

Switched M 261

Chapter 261: Is There a Little Baby Now?

Sun Lanlan felt something unusual on her forehead and opened her eyes to see Lin Chuxia. "When did you get back? How's the bun shop doing? Is it too busy?"

Lin Chuxia saw that she was trying to get up and quickly pressed her down.

"Alright, just rest well. The bun shop can manage without you for a bit. Look at you, what have you turned into? Have you not been to the clinic? Where is Old Su, letting you push yourself like this?"

Mention of Su Wensong made Lin Chuxia's tone slightly harsh.

She thought he was a considerate and meticulous man who would take good care of Sun Lanlan. The woman is in this condition and he still hasn't taken her to see a doctor, even though she had spoken highly of him before.

Sun Lanlan gave a slight smile, pulled her to sit by her side, and spoke gently.

"It's not his fault, don't be angry."

She touched her own abdomen, "He took me to the clinic a couple of days ago. I'm pregnant, probably having morning sickness. It should get better soon."

Granny Su interjected with disapproval, "How can it not be his responsibility? If you ask me, he is largely to blame."

Even as she voiced her complaints, her eyes were full of smiles.

Continuing to fan Sun Lanlan without stopping, her face displayed loving affection.

"It really has put you through hardships."

Lin Chuxia quickly sat down beside her, touching her abdomen, "Really? You got pregnant so quickly?"

Calculating it all, they've been married for just two months and there's already a baby?

Being in front of Granny Su made Sun Lanlan blush a bit.

She hadn't expected it so soon, especially since Su Wensong had been so vigorous every night after their marriage.

Despite also having plenty to deal with at the factory, she wondered how men could have such energy.

At first, she couldn't take it and would beg for a break, which was the only time he would stop.

Later somehow, it was as if he had unlocked some profound energy channels, innovating each time, which she began to enjoy as well.

After that, she couldn't even resist, and then... it just happened.

Seeing her daughter-in-law begin to feel shy, Granny Su knew the ladies had secrets to share.

Leaving the fan with them, she walked into the house.

Once the door shut, Lin Chuxia leaned closer and whispered, "How is it? Is it really tough being pregnant?"

Sun Lanlan retorted playfully, "If you're curious, have one yourself. You and Mr. Qin have been married for a year now, aren't you planning to have children?"

Indeed, they hadn't planned for it yet. On her trip to the Northwest, they were still using contraception.

She remembered how Qin Yang panicked the next night when he found out that they were out of condoms and had to resort to a less ideal method.

But thinking about having children...

Her career was beginning to take shape, and she had enough staff.

Her recent trip to the Northwest hinted at an opportunity for Qin Yang to relocate.

If Qin Yang could transfer closer, even just nearer to their home, having a child wouldn't be a hassle.

Just imagining a little, soft, cuddly baby with hers and Qin Yang's blood made Lin Chuxia feel incredibly tender-hearted.

Having never harmed her body and with the aid of spiritual spring water, she should... possibly have a child, right?

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Lin Chuxia wanted Sun Lanlan to rest for a few days to recuperate, but Sun Lanlan was worried about the bun shop, stating it was close enough for her to keep an eye on, and she wouldn't rest well otherwise.

Knowing Sun Lanlan's personality, Lin Chuxia accepted her decision and didn't insist further, only arranging for two additional workers for the bun shop near the train station.

Meanwhile, there was also good news from the Qin Family; Qin Lihua and Cai Jun were finally getting married.

Although it was a matter concerning the main branch of the Qin Family, the various branches of the Qin Family were close, and Lin Chuxia and her family also needed to help.

Fortunately, they all knew they were busy with their own affairs, especially Qin Liang and Qian Chuncao, who had always felt guilty towards Lin Chuxia because of Qin Lihua.

Another reason was that Qin Jianjun was still working under her.

They had informed the elders of the family branches early on that they would handle the wedding preparations themselves and they would simply join on the wedding day to add to the festivity.

During the time Lin Chuxia was away, Qin Lihua also stopped working at the Bun Shop.

She hadn't formally resigned, but everyone knew she was no longer working there.

It was likely because of this that their marriage was arranged.

After all, Qin Lihua had wanted Cai Jun to work with her, and Cai Jun had wanted Qin Lihua to quit with him. The two had been struggling over this for months.

Lin Chuxia had thought that after such a long ordeal, they would split up unhappily, but it turned out that Qin Lihua compromised.

But thinking about it, it was understandable.

In this conservative era, Qin Lihua and Cai Jun were in a love marriage, and the Cai family had also proposed.

If the marriage were really called off, Qin Lihua would have a hard time finding another marriage match.

People wouldn't ask for the reason; even if you explained everything, they would still say that your daughter was rejected in marriage, implying it was the woman's fault.

If your daughter was good, why would the marriage be called off?

Worse yet, some might suspect your daughter had been involved with men, questioning if she had been intimate, afraid of marrying someone "second-hand."

The new era advocates for gender equality, but no matter the era, true equality has never been achieved.

The wedding was relatively lively, the Qin family, excluding Qin Wen and his wife Ma Suyun, as well as Qin Yang who was working abroad, were all present.

Since the conflict between Qin Liang's family and Ma Suyun, the two families stopped interacting, and the brothers even stopped speaking to each other.

Within the procession fetching the bride, Lin Chuxia spotted Cai Jun surrounded at the center.

He had slimmed down and darkened and went through the bridal fetching rituals meticulously.

He didn't spare Lin Chuxia, his former boss, a glance, nor did he show recognition to his former colleagues like Qin Han and Qin Wu, addressing them as "second uncle" and "fifth uncle" as if meeting them for the first time.

Fortunately, the groom didn't need to formally meet the female relatives on the day he fetched the bride, otherwise, he would have had to formally address Lin Chuxia as "aunt."

The Cai family had brought a tractor for fetching the bride.

Qin Lihua had wanted to borrow the Xiyang Food Factory minibus 121 from Lin Chuxia, which was at least a car, but Cai Jun refused.

What Qin Lihua desired for status, in Cai Jun's view, was stepping on his face.

Xiyang Food Factory may be said to belong to Lin Chuxia, but the factory manager was Su Wensong.

Cai Jun did not want to have any connections with Sun Lanlan, including her husband Su Wensong.

Lin Chuxia overheard these matters casually during a chat between Zhou Hongmei and Zhang Guilan.

Respect others' destinies, do not interfere in their karma, let go of the urge to help.

Lin Chuxia clearly understood that the greater one's ability, the more they must remain virtuous.

After sending everyone off, Lin Chuxia planned to visit the village chief's house; she noticed that the pig farm within the village had already been constructed.

She hadn't walked far when she saw Sun Hao, who had just entered the village on a bicycle.

Sun Hao also did not expect to meet Lin Chuxia here and greeted her with a smile.

"Mr. Lin, I was just about to head to your house."

Lin Chuxia raised her eyebrows, "What's the matter, not afraid of Yuan Bao showing his temper? He's at home right now."

Last time Sun Hao left quite embarrassingly. Believing that if he saw him again, Yuan Bao would not be in a good mood.

Chapter 262: No Small Sincerity

Sun Hao smiled helplessly, pointing to the sack on his bicycle handle, "Isn't this to apologise to Yuan Bao? Fresh large bones and ribs, I hope it can forgive me."

The sack was huge, weighing about seven or eight jin.

"Not a small gesture of sincerity."

As the two of them walked back, they naturally talked about the case again.

Recently, there was a new development in the case; several individuals implicated by the criminal suspect had been identified, and they would be arrested once there was conclusive evidence.

The case involved several provinces and cities, and the fact it was cracked in An City meant the entire Ancheng Public Security Bureau received a lot of attention.

In this, Yuan Bao naturally played an indispensable role.

They talked as they walked, all the way to the Qin Family's place.

As soon as they entered the gate, Yuan Bao heard the sounds.

Seeing it was Sun Hao, it immediately bared its teeth and grimaced.

Sun Hao quickly took the meat off the bicycle handle, with a face full of eagerness to please, "Yuan Bao, look what I brought for you? Meat, all meat, your reward."

Yuan Bao stopped its aggressive stance, sniffed the meat, realized it really was meat, and didn't show hostility anymore, but it also didn't wag its tail in flattery as before.

Lin Chuxia laughed to herself, thinking Officer Sun really offended Yuan Bao this time, and was impressed by Yuan Bao's intelligence.

Knowing Officer Sun came to make amends, it didn't continue to drive him away, but it maintained an indifferent demeanor, playing hard to get.

Sun Hao really wanted to regain his status in Yuan Bao's eyes, and he also came on a mission this time.

His wife knew he had offended Yuan Bao by giving it a dog leash, so she gave him an ultimatum: if he didn't make Yuan Bao happy, then don't even think about getting in her bed.

If it weren't for the station having matters that needed attention, and Chen Ping being unable to leave, Chen Ping would have personally made the visit by now.

Seeing Yuan Bao's attitude towards him thawing, Sun Hao took on the responsibility of cooking the meat.

There was a big pot in the yard, and Sun Hao rolled up his sleeves, ready to start cooking.

Mrs. Qin, seeing the visitor, was not about to let the police officer do it himself.

However, Sun Hao insisted, and only after Lin Chuxia spoke did Mrs. Qin give up, helping him out with Zhuangzhuang on the side.

Sun Hao knew Lin Chuxia was busy, so he told her to go about her business without him needing her company.

Lin Chuxia sat in the yard for a while, watching Sun Hao cook meat and chat with Mrs. Qin.

Sun Hao had always been working at the grassroots level and was good at talking, quite charming Mrs. Qin into laughter.

Little Zhuangzhuang also looked up at him with an admiring gaze.

Aside from Yuan Bao's indifferent attitude, the atmosphere was quite harmonious.

Thinking about the issue at the pig farm, Lin Chuxia did not decline any further and went out pushing her bike.

The village chief had been at the pig farm these past few days, and when Lin Chuxia arrived, she found him there.

He stood amongst the workers, gesticulating and saying something.

Upon seeing Lin Chuxia, the village chief immediately called her over, "Lin, come over here and take a look."

The Qin Family Village pig farm was different from the villagers' family pigsties; it was assisted and guided by breeding station and animal husbandry bureau staff from the town, so there were often various problems during construction.

Fortunately, the issues were not complicated and could be corrected immediately with a little guidance.

The entire pig farm is divided into two areas; the larger front area is for feeding castrated fattened pigs, and the pigsties there are built simply.

The construction happening now is for the sows' pens, which are much more refined.

Lin Chuxia walked over and took a look, with the village chief explaining by her side.

"These pens are built higher than the ones we usually have at home, which makes management convenient. When the sows give birth to piglets, it will save the need to bend over and strain one's back when entering or leaving. This front area is designed for easy manure cleaning, and the separation is also for the piglets' hygiene and safety."

The village chief remembered all of these details clearly as they were explained to him by the comrades from the Animal Husbandry Bureau.

Now he was sharing them with Lin Chuxia, partly to show off the achievements of the pig farm, as Lin Chuxia was also one of the investors, and partly to boast a little bit about his knowledge, showing that he, as the village chief, wasn't ignorant.

He really learned a lot during his time spent with those technical staff.

In her previous life, Lin Chuxia had dealt with pig farms. It wasn't her personal investment, but a partner's, which was quite large-scale.

That was already in the 90s, so Qin Family Village's pig farm paled in comparison in terms of sophistication.

But she also knew that, given the current conditions, the scale was already quite impressive.

She listened earnestly and responded with a smile, lavishing praise after the village chief finished his introduction.

Her feedback provided ample emotional value.

The village chief's face bloomed into a smile. "Oh, Lin, rest assured with your cooperation with our village. We will definitely act according to the guidance from the township and county authorities, we won't let your investment go to waste."

"I certainly trust the village chief, and I also believe in our village's capability."

The pig farm is expected to be completed by next week.

The sows are already contacted, but it takes time to raise them.

Thus, the village chief reached out to the Animal Husbandry Bureau and the breeding station, planning to purchase a batch of piglets from them.

Additionally, there are also a few pig-raising households in the village planning to sell their new piglets to the pig farm.

Such an arrangement is the most reasonable, and in the end, Lin Chuxia proposed that the village could also raise a breeding pig, which would save a lot of trouble and worry.

The technicians from above can provide guidance on other matters, but this particular suggestion might not come to mind for anyone.

Especially not from those at the breeding station.

Sure enough, the village chief hadn't thought about this angle. Once Lin Chuxia mentioned it, he thought it was a matter that needed addressing.

"I just felt something was missing. Of course, the breeding station wouldn't want us to raise our own breeding pigs and take their business," the village chief said with some rueful anger, then worried, "Lin, so where do you suggest we purchase our breeding pig?"

Would the breeding station be happy if they raised their own breeding pigs?

And who else could they turn to for this matter?

Lin Chuxia didn't see it as an issue, "You can just go directly to the breeding station. They have channels for excellent breeding pigs. As for the rest, you needn't worry too much. Our Qin Family Village pig farm is also considered a township-supported enterprise. On account of the town mayor's face, the breeding station won't make things difficult for you."

Thinking about it, the village chief found it made sense, "Alright, I'll make a trip to the breeding station myself tomorrow and have a good talk with the station chief."

When she got back from the pig farm, Sun Hao had already left, and Yuan Bao was gnawing on a big bone in its kennel.

Mrs. Qin was preparing lunch and shared her thoughts, "Officer Sun really is good-natured. He stewed bones and personally fed Yuan Bao. Only after seeing Yuan Bao finished did he leave. I asked him to stay

for lunch, but he wouldn't agree. He came all this way to stew meat for Yuan Bao and barely drank any water. Such a good person."

After washing her hands, Lin Chuxia took over what Mrs. Qin was doing and replied with a smile, "He feels guilty, that's why. So, after eating his bone, did Yuan Bao act a little nicer to him?"

Mrs. Qin laughed at this, "Yuan Bao is really getting clever. It ignored Officer Sun entirely while the bone was stewing, only wagging its tail and coming over once the meat cooled down. No manners whatsoever. And with that dog leash, how pretty it is, yet it knows it's to tie it up? Too clever."

Chapter 263: The Ungrateful White-Eyed Wolf

"Auntie, Yuan Bao even shared his meaty bone with me, grandma said Yuan Bao likes me."

Little Zhuangzhuang held a big bone in his hand, gnawing it with his little face all greasy.

Lin Chuxia tousled his unkempt hair, "Yes, Yuan Bao likes Zhuangzhuang the most."

"By the way, there is another thing," Mrs. Qin's expression grew serious, "The day after tomorrow is Lihua's homecoming day as a bride. I've thought about it, and it will be enough if your dad and I go. You all have work commitments, and your eldest brother and sister-in-law understand. It's just that on the ninth day, we, the bride's family, need to visit the new relatives. By then, you and your sister-in-law probably have to visit, the whole family went when your elder sister got married."

Today is Qin Lihua's wedding day, and Qin Liang and his spouse have both gone to the groom's home. According to local customs, on the ninth day, uncles and aunties from the bride's family also need to visit the new relatives.

If their own family has such an occasion everyone attends, similarly, for other's daughters' first visit as brides, it wouldn't be appropriate for them not to participate.

"Alright, then I'll go with my sister-in-law at that time," Lin Chuxia agreed readily.

She wouldn't make this difficult for her mother-in-law.

Moreover, if Cai Jun is ashamed to see her then that's his problem, she hasn't done anything wrong, what is there to fear?

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Cai Village

After sending off the last batch of guests, the courtyard that had been lively all day finally quieted down.

Qin Lihua rubbed her cheeks, sore from smiling, just as she was about to walk into the house, she was stopped by Eldest Sister-in-law Cai.

"Little sister-in-law, this courtyard is a mess, why don't you sweep it?"

Qin Lihua glanced at the chaotic courtyard; she was supposed to sweep? She had never swept the courtyard at home, it was always either her brother or younger brother who did it.

She couldn't help but look towards Cai Jun, who, seeming not to hear the commotion over here, was talking to Mrs. Cai.

Qin Lihua had no choice but to pick up the broom and slowly started to sweep the courtyard.

After a tough sweeping session, she was sweating profusely, and her bridal clothes had also gotten quite muddy.

Eldest Sister-in-law Cai just came out from the kitchen and chuckled at her appearance, "Little sister-in-law must not have done this at home, huh? So tired from just sweeping the yard, you'll gradually have to get used to it. Here in our village unlike Qin Family Village, everyone has their little plots of land, without some physical strength, it's difficult to work in the fields."

Qin Lihua smiled at her sister-in-law, "I'll go change my clothes first."

"Go on, go on, I'll handle the rest. Let's start dinner soon; your second uncle and aunt are coming over for dinner, we should cook early."

Qin Lihua nodded and dragged her tired body into the house.

The entire Cai family lived in the same courtyard, and Cai Jun's family only had two rooms.

The room was decorated festively, with a sewing machine next to the kang (heated brick bed).

For the dowry, the Cai family only bought her a sewing machine after her insistence.

She had thought with Cai Jun working for so long, he could have arranged the traditional "three rounds and one sound."

Su Wensong provided "three rounds and one sound" when he married Sun Lanlan.

Turns out the money Cai Jun earned was always given to his mother, and when his eldest sister-in-law entered the family, she got nothing. His mother's stance was clear; marrying her could not overlook the eldest sister-in-law.

Only under pressure from Qin's family did they finally buy a sewing machine.

Qin Lihua also remembered Sun Lanlan's wedding, which she didn't attend but secretly went to see.

It was indeed grand.

A sedan car for fetching the bride, so many dowries, and a wedding feast at the State-Owned Restaurant.

The people attending the wedding were all significant figures.

Today's wedding made Qin Lihua truly realize what she lost by marrying Cai Jun.

The door creaked open as Cai Jun walked in.

The man who used to enchant her no longer seemed very special.

Especially after quitting the Bun Shop, he rarely smiled at her, as if he had become a different person.

"What were you just talking to mom about? I called you but you didn't hear, Eldest Sister-in-law asked me to sweep the yard, and you didn't even help."

His words carried a tone of complaint, and even a hint of coquetry.

Cai Jun looked back puzzled, "It's just sweeping the yard, what's there to help with? Besides, mom, dad, elder brother, and sister-in-law are all here, it would be absurd for me to help you with that."

"But I've never had to sweep the yard at home, my mom never asked me to do it."

"You said it yourself, that was at your home. Our home is like this, even our 5-year-old nephew helps out."

Cai Jun saw the look of grievance on her face, and since it was their first day as a newlywed couple, he eventually didn't continue with his words.

"Alright, don't be upset, next time I'll do it when mom, dad, elder brother, and sister-in-law aren't around, is that okay?"

Qin Lihua pouted and looked at him, "Do you mean it?"

Cai Jun nodded.

Finally, a smile appeared on Qin Lihua's face. She took his arm and made him sit beside her.

"You know, I'm the only daughter in our family. My parents never made me do hard labor or work in the fields. I heard from sister-in-law that our family has lots of land, what if I really can't handle it? Maybe we should find jobs elsewhere."

Cai Jun also knew that working is better than farming, but finding a job isn't that easy.

Seeing him silent, Qin Lihua knew he wouldn't go back to work at the factory owned by his aunt and they didn't have connections anywhere else.

"How about we start our own business?"

"What kind of business?"

Lately, Cai Jun had been considering this too, but only in thought.

Starting a business isn't easy.

Their family has been farmers for generations, and he didn't possess any outstanding skills. It was only when Sun Bingnan introduced him to work at the Bun Shop for a while that he began to see a broader perspective.

It seemed like Qin Lihua found a new direction, her eyes sparkling as she looked at him, "How about we also sell buns? My aunt started her business by selling buns at a train station, and later on, her business grew so she opened a shop."

Later, one shop turned into two, and eventually became a food factory.

Thinking about it, his aunt wasn't much older than her, and although she didn't have her aunt's skills, she and Cai Jun working hard together might just work out.

Isn't there a saying? 'Three cobblers make a Zhuge Liang.'

But Cai Jun's expression dimmed after hearing her mention selling buns.

"We've been working at your aunt's bun shop for so long, now quitting to sell buns ourselves, do you think that's appropriate?"

"Why not? We won't sell in the county, just in the town. I learned how to prepare dough and fillings from your second aunt while I worked at the shop, even the technique of making buns, that's no problem for me. Even though I can't make the cooked foods, I can handle the cold dishes..."

"Stop it," Cai Jun interrupted her, his face turning unsightly.

"Do you think your aunt and second aunt taught you everything so you could compete with their business? How is that different from being an ungrateful wolf? I won't do it."

Cai Jun stood up and walked out, turning back at the door, "Uncle and his family are coming over for dinner tonight, stop thinking about all this mess and come out to cook with Eldest Sister-in-law."

Chapter 264: The Days Ahead are Dark and Gloomy

The door slammed shut, and Qin Lihua's excited expression from thinking of a good idea had hardly faded as she blankly stared at the door.

What does it mean to be a mess?

An ungrateful wretch?

Aunt Si's Bun Shop is in the county, and they only sell buns in the town, so how could they be stealing Aunt Si's business?

She never expected Cai Jun to be so noble, getting upset just by hearing about selling buns.

In the end, it wasn't because he was afraid of stealing Aunt Si's business, but because he was worried that Sun Bingnan and the others would find out and accuse him of being an ungrateful wretch, right?

Qin Lihua suddenly felt that the future days were bleak.

In the scorching heat of July, even the cicadas on the trees sound lethargic.

Lin Chuxia finally managed to buy three ceiling fans for the Bun Shop after pulling some strings.

These days, the heat affected the bun shop's business; people would stay home if they could, not to mention that the hot weather also affected their appetite.

"Big brother, how are the cooked foods selling these past few days? I've spoken to the department store, and they'll reserve the first freezer for us when it arrives."

Qin Han stood under the ceiling fan with his hands on his hips, staring at the ceiling fan with a somewhat silly smile.

Upon hearing Lin Chuxia's words, he immediately said, "That's great. These days cooked food isn't selling well, and even though it's less, we still have to make two trips to the factory to pick up the goods, because it's really easy for the food to go bad if we pick it up in the morning and keep it till afternoon. It would be so much better with a freezer."

He mentioned the freezer casually, but if it were before, Qin Han wouldn't even dare to dream of such things.

He wouldn't even dare to think about the ceiling fans above his head.

Those were the luxuries only the non-agricultural workers in the city could enjoy.

Now, not only were they using them, but there were even two in this shop.

And at home, the television set his younger brother and sister bought back the day before, which was meant to entertain their parents.

How many television sets could there be on the entire street of Qin Family Village? Not to mention buying one to entertain the elders, it was empowering even to think about it.

Lin Chuxia hadn't expected that in the time she hadn't been managing the Bun Shop, Qin Han had arranged everything so well.

In the summer heat, cooked food indeed wasn't easy to keep fresh, and it was very easy to cause stomach problems if there were issues.

Qin Han had no experience in running a shop, yet he managed everything so thoughtfully, which was truly rare.

"Alright, then it's settled. I'll be heading back now."

After discussing the matter, Lin Chuxia didn't want to stay at the Bun Shop anymore, desiring to find a quiet place in this kind of weather.

Speaking of which, her small courtyard was quite nice, with a square yard and two big trees in the middle.

Those two big trees were clearly ancient, lush and leafy, shading the entire yard.

The only shortcoming was that the yard was used as dormitory housing, so with more people living there, it also seemed somewhat cluttered.

Lin Chuxia thought about her finances again in her mind, concluding that she still had quite a surplus, and thought about buying another small courtyard later.

Having experienced the development of society once, Lin Chuxia knew that money at this time was both valuable and not valuable.

It was valuable because it had strong purchasing power; a few thousand yuan could buy a small courtyard.

It was not valuable in the sense of its own worth; a few thousand yuan placed in a bank would only depreciate after a decade or two.

The best strategy was still to convert it into a rising value real estate or land business.

While Lin Chuxia was thinking, a familiar figure appeared in the distance.

On a hot day, Li Guangyuan, wearing a white shirt and long pants, his hair slicked back as if with pomade to a degree that a fly could do splits on it, stopped with his bike at the gate of a small courtyard.

He knocked on the courtyard door, and after a while, the gate opened, a woman's head poked out, and almost simultaneously, both glanced around left and right before pushing the bicycle into the yard.

As Li Guangyuan entered the yard, the woman popped her head out, looked around, and then closed the gate tightly.

Chuxia sneered, this really was a case of a dog not changing its ways.

Their behaviors made it hard not to think further about it.

Recently, her brother Lin Jiadong had mentioned that Li Guangyuan had started setting up a vegetable stall again.

These days, as long as people are willing to work hard, they can enjoy some benefits of the times to some extent.

But some people, once they have money in their hands, forget who they are.

She could tell from a distance that the woman was old, at least older than Lin Jiayi.

She wondered if this person was really hungry, or just naturally despicable, always thinking the grass is greener on the other side.

Chuxia couldn't be bothered with their messy affairs; after all, it had nothing to do with her anymore.

In the distance, an old man on a bicycle with a white wooden box on the back rack was loudly hawking, "Ice pops, adzuki bean ice pops, cream ice pops..."

Soon, two children ran out from the nearby alley and stopped the ice pop seller.

Chuxia also walked over.

Both children were holding money in their hands, clamoring to buy ice pops.

"Cream ice pops ten cents each, adzuki bean ice pops five cents each, what do you want?"

"I want the creamy one, they're tasty," the younger sister shouted loudly.

After thinking, the older brother said, "I want the adzuki bean one."

The old man first handed a cream ice pop to the sister, and then gave an adzuki bean ice pop to the brother.

The sister handed all her two five cents coins to the old man, and the brother had a ten cents bill.

The old man took the brother's ten cents, and casually gave him one of the just-received five cents.

With one hand holding the change and the other holding the adzuki bean ice pop, the brother happily walked back.

The sister, looking at her ice pop and then at the five cents in her brother's hand, was dumbfounded.

She hurriedly chased after him, "Brother, brother, give me back my money."

"This is my money, why should I give it to you?"

"It's not yours, it's clearly my five cents."

"You already bought a cream ice pop with your money, this five cents is mine now."

"That's wrong, this is my five cents, I saw the grandpa give my five cents to you, you're cheating, I'm going to tell mom."

"You can't be unreasonable, you already bought your ice pop."

"It's you who is being unreasonable; the money in your hand is clearly mine..."

Chuxia watched the two children walk away, a smile in her eyes.

She took ten cents out of her pocket, "Old man, give me a cream ice pop."

The old man reopened the wooden box, lifted a corner of the white sheet, and took out neatly arranged ice pops to give her one.

Chuxia hadn't eaten this kind of ice pop for several decades, white wrapping paper with a light blue pattern on it.

Upon opening, a gentle cream scent wafted out, bringing a coolness with it.

Taking a bite, sweet and chilly, on this summer day lacking air conditioning and even fans, it felt blissful.

Meanwhile, having entered the yard, Li Guangyuan put aside his bicycle and, unable to wait, embraced Tian Cuihua, his hands wandering restlessly...

Chapter 265: He Must Learn to Protect His Mother

Tian Cuixia giggled as he touched her, pinching the soft flesh around his waist, "Look how eager you are, has your wife made you into a monk again?"

Li Guangyuan kissed her passionately, his breathing becoming heavier, "Monk or not, could she compare to you? Cuixia, I've missed you so much, you don't know how much I've thought of you these days, thought of you till it hurt."

Tian Cuixia pushed him away with a smile, "Don't try to sweet talk me, I am no eighteen-nineteen-year-old girl, and I know exactly what you men are thinking. If you missed me so much, how come you didn't come to see me for so many days? I heard you've been doing some big business deals lately, look at how different your clothes and things are. You say she can't compare to me in front of my face, but you haven't come for so many days, you must be at home pampering your wife, right?"

Li Guangyuan wasn't embarrassed being seen through; he approached her again, grinning cheekily.

"Things have been really busy at home lately, I'm a grown man, I can't be selling vegetables for a lifetime. The business I'm doing now isn't huge, but the income is decent."

Li Guangyuan had indeed been pampering his wife recently.

Lin Jiayi had gotten the cooked food recipes from her parents' home, and they had been making and selling their own cooked food for some time now.

Although the taste of their cooked food was slightly inferior to Qin's Cooked Food, what meat isn't tasty?

Plus, they were selling in the nearby villages, and everyone knew his wife was Lin Chuxia's elder sister, so naturally, the business was pretty good.

How many people in their village could run to the county to buy cooked food? It was whatever they said.

This wisdom had come from his wife, and he had to admit she did have a knack for business.

Or perhaps it could be said the Lin Family had a knack for business.

So, he dared not run off to town these days. After the last incident, his wife had become suspicious, and he absolutely couldn't stir up trouble at this critical moment.

Seeing Tian Cuixia looking a bit displeased, Li Guangyuan hurriedly took down the things from the handlebar of his cart to give to her.

"This is the cooked food we made ourselves, try it later, it's no worse than Qin's Cooked Food."

Seeing a benefit, Tian Cuixia immediately put on a smiling face, "Then I must try it well. Just remember, when you make it big one day, don't forget about me."

"How could I? Don't worry, I could forget anyone but not you. Hurry up, will you? Do you want to kill me with anticipation?"

As he spoke, he pounced on her.

Tian Cuixia was kissed breathlessly by him but also enjoyed this fierce and impatient side of a man.

Nonsense, if a man isn't strong, what good is he?

Li Guangyuan was young and healthy, and Tian Cuixia was very satisfied with him.

"Don't go there; the child is napping in that room."

Tian Cuixia saw him heading towards the inner room and reminded him.

Li Guangyuan turned around with her in his arms and headed into another room...

Erdan was woken up in a daze by the noise, hearing his mother's voice rising and falling, interspersed with a man's voice, he got up with a start.

He knew his mother was often beaten by men; he had no father, just his mother looking after them both, living a widow's life, and they were looked down upon by others, with many men coming over to beat his mother.

Even though those men were not bad to him, Erdan knew his mother was the best to him in this world.

He was already 5 years old; a big kid now, and he had to protect his mother.

He climbed down from the kang with bare feet, by now hearing clearly that his mother was in the opposite room.

As he left the house, he picked up the broom standing beside the door.

He extended his little hand gently pushing open the door, seeing his mother pinned down under a man, being beaten fiercely.

The weather was too hot, the man was sweating profusely, and his mother's clothes had been scattered, she had no strength to struggle, only able to helplessly scream.

Fortunately, the man's back was turned to him and didn't notice his arrival.

Erdan's little face was taut, gripping the broom in his hand tightly, step by step he approached the man.

When his mother cried out helplessly once more, Erdan lifted the broom and struck the man's head fiercely.

"Smack!"

The man stopped, and the mother also ceased shouting; time seemed to freeze at that moment.

Li Guangyuan turned around, saw the child still holding up the broom behind him, and shuddered...

Tian Cuixia burst out laughing, pushed the man aside, stood up, and embraced her son.

"My good son, are you taking Mom's frustration out on him?"

Erdan nodded, giving Li Guangyuan a wary look, "He hit Mom."

"Hahahahaha..."

Tian Cuixia laughed even harder, "You did well, son. That's exactly what you should do. Who ever bullies Mom, you hit him. But today, your Uncle Li came to give us meat, so let him off this time."

As she spoke, she held Erdan and left the room, turning back at the door to throw a flirtatious wink at Li Guangyuan.

Li Guangyuan didn't care about her seduction at all; he sat weakly on the kang bed, looking down.

It almost scared him to death.

After Li Guangyuan got dressed, he saw Tian Cuixia coming back in from outside, laughing heartily without a trace of embarrassment from the interruption by the child.

After Li Guangyuan fastened the last button, Tian Cuixia finally stopped laughing, "Are you heading back now? I've sent Erdan to the next-door auntie's house."

She wanted to pick up where they had left off.

Li Guangyuan shook his head, "It's getting late; I should be going."

"What time is it? It's not often you come to the county town..."

She reached out again to pull on his clothes.

Li Guangyuan held her hand, "Next time, I still have things to do, I really have to go."

He came to the county to buy spices, and he had to pick up some goods later.

If it weren't for this, he wouldn't be able to make a round to Tian Cuixia's place.

But if he delayed any longer, his wife at home would definitely suspect him again.

Tian Cuixia snorted derisively, "Coward."

.....

When Li Guangyuan got home with the freshly purchased meat and offal, Lin Jiayi and Li Dongmei had just come back from the outside.

Although Lin Jiayi's stomach was protruding, her feet were quick, and her face bore a contented smile not seen for a long time.

Li Dongmei carried a basket on her back, following behind her, without the usual confrontational attitude towards her sister-in-law, and even showing a touch of submission.

Seeing Li Guangyuan just returning, Lin Jiayi frowned slightly, "Why so late?"

Li Guangyuan propped the cart, unloading goods while replying, "Today's offal at the butcher's was not great, so I didn't buy it. I went to another butcher's which delayed me a bit; I also bought some spices."

"Another butcher's? Was it cheaper than the previous one? We had a hard time negotiating a lower price."

"It's alright, it's a bit more expensive, but with the hot weather everyday, if the meat's not fresh, it can indeed cause trouble if people get sick."

Lin Jiayi seemed unbothered, "It doesn't make people sick so easily. Besides, if someone does get sick, that's the butcher's responsibility, they gave us unfresh meat. Business is not easy for us; we can barely make much as it is, so we still need to be frugal. Don't do this next time."

Chapter 266: Indeed, We Can't Let This Woman Get the Upper Hand

Li Guangyuan nodded haphazardly; after all, it was all excuses—whatever Lin Jiayi said was right.

Seeing how obedient Li Guangyuan was, Lin Jiayi's mood instantly improved a lot.

"I tell you, we sold all our cooked food today. Those who bought it knew I was the Lin Family's daughter and they all rushed to buy it. Plus, the old customers who have tasted our cooked food said it's good, on par with the county's Qin's Cooked Food."

After finishing, she glanced at her sister-in-law behind her, "Isn't that right, Dongmei? Didn't they say so?"

Li Dongmei nodded in agreement, "Brother, they really said that. Knowing my sister-in-law and Qin Family's daughter-in-law are sisters, they all said our cooked food tastes like Qin's."

Li Guangyuan was noncommittal; he had tasted Qin's Cooked Food and knew exactly how his family's own tasted.

As they spoke, Li Hongmei came out of the house.

The moment Lin Jiayi saw Li Hongmei, her face instantly turned cold, "Why have you come back again?"

"Oh, sister-in-law, you are doing so well now that you don't even acknowledge your own relatives?"

Lin Jiayi scoffed coldly, "I dare not acknowledge a relative like you. Let's get one thing straight: the money at home was earned through the hard work of me and your brother. Even if you're his real sister, you can't cling to us to suck our blood dry. A married daughter is like spilled water; if you're unhappy with your in-laws, just divorce. Don't act like we owe you all the time."

Li Hongmei was so angry her chest heaved. Indeed, one cannot let this woman feel too powerful.

But then she remembered what her mother had said—the family business still relied on her—and she had to suppress her anger.

Old Mrs. Li came out of the house, "It was I who called Hongmei back. There are many things to do at home right now. Your sister-in-law is pregnant and it's not convenient for her, so the more help the better. Hongmei, from now on, you'll work with your sister-in-law; your brother and your sister-in-law won't treat you unfairly."

Ever since Lin Jiayi returned from her parents' house and brought out a secret recipe for cooked food, Old Mrs. Li's attitude towards her had changed.

And since they had made money from selling the cooked food, there was no need to say anything else.

Lin Jiayi did not immediately agree, but instead looked towards Li Hongmei.

Ever since her sister-in-law got married, she hadn't stopped meddling in the family affairs, accusing Lin Jiayi of hurting her, setting traps and making things difficult for her. If she didn't make her stance clear today, Lin Jiayi wouldn't easily let it go.

Li Hongmei, seeing her act so high and mighty, wanted to claw at her face, but in the end, she restrained herself.

"Sister-in-law, I was out of line before. Mother is right; you're heavily pregnant and shouldn't deal with this dirty and tiring work. We'll do more work in the future, and you should rest up."

Only then did Lin Jiayi reveal a smile, "We're one family; there's no need to be so polite. But now that our business is doing well, we really should stock up more and prepare more cooked food. With you here, you can really help out."

Afterwards, she discussed the matter with Li Guangyuan.

Li Guangyuan hesitated. Cooked food was something everyone wanted fresh.

The villagers were not like city folk; no one had spare cash to eat cooked food every day.

The sales these days were good solely because they had just started this business. It was uncertain if they could continue selling as much in the long run.

Now that the weather was hot, any leftovers would easily spoil.

Cooked food was not like vegetables; if vegetables were left for an extra day, the worst would be they became wilted, but cooked food would change in taste.

Li Guangyuan had just shared his thoughts when Lin Jiayi interrupted him.

"How could it not sell? Ask Dongmei how good our business is. If we don't strike while the iron is hot, when will we save enough to open a store? We surely can't set up a street stall forever, can we?"

Li Dongmei also nodded in agreement.

It was too much suffering to sell things at a street stall. She longed to stand behind a counter as a shop assistant. How prestigious that would be.

Li Hongmei added, "I think sister-in-law is right, and besides, I'm here now, aren't I? One more person should be able to sell more. Brother, a person looking to accomplish big things can't be so hesitant."

Her mother told her that all the money she earned in the future would belong to her, and of course, the more the better.

Lin Jiayi was rarely idolized by her two younger sisters-in-law. Had her pride not been larger than her aspirations, she would have laid herself on the ground.

Seeing Li Guangyuan still hesitating, she pressed further, "Just look at the Qin Family's shop; aren't they opening one after another? Now they've even started a factory. How long has it been? The Qins were farmers just like us, where do we fall short of them? Guang Yuan, I know what you're capable of. Compared to Qin Han, he's far behind."

Li Guangyuan didn't know about Qin Han's capabilities, but he thought of his younger sister-in-law.

If his younger sister-in-law could do it, so could he.

.....

The night was still, and in the latter part of the night, a light rain began to patter down.

Dogs barked in the distance, one after another, gradually, all the dogs in the surrounding area joined in.

Jia Liang jolted awake from his sleep.

The Bun Shop's renovation wasn't finished yet, so they laid their bedding there every night.

The room was pitch-black, lightning flashed in the distance, and a silhouette stood up.

"Zhuzi, where are you going?"

Tian Jinzhu didn't expect to have startled Jia Liang, but the noises from afar made him uneasy as well.

"I'm going to take a leak."

"It's raining outside, put on a raincoat and go further away; don't just pee at the doorstep," reminded Jia Liang.

"Got it, Brother Liang. Look at you, getting more naggy by the day."

Tian Jinzhu joked indifferently, but his face in the dark was quite grim.

He put on his coat, donned a raincoat, and stepped into the drizzle as he opened the door.

He hadn't walked far when several figures suddenly rushed out, "Don't move, put your hands up."

At the same time, someone kicked open the door of the Bun Shop, a flashlight swept around a few times, and voices shouted inside, "Police operation, put your hands up and squat to the side."

After a commotion, the lights in the room were turned on.

Jia Liang, Feng Zhong, and Tian Jinzhu squatted on the ground, facing several police officers.

The leading officer's gaze fell on Tian Jinzhu, still dressed in a raincoat, dripping with water as he squatted on the ground.

"Are you Tian Jinzhu?"

Tian Jinzhu wanted to say he wasn't, but the officer's gaze indicated he recognized him, so he hung his head in silence.

"Think staying silent will do any good? If you're not guilty, why did you run?"

When they arrived just now, Tian Jinzhu's actions clearly looked like he was trying to escape.

"You're quite alert, aren't you? Do you know Yu Dahu?"

Tian Jinzhu kept his head down, saying nothing. Jia Liang, however, had already realized something. His look towards Tian Jinzhu was filled with anger. Suddenly, he stood up and delivered a kick.

"You damn still have dealings with Yu Dahu? Who is Yu Dahu? How many times have I told you all, what things we should do, what we shouldn't, and which things we must absolutely not touch? Are you trying to get yourself killed and drag us down too?"

Jia Liang, though he had mended his ways, still had some brothers from the old days to keep in touch with, of course, only in a lawful manner.

Chapter 267: Isn't this a trap for Mr. Lin?

During this period, Su Wensong had heard quite a bit about Yu Dahu.

Although they also used to engage in illegal activities, they never did anything that could cost them their heads.

Who would have thought that after Tian Jinzhu split from them, he would take refuge with Yu Dahu.

And that would be fine, but now that he's gotten himself into trouble, he's come to them for cover.

Regretfully, Su Wensong had thought his brother had finally reformed and was on the right path, introducing him to Mr. Lin and even getting him a job at the Bun Shop.

Isn't this getting Mr. Lin into trouble?

The more Jia Liang thought about it, the angrier he became, kicking one foot after another, wishing he could kick Tian Jinzhu to death right here.

It was the police officers who came over and pulled the two men apart.

Jia Liang then turned his gaze towards Feng Zhong, sharp as a knife.

Feng Zhong quickly shook his head, "Brother Liang, this has nothing to do with me, I really don't know anything, I truly don't know anything, and I definitely don't know any Yu Dahu."

Feeling that just explaining to Jia Liang wouldn't do, he turned to the police officers, "Officers, I really don't know anything. It was Tian Jinzhu who came to me, saying he wanted to take refuge under Brother Liang and find a decent job. I truly have reformed. If you don't believe me, ask my mother. In the past six months, I haven't committed a single petty theft, I want to learn from Brother Liang, reform, and be a decent person."

The other police officers had already searched the Bun Shop.

The not-yet-renovated Bun Shop was clear at a glance, they searched it and indeed found nothing suspicious.

They said to the three men, "Cut the nonsense. If there's anything to admit, do it inside."

...

Early in the morning, Lin Chuxia was woken up by a knock on the door.

By the time she got dressed and went outside, Qin Han had already led Su Wensong inside from outside.

Seeing Lin Chuxia, Su Wensong spoke with a serious face, "Mr. Lin, something has happened downtown, you need to go there personally."

"What happened? Did they say?" Lin Chuxia asked while going back inside to pack her things.

Jia Liang, who was responsible for the Bun Shop downtown, had been busy with the renovation lately, and would report to Lin Chuxia about the progress.

Since her return from the Northwest, she hadn't had the time to visit downtown.

"One of the employees he hired has a tainted background and was taken away by the police last night. Jia Liang and another person were taken as well, all three being employees of the Bun Shop, so we need you to go."

Su Wensong summarized the situation.

Hearing this, Lin Chuxia turned to look at him.

The men Jia Liang was managing were all personally recruited by him.

Several of them had connections with Lin Chuxia, as they were his past brothers.

Talking about a shady background, it was likely those people.

Lin Chuxia didn't ask further, washed up, and followed Su Wensong.

The factory's 121 had just returned from delivering goods, and the two of them drove straight to the downtown police station in the 121.

There, after presenting her identity, a police officer came to inquire.

Lin Chuxia answered all of the officer's questions.

The downtown Bun Shop was her investment, with Jia Liang in charge of the renovation, and his people were in an employment relationship with their Bun Shop, consistent with what Jia Liang had reported.

After the questioning, they took them to see Jia Liang and also summarized the results of the overnight interrogation to Lin Chuxia.

Among the three detained the previous night, Tian Jinzhu was involved in a smuggling case. Related individuals had already been arrested by the authorities, but due to insufficient evidence, Tian Jinzhu had remained at large. Now with conclusive evidence, Tian Jinzhu was formally arrested.

As for Jia Liang and Feng Zhong, who were with him, after examination, they were found indeed unrelated to this case.

"Comrade Jia Liang is on the right path now, and the government gives everyone who has erred a chance. This time he was mostly duped by others. And Mr. Lin, please remind Comrade Jia Liang more often to be discerning with people and matters. If he truly wants to reform, he must abandon his past.

Brotherhood of the rivers and lakes is no good, just like this time, if he had really covered for a criminal suspect, it would still be a crime."

From Jia Liang's reaction during the arrest and a series of interrogations, it was verified that Jia Liang indeed was unaware.

Otherwise, they wouldn't let him off so easily.

"Yes, Officer, I believe Comrade Jia Liang was also deceived. When I go back, I will surely supervise more, and will definitely not cause any more trouble for the government."

Lin Chuxia quickly expressed her stance, her disdain for Tian Jinzhu growing inside.

It seemed Tian Jinzhu approached Jia Liang claiming he wanted to go straight, just to evade the police station's investigation and fool the police.

Lin Chuxia hadn't expected Tian Jinzhu to actually have ties with Yu Dahu's criminal gang.

It was the capture of Yu Dahu and his associates that led to the gradual exposure of Tian Jinzhu and others.

As for Feng Zhong who joined Jia Liang, there seemed to be no issue, probably also deceived by Tian Jinzhu.

Lin Chuxia saw Jia Liang and Feng Zhong in the detention room.

Perhaps it was due to lack of rest, especially Jia Liang, who appeared to have lost weight, dark circles under his eyes, and a look of utter exhaustion.

Upon seeing Lin Chuxia, Jia Liang moved his lips but ultimately said nothing.

Lin Chuxia was somewhat relieved to see that although they were haggard, they were intact.

After signing the paperwork and cordially thanking the police officials, she was able to take the two men out.

The sun was already high, and Jia Liang stepped out of the police station, inevitably squinting his eyes.

Lin Chuxia walked straight to the 121 and gestured, "Get in."

Jia Liang stood beside the car and didn't move; he hadn't eaten or drunk anything since being caught the day before, not even sleeping for a moment.

He'd been involved in the underworld for many years, and it wasn't his first time being caught.

When he started out in this line of work as a youngster, aside from feeling a bit scared during his first arrest, every other time he ate, drank, and slept as usual, treating the detention just like being at home, staying inside contentedly for however many days he was held.

But this time was different from the past; it felt like a heavy stone pressing on his chest, making it hard for him to breathe.

All through the night, he had pondered a lot; he knew Lin Chuxia would come to bail them out.

He imagined how Lin Chuxia would react to learning about this, envisioning her scolding him in anger.

Mr. Lin had trusted him so much, giving him full control of the shop and letting him manage substantial amounts of money, and even when he employed his old brothers, Mr. Lin didn't question it.

Jia Liang knew Mr. Lin trusted not Tian Jinzhu and the others, but him.

Yet, with all that trust from Mr. Lin, he still ended up letting Mr. Lin down.

"What's the matter? Didn't stay long enough at the station, want to go back and sit for a while?"

Seeing that Jia Liang wasn't moving, Lin Chuxia called out a reminder.

"Jia Liang, get in."

"Mr. Lin..."

As Jia Liang began to speak, he realized how dry his mouth was and his throat rough.

Lin Chuxia didn't wait for him to finish, turned her head to the car, simply remarking, "Cut the crap, I'm hungry, let's find a place to eat."

Jia Liang swallowed dryly and did not respond further, climbing into the back of the 121.

Chapter 268: I'll figure it out myself

Su Wensong found a small eatery nearby that looked quite clean; the four of them ordered four bowls of noodles and three cold dishes.

Jia Liang held a bowl of noodles, looking once again at Lin Chuxia opposite him, only to see her alternating between noodles and cold dishes, eating with relish.

Jia Liang also picked up his chopsticks and took a bite of the noodles, but he ate without any taste.

After finally finishing a bowl of noodles, Lin Chuxia also put down her chopsticks.

However, Lin Chuxia didn't rush to leave. She drank some water while waiting for Feng Zhong beside Jia Liang to finish his noodles, worrying he wasn't full, she ordered him another bowl.

She even turned to ask Jia Liang if he wanted another bowl.

From last night when they were taken away by the police comrades to now, Jia Liang hadn't eaten anything, but he couldn't bring himself to eat.

Feng Zhong, having been up all night, was really hungry. Seeing a new bowl of noodles being brought to him by the server, he smiled in thanks to Lin Chuxia and began to gorge himself.

Seeing that everyone had finished eating, he even scraped the remaining cold dishes into his noodle bowl to finish them off.

After slurping down the last of the soup, he looked up to see everyone watching him, and somewhat embarrassed, he chuckled and wiped his mouth, "I'm full now."

"That's good you're full," Lin Chuxia stood up, "Let's go, since we're here, we might as well check out the shop."

She was as usual, efficient and competent in her doings, as if coming to the city was just to inspect the shop, not even hinting at the matter with Tian Jinzhu.

This made Jia Liang both relieved and somewhat at a loss, but he still rallied his spirits and took Lin Chuxia to their bun shop.

Lin Chuxia knew the location of the storefront; it had already been renovated, only lacking the procurement of tables, chairs, benches, and kitchen equipment.

The bun shop in the city had the same decorative style as the one in Ancheng County.

Before the renovation, Lin Chuxia had provided Jia Liang with the blueprints, and under his supervision and guidance, overall, Lin Chuxia was very satisfied.

"When do you estimate the shop will be ready to go into business?"

Lin Chuxia once again passed the initiative to Jia Liang.

Jia Liang was momentarily stunned but quickly recovered, setting aside previous thoughts and answering earnestly.

"The tables, chairs, and benches had already been ordered last week, they will be delivered next Wednesday, and the rest of the items can be prepared during this time."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "You can start preparing the staff as well, it's more convenient to recruit people in the city. Recruitment standards and wages should follow our previous criteria; you're still familiar with that, right?"

"I know all about it, Mr. Lin."

"I'll make it clear to the pastry staff that they need to train for two weeks in Ancheng County."

"Yes."

After everything was arranged, Lin Chuxia once again looked inside and outside the shop. Finding no issues and seeing that it was getting late, she left with Su Wensong.

Watching as 121 drove away, Feng Zhong exclaimed, "Mr. Lin really is a good person, no wonder Brother Liang you're also willing to work with a woman."

This was his second time seeing Lin Chuxia; the first time was also just an introduction by Jia Liang.

In Feng Zhong's memory, he only remembered Lin Chuxia was beautiful.

This incident gave him a deeper understanding of Lin Chuxia.

This person, being a big boss, hadn't looked down on them in the slightest. As Brother Liang said, with their kind of background, only by following someone like Mr. Lin could they make something of themselves.

Otherwise, given the petty crimes they had committed, there were not many who would employ them, and even if they did, they wouldn't trust them.

Jia Liang nodded, not denying this fact.

Feng Zhong followed Jia Liang into the shop, starting to curse at Tian Jinzhu again.

"The fucking bastard Tian Jinzhu, Brother Liang, you treated him so well, yet he still wanted to harm you. If it hadn't been for Brother Liang back then, he would have been beaten to death by his stepdad already. Brother Liang has always been looking out for him, and when it was time for him to flee, he remembered Brother Liang."

"And there's Mr. Lin, who's been so good to us brothers. We couldn't be more grateful to her, how could he be such an ungrateful wretch, truly inhumane."

"Thank goodness the police arrived just in time last night. A moment later, if Tian Jinzhu had run away, wouldn't we have been unable to clear our names even if we jumped into the Yellow River?"

He had already ranted about these things all night long at the police station yesterday, and thinking about it now, he was still not satisfied.

As he cursed, another thing came to his mind.

"Brother Liang, why didn't you talk to Mr. Lin about the renovation payment?"

Tian Jinzhu said he had a way to get cheap and good quality wood, you trusted them, and when he asked for an advance deposit, you gave him the money directly.

Later when it was time for renovation, but the wood wasn't delivered, Tian Jinzhu said he used the money for his mother's medical expenses, and you believed him again.

Thinking about it now, could that money have been embezzled by him?

Now that Tian Jinzhu has been arrested, who are they going to ask for the money?

Jia Liang had already thought of this problem; indeed, he was played by a brother he trusted, but he never thought of mentioning it to Lin Chuxia.

"I was the one who brought the guy in. Now that there's a problem, how can I have the face to talk to the boss about it?"

"But if you don't mention it, what about such a large sum of money?"

What Brother Liang gave him was not only the deposit, afterwards the entire batch of wood money was taken by him as well.

Jia Liang looked out the window, his face sinking heavily, "Forget it, I'll figure it out myself."

It was his own mess, how could he have the nerve to ask Lin Chuxia to clean it up for him?

"You figure it out? Brother Liang, that's not a small amount of money, where would you get so much money? If it doesn't work out, we can talk to the police; maybe we can still get the money back."

Jia Liang shook his head, "It's been so long already, and if Zhuzi really took the money for that matter, it's futile to look for it. It might stir up the police and drag the boss into it. Listen to me, don't talk about it, I'll find a way for the money."

.....

On the way back, Lin Chuxia sat in the passenger seat of 121, noticing Su Wensong hesitating to speak.

"Just say what you have to say."

Since her return from the Northwest, she saw that both the Bun Shop and Xiyang Food Factory were operating normally, so she didn't interfere much, always busying herself with trivial matters.

She also knew whether it was Lanlan, her elder brother Qin Han, or Su Wensong, if it wasn't something they couldn't handle, they usually wouldn't bother her.

Even though she was the real boss.

But right now, seeing Su Wensong's reaction, it actually piqued her interest.

Su Wensong sighed and looked straight ahead, "I don't know if I should tell you or not, but the staff on Jia Liang's side are all brought by him, and I do know Jia Liang's character..."

"Quit the babbling and get to the point," Lin Chuxia interrupted him.

She knew Jia Liang's character, of course, but now that something has happened, this person is still beating around the bush; has she been too easy to talk to all this time?

Su Wensong turned his head to look at her and smiled slightly, then changed his tone.

"Before you went to the Northwest, you told me to take extra care of Jia Liang's side, and I know you meant well. However, Tian Jinzhu is not honest. As far as I know, during the Bun Shop's renovation, Tian Jinzhu took a portion of the construction funds from Jia Liang under the pretext of helping to procure materials. Now that Tian Jinzhu has run into trouble, it's very likely we won't be able to recover this money."

Lin Chuxia frowned and looked at him, "What? That happened too?"

Chapter 269: Luck

Su Wensong nodded, "Jia Liang was short on people and asked me for two. I heard about it from them. Today, I saw Jia Liang being silent all the time, I thought he was also worried about this and would discuss it with you openly, but who knew..." Who knew that in the end, he didn't mention it at all.

Although Jia Liang didn't mention it, he didn't feel that the payment for the project could be recovered.

Lin Chuxia didn't need to think deeply to understand what was going on.

"Tian Jinzhu was guaranteed by Jia Liang in front of me, even if the project payment really can't be recovered, he wouldn't bring it up at this critical moment."

Jia Liang, as a person, although he has taken detours, his disposition is still quite good.

He values loyalty and cherishes relationships.

Being able to be the big brother of those people shows his charismatic character.

He managed, against all odds, to bring Tian Jinzhu to her, and now that there is a problem with Tian Jinzhu, he will naturally overcome all difficulties and resolve the subsequent issues.

"I shouldn't interfere in this matter here, but when you go back, keep a close eye on it, especially things related to Jia Liang's family. Let me know if anything happens."

"Okay, I understand."

After they finished talking about Jia Liang, they brought up Sun Lanlan.

Sun Lanlan's early pregnancy symptoms were quite severe, and Lin Chuxia still wanted her to rest more.

Su Wensong said helplessly, "Mr. Lin, I really can't make decisions for Lanlan in this matter. Frankly, I do want her to rest more, but with her personality, she really can't stay idle. Maybe Mr. Lin could help me talk to her again?"

Lin Chuxia laughed, "Better not, I shouldn't meddle in the affairs between you two. Eh~, speaking of which, as a boss, having employees like you two, I'm really quite lucky."

Su Wensong also laughed, feeling that as employees, having a boss like Lin Chuxia was the real fortune.

Su Wensong first dropped Lin Chuxia off at home, then went to Xiyang Food Factory.

After arriving at the office, he sent someone to fetch Hou Xiaobao.

Hou Xiaobao was unaware of the situation in the city, thinking Su Wensong had work-related matters for him.

As he entered the office, he greeted politely, "Factory Director Su, did you need me for something?"

Su Wensong pointed to the seat next to him and asked him to sit down and talk.

"I heard you know Tian Jinzhu, do you still keep in touch with him now?"

This was also something Lin Chuxia reminded him on the way back. Although they all trusted Hou Xiaobao, Tian Jinzhu was clearly a man of many schemes.

"Just like this time he managed to deceive Jia Liang, who knows if he also contacted Hou Xiaobao."

Hou Xiaobao still doesn't know about the situation in the city, and when Su Wensong asked about Tian Jinzhu, he sneered.

"All of us were brothers before, when Brother Liang and I defected to Mr. Lin, we even invited him to join us, but back then he looked down on Mr. Lin's business. I don't know what got into him recently, he came looking for Brother Liang, wanting to work with us, that one time we met, I ridiculed him a lot. Now seeing Mr. Lin making it big, he's clinging on again, if not for Brother Liang considering the brotherhood, I wouldn't even bother to include him."

"So you were aware that Tian Jinzhu and Jia Liang went to the city? Did you guys keep in touch afterward?"

Hou Xiaobao nodded, "I knew, but after he and Brother Liang went there, I never saw him again."

Then he asked, "What's wrong, Factory Director Su? Is there something going on with Brother Liang? It can't be that Tian Jinzhu couldn't handle our work and backed out again, right?"

It was then that Hou Xiaobao realized Su Wen's face didn't look good when he mentioned Tian Jinzhu.

"I knew that kid wasn't good at handling things, apart from sneaking around like a thief, he really has nothing to show for. Factory Director Su, don't worry, I will speak with Brother Liang, if Tian Jinzhu doesn't work hard, just let him get lost far away, don't let him delay Mr. Lin's matters."

Mr. Lin and Factory Director Su are good people, giving face to Brother Liang. The things they felt uncomfortable to mention, he, Hou Xiaobao, would handle.

Su Wensong waved his hand, "That's not necessary."

He told Hou Xiaobao about Tian Jinzhu being involved in a smuggling case and the arrest last night, as well as Jia Liang, Feng Zhong, and his and Lin Chuxia's early visit to be investigated.

Lastly, he said, "It's better that you haven't been in contact with Tian Jinzhu. If you have had any contact or found any suspicions, you must report it to the police immediately, don't be like Jia Liang who was kept in the dark and mistaken for an accomplice."

Upon hearing Su Wensong's words, Hou Xiaobao exploded.

"Damn Tian Jinzhu, Brother Liang has been so good to him, yet he set such a big trap for Brother Liang. I told Brother Liang from the start that this kid was no good, he was always the most cunning when we were together. Yet Brother Liang said, no one is a saint, who can be flawless? We all came from those days, Mr. Lin gave us a chance to make amends, we should be more understanding towards these people, just like Mr. Lin, showing them tolerance and trust. But what does he do? Treats us brothers like fools."

Hou Xiaobao was so angry he was jumping, "Factory Director Su, you don't know, not only this matter, but when we were together before, Brother Liang really took care of Tian Jinzhu. Tian Jinzhu has had no father since he was young, his mother, to survive, found him a stepfather. That stepfather despised Tian Jinzhu as a burden, often beating him up, not giving him food. Tian Jinzhu didn't go to school, started stealing when he was not even 10 years old, often got caught and beaten half to death. If Brother Liang hadn't taken pity on him and taken him in, he would probably have been beaten to death long ago."

Su Wensong twitched at the corner of his mouth.

If not for knowing what Jia Liang and Hou Xiaobao used to do before, such acts could really be considered meritorious.

He steered the conversation back, "It's good that you haven't had much contact with him, this matter has already passed. Jia Liang and Feng Zhong have already been cleared of suspicion, but there's something Jia Liang didn't mention. Recently they've been renovating a Bun Shop in the city, Tian Jinzhu took a sum of renovation money from him, claiming it was for his mother's medical treatment, that money probably hasn't been recovered. I guess Jia Liang intends to cover this shortfall himself. You know Jia Liang best, keep an eye on him during this period, if there's any issue, let me know in time."

Hou Xiaobao felt like cursing again, but he also knew that no amount of cursing right now would solve the problem.

"Brother Liang might look rough, but he's always valued loyalty and justice. Mr. Lin entrusted him with such an important task, with such a problem arising, he definitely won't complain to Mr. Lin. Factory Director Su, rest assured, I know what to do."

After Hou Xiaobao left, Su Wensong saw that it was about time, tidied up his desk, and prepared to leave work.

He had left early today. When the city called the food factory, the duty staff had first contacted him, the factory director. Sun Lanlan hadn't even gotten out of bed when he left.

During this time, Sun Lanlan occasionally had morning sickness, her appetite was also smaller than before, only really craving sour foods.

Chapter 270: Children Should Be Educated from a Young Age

Su Wensong rode his bicycle to the grocery store.

He went straight to the counter selling snacks and dried fruits, first buying a pack of dried plums, calcium milk cookies, animal cookies, and some fruit peel snacks, as well as some canned goods and pastries.

After all was said and done, he left the grocery store with a big net bag full of items.

When he got home, the Bun Shop hadn't closed yet, so he put down his things and went to help out at the Bun Shop.

The two of them were busy until the Bun Shop closed, locked the shop door, and then returned to the courtyard.

Granny Su couldn't stay idle and had already prepared dinner for them.

Su Wensong took out the big bag of snacks and held it up to Sun Lanlan like he was presenting a treasure.

"See anything you'd like to eat? Here are your favorite dried plums, or would you like a can of something?"

Sun Lanlan had been feeling much better these past few days, and she hadn't even finished the dried plums she bought last time, now there was this whole bag of delicious treats.

"I eat quite well at the Bun Shop every day, and Granny's cooking is delicious; there's really no need for all this."

Despite both earning salaries, they shouldn't be spending money like this.

Sun Lanlan grew up in a village and was still very frugal at heart.

"These pastries and canned foods are for Granny to eat; I'm fine with these snacks."

"Granny has her share too; I bought some for her, all of these are yours."

Su Wensong said, taking out a strip of candied fruit peel and holding it up to her lips.

"Try this, I tasted it after I bought it; it's sweet and sour and really delicious."

Granny Su was standing right next to them, and Sun Lanlan was embarrassed, especially since Su Wensong was coaxing her like a child, insisting she take a bite.

Sun Lanlan had no choice but to take a bite, and Su Wensong anxiously asked her, "Is it good? Do these snacks make you feel a bit better?"

"I'm really not reacting that much anymore; you don't have to be so worried."

Seeing that Sun Lanlan was really not feeling any discomfort, Su Wensong finally breathed a sigh of relief and seriously said to her belly, "You behave yourself, don't give mom a hard time anymore, or else watch out when you come out—I'll spank you."

Sun Lanlan's face flushed red, and seeing Granny Su looking at them with a laugh, she wished she could find a hole to crawl into.

She slapped Su Wensong's arm and chided, "What are you talking about?"

Although they were married and pregnant, she had only been a young woman three months ago, and was still very shy.

Su Wensong just chuckled, "I'm educating our child; you have to start young."

Is that starting young? More like starting from inside the stomach.

Sun Lanlan couldn't outtalk him, so she turned to Granny Su for help.

Granny Su intervened, "Alright, alright, let's eat."

Seeing the loving couple, Granny Su was genuinely pleased.

The meal was cooked to Sun Lanlan's taste, and Granny Su's cooking was excellent and refined. Sun Lanlan ate a lot.

This was the first time in a while that she had eaten so much, and Su Wensong's appetite improved as well.

When Sun Lanlan and Granny Su put down their chopsticks, Su Wensong finished off the rest of the food.

As they ate, he talked to her about things happening in town.

He had been urgently called away early in the morning, and Sun Lanlan had been worried all day.

Now that she knew everything was over, she also felt relieved.

"Mr. Lin knows that you feel unwell due to your pregnancy and wants you to rest for a while. How about we take a few days off? I heard that it gets easier as the months go by. Or I can talk to Mr. Lin about promoting another manager so you can stay home and focus on the pregnancy; I can support you and our child."

He is now earning about 100 yuan a month, which is more than what some families make.

Sun Lanlan glared at him dissatisfiedly, "What now? You think you're a big deal since you became a factory manager, and your wife should just stay at home to serve and take care of you like a lord? Even thinking of stripping me of my manager position?"

"I didn't mean that," Su Wensong hurriedly explained.

Sun Lanlan chuckled. She knew that wasn't what Su Wensong meant.

"Don't worry, I'm not that delicate. I have been feeling much better these days, and the work at the Bun Shop isn't too demanding. Just handling orders and keeping accounts. In our village, which wife doesn't do this while pregnant? Both my sisters-in-law worked in the fields when they were pregnant."

Compared to them, she already felt very fortunate.

Work is easy, her husband is considerate, and Granny Su loves her so much.

If she quit her job now, she would really become a lazy bum who only eats and does nothing.

"Besides, I really like my job. Although I can't achieve something big like Xiaxia and become an economically independent woman, it's great enough being this way. I don't want to quit."

The more she got to know Su Wensong, the more she recognized his excellence.

No wonder Xiaxia valued him so highly.

Now that Su Wensong is a factory manager, Sun Lanlan feels that only by doing well as a manager can she be worthy of the outstanding Su Wensong.

Knowing that she truly enjoys her work, Su Wensong, seeing her insistence, didn't say much more.

Granny Su can't stay up late, so she went to rest in her room after dinner.

Su Wensong swiftly cleaned up the dishes and went to prepare bath water for Sun Lanlan.

The weather was hot, and a daily bath was a must. Su Wensong was worried about her bathing alone during her pregnancy, so he always stood by the door.

Sun Lanlan laughed at him for being silly, but he still insisted.

Through the crack in the window, Sun Lanlan glanced at the man sitting on the stool outside.

The water in the tub was at the right temperature, and he even placed a small stool by the tub for her convenience.

The towel and soap were arranged on the side, and even her change of clothes was prepared in advance.

She was well-loved at her parents' house, pampered by her parents and three older brothers, but Su Wensong cared for her even more, down to the smallest details.

Previously, she thought her elder brother and sister-in-law, as well as her second brother and sister-in-law, had it good—working together, discussing matters together, sharing meals together.

She always thought that harmonious marital life couldn't get better than that.

But she never imagined that true marital harmony meant considering each other in everything, true care means spoiling someone to the depths of their heart.

Sun Lanlan was washing herself when suddenly she yelled out.

The man outside immediately stood up and rushed in like an arrow, "Lanlan, what's..."

His words suddenly got stuck in his throat.

The girl's body was glistening and beautifully curved.

Her long black hair spilled over her shoulders, partially veiling...

His deep gaze lingered on the trembling droplets of water, watching them eventually roll down her skin, making his Adam's apple unconsciously bob.

"You..." Su Wensong's voice was a bit hoarse as he coughed lightly, "Are you okay?"

Sun Lanlan stepped out of the tub and reached out to embrace his waist, resting her head on his shoulder, her voice frail,

"I think I saw a mouse earlier; it startled me. It's gone now, but my heart is still pounding—you can feel it."

Su Wensong mechanically raised his hand, his mind slightly dazed...