: "..."

Just, speechless!

.....

The morning air was exceptionally fresh, even the birds' chirping sounded crisper.

Inside the bun shop, Sun Lanlan couldn't stand her sisters' teasing glances, ruthlessly sending them away.

"Hey hey hey, I'm saying, don't you have work to do today regarding the equipment? What's the meaning of sitting around here?"

Lin Chuxia rested her chin on her hands and retracted her gaze, clicking her tongue, "Oh my, really favoring love over friends, there's a different sex but no humanity, who used to have endless chats with me, who told me that I was her best sister and wanted to be sisters for life, but now, just when someone shows concern, you chase them away, this truly saddens me."

Lin Chuxia pretended to wipe tears exaggeratedly, making Sun Lanlan so angry she stomped her feet.

"Is that what you call concern? You're here to laugh at me."

Lin Chuxia immediately laughed, lifted her chin and looked at her lips, "Then you deceive me saying it's because you've been hot-tempered lately, I see it's not you who's hot-tempered, it's your Old Su who is, almost getting married and he can't even wait for this bit of time, so eager? Lanlan oh Lanlan, you've been led astray by your Old Su..."

"Hurry and go, hurry and go, it's going to rain if you don't leave now."

At this, Sun Lanlan directly pushed her out of the door, making Lin Chuxia laugh heartily.

She saw yesterday that Su Wensong's lip was broken but didn't pay attention, only today did she see Sun Lanlan's lip, at the same position, was also slightly cut.

Everyone is experienced, Lin Chuxia immediately thought of what was going on.

But she didn't expect that a month ago when she brought up Su Wensong, Sun Lanlan had adamantly refused, and now their relationship seems so good.

In this day and age, flash marriages are common, and as long as both parties agree, they quickly arrange the wedding.

After marriage, both of them would gradually get to know each other, like her and Qin Yang.

She thought that even if Sun Lanlan and Su Wensong were colleagues, if they were to marry, it would still take some time to adjust.

It turns out she was too conservative.

Seeing Sun Lanlan's annoyed yet blissful look, Lin Chuxia genuinely felt happy for her.

The sky was gloomy outside. Lin Chuxia left the Bun Shop and headed directly to the Xiyang Food Factory.

The food processing machinery coordinated with Director Xu was supposed to arrive at the factory today; she hoped it wouldn't start raining on such a gloomy day.

Although that's what she thought, things often go contrary to wishes, and not long after she walked, huge raindrops started pelting down.

The rain came down heavily, accompanied by strong winds, and soon there was almost nobody on the streets.

Lin Chuxia didn't bring any rain gear, so she quickly propped her bike to the side and ran under someone else's eaves to take shelter.

Originally thinking that the violent storm would pass quickly, the wind eventually stopped, but the rain did not.

Lin Chuxia looked up at the sky and saw the large clouds slowly moving south.

With the clouds moving south, and continuous rain, it seemed like the rain wouldn't stop anytime soon.

Glancing at her wristwatch, the delivery truck should have arrived; not wanting to delay any further, she pushed her bike and dashed into the rain.

The Xiyang Food Factory was less than 2 kilometers from here, and she could get there in less than 10 minutes if she cycled fast.

At that moment, a raincoat was draped over her.

That scent was so repulsive to her core that she almost reflexively glared back at the man behind her.

Her gaze was fierce and angry, filled with disgust, scaring Li Guangyuan into stepping back as he instinctively explained, "Little... little aunt, it's me. This... this raincoat is mine, you... wear it first, don't... don't get sick from this heavy rain..."

He was passing by when he happened to see Lin Chuxia taking shelter from the rain.

For some reason, he also stopped, taking shelter not far from her.

He could tell that she seemed to be in a hurry for something important.

While hesitating whether to go over and greet her, he saw her rush into the rain, knowing she was going to brave the rain.

Almost without thinking, he took off his raincoat and draped it over her.

He thought she would appreciate his gesture, but didn't expect her to be so guarded.

At that moment, his eyes were so piercing that it frightened him.

It seemed like the next second, she was going to swing a punch at him.

Lin Chuxia immediately pulled off the raincoat and threw it back on Li Guangyuan, "No need."

Without looking back, she got on her bike as staying any longer might make her unable to resist the urge to hit someone.

She thought she had made clear boundaries with Li Guangyuan in this life and they were walking different paths with almost no overlap, and that she would gradually let go of the past.

Only when the scent of that person invaded her nostrils did Lin Chuxia realize that the revulsion deep in her bones was not controlled by her brain.

Li Guangyuan, holding the raincoat, blankly watched Lin Chuxia's retreating figure.

For some unknown reason, he felt that his little aunt really disliked him.

Could it be that the pole-changing was actually the little aunt's idea? Little aunt looked down on him.

But why?

Chapter 220: Li's Steamed Bun Shop?

He draped the raincoat over himself, wandering aimlessly in the rainy field.

The sky didn't look promising early this morning, so he decided against setting up his stall. Without the stall to tend to, he also didn't want to stay at "that" home.

Recently, he'd often reminisce about his wedding. Whenever he heard people mention Qin's Buns Shop, her silhouette would emerge in his mind.

He knew he shouldn't dwell on it, but he couldn't help himself. Sometimes, he even wondered if there hadn't been the switch in marriage partners, and Lin Chuxia was his wife, would things have turned out like his sister said—no Qin's Buns Shop, only Li's Steamed Bun Shop?

Once this thought took root, it grew rapidly like a seed, thriving into a towering tree.

It wasn't until the look in Lin Chuxia's eyes just now that Li Guangyuan deeply realized he might have truly been mistaken.

There wouldn't be a Li's Steamed Bun Shop, just like his wife said, Lin Chuxia never had any interest in him from the very start.

Lin Chuxia scorned his poverty and looked down on him.

"Hey, Guangyuan, why have you come out in this heavy rain? What's happened to you, getting all wet even with a raincoat? Come on, come in quick, dry yourself off, be careful or you'll catch a cold..."

Li Guangyuan snapped back to reality and realized that he had unknowingly made his way to Tian Cuixia's home.

Tian Cuixia was pulling him by the arm towards the house.

He managed a smile, "Cuihua, sorry about this, I was out handling some matters, didn't expect it to rain, so I came to seek refuge at your place."

"Nonsense, why be so polite with me? At the vegetable market, I've always been the one under your care. Here, take this towel; look how wet your clothes are! Take them off and change..."

Tian Cuixia reached out to help Li Guangyuan undo the buttons on his clothes, but he instinctively stepped back, looking utterly bewildered.

Tian Cuixia chuckled at his reaction, "Alright, you can do it. I'm busy making dumplings in the kitchen; this rain won't stop anytime soon, so you might as well stay here and eat with me. I always say, you really have a hard lot in life. Why wander outside on a rainy day?"

Li Guangyuan kept his head down, wiping the rainwater off, not affirming or denying Tian Cuixia's words.

His younger sister had returned to her maternal home again. As long as she was back, there wouldn't be a moment's peace in "that" home.

It was wrong for Li Hongmei to bother her sister-in-law with trifling matters at her maternal home, but if Lin Jiayi hadn't intervened to arrange her marriage, she probably wouldn't be bothering them every now and then.

Stuck between his wife on the one side and his own sister on the other, Li Guangyuan felt distressed, finding it more tolerable to wander outside than to stay at home.

"Here you go, these are my man's clothes. Try them on and see if they fit; just make do for now."

Tian Cuixia held up a sleeveless shirt in front of Li Guangyuan, her eyes shimmering playfully with a smile.

He felt a bit dazed; Li Jiayi also used to look at him with such eyes when they first got married, full of admiration and joy.

But he didn't know when those eyes began to only show resentment and dissatisfaction.

Li Guangyuan looked down and took the clothes. Just as he was about to change, he realized something and saw Tian Cuixia still smiling at him.

Before he could say anything, Tian Cuixia teased him, "What's the matter, you're a grown man scared of being seen? You really think I'm dying to look at you? There's plenty of topless men around on the streets when it's hot, I've seen it all before."

Li Guangyuan thought about it and realized it was true. When it was hot, the working men, including himself, were used to baring their chests, and even in their village, women would bare their chests to work during the dog days of summer.

Being bashful now would indeed seem overly sensitive.

Lifting his garment, he took off his soaking clothes and put on the clean ones.

Tian Cuixia laughed and said, "You know, you do look a bit like my unlucky husband in those clothes. Wait for it, the dumplings are almost ready, and I happen to have half a bottle of liquor left. We can have dumplings with liquor for lunch. Let's have a drink."

When Lin Chuxia arrived at Xiyang Food Factory, there were two large trucks parked in the factory yard, covered with thick tarpaulins.

Su Wensong, wearing a raincoat, was checking for leaks when he saw Lin Chuxia coming in from outside the yard; he hurried over to greet her.

"Mr. Lin, why have you come at this time? It's pouring rain."

While saying so, he started to take off his raincoat to give to Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia waved her hand dismissively and walked quickly to the shelter under the eaves.

"When did the equipment arrive? Where is the person in charge?"

The sound of the rain was quite loud, especially under the eaves, Lin Chuxia had to speak almost by shouting.

"They are already in the office."

This batch of equipment was arranged by Xu Changping, the deputy director of the machinery factory. However, the specific details were unclear, so they needed to come and inspect it in person.

Lin Chuxia nodded and asked Su Wensong to find her a new set of staff uniform.

Su Wensong quickly got his subordinates to take care of it.

After changing into clean clothes, Lin Chuxia felt much more comfortable.

It wasn't that she didn't trust Su Wensong, but rather, she understood from a lifetime of experience that even a small deviation in these production machines could affect the entire production line.

Nowadays, the quality of machinery on the market varies greatly, and she tried her best to clearly convey her requirements to Xu Changping's side, just in case.

It was still raining outside, and it was time for lunch. Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong, along with the person in charge and the drivers, went to have lunch first.

The rain gradually stopped after lunch—just in time to inspect the machinery.

Pulling off the tarp, Lin Chuxia climbed onto the Jiefang truck and carefully checked the machinery against the manual. She was quite satisfied. Indeed, as Xu Changping said, this set of machinery seemed to be one of the more advanced on the market.

The machinery was bulky, and moving it into the factory building was troublesome. Cranes were hard to find in a small county town; it had to be moved by manpower.

Lin Chuxia went directly to Village Chief Qin. Qin Shusen, without saying another word, went to the village committee's loudspeakers and broadcasted a call for the strong and young villagers to help move the machinery at Xiyang Food Factory.

Su Wensong, seeing that Village Chief Qin had only broadcasted through the loudspeakers, was somewhat concerned.

He asked Lin Chuxia in a very low voice, "Will this work? What if the villagers don't want to come? Otherwise, if we stop the factory's production line for half a day and get our own employees to do it together, that should be nearly enough."

Su Wensong was a genuine city kid. Even if he had gone to the countryside as a youth, he only lived at the youth point and didn't experience much of the villagers' sense of solidarity.

Lin Chuxia just smiled slightly, "No need, you'll see in a bit."

When building Xiyang Food Factory and Qin Family Village chicken farm, she had personally witnessed the influence Village Chief Qin Shusen held in the village.

It wasn't about him overpowering others with his authority, but rather he genuinely did practical things for the common people and sought benefits for the villagers. Everyone in the village held great respect for him.

Sure enough, in less than a moment, villagers began to approach from all directions, some in groups.

Knowing it was to move heavy machinery for the factory, they brought with them thick wooden sticks, coarse ropes, and other handy household items.