

## Switched M 221

### Chapter 221: For Honor

In no time, the factory gathered around a hundred or so people, ranging from young men in their twenties to those in their fifties, along with some strong-bodied women and quite a few children who followed to watch the excitement.

Lin Chuxia especially enjoyed this atmosphere, which was rarely seen in the 21st century.

In that era, the widespread use of heavy machinery liberated manpower but also caused the cohesion among people to dissolve bit by bit.

Not to mention the relations between villagers, even within clans, contact would be minimal after three generations.

Lin Chuxia did not stop the children from joining in on the fun, letting them watch from a safe distance.

The village chief also came along and pointed out a few of those in their fifties in the crowd. After circling the Jiefang truck a couple of times, they began making arrangements.

Lin Chuxia knew that these older folks were the experienced hands of the village.

Some people brought over thicker planks to lay on the truck, round logs were placed under the machine, and ropes thicker than a thumb were wrapped around the machinery...

It was a contest of strength and wisdom. Initially, Lin Chuxia did not have much confidence, and even when people started lifting the machinery, she was quite nervous.

But there she was, watching intently as the machine, weighing several tons, was gradually moved off the truck by dozens of strong young people...

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Qin Lihua sat under the big tree in the courtyard, staring blankly at the half-washed clothes in the washbasin in front of her.

Just now, the loudspeaker of the brigade broadcasted that her dad had put down his work and gone to Xiyang Food Factory, apparently to move some machinery.

At that moment, someone called out to her at the entrance of the courtyard, "Lihua, why are you still at home washing clothes? I heard Xiyang Food Factory just received two large machines, half the village has gone over there. Let's go, let's go together and take a look."

Before Qin Lihua could respond, that person was already pulling her hand and heading out, while saying, "Last time the food factory was hiring I didn't get selected. Are they hiring again with the new machines? I wonder what the requirement is this time. If only I had an aunt as capable as yours, would I even need to worry about not having a job?"

"Lihua, could you talk to your aunt on my behalf? I also want to work at the factory; I don't mind if the salary is less, while others earn 40, I'd take 30, and I'd work really hard."

In their village, the younger generation takes pride in working at Xiyang Food Factory.

Those who weren't married or dating saw it become much easier to find a partner once they had a job.

Qin Lihua was overwhelmed by her incessant chatter and made up an excuse to head towards Xiyang Food Factory first.

The road was filled with people heading to Xiyang Food Factory to join in the commotion, in groups of threes or twos, all discussing the factory.

"I remember when Xiyang Food Factory was first established, they installed several machines and then started hiring in the village. Are they hiring again this time?"

"Of course, they are. My spouse even said we should sign up when Xiyang Food Factory hires again. Last time we thought they only wanted young people and wouldn't bother with married folks, so we didn't even apply. But just look at the Li Family couple; they're over 30 and still got a job at the factory."

"That's right, I heard Xiyang Food Factory offered 20 positions to the village. I figured there was no way I'd get one, so I didn't even go for the interview. But turns out the village chief was the one to pick those 20, and the factory director wanted to choose people too."

"That's why I say the Qin Family people are decent. In my opinion, they are looking out for the elders and folks of our Qin Family Village."

"Exactly, I heard the village is also planning to build a pig farm. No matter what, if there's a chance to apply for a job, we should all sign up. I don't want to farm anymore."

"What can you really earn from farming? Last year my family farmed vegetables for a year only to sell them cheap. At the end of the year, after settling accounts, we barely covered the cost of fertilizer and utilities. It was truly a year's labor for nothing."

"Farming is such hard labor. Look at those who work at the food factory. They've been working for just a few months, and their skin has become smoother than it was when they were farming. They all look like city people."

"City dwellers might not even compare to them. The wages for factory workers in the city aren't as high as theirs."

"Oh my, let's not talk about it. Let's go take a look and see if there's any news."

"Exactly, let's hurry."

Qin Lihua watched the retreating figures and slowed her pace.

Their words struck her heart one by one.

She hadn't gone to work at the Bun Shop these days, both because she was recovering from an injury at home, and also because Cai Jun had been pressuring her to resign.

She tried all sorts of ways to convince him, but that man was as stubborn as a bull, impossible to persuade.

She couldn't understand what was wrong with working and earning money. How many people would actually want to face the soil and turn their back to the sky? Was his pride really more important than the better days that were to come?

Qin Lihua finally arrived at the Xiyang Food Factory and saw the villagers working together to move a huge machine into the workshop.

Every face was brimming with a genuine smile, as if the machine did not belong to the Xiyang Food Factory, but to them.

But thinking back to the conversations she overheard on the way, it didn't seem wrong to think this way. After all, there was a glimmer of hope.

Qin Lihua stood among the crowd until the machine was inside the workshop. Her Aunt enthusiastically thanked everyone, and told Manager Su to distribute cigarettes and candies to every villager who helped.

She saw Su Wensong wearing a crisp white shirt, black trousers, and even a pair of leather shoes on his feet.

His short hair was neatly groomed, and the once brown glasses had been replaced with metal frames, making him look scholarly and quite a few years younger.

No, on second thought, Su Wensong had always seemed younger.

He was less than three years younger than her second uncle, but when standing next to him, he looked at least five years younger.

As he was handing out cigarettes and candies, people spoke to him with respect and even the older villagers, who were usually treated with the utmost deference, were very polite to him.

Qin Lihua gently bit her red lips. Just yesterday, her older brother mentioned that Factory Director Su and Manager Sun's wedding was just a few days away, and this weekend they were going to help Factory Director Su.

Factory Director Su had booked several tables at the State-Owned Restaurant. He wasn't qualified to attend Factory Director Su's wedding, but he wanted to go with his Aunt.

Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan were getting married, while Cai Jun was still angry with her over her refusal to quit her job, and he even didn't want to discuss marriage.

If only they hadn't objected to Su Wensong's age when her second aunt mentioned him back then, would it be her preparing for the wedding now?

Her older brother wouldn't be without the qualifications to attend the wedding; he would be Factory Director Su's uncle, an honored guest.

When old friends from childhood asked about work, wouldn't she, as the factory director's wife, have a say?

Qin Lihua shook her head. She couldn't go on thinking about such things; it was impossible now.

What she needed to do was to persuade Cai Jun, to get him to stay and keep working, so that she could continue her good days.

Chapter 222: Do you really like me?

Qin Lihua didn't go home after leaving Xiyang Food Factory; instead, she headed straight to find Cai Jun.

Although it wasn't quite appropriate for her to show up like this, Qin Lihua could no longer care about that.

Before she even reached the village entrance, she saw Cai Jun working in the fields at the east end of Cai Village.

Cai Jun was watering the wheat. The wheat was about to head, and watering it now would ensure the grains filled out well.

Qin Lihua made her way towards Cai Jun, with uneven steps on the soft ground.

Cai Jun glanced at Qin Lihua, and with just that one look, he bent down to unblock the water entrance of the irrigation channel, redirecting the flow into another furrow, "Why have you come here?"

Seeing how differently he treated her compared to the enthusiastic start of their relationship, Qin Lihua felt even worse.

"If I don't come looking for you, will you ever come looking for me? Cai Jun, do the things you said to me before still count?"

After a brief silence, Cai Jun nodded his head.

"If they count, then go to my house to propose marriage. After the wheat harvest, we'll get married. Also, I have some good news for you – my aunt's factory got two new large machines and I've heard they're adding two more production lines, so they will need more workers. How about you take a job at the food factory then?"

Worried that Cai Jun might refuse, Qin Lihua hurriedly added, "I've inquired about it. Although Sun Bingnan works at the food factory, he's in sales. He's office-based and won't go to the workshop, so you won't run into him there."

Cai Jun finished changing the water course, looking down as the water flowed into the wheat field, where the wheat was growing well, the water snaking quickly through the stalks towards the deeper areas.

Seeing him silent again, Qin Lihua was utterly frustrated.

"Auntie said you could start working there. What are you being so stubborn about? If you don't want to work at the Bun Shop, you can work at the food factory. Besides, even if you run into the Sun siblings, what of it? They've already beaten you up once; can they beat you again?"

"Lihua," Cai Jun finally lifted his head, "do you really like me?"

Qin Lihua nodded, "Of course I like you," if she didn't like him, why would she make such a fuss?

"I've already said I won't go back to work there, and if I work again in the future, it would be a different job, not at your aunt's place."

Work at the food factory?

Had Qin Lihua suggested this at the beginning, maybe he would have wavered, but now with Sun Lanlan and Su Wensong set to marry, going to Xiyang Food Factory to find Su Wensong would be like slapping his own face.

He still remembered the disdain, disgust, and even anger in Su Wensong's eyes when they were found out that day.

Whether he stayed at the Bun Shop or went to the food factory, it was an awkward situation for him.

He didn't have the face to go back.

Qin Lihua was close to crying with urgency, "If I didn't like you, why would I plead with my aunt on your behalf?"

"If you really liked me, you wouldn't try to persuade me. Same as before, I won't go back."

Qin Lihua looked at him, his clothes - a vest and shorts that had turned white from washing – were covered in mud and water.

His skin wasn't as fair as it had been when he worked at the Bun Shop, perhaps because of that fairness, now the skin that had been scorched by the fierce sun was red, some parts even peeling.

His hair was a mess, unlike when he worked at the Bun Shop, where he had to pay attention to hygiene, making sure his appearance was always presentable.

Cai Jun's hair had grown long, even his beard hadn't been shaved for several days, looking scruffy.

His current appearance was a far cry from the man she had first set eyes on, and what disappointed her even more was his attitude.

"In the end, it's not that Sun Lanlan is thinking of you; it's you who's thinking of Sun Lanlan, isn't it? Not returning to the Bun Shop to work is just because you're afraid of seeing her. Cai Jun, after all I've done for you, you'd rather resign because of your petty thoughts without considering our future together?"

If her fourth aunt did not agree, it would have been fine, but her fourth aunt had clearly agreed.

In his heart, was his pride more important than their future life? Or even more important than her?

Watching Cai Jun's continuing silence, Qin Lihua couldn't hold back anymore and ran out of the wheat field crying.

After seeing off the fellow villagers who had helped, Lin Chuxia spent a long time wandering around the factory and the machines.

In her last life, it was with beef sauce as the foundation that she started a food processing factory, transitioning from a retail storefront to factory processing, which stabilized her first step and also brought her honors and wealth.



In this life, she embarked on the beef sauce business again, confident that she could do even better.

Old Food Factory, brace yourself for our competitive pressure!

"Have you found out about the sales channels for the beef sauce at the Old Food Factory?"

At this moment, only Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong were in the factory.

Su Wensong nodded, "Mostly, yes. The Old Food Factory's sales channels over the years haven't been a secret, and with a little inquiry, we've found them. The only tricky thing is, most of their sales channels are state-owned enterprises."

The fact they were state-owned enterprises meant that cooperation between the two enterprises wasn't entirely based on mutual interests.

This didn't bother Lin Chuxia. Ten years ago, she might have been extremely cautious, but now, with individual enterprises sprouting up like bamboo after rain, if state-owned enterprises still clung to their old ways, they would be nearing closure.

Market competition brought about by individual enterprises would inevitably pressure state-owned enterprises.

Every state organization she had dealt with, be it a grocery station or a machinery factory, was actively seeking new breakthroughs just to ensure that the factory had sufficient capital and interest to continue operating normally.

She did not believe that the enterprises cooperating with the Old Food Factory had no such thoughts.

In the face of interests, neither face nor friendship mattered.

"Later, organize the information for me, and also arrange for the purchasing department to procure some items for me tomorrow."

Lin Chuxia said as she left the factory and went straight to the office, taking the position of factory manager and began writing with a pen.

Su Wensong stood aside watching. After she wrote two lines, he understood what she was planning to do.

"These two production lines are starting up, how should we arrange the hiring of workers?" Su Wensong asked.

Now that she was planning to produce beef sauce, with the product ready, the production lines had to be set in motion.

"We can post the job advertisement, stick to the original hiring standards, and arrange for someone to take care of it."

"Alright, understood."

Lin Chuxia handed the written material to Su Wensong, and with nothing else to do here, she went directly home since Xiyang Food Factory was just next to Qin Family Village.

Mrs. Qin hurriedly greeted her upon her return.

Mr. Qin had already left after hearing the broadcast. Even if he couldn't help, it was his family's matter, and he wanted to see what was happening.

Mrs. Qin hadn't gone, but she was concerned about the matter, and Mr. Qin came back unable to explain clearly.

Seeing Lin Chuxia wearing the food factory's uniform and her hair still damp, she didn't bother to ask anything else.

"Did you get caught in the rain? Doesn't the factory have raincoats? What if you catch a cold, come in quickly, I'll heat some water for you to take a bath."

Without waiting for Lin Chuxia to refuse, she went straight into the kitchen.

## Chapter 223: Love Me, Love My Dog

Lin Chuxia felt warmth in her heart.

She could shower directly in her space. When Qin Yang was not at home, she mostly showered in the villa within her space.

She had originally planned to go back and shower immediately, but now that Mrs. Qin was boiling water, she had to wait a bit longer.

Yet, she was willing to wait.

In her past life, no one had cared about her; she didn't even know what it felt like to be cared about, which led her to treasure Li Guangyuan's insincere gestures excessively when they first married.

Knowing that he was deceiving her, she still foolishly refused to face the reality.

In this life, whether it was Qin Yang or the Qin Family people, their sincere concern for her truly had her in their hearts.

Whether it was when she first entered the Qin Family or when she started her business, the care and protection she never had in her previous life, she had it all this time.

After Mrs. Qin had heated the water, she even delivered it to her room. Lin Chuxia quickly took it and asked, "Mom, did you have something you wanted to talk to me about just now?"

Mrs. Qin waved her hand, "Nothing much, you go ahead and take a shower. Oh, later I'll be making dumplings with chive and egg filling, come and have them with your father and me."

"Okay, thank you, Mom."

"About that..." Mrs. Qin hesitated before saying, "Yangyang seems to have not written for a while now. I heard that your factory has a telephone installed. Has Yangyang called you?"

Because of business exchanges, a telephone was installed in the food factory shortly after its inception.

Installing a telephone nowadays is not easy; apart from the high cost, a connection point is also required.

Fortunately, Qin Family Village is an urban village. After getting the telephone, Lin Chuxia did write to Qin Yang to tell him the number, but most of the time she was not at the food factory and seldom called Qin Yang.

Lin Chuxia spoke honestly, she indeed hadn't spoken to Qin Yang on the phone or written to him recently, she was busy here, and Qin Yang must be busy there as well.

Hearing this, Mrs. Qin's expression became even more worried, "Then, when you have time, give Yangyang a call or write him a letter. Tell him that everyone at home misses him and ask him to write home more frequently."

"Okay, I will."

Seeing Lin Chuxia agree, Mrs. Qin closed the door for her and urged her to quickly take her shower.

Back in her room, she just sat on the edge of the kang bed and sighed heavily.

Mr. Qin, smoking his pipe, glanced at her, "I tell you, old woman, you worry too much. The kids are grown up; let them make their own way. What can you really help with, or control?"

"What do you know," Mrs. Qin retorted, glancing at her husband, "Yangyang hasn't written to us for a long time. His wife's factory is growing bigger and bigger, everyone in our village praises how we've got a beautiful and capable daughter-in-law. Why can't he be a bit more concerned?"

"How can he be more concerned? He works far away; he can't just leave his job and come home to hover around his wife all day."

"He could still write a letter or make a phone call from time to time. You know your son; once he gets busy with work, he neglects everything else. It's hard enough for women to handle things, let alone without a partner to care and ask how one feels."

There was still something she hadn't mentioned. Watching Yangyang and his wife nearing a year of marriage, others who married around the same time had children or were pregnant.

The couple having no children still made them feel like something was missing.

The two living apart and without children, what if they grew tired of each other? Wouldn't that lead to a simple breakup?

As a mother, Mrs. Qin knew Qin Yang truly liked his wife, but her youngest son was cool and distant, not knowing how to express his feelings.

Mr. Qin was open-minded, "The two children are now focused on their careers, surely that's something they've discussed. Being young, shouldn't they prioritize their careers? Don't overthink it. Our Yangyang isn't the type to betray and abandon. Our daughter-in-law takes care of the family and respects her elders. She looks after not only our Old Qin Family but also Qin Family Village. What do you think that's for?"

It's definitely because her son is from Qin Family Village. That's called 'love me, love my dog.'

"If our son can't care for her, let's treat our daughter-in-law well ourselves. She has left the place where she grew up and her own family to join ours; it's not like she came here out of charity."

"Oh, you say that as if I don't know. Isn't everybody born to parents and doesn't everyone owe respect to their elders? Being kind is mutual, I understand all that."

Speaking to Mr. Qin, Mrs. Qin felt much relieved.

Looking up, she noticed Mr. Qin smoking again and quickly snatched it away.

"How are you smoking again? You've healed your wounds and forgotten your pain. Careful, or I'll throw this in the stove and set it alight."

"I just took a couple of puffs, don't worry. I'm feeling perfectly fine nowadays. I just went to the food factory and saw those young lads lifting machinery, I even wanted to help out. When was the last time you heard me cough?"

"That still doesn't make it okay. Smoking is bad for your health. If you have nothing else to do, come help me make dumplings, we'll eat with our daughter-in-law in a bit."

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After bathing, Chuxia noticed that Mrs. Qin had already started boiling the dumplings.

Taking a hot shower followed by enjoying warm dumplings eased all the fatigue and the chill from being drenched in the afternoon rain.

After eating, while going back to her room, Chuxia remembered what Mrs. Qin had asked her earlier, and took out some stationery to start writing a letter to Qin Yang.

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The night after the rain was exceptionally clear and bright, a crescent moon hung high in the sky, surrounded by twinkling stars that seemed more numerous than usual.

Li Guangyuan was pushing his bicycle, walking step by step toward his home, his look vacant, his mind still a mess.

Today he was indeed feeling down, especially after encountering Lin Chuxia. For some reason, those suppressed thoughts kept surfacing inexplicably.

He went to Tian Cuixia's house only because he wanted a place to shelter from the rain, and as for Tian Cuixia asking him to stay for dumplings...

He often helped her at the market, so having a meal of her dumplings didn't seem excessive.

Yes, what he did wasn't excessive; it was all normal human relations...

Images of Tian Cuixia unbuttoning her blouse one by one in front of him, her seductive and enchanting demeanor, making him blush and fluster.

And her chest...

Women who've had children definitely aren't the same as those who haven't.

He must have been bewitched to carelessly embrace that body.

And that body turned out to be more tempting than he imagined, like a vine wrapping around him, clinging to him, trying to drain him dry.

That wild seductive force and that ultimate sensation, something he had never experienced with Lin Jiayi.

Li Guangyuan wiped his face with his hand, unable to shake off that image from his mind.

After struggling with that woman for a long time, he was still not satisfied.

He knew what he was doing was wrong, but could he really be blamed for all of it?

Chapter 224: Who is that person?

Lin Jiayi hadn't let him touch her since she got pregnant, having kept her distance for over half a year already.

The doctor clearly said they could after three months, and he even heard brothers from the same village saying that there was no need for avoidance during pregnancy, that things could continue as normal.

Why was Lin Jiayi so delicate?

It wasn't his fault, not his fault at all; it was Lin Jiayi who didn't want him to touch her.

He was a normal, healthy man; he couldn't always hold back, and today he had drunk a bit too much, with alcohol adding to his mischief.

Psyching himself up, Li Guangyuan finally pushed open the door in front of him.

The lights were off in his mother's room; she must have been resting already, but their room still had the oil lamp burning.

Li Guangyuan parked his bike under the eaves, their room's door was open, too.

"Why are you coming back now?" Lin Jiayi asked as she saw Li Guangyuan.

Li Guangyuan glanced in the direction of the neighboring room and pushed Lin Jiayi back into theirs.

"Keep your voice down, they're all sleeping, don't wake everyone up."



The man's approach came with a faint scent, one that didn't belong to Li Guangyuan.

Lin Jiayi immediately widened her eyes, "You haven't told me yet, where have you been all day in this rain? What did you do that made you come back so late?"

Li Guangyuan closed the door with the back of his hand and explained in a low voice, "Where else could I have gone? I went to see if there was a night market, thinking if there were stalls, I'd set up one, too; sell something if I could. But everyone was afraid of the rain, so I just wandered around. Haven't you always wanted me to try other businesses? Then the rain started pouring..."

"Even if you got caught in the rain, it stopped early. You're back so late; you must be hiding something from me, right?"

A flicker of guilt crossed Li Guangyuan's face, and he turned to walk into the room, "What would I hide from you? Our home is over 20 miles from the county; when the rain stopped here, it didn't stop there, only stopping at dusk. Once it stopped, I hurried back."

He gave a nonchalant explanation and casually took off his clothes.

Lin Jiayi thought about it, the rain did indeed come sporadically, often falling in one village and not another.

Just as she relaxed, she looked up and saw the red marks on Li Guangyuan's back.

In that moment, Lin Jiayi felt her breath stop for an instant, and she quickly grabbed Li Guangyuan's arm, dragging him to the light.

Li Guangyuan was confused by her pulling, "What are you doing? It's late, let's rest. I've been on the run all day, exhausted."

Lin Jiayi stared intently at his back, her voice sharp, "What did you actually do? How did these marks get on your back? Which wench scratched you? Good for you, Li Guangyuan, slaving away at home, taking

care of the elderly and the young, and I'm pregnant with your child, yet you're out there flirting with women – was it that widow?"

Li Guangyuan felt a jolt in his heart, now only remembering how vigorously he and Tian Cuihua had been fooling around, that flirtatious Tian Cuihua scratching and biting him; he reminded her not to scratch, but who could pay attention to that when things got intense?

Surely those marks on his back were now discovered by Lin Jiayi.

But the panic was only fleeting. Li Guangyuan turned around, a serious look on his face. "What nonsense are you talking about? I've been roaming around the town all day, where would I have the time to find Tian Cuixia? How many times do I have to tell you, I only helped her out when selling vegetables, and that was just to secure a spot for myself. There's nothing more to it."

"Then tell me, how did you get those marks on your back?"

"How would I know? Maybe I was scratched by some branches. Look at you overthinking again. I've told you, you are the most important to me."

"Spare me those sweet nothings."

In the past, Lin Jiayi might have believed Li Guangyuan's explanations, but now? His elder sister constantly returns to her maternal home, causing trouble for no reason, and he doesn't even speak up for her, just expecting her to always give in.

Is this what's important?

Lin Jiayi thought again about the last time she brought food, how Li Guangyuan and Tian Cuixia were getting along so warmly, and she went up to him like a madwoman, hitting him.

"What do you mean scratched by branches? The branches only scratched your skin, not your clothes? Li Guangyuan, do you even have a conscience? Your sister comes home and causes trouble for no reason;

you go outside chasing after other women. How am I supposed to live? I'm carrying your son! You bastard, who is that woman? If you don't explain clearly to me today, this isn't over."

"I was pampered at home, but I come to your family and get treated like this. If not for me, you'd still be scrounging for food in the soil. Now you're earning a bit of money from doing business and already think of chasing women outside? Is the little money you make enough for your mother and your insatiable sister?"

"You promised to treat me well, is this how you do it? Look at what your whole family is like, how can you be worthy of me..."

Her fists pounded Li Guangyuan's back and shoulders, and a slap landed squarely on his face.

Li Guangyuan looked at Lin Jiayi, who seemed maniacal, his gaze gradually deepening. His hand by his side shook slightly, then clenched a bit tighter, but in the end, he exhaled.

"Jiayi, I really didn't do what you said, I've been around town looking for a proper business, isn't that what you wanted? If you think I've been outside to find other women, then from now on I'll go nowhere. I'll just stay home every day to accompany you, it's not like we have a shortage of land to farm at home—I can support us just by farming."

The fists suddenly stopped mid-air. Lin Jiayi, with tears still on her face, looked at Li Guangyuan's calm face and his deep eyes, which jolted her back to her senses.

Stay home every day? Impossible. Wasn't she counting on having better days ahead?

Seeing her calm down, Li Guangyuan went straight to bed without any intention of comforting her.

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When Lin Chuxia arrived at Xiyang Food Factory, Su Wensong and Pang Yongli were already waiting there, and the ingredients purchased early that day have been placed inside the workshop.

"Mr. Lin, are these correct? These are the best ingredients chosen according to your requirements, and these seasonings are the freshest available on the market."

Lin Chuxia checked the ingredients one by one and then took a handful of seasonings to sniff, which were indeed not bad.

Today, she planned to make a pot of beef sauce for everyone to taste, to boost everyone's confidence. Calling Pang Yongli over, she intended to eventually pass on the key to making the beef sauce to him.

He and Ma Yingzi, the couple, had talent in food making, whether it was the heat control or the flavor. With just a little guidance, they could achieve the effect she desired.

Of course, these seasonings were only the basics, the essence still lay in her secret recipe.

"Not bad," Lin Chuxia patted her hands and glanced around at the prepared household wares, "Then I'll get started. For lunch today, we'll have an extra dish for the workers of our factory."

## Chapter 225: Beef Sauce

"Sure," Sun Bingnan was the first to respond, "I've always heard Lanlan say how delicious your beef sauce is, I've never had a chance to try it yet."

Lin Chuxia smiled, directed people to light the fire and set the pan, and got to work.

Rendering the oil for the beef sauce is crucial.

A good half pot of oil was poured into the big pot, the oil was heated, and then in proportion, coriander, green onions, and onions were added, followed by the spices: star anise, bay leaves, cinnamon, and finally her secret spice mix.

In no time, a fragrant aroma filled the air.

Once everything was fried to a golden color, the spices were scooped out, and the oil was ready.

While the oil was being rendered, Lin Chuxia had already instructed Ma Yongli and Su Wensong to process the beef into small granules.

Now they poured the beef into the oil to fry off the moisture.

This process was quite slow and the oil splattered from time to time, so it was easy to get burned if one wasn't careful.

Pang Yongli stepped in very considerately and took the large spoon from Lin Chuxia's hand, "Mr. Lin, just say the word, and I'll do it."

This job was actually something Lin Chuxia intended to train Pang Yongli to do later, so allowing him to do it now was perfect for teaching him.

She directed him to stir the beef in the oil while keeping an eye on the fire.

What kind of oil temperature was just right, approximately how long the beef should be fried, and what it should look like.

Once the beef was almost done and the aroma even more intense, she had him scoop it out.

Then came the main event; she poured minced garlic, minced ginger, and minced hot peppers into the hot oil, cooked until the aroma was released, and then added the fried beef granules, soybean paste, sweet flour sauce, and salt, continuing to simmer.

"Damn, this is way too fragrant."

Sun Bingnan had been tending the fire, eyeing the pot full of red oil beef sauce, and swallowing his saliva several times.

"Just give me this sauce for lunch today, I don't need any other dishes, I could eat five buns."

What Su Wensong saw, however, was the market potential once such beef sauce was mass-produced.

He had tasted the sauce from the Old Food Factory before, and even without tasting their own, he could assert that it definitely couldn't compare to theirs from Xiyang.

Seeing that it was almost ready, Lin Chuxia threw in a big handful of sesame seeds into the pot for Pang Yongli to mix well.

"It's ready."

Lin Chuxia personally dished up a bowl and put it on the table, and had Su Wensong arrange various sauces bought from the marketplace, including the one from the Old Food Factory.

"Come and try it out. See how our sauce differs from the others and if there's anything that needs to be improved."

Sun Bingnan couldn't wait to sample them with his chopsticks, and the others picked up their chopsticks too.

To clearly distinguish the quality of their own beef sauce, they tasted theirs last.

Each person would express their opinion after tasting each sauce.

When they got to the last one, all were impressed.

"The meat is tender and chewy, with a rich aroma," Pang Yongli commented.

"They're all spicy, but I felt something was lacking in the previous ones, our beef sauce combines spiciness with aroma, and the scent of the oil is most pronounced," Su Wensong also said.

Finally, it was Sun Bingnan's turn. Everyone waited for a while but didn't hear him comment, only to see him happily munching on more with his chopsticks.

Realizing something, he looked up to see everyone watching him, gave a sheepish grin, "Delicious! I could use a bun right now."

Everyone laughed.

Lin Chuxia had confidence in her own culinary skills, as she had practiced them in her previous life.

Su Wensong was her diehard fan, and from the moment Lin Chuxia suggested it, he believed there would be no issues. Pang Yongli praised the beef sauce endlessly after trying it.

And Sun Bingnan showed everything through his practical actions.

The leftover beef sauce naturally became an added dish for the employees at lunch, resulting in the cafeteria's other dishes being largely untouched. Many workers even reluctantly packed some away to take home for their families to try.

Lin Chuxia did not discourage this, as it served as a form of indirect advertising.

Now with the machinery and the beef sauce, the next step was mass production.

Lin Chuxia had already discussed the staffing and recruitment for the beef sauce production workshop with Su Wensong the day before; she left the rest for him to handle.

With the beef production line sorted, Lin Chuxia then turned her attention to another matter.

This was something she had been contemplating for a long time, and her determination solidified the last time she went shopping for clothes with Sun Lanlan in the city.

She called Jia Liang over.

Jia Liang had been working with Hou Xiaobao in the ready-to-eat food courtyard, and when the Xiyang Food Factory was established, the pair was transferred there.

However, as Hou Xiaobao lacked skills in sales, he was assigned to other positions, while Jia Liang, along with Sun Bingnan and Qin Wu, remained in the marketing department.

After several months of operation, Xiyang ready-to-eat food had built a reputation, the market was maturing, and increasingly, merchants were proactively placing orders. The marketing department's staff began to relax, and to seek more achievements, they had to explore broader markets.

Given the current production capacity of Xiyang Food Factory, the current market was just right, so the marketing department could downsize.

"Mr. Lin, you were looking for me?"

Su Wensong went to arrange other matters, and Lin Chuxia was alone in the office.

Lin Chuxia nodded, pointed to the chair beside her, and asked him to take a seat.

"How have you been recently? Are you facing any difficulties in work or life?"

Mentioning this, Jia Liang laughed heartily while stroking his Bald head, "Mr. Lin, what a question. Do I look like someone with troubles? I have a stable job now, earning a salary of sixty to seventy yuan a month, enough for me and my old mother to spend freely. If there really is a problem, it's that my mother keeps on urging me to find a wife. She nags so much my ears have calloused. I'm thinking about living at the company like Houzi."

Jia Liang, now in his early thirties, used to be irresponsible and beyond his mother's control. She also thought that with his previous behavior, he would only be tricking any girl who married him.



But now that he had a proper job and a stable income, of course, she wanted him to settle down.

Lin Chuxia smiled, "I really can't help with that, but you're not getting any younger. If there is someone suitable, it's time to consider it and let Aunt Jia hold a grandchild early."

"I would like to, but who would want to follow me, just the way I am?" If they didn't know about his past, it might be okay, but he couldn't hide the truth, or it would be like deceiving someone into marriage.

But whenever it was brought up, no one was willing to consider him. Besides, at age 32, the prospects he's left with are either widows or damaged goods.

Having been the head honcho for many years, Jia Liang still had some standards. He'd rather remain single than settle.

With that, Lin Chuxia decided not to dwell on his personal issues any longer and talked to him about opening a branch in the city.

Jia Liang's eyes lit up, "No problem, Mr. Lin, I'll do a good job," which would also give his mom fewer reasons to nag him for a few days.

"Then start looking for a location in the city starting tomorrow. The standard should be the same as in Ancheng County. It doesn't have to be on a busy commercial street, but it must be in a populated area important for daily life. It's best to look for properties owned by governmental units or housing authorities, but if there are suitable options, we can consider buying..."

Jia Liang made a note of each point; he wasn't very educated, but he was sharp-witted.

Moreover, after interacting with him, Lin Chuxia discovered that Jia Liang had high emotional intelligence.

That's why, despite both having unimpressive appearances, while Houzi couldn't secure a single deal, Jia Liang, looking like a bandit, could.

## Chapter 226: Lanlan, I'm Here to Take You Home

After everything was explained, Jia Liang's expression grew more solemn, and his heart fluttered with excitement, knowing that Mr. Lin was about to entrust him with a significant responsibility. He resolved to handle the matter beautifully.

No man dislikes the taste of power, and looking at Su Wensong and Qin Han, Jia Liang felt a tinge of envy.

Having left Xiyang Food Factory with time to spare, Lin Chuxia went to the Bun Shop.

Through the glass of the back kitchen, she saw Jia Yuanliang and Zhang Guilan making buns. Their methodical movements indeed looked like they knew what they were doing.

Soon, buns as pretty as flowers lay ready in their hands.

"Not bad progress," Lin Chuxia commented.

Upon seeing Lin Chuxia, Jia Yuanliang stood up straight with decorum and greeted her as Boss Lin.

Zhang Guilan spoke with a smile, "Don't mention it, this young man has quite the skillful hands. It's my first time seeing a man with such patience."

Men from their village hardly ever cook, and learning to cook is something they wouldn't even consider.

For example, Qin Han never once entered the kitchen. Even when he started working at the Bun Shop, he managed the storefront. Even if there was a rush and the back kitchen couldn't keep up with the bun demand, he never offered a hand.

It wasn't because he was too proud or disdainful to do the work, but rather no one had that mindset.

Of course, since Jia Yuanliang started his apprenticeship, Qin Han also attempted to learn how to make buns.

But his large hands were like clumsy pincers, wasting quite a bit of dough and filling without successfully making a couple of buns and eventually had to give up.

Jia Yuanliang was different from the men she had met; he learned earnestly and diligently, and most importantly, he managed to learn it well.

Now his bun making skills are not far off from theirs.

Lin Chuxia watched him make a few buns, which were indeed quite good, "Do you know how to mix the filling?"

"I do now, Sister Zhang taught me everything."

Before coming here, Jia Yuanliang had thought through many possibilities and also pondered whether the apprenticeship fee was worth it or not, but now he was thoroughly convinced.

From kneading dough to mixing fillings to making buns, he was taught everything clearly, except for the secret seasoning mix.

It was the first time he realized that in addition to seasoning, the mixing of the filling was also crucial.

Mixing the filling is a skill; during the process, seasoning water needs to be continually added to make the buns tasty and juicy.

"Not only did Sister Zhang teach me how to make buns, but Brother Qin also taught me many methods of managing the shop, including how to prepare cold dishes. I've learned that too."

In the end, Jia Yuanliang was a bit shy about it, as he had come to learn how to make buns but ended up learning so much more.

Lin Chuxia didn't mind at all, "It's good that you've learned it all. If you have any questions, just ask. Even after you go back, you can still write and exchange letters if there are any issues."

Jia Yuanliang nodded vigorously, "Thank you, Boss Lin. I plan on returning next week, and if it's possible, when my Bun Shop opens, I would like to invite Boss Lin to attend, but I don't know if it would be convenient for you."

He added, "I'll buy the round-trip train ticket for you."

He had been here for a month and mastered various skills. Now that he was talking about doing business again, he felt an outburst of enthusiasm and wanted to show what he could do.

Lin Chuxia agreed without hesitation, "Sure, I'll go to the Northwest with you next week. But you really don't need to buy the train ticket."

Jia Yuanliang's Bun Shop was, in a way, the first branch she had opened, and since he learned the craft from her, it was only proper for her to go and see it.

Next week, after Lanlan and Su Wensong's wedding was over, she would be free of obligations.

Most importantly, she missed Qin Yang a bit.

I promised him before that I would visit when I had time, and now the opportunity had come.

Jia Yuanliang didn't expect Lin Chuxia to agree so readily and was very happy about it.

In the blink of an eye, the day of Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan's wedding arrived.

Although Su Wensong, as the director of the Xiyang Food Factory, was quite busy, he had many helping hands.

In just two days, they had decorated the Su family courtyard with joy and happiness.

All the furniture in the bridal room was newly purchased, and brand-new bedding had been made, each tied with red wool into butterfly knots.

The walls, windows, and doors were all adorned with double happiness characters.

Granny Su had not been idle during this time either, personally managing the little details of the wedding, and when she was uncertain, she would consult Sun Lanlan.

At first, Sun Lanlan felt shy, but after being called over multiple times, she began to help Granny Su with the arrangements.

So while Su Wensong's wedding seemed rushed, it was actually grand and exquisite.

Early on the wedding day, Su Wensong, wearing a brand-new suit and a big red flower on his chest, was surrounded by a groomsmen group consisting of Jia Liang, Hou Xiaobao, Pang Yongli, and Qin Wu, and they headed straight to Daqing Mountain Village in a car.

Sun Bingnan, as a family member from the bride's side and the eldest uncle, was already waiting at the Sun family's front gate early on.

When the car decorated with a big red flower entered the village, the whole Daqing Mountain Village was stirred.

A sedan car had come to fetch the bride—this was the first for Daqing Mountain Village.

Sun Bingwen and Sun Bingshan were also eldest uncles, but being not as familiar with Su Wensong and Sun Bingnan, and considering their chicken farm and Xiyang Food Factory relationship, they didn't know which side to support for a while.

As the two hesitated, the groomsmen dashed through the main gate, shouting all the way into the house.

Of course, during this time, wedding candies and red envelopes were lavishly scattered.

The Sun family was a prominent household, and Sun Lanlan's father was the village chief; many people attended the wedding today.

Adults and children alike picked up the wedding candies and red envelopes; beyond fruit candies, there were also White Rabbit Creamy Candies, and besides one-cent red packets, there were fifty-cent ones too, all praising that Sun Lanlan was marrying well, and the groom was generous.

Mr. Sun also earned plenty of face.

Encircled by a crowd, Su Wensong entered the house and immediately saw Sun Lanlan sitting on the kang.

A trace of astonishment flickered in his eyes, unable to contain anything else.

Sun Lanlan, in a red dress and wearing a red velvet flower on her head, radiated festivity and lovely beauty.

Her shy yet affectionate eyes gazed back at him, and Su Wensong felt his heart pounding non-stop inside his chest.

"Come on, speak up."

"Right, groom, seeing such a beautiful bride, aren't you going to rush over?"

The words of the people around brought Su Wensong back to his senses, and he smiled slightly, extending his hand, "Lanlan, I'm here to take you home."

Sun Lanlan smiled and placed her hand on his, immediately followed by laughter and cheers from the crowd.

Su Wensong helped Sun Lanlan off the kang, and the two bid farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Sun, and were escorted out by the crowd.

The distance from the Sun family's house to the main gate was not far, yet Su Wensong walked with exceptional care, sneakily glancing at the girl beside him, still feeling a sense of unreality, overwhelmed more by excitement.

He had finally married the girl he loved. From this day forward, he would be her support and would protect her well.

Because of the Lin family's involvement, Lin Chuxia did not return to Daqing Mountain Village to accompany Sun Lanlan on her marriage, instead, she waited at the restaurant.

#### Chapter 227: If Only There Had Been No Exchange of Brides

Today is the wedding of Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan. They have booked the largest restaurant in Ancheng County. Lin Chuxia even offered some ideas for the decorations.

Although there are no rainbow gateways or flower baskets like in the future, the entrance still prominently displays Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan's wedding.

Now, even urban folks rarely host their weddings at the restaurant. Su Wensong has splurged on booking the entire restaurant, and with all the firecrackers at the entrance, the curious are gathering nearby to see what the bride and groom are like.

Li Hongmei, who came to the county for a stroll, saw the crowd from afar and walked over to check out the excitement.

Upon hearing that a family had booked the entire restaurant for their wedding, her face showed immense envy.

Booking the entire restaurant for a wedding?

She's never even eaten in such a fancy restaurant in her life. How much would one table of food cost?

The urban folks can actually afford to book the entire restaurant for a wedding feast.

Li Hongmei was doted on at home, unlike other families who favor boys over girls; her mother treated her like a treasure. From a young age, she knew she was different from other village girls.

But no matter how different, they were still rural folks, always facing the soil and turning their backs to the sky. She always envied the clean-dressed city people she saw at the factory.

After the economic reforms, Li Hongmei, now a young woman, yearned more and more for the urban lifestyle.

But without a father and with a mother who lacked significant skills, it was impossible for her to get a city job.

The only solution was to marry a city man and move to the city.

Just like what she saw now, wearing the prettiest clothes, surrounded and watched by the whole county, receiving their envious gazes.

As she reflected on this, she looked up and saw Lin Chuxia standing at the entrance.

Li Hongmei knew Lin Chuxia; they were about the same age, with Lin Chuxia just a grade above her.

Xiaoqingshan Village, where she came from, was small with few children, and the local school only went up to third grade. From fourth grade on, children had to go to the neighboring Daqing Mountain Village to continue their studies.



Lin Chuxia was a good student, often used by teachers as an example to encourage others.

When Li Hongmei went to school in Daqing Mountain Village, she often heard teachers praise Lin Chuxia. Although she never spoke to her, she knew her.

Previously, when a matchmaker mentioned Lin Chuxia as a potential match for her brother, Li Hongmei was quite excited.

That praised good student, no matter how scholarly, would still end up as her sister-in-law, right?

If she married into their Li family, she would have to please her, the younger sister-in-law.

She even fantasized numerous times about how to make life difficult for Lin Chuxia, getting more excited the more she thought about it, feeling a surge of triumph.

However, who knew that in the end, it would be Lin Jiayi who married her brother.

Li Hongmei looked at Lin Chuxia, dressed in a sharp ladies' suit ensemble that she hadn't even seen in department stores.

She was standing at the entrance, talking to someone nearby.

Though Lin Jiayi and she were sisters, they had very different demeanors.

Every move Lin Chuxia made was elegant and refined, and the people around her seemed to listen intently to her, almost like the big bosses on TV.

As she was thinking, someone suddenly said, "They're here."

Then she saw two cars approaching from a distance, the first one a sedan adorned with a big red flower.

In those days, using cars for a wedding procession meant the bride and groom were either significant figures or the children of significant figures.

Li Hongmei sighed, truly a city folk's wedding.

In their village, for nearby weddings, most people just ride bicycles, and using a tractor is already considered good; some even use ox carts.

She herself was married in an ox cart, as it was too far to go by bicycle, and the Ma family couldn't find a tractor.

Shaking off these thoughts, Li Hongmei tiptoed and craned her neck to watch the sedan slowly pull up in front of the restaurant.

The rear car door opened, and a groom in a suit got out from one side, standing tall and dignified, clearly not just anybody.

After getting out of the car, the groom first nodded at the people at the restaurant's entrance, then walked around the front, arriving at the other side of the car, opening the rear door.

There was a commotion among the crowd.

"Look, look, the bride is coming down."

"The groom looks so spirited; the bride must be very pretty."

"The bride's dress is so beautiful, it looks like it's a new style from the south. I saw it last in the city's Department Store."

.....

Li Hongmei first saw a white arm extending from the car, a small hand resting on a man's large hand.

Then a leg came down, along with a corner of her dress, that red dress as beautiful as fire.

When the bride fully emerged, bursts of exclamations arose from the crowd, but Li Hongmei was stunned.

Sun Lanlan? The bride is actually Sun Lanlan? Sun Lanlan from Daqing Mountain Village next door???

That's right, she seemed to have heard her sister say that Sun Lanlan was getting married.

She didn't expect Sun Lanlan to marry someone from the city, and with such grand arrangements.

She saw Sun Lanlan and the groom walk to the entrance of the restaurant, first nodding at Lin Chuxia, saying something unknown.

She knew Sun Lanlan and Lin Chuxia were good friends, but that demeanor didn't look like good friends at all, especially the groom, more like a junior treating an elder or a subordinate treating a leader.

She recalled the rumors she had heard...

Until the crowd at the restaurant's entrance dispersed, Li Hongmei still stood there, dazed.

Recently, she often returned to her parents' home and had quite a few conflicts with Lin Jiayi.

She admitted that she brought up the past matter of switching brides to upset Lin Jiayi, who had arranged that marriage for her.

But speaking of which, knowing Lin Chuxia had made a place for herself in the Qin Family, she still felt a bit...

If the bride switch hadn't happened, if Lin Chuxia had been her sister-in-law, would things have been different?

.....

Lin Chuxia watched Su Wensong, dressed brightly and joyously, and beside him, Sun Lanlan with a face full of shy happiness, her lips carrying a smile, her heart filled with emotion.

Sun Lanlan had finally found her happiness, Su Wensong was a man worth entrusting.

Today, the restaurant had been booked by Su Wensong, the hall lively with joy, attended mostly by their colleagues and Su Family's neighbors.

Granny Su sat in the main seat in the hall, beaming as she watched the couple walk in from outside.

Qin Han acted as the host for today, calling the couple forward.

A bow to heaven and earth, a bow to the parents, the couple bowing to each other...

Although it's the modern age, with policies loosening over the past two years, these traditions had been picked up again.

Most importantly, today's guests were all familiar people, everyone comfortable and lively.

After bowing to heaven and parents, and before bowing to the wedding guests, Granny Su suggested that Lin Chuxia sit in her place, allowing Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan to properly bow to Lin Chuxia.

In Granny Su's view, Lin Chuxia wasn't only Su Wensong's colleague and leader but also his benefactor, as well as a benefactor to the Su Family.

Without Lin Chuxia, they wouldn't enjoy their good days today, nor could they have married such a beautiful and considerate granddaughter-in-law like Sun Lanlan.

With Granny Su's words, the surrounding people also applauded.

Lin Chuxia was somewhat embarrassed, "There's really no need for this."

"It is necessary, it is necessary," Granny Su repeatedly said.

Su Wensong smiled at Lin Chuxia, and Sun Lanlan was even more straightforward.

"Xiaxia, please sit properly, accept me and Old Su's bow. Although we are the main characters today, there wouldn't be a today for me and Old Su without you."

Lin Chuxia was pushed to the main seat and, no longer demure, sat down to officiate Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan's wedding, receiving their bow.

After the wedding ceremony concluded, everyone joyously took their seats, just then, three people walked in from outside.

#### Chapter 228: The Weasel Greet the Chicken with Ill Intent

Su Dazhuang entered with his wife and Su Wenmao, grinning as soon as he crossed the threshold, "Wensong, you didn't even give us a heads up about your big day today. I only heard about your wedding from the neighbors. Your parents passed away early; if there's anything happening at home, why did you keep us at arm's length?"

Most of the colleagues who attended Wensong's wedding today were from the Bun Shop and the cooked food courtyard. They all knew the Su Family situation well.

When the trio entered, the previously bustling hall quieted down.

Su Dazhuang seemed to have forgotten all past conflicts, walking forward with a smile while pulling out a red envelope from his pocket.

"Is this the bride? Meeting for the first time. This is a little gift from your uncle and auntie. Look at how lovely this little girl is. We've always known our Wensong is blessed. Now he has become a factory manager and married such a beautiful wife. Your parents' spirits in heaven must be at peace."

Sun Lanlan glanced at the red envelope held up to her but didn't take it.

Despite Su Dazhuang's outwardly warm words, she didn't miss the jealousy and resentment in Su Wenmao's eyes beside him.

She had long heard from Wensong about how Su Wenmao's relationship fell apart and his tendency to shirk work at the mechanical factory.

He was caught slacking off by Xu Changping not long ago and was promptly fired.

Xu Changping is now the deputy manager of the factory, and firing an intern like Su Wenmao was just a matter of a few words.

As the saying goes, a weasel's New Year greeting to a chicken carries no good intentions.

Having been bullied by Su Dazhuang's family so much before, Sun Lanlan had a bad impression of the entire family.

Still, they were ultimately part of the Su Family. Lanlan was unsure of what Wensong and Granny Su thought, whether they would consider familial ties or, due to the wedding, might not want to escalate the situation too badly and maintain a superficial facade.

Sun Lanlan's refusal to take the envelope caused a momentary stiffness in Su Dazhuang's smiling face, and Mrs. Su at his side immediately showed discontent.

"You child, how come you don't know to accept a red envelope from your elder?" Coming from the countryside, being inexperienced in the world, not having any manners, what use is beauty?

Despite thinking this, she still took the red envelope from Su Dazhuang's hand, intending to stuff it into Sun Lanlan's hand.

For the sake of her and her son's future employment, she still had to maintain appearances.

However, just as her hand was about to reach out, a large hand abruptly grabbed her wrist, stopping her action.

Following this large hand, she met Wensong's gloomy gaze.

"What... what are you doing? This is a little token from your uncle and auntie. Let go, don't make our new bride think it's a joke."

"What uncle and auntie? I don't recall having an uncle and auntie."

Upon hearing Wensong's words, Su Dazhuang suddenly felt uncomfortable and at a loss for face.

"What nonsense are you saying? We of the Su Family are all from one branch. Do you not recognize your own blood uncle? On such a great joyful day, don't let the townsfolk laugh at us," he said while signaling to Wensong with his eyes.

Wensong just sneered, "Haven't the townsfolk seen enough of our jokes? When my blood uncle kicked my parents when they were down, did he think about us being from the same Su Family branch? He is my father's true cousin, and my grandfather is his father's true brother, how come my uncle has forgotten already? If it has been too long and uncle can't remember, shouldn't he at least remember trying to take my job and my house?"

Su Dazhuang didn't expect Su Wensong to really disregard all face. He thought today, being Su Wensong's big day, even for the sake of his own wedding and bride, Su Wensong would give them some respect.

People often say, you don't slap a smiling face. They all brought red envelopes to attend his wedding, in front of colleagues and neighbors, and he, as the manager of the food factory, couldn't be more clueless?

As long as he accepts their red envelopes, afterwards, he could just have Su Wenmao apologize to him, and casually arrange a job for Wenmao. It wouldn't be difficult.

Having Su Wensong, his brother, as the manager, Su Wenmao wouldn't suffer in the factory.

But unexpectedly, Su Wensong didn't offer any respect at all.

Not only did he bring up their job-stealing incident, but he even let out the previous generation's issues.

"Oh, why say so much? Back then, your uncle was helpless too; that's all in the past. Isn't it enough if I apologize as your uncle? We're family, so there shouldn't be talk of two sides. Whatever misunderstandings there were, we can gradually clear them up later. Let's not bring them up on such a wonderful day of yours."

"I don't accept your apology," Su Wensong flatly refused, "I'm not in a position to forgive you on behalf of my parents. As for misunderstandings, I believe there are none between us. Calling you 'uncle' is not out of respect but rather the upbringing my parents gave me. In fact, I'd rather call you Su Dazhuang."

He coldly looked at the newcomer, "Su Dazhuang, there's no need for us to pretend to be confused. The harm you've done to my parents, to my family, I will never forgive you in this life. Please leave."

Su Dazhuang didn't expect Su Wensong to actually send him away directly, seeing the looks from people around, his face burning.



Especially the way 'Su Dazhuang' was uttered by the younger generation, enraging him to the point of trembling.

"You... you..."

He struggled for a long time, failing to utter a complete sentence.

Su Wenmao, seeing Su Wensong in a brand-new suit with a beautiful wife beside him, had long been insanely jealous.

Now hearing him not giving them face at all, he became furiously embarrassed, "Su Wensong, who do you think you are to send us away, acting all high and mighty just because you're a lousy factory manager..."

"Jia Liang, Houzi, show them out!"

Jia Liang and Houzi desired to lay hands as soon as they saw the visitors. Now hearing Su Wensong speak, not only them, but also Pang Yongli, Qin Wu, and Qin Han stepped forward and shoved the people out.

While pushing, Houzi also gave a few kicks to Su Wenmao.

What a joke?

Su Wenmao screamed out when kicked, and as he turned his head and saw Houzi and Jia Liang, the previous shadow of being beaten instantly struck him, forcing him to obediently shut his mouth.

The brief episode didn't affect the liveliness of the wedding, but Su Wensong's eyes held a trace of pain as he looked at Sun Lanlan.

Such a beautiful girl, he should have given her the most perfect wedding, but because of his so-called family, it turned into a spectacle for everyone.

After the wedding ended, Su Wensong eagerly pulled Sun Lanlan aside, speaking earnestly, "Lanlan, I'm sorry. I know our wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime event, I shouldn't have argued with Su Dazhuang's family to the extent of affecting our wedding, but I just couldn't swallow this insult. I'd rather be laughed at by everyone than have any more ties with that family."

Sun Lanlan smiled carelessly, "Old Su, actually what you did was exactly what I wanted to do. Seeing Su Dazhuang and his family, I wanted to do the same, and I was worried you would endure it for the so-called face. Our wedding should be about our happiness. If we had to suppress ourselves on this day, wouldn't it be too stifling for the rest of our lives?"

#### Chapter 229: The Old House

"Lanlan is right," Granny Su entered the room, heard the two's conversation, and chuckled, "Even if you don't drive them away, I, the old lady, would still shoo them off. They are just eyeing you now that you've made something of yourself, wanting to suck your blood. We don't lack such relatives."

At this moment, with her grandson married, it's time for them to enjoy their little life. She really didn't want those annoying pests to disturb their days.

She still remembered the hurtful words Su Dazhuang and Su Wenmao had for Sun Lanlan when they first came knocking. Just for that, she would not easily let it go.

"If you feel like you've wronged Lanlan today, then treat her well from now on."

Finally, Granny Su said with a laugh.

"Granny, I don't feel wronged at all today," on the contrary, she was very happy.

Sun Lanlan's cheeks were flushed as she looked at Su Wensong, and although she didn't finish her sentence, Su Wensong felt it.

Seeing the gaze between the two children growing tender, Granny Su hurriedly found an excuse to leave.

My, my, the young people these days, their affection is really strong.

In the room, Su Wensong raised his hand and gently caressed Sun Lanlan's face. Whether it was the alcohol from the feast, he felt dizzy all over, looking at the girl before him as if she was haloed in light, so beautiful and graceful.

"Lanlan, you are really beautiful today."

Sun Lanlan's face grew redder under his deep gaze.

Such straightforward praise left her even more at a loss.

She averted her gaze, about to find some excuse, when a strong hand clamped her chin, forcing her to look him in the eye.

"I'm going to... mmm..."

She didn't finish her sentence before it was cut off by the man.

Tender and passionate, soft and lingering.

Although they didn't have many chances to be alone during this period, whenever there was one, the man would always find ways to take some advantage.

She had heard her girlfriends complain before that newly married men are trouble and to be wary of Su Wensong, calling him an old hand.

At that time, she didn't quite understand what they meant.

Since that time he kissed her, clumsily and so fiercely it broke her lip, Su Wensong had unlocked something inside him, and he even pretentiously called it practice.

Indeed, each time she could feel the difference, from his roughness to his finesse, and the tenderness that came later.

She had to admit the man's ability to learn, just as she had to recognize that saying of her girlfriends—when an old house catches fire, it burns uncontrollably.

Just like now, even though it wasn't completely dark yet, the man had already made her lose herself.

In the beginning, Sun Lanlan still had some sense left, but gradually she could hardly stand.

Just when she secretly scorned herself for being so weak, she felt light as her body was lifted into the air.

"Old Su, it's not dark yet, Granny is still outside..."

She reminded him urgently, her face flushed to an unseemly degree.

Su Wensong looked at her lush and tempting red lips, all his own handiwork, and his lips curved slightly.

He laid her down on the large bed, looking down and admiring the girl's shy bashfulness.

"It's already eight o'clock, and tonight is our wedding night. Spring nights are short, Granny will understand."

Granny understands, but I need to save face!!

Sun Lanlan grumbled in her mind, but had no choice as the man came on top of her again.

The buttons of her dress were undone one by one, revealing a spring scene, and the old house finally caught fire.

.....

When Li Hongmei got home, the place was bustling with activity; the eldest sister-in-law and elder brother were yelling about something.

During this time, since she's been back, it's always been this sister-in-law picking fights with her, but this was the first time she saw her arguing with elder brother.

She just grabbed a stool, sat under the big tree, munched on pears from the table, and watched the two argue fiercely, meanwhile calling over Li Dongmei to find out what was happening.

Actually, without asking, she had already heard bits and pieces; seems like her eldest sister-in-law suspected that her elder brother had a woman on the side.

Her elder brother could have a woman on the side?

Li Hongmei sneered inwardly; her sister-in-law must really be sick.

If her elder brother had that much capability, would he have still needed to marry a wife only well into his twenties?

When the Lin Family wanted to swap brides back then, they would've easily called off this marriage arrangement and wouldn't have allowed them to be so picky.

Thinking of the Lin Family's bride swapping incident darkened Li Hongmei's eyes.

Then she raised her head and said loudly, "I'm saying, eldest sister-in-law, you really should change this paranoid habit of yours. Not to speak ill of you, but go out and ask around, what kind of person my brother is, a good and honest man popular for miles around. Talking like this could spoil his reputation."

Lin Jiayi was in the middle of her fury and, hearing Li Hongmei's accusation, turned her head and glared angrily, "What do you know, prat! What honest man? I see no honest people in your family at all."

"Heh, I'm saying, eldest sister-in-law, if there are no honest people in our family, does that mean everyone in yours is? Honest people, yet they snatch away their sister's marriage prospects, my, I've really seen it all now."

Lin Jiayi was instantly hit where it hurt, her eyes turning blood red, pointing at her own belly.

"Li Guangyuan, are you still a man or not? I'm carrying your son now, you're heartless and let me down, and you even let them bully me like this. Do you want to drive me to death? If you really can't tolerate me, I might as well be dead."

Originally, Li Hongmei, the troublemaker, would stir up discord in the house every day, and Li Guangyuan could say a few words to defend her.

But recently, no matter what Li Hongmei said, Li Guangyuan played the fool and turned a deaf ear, even using running a street stall as an excuse to leave for a whole day, abandoning her alone in this home uncared for.

Lin Jiayi had suspected that Li Guangyuan had someone else on the outside last time, and he had said it was just a scratch by accident.

Today, she actually saw teeth marks on his shoulder, and he didn't even bother to explain, simply saying she could believe it or not.

How could she believe this?

In his previous life, he had come into power, and Lin Chuxia had followed him, living a life of luxury.

That shameless woman didn't even give him a child, but wasn't he still courteous to Lin Chuxia?

There was a time when rumors said he got together with his secretary to have a son. God knows how happy she was to hear this, and she even advised against her family stepping in to defend Lin Chuxia.

But in the end, Lin Chuxia remained Mrs. Li, the secretary was fired, and as for the child, there was none at all.

Why then, when it's her turn, despite her dedicated planning, bearing him a son early on, was he finding women outside?

Lin Jiayi couldn't understand, her good days hadn't even started, so why treat her like this?

Li Hongmei, hearing her threat, just snorted coldly, "Eldest sister-in-law, there's no need for the melodrama, always saying our Li family bullies you. How have we bullied you? Day in, day out you live in comfort, even managing my brother's money. Go and ask around, which newlywed bride gets your kind of treatment, and what have you done for this family? Just being pregnant and acting like you're a princess now, doesn't everyone get pregnant and have children after marriage?"

With that, Li Hongmei changed the topic abruptly, "Oh right, guess what I saw in the county today?"

Chapter 230: You and I Have a Grudge

"I saw Sun Lanlan from your village got married to a city guy. They booked the biggest restaurant in the county for the wedding, and the groom's side came in cars to pick her up. If you really think you're a princess, why did you fancy my brother? You should marry some city guy too."

"Oh, right, your previous fiancé was somewhat a city guy too, Qin Family Village is practically urban. I heard that man was even a college graduate with a stable job, but he didn't want you, which is why you ended up marrying my brother. If you ask me, you should thank my brother for marrying you; otherwise, you'd be an old maid by now..."

"Li Hongmei, do we have a feud or something? Shut up," Lin Jiayi interrupted her angrily, "What do you mean the Qin Family didn't like me? That's not the case at all. If you keep spouting nonsense, I'll tear your mouth apart."

It was clearly her who looked down on the Qin Family and didn't want to marry that cold-hearted man again.

"Yes, we do have a feud."

Li Hongmei had long ripped off the pretense with Lin Jiayi; she is now married and doesn't care about reputation anymore.

And since she married such a person, she's having a hard time, and she doesn't want anyone else to have it easy.

"Our Li Family kindly took you in, and you repay kindness with ingratitude, manipulating my marriage to Ma Dazhuang. If you ask me, my brother should have divorced you long ago, any woman would be better than you, you malicious woman."

The word "divorce" struck heavily in Lin Jiayi's heart.

These days, Li Hongmei had more than once incited Li Guangyuan to divorce her, simply because her own life was troubled, she wanted to mess with her brother and sister-in-law's life as well.

At first, she didn't take it to heart, but now, if Li Guangyuan really has someone else...

A cold sweat broke out on Lin Jiayi's back.

She couldn't afford a divorce; the Li Family hasn't prospered yet, and her good days haven't even started.

Who would she marry if divorced?

She was pregnant now; a woman who has had a child is seen as 'second-hand' in the eyes of others, only desirable to widowers or old men—undesirable to everyone else.



A great fear overwhelmed her, not even caring anymore if Li Guangyuan really had someone else on the side.

Her mind kept spinning, thinking of how to make Li Guangyuan change his mind and not divorce her.

She started by softening her tone.

"Guang Yuan, don't listen to her nonsense. I really didn't know about the Ma family situation; I was deceived too. I know you love your sisters, and I truly have their best interests at heart."

Originally feeling guilty and letting her lash out—as he couldn't clear up today's issue—Li Guangyuan had already warned Cuihua to be careful, who knew what that woman might do when mad...

It was his first time dealing with such a woman, completely unlike Lin Jiayi's gentle and slight kindness, and it was precisely this that made him unable to stop, and he cheated again.

Seeing Lin Jiayi not mention that incident now, he secretly breathed a sigh of relief. Just as he was about to console her with a few words, Li Hongmei spoke again.

"Enough with the pretense, who are you performing for here? If you really cared about us, why didn't you introduce us to work at Qin's Bun Shop? That's your sister's place, even Sun Lanlan works there and I heard she's some kind of manager, making dozens of yuan a month. Are you saying your own little sisters-in-law can't even compare to an outsider? Now that Sun Lanlan has married a city guy, even arriving in a car, if you had introduced us to the Bun Shop, maybe we'd have married city guys by now. It seems you just don't want us to have anything good, you have good opportunities but don't share them, instead, you introduce a guy like Ma Dazhuang to me. Lin Jiayi, you clearly have ill intentions."

Old Mrs. Li originally didn't intend to get involved in their affairs, but hearing her daughter's words, she reconsidered, "Is that really true?"

"Today I personally saw it in the county. The groom's side booked the biggest restaurant in the county for the wedding. Sun Lanlan looked so beautiful. If you don't believe me, go ask around in Daqing Mountain Village. On my way back, so many people were talking about the Sun Family wedding, the

groom came in a car, I heard they prepared everything with three rounds of firecrackers; the betrothal gift alone was 600 yuan."

Li Hongmei's face was full of envy, that was the life she dreamt of.

As long as Lin Jiayi could get them both a job at the bun shop, she would divorce Ma Dazhuang and then find a city man.

Old Mrs. Li had also thought of this, glanced at Lin Jiayi, and said softly, "I won't mention Hongmei's marriage anymore. Tomorrow when you go back to your parents' house, talk to your sister about it. Let Hongmei and Dongmei work at Lin Chuxia's bun shop, they need so many people for such a big shop, don't they? Even if they hire outsiders, it's still better to employ our relatives. We are all real relatives, should indeed interact more."

Lin Jiayi did not expect things to develop in this direction, arranging for Li Hongmei and Li Dongmei to work in Lin Chuxia's bun shop?

Let alone whether Lin Chuxia would agree, she would not agree either.

These two younger sisters-in-law already had their opinions about her, even felt it was her who switched their kin, wishing it was Lin Chuxia who became their sister-in-law.

If they were really arranged to work at Lin Chuxia's bun shop, she would have even less of a place in this house.

Wouldn't the two flattering younger sisters-in-law be holding Lin Chuxia's stinky feet all day long?

She turned her pleading eyes towards Li Guangyuan.

Li Guangyuan knew about the Spring Festival issues, he should understand her difficulties, shouldn't he?

However, Li Guangyuan seemed to have not received her plea for help and looked elsewhere.

Seeing that she remained silent for a long time, Old Mrs. Li's voice also dipped slightly.

"What's the matter, unhappy about it? Or do you really not want to help your two sisters, not really considering us as a family?"

.....

Lin Chuxia wanted to give Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan three days of marriage leave, but neither planned to take it, returning to their posts the next day.

It was still okay at Sun Lanlan's place, Xiyang Food Factory had just started a beef sauce production line; Su Wensong really couldn't let go.

Now he has already treated the Xiyang Food Factory as part of his life.

The two insisted, so Lin Chuxia didn't say much more, and on this day Jia Liang came looking for Lin Chuxia as well.

Other than attending Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan's wedding, his main purpose was to report the work progress in the city to Lin Chuxia.

The storefront had been rented, located within the range Lin Chuxia had specified, and he wanted her to personally check it.

Originally, Lin Chuxia was to grant Su Wensong marriage leave, and she needed to be present at the Xiyang Food Factory for the next few days.

Since Su Wen came to work, she didn't have much to do either. Glancing at the time, they could still catch the bus to the city, so they packed up and set off.

Once they arrived in the downtown area, Jia Liang took Lin Chuxia directly to the storefront he had chosen.

"This is a storefront of a garment factory, similar in nature to the one they rented in Ancheng County. The garment factory has been focusing on batch production and export for the past two years, so this building was idle, but it is still owned by the garment factory. I've contacted them already, and the price is this number."

He gestured a number, Lin Chuxia looked at the building, the price was indeed not expensive.

"That's good, you handle the negotiations with them, try to rent it long-term, and also the renovation work after renting the house, leave it all to you, I'll give you the drawings later."