

## Switched M 341

### Chapter 341: Good Intentions

Lin Chuxia grew impatient with her babbling and was about to make an excuse to send her away when she heard Sister-in-law Feng shift the topic.

"It's not for me to say, but you city folks just don't know how to live frugally. No matter the time, one must always budget carefully. Look around our residential compound; in their courtyards, every family has a patch of vegetables growing, even in Jiang Hong's tiny yard, there are two beds of greens. With such a big yard of yours going to waste without some planting, it's truly a shame. But I know, as a city girl, you probably can't do farming. That's not a problem; I can plant for you. After all, we have such a deep relationship. With me around, I guarantee your yard will be well looked after, saving you a decent amount on vegetables all year round."

Only then did Lin Chuxia realize why she kept praising her yard—it turned out she had her sights set on it.

"There's no need for you to worry about that. Besides, I believe I've told you at our first meeting, I'm not some city person. When it comes to farming and gardening, I'm no worse than you. After all, my family are bona fide vegetable farmers. We know exactly what to plant in each of the four seasons, perhaps even better than you."

Sister-in-law Feng didn't take her words seriously at all, "Oh come on, don't be polite with me. Who would believe that? With your delicate, untouched hands, you saying you can garden? It's settled then. I'll bring a hoe tomorrow. The ground needs to be turned over and the soil loosened before anything can be planted..."

Lin Chuxia had encountered many people in her two lifetimes, but she had never met anyone quite like Sister-in-law Feng.

While most people would leave some room for pride, she insisted on acting obtusely.

"Xu San Ni, do you truly not understand, or are you just pretending to be confused?"

Xu San Ni was Sister-in-law Feng's real name. Considering that Feng Dajun and Qin Yang were colleagues, Lin Chuxia didn't want to fall out with her.

But she couldn't hold back any longer.

"My home, my yard—there's no need for others to point fingers and tell me what to do."

"Qin Yang's wife, look at you getting all worked up. I'm only doing this out of kindness," Sister-in-law Feng said with a face full of sorrow, as if she had good intentions but wasn't understood.

"Your kindness?" Lin Chuxia scoffed, "Qin Yang and the others are about to finish work. Should I call Feng Dajun over to see your 'kindness'?"

The mention of bringing the men into it visibly made Sister-in-law Feng blink in guilt, "It's just a small matter. The men already have it tough enough working and earning money; no need to bother them with this. If you really don't want it, then don't. It's not like I'm desperately forcing myself to work for your family, how could you possibly complain to someone about it?"

Despite what she said, Sister-in-law Feng didn't dare delay any further; she was afraid that once Qin Yang and Feng Dajun returned from work, Lin Chuxia would indeed drag her husband into the complaint.

Lin Chuxia could clearly see what she was thinking, and now that Sister-in-law Feng wanted to leave, Lin Chuxia wasn't about to let her.

"Look at how you're talking. What do you mean by complaining? You're so kindhearted, wanting to rush over to help us with our vegetable garden. Shouldn't I praise you in front of Engineer Feng? Not only do I want to praise you in front of Engineer Feng, but I also want to write two letters of commendation. One to be posted on our residential compound's bulletin board, and another to be sent to our unit's leaders, so everyone can learn from your helpful, selfless spirit."

Hearing that it might get escalated to the leaders, Sister-in-law Feng grabbed Feng Jingjing and ran out.

If this petty issue really reached the leaders, wouldn't Feng Dajun send her back to her hometown?

As Sister-in-law Feng fled in panic, Lin Chuxia called out from behind, "Sister-in-law, don't go! I'm about to write the letter of praise and I'll read it to you."

The moment she finished speaking, Sister-in-law Feng stumbled nearly falling flat on her face.

Behind her, Lin Chuxia's laughter rang out like tinkling bells.

Sister-in-law Feng clenched her hand and saw Feng Jingjing gripping it tightly with a worried face, which infuriated her even more.

"Do you see? They look down on us deep in their hearts. No matter how much we pour out our hearts to others, we can't buy their appreciation."

"Remember this in the future; however nice people are to you, it's all fake. Who knows how much they may despise you inside? You come from the countryside; why on earth should they be nice to you? They might even be harboring ill intentions, scheming against you. The only ones who truly care for you in this world are your father and mother."

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When Qin Yang got home, he saw that Lin Chuxia had already returned and seemed to be in a good mood.

"Did you get everything taken care of?"

"Yes, the school has been arranged. We can bring Jianjun over after a while. There's a staff dormitory at the Bun Shop, and I've spoken to Jia Liang about it; he can stay in the dorm for now. If he's willing to work while studying, I can offer him a salary as well."

Classes are mostly in the evening; there are no classes during the day.

If she directly provided him with a salary, Lin Chuxia could afford it, but she has always understood the need for moderation in such matters.

To earn more money, one must rely on their own abilities, and Qin Jianjun is not yet 20 years old—an ideal time for him to be tempered.

If he starts expecting to reap without sowing, believing that he can rise through the ranks solely based on family connections, there's no telling when he might make a massive blunder that could be unrecoverable.

"Alright."

Qin Yang was very supportive of this arrangement.

He had been wondering, what if his wife really decided to bring her nephew to live with them?

Although they had room in their home, having just tasted the sweetness of their life as a couple, he didn't want an extra wheel around.

It turned out that his wife was thinking the same.

Lin Chuxia then told Qin Yang about her encounter with Qin Juan, and upon the mention of his elder sister, Qin Yang nodded, "My elder sister is gentle and protective. She took care of me the most when we were kids. Back then, our grandparents were busy working in the fields to earn work points, and I was always with my elder sister—it was almost like she raised me."

However, after he began schooling and working, he was busy with his job and seldom contacted his family; his relationship with his elder sister became distant.

"Now it's better, we live closer, and we'll visit each other more often."

Lin Chuxia noticed his melancholy and comforted him.

"Speaking of which, Sister-in-law Feng came to our house again today."

Mentioning Sister-in-law Feng, Lin Chuxia was no longer angry but instead started smiling.

She recounted how Sister-in-law Feng brazenly wanted to turn their yard into her vegetable garden.

"I really don't understand what goes on in her mind. No wonder when we were in the Northwest, Sister-in-law Song and the others had complaints about her. Sister-in-law Song is usually a peaceful person."

Someone who could keep even Sister-in-law Song at a distance is truly a rare breed.

Qin Yang looked displeased, "I'll have a word with Feng Dajun later, and when we go back to fetch Jianjun, we'll bring Yuan Bao along."

Lin Chuxia agreed, although after seeing Sister-in-law Feng's behavior today, she might not come to their house again.

But who knows the thought process of an odd person? Having Yuan Bao at home could also serve as a deterrent.

If not, just close the door and let the dog out.

In the blink of an eye, the weekend arrived, and Qin Yang and Lin Chuxia went back to their old home in An City.

Knowing that everything at home was fine and the factory and Bun Shop were running smoothly, Lin Chuxia did not inquire further.

As a leader, she knew when it was time to let go.

Wasn't she cultivating Su Wensong and her elder brother's leadership abilities precisely so that she could completely let go one day?

Now she would be able to live a peaceful life in the city.

They had lunch at home with Mr. Qin and Mrs. Qin. In the afternoon, they visited Qin Liang's family.

Hearing that they were planning to take Qin Jianjun to the city for school, and it was to attend university, Qian Chuncao was incredibly excited.

"I knew it, being around accomplished people would lead to the children becoming successful too. Younger sister-in-law, I am at ease leaving Jianjun with you. Treat him as your own son; if he does anything wrong, don't hesitate to discipline him. I won't have any complaints, sister-in-law."

#### Chapter 342: Respect, Then Go With the Flow

Chun Cao didn't even need to say these words. Back when the incident with Xiyang Food Factory happened, Qin Jianjun was arrested by the police and taken to the station, and Chun Cao never uttered a word of complaint.

It was precisely because Lin Chuxia knew this that she made arrangements for Qin Jianjun's education.

When it was time to call Qin Jianjun back, Chun Cao was both packing his bags and repeatedly giving him instructions.

"When you're in the city, you must listen to your Aunt, whatever your Aunt tells you to do, whether it's to go east or west, you should do it. Whatever your Aunt says, it's all for your own good."

Qin Jianjun felt that his mom had a sort of blind adoration. Although he also thought his Aunt was very good, upon hearing his mom say this, he really wanted to ask, if his Aunt gave him a knife and told him to stab someone, would he have to do it too?

But then he thought it was better not to ask.

Qin Jianjun felt that if his Aunt really handed him a knife to stab someone, he might hesitate, but his mom would probably grab his wrist and force him to do it.

"Mom, I know, you've said this many times. Actually, the idea to study law was suggested by both me and my Aunt, and I wanted to study it..."

Before Qin Jianjun could finish speaking, he received a slap on the back of his head.

"What kind of nonsense are you talking? Without your Aunt, could you have even decided to study? That's the university you're going to. Once you graduate, you'll be a university student. Do you realize how hard your Aunt worked to find that school for you? Don't be ungrateful."

"Mom, how could I be ungrateful? I'll definitely study hard, and once I've learned, I'll also help out my Aunt," he said.

He wanted to study law specifically because he didn't want to see his Aunt suffer or be restricted any longer.

He always felt that his Aunt was very capable. He wanted to work with his Aunt and knew that he couldn't just focus on the present.

Chun Cao was very pleased with her son's attitude, "It's good you think this way. Work hard following your Aunt, and you definitely won't come out at a loss."

Saying this, she glanced around and lowered her voice, "Be somewhat perceptive, and don't act like your sister, wasting a good future."

Speaking of her daughter, Chun Cao sighed quietly to herself, feeling it was a momentary confusion that ruined her whole life.

Qin Jianjun had never thought highly of the things his sister did, "I know, Mom. I'm not thinking about finding a partner now. That sort of thing won't happen to me."

Although her son's agreement was to her liking, something about it didn't sound quite right to her ears. She still harbored the desire to hold her grandchildren soon.

Qin Yang and the others took the bus back to An City. Since they had an extra person, as well as luggage and a dog, Hou Xiaobao drove them in his 121 for the trip.

Now that Lin Chuxia had gone to the city, she felt the road was long and inconvenient, and thought about how nice it would be to buy a car to drive.

Upon reaching the city, she handed over Qin Jianjun directly to Jia Liang for arrangements.

Hearing that he could work during the daytime and attend school in the evening, not only did Qin Jianjun not feel that it was tough, but he also felt that his Aunt was looking out for him.

Having a job meant having an income. He had been following Uncle at the food factory for over half a year and his income was quite good.

It would really be unaccustomed for him if his income were suddenly cut off.

Once back at the residential compound, as Lin Chuxia was getting out of the car with Yuan Bao, their neighbor Hu Xingwei spotted them.

"Aunt Lin, is this your dog? It looks really alert and lively."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Yes, it is."

Although Yuan Bao was just an ordinary Shiba Inu, as it had been drinking Spiritual Spring water since it was a puppy, along with never lacking food and drink, it had grown a bit larger than average dogs, its fur shone brighter, and it overall appeared livelier.



Hu Xingwei approached enthusiastically, wanting to pet it but hesitated, looking at Lin Chuxia, "Can I pet it? Does it have a name?"

"It's called Yuan Bao."

Lin Chuxia gave a command looking down, "Yuan Bao, lie down."

Yuan Bao, still curious about its surroundings, nonetheless lay down upon its owner's command, sticking out its tongue and looking up at Lin Chuxia appealingly.

Hu Xingwei exclaimed, "Wow, it can actually understand human speech!"

Yuan Bao lazily glanced at him, the look in its eye was as if beholding a fool.

Hu Xingwei squatted down, reaching out to rub Yuan Bao's head, greeting it, "Hello there, Yuan Bao. Your fur is so smooth and silky. Can you understand what I'm saying, Yuan Bao?"

Yuan Bao probably couldn't stand this person's nagging anymore and whimpered at him.

Hu Xingwei got even more excited, his eyes shining brightly, "Aunt Lin, it can understand me, it really can understand what I'm saying."

Hu Xingwei even went to hug Yuan Bao's head, looking so fond of it that he was almost ready to give it a couple of kisses.

"I've always wanted to have a dog. The dog in my dreams is just like Yuan Bao, smart and sensible. It's just that my parents won't let me have one. They say it's not good if the dog runs out and bites someone in the residential compound. I have to show Yuan Bao to my mom. It's so sensible and obedient, how could it possibly bite people randomly? Even if it bites, that person probably deserved it."

Lin Chuxia: "..."

Young man, blind worship isn't good, you know.

There were also things that Mrs. Qin had brought for them in the car.

The new corn from the family home had just been harvested, and Mrs. Qin had especially prepared some corn grits these past few days, knowing that Lin Chuxia liked drinking corn grit porridge, and told her to bring it to cook for herself.

There was also cornmeal, wheat flour, soybeans, adzuki beans – she brought everything she could from home.

She even picked a round of vegetables from the vegetable garden.

Returning home this time was like stocking up her Bun Shop with goods.

These were things you could buy with money, Lin Chuxia was not short on cash, but the sentiment from Mrs. Qin was priceless.

Lin Chuxia knew Yuan Bao wouldn't bite people, so she went to help Qin Yang, Hou Xiaobao, and the others to move things into the house.

When she came out again after moving things, she saw Yuan Bao stuffing its stainless steel food bowl in front of Hu Xingwei repeatedly.

Hu Xingwei scratched his ears and cheeks in confusion. Upon seeing Lin Chuxia, his savior, he asked for help, "Aunt Lin, is it hungry? Can I go home and get it some steamed buns to eat?"

Lin Chuxia's inward eye-roll almost flipped heavenward.

Yuan Bao wasn't hungry. It was just showing off its food bowl again.

No choice, for her own furry child, she could only spoil it.

Lin Chuxia explained the origin of the food bowl to Hu Xingwei, simply saying that Yuan Bao had helped the police comrades and it was a reward from the police station.

Even so, Hu Xingwei still couldn't stop praising Yuan Bao.

For them, a police dog was too remote a concept, so having a dog that could compare with a police dog was already quite something.

"Hu Xingwei!"

Hu Yaping saw her brother being affectionate with the dog as soon as she came out and spoke in a stern voice.

"Who let you touch someone else's dog? Did you just ignore what mom said? You can get rabies if a dog bites you."

"Sister, Yuan Bao doesn't bite people," Hu Xingwei grinned with a mouthful of teeth.

Hu Yaping directly stepped forward to pull him up, retreating several steps back, with a wary expression, "What doesn't bite? It'll be too late to regret after you're bitten. Whose dog is this? Why isn't it leashed?"

Yuan Bao, encountering a stranger in an unfamiliar environment, was also on guard.

Animals like dogs are very sensitive to human emotions. It could feel the hostility from Hu Yaping. Although it didn't move from its spot, it still whimpered softly twice.

"Yuan Bao," Lin Chuxia called out.

Yuan Bao turned its head and obediently sat beside her.

Lin Chuxia first comforted it with a touch, then addressed Hu Yaping, "This is my dog. I only brought it over today. It's not leashed, but I will keep it in the yard."

She brought Yuan Bao here partly for companionship and partly as a deterrent.

That's why Lin Chuxia wouldn't leash Yuan Bao, and of course, she wouldn't let just anyone talk about how easy-going Yuan Bao was.

That's just how it is with furry kids – those who like them can understand them; those who don't, you could talk all day and they still wouldn't get it.

Respect, then let it be.

#### Chapter 343: Unappreciative

Hu Yaping glanced at Lin Chuxia and still politely greeted her, then fiercely told Hu Xingwei to hurry home.

Hu Xingwei was reluctant to leave Yuan Bao, and while being dragged home by his eldest sister, he turned back to wave goodbye to Yuan Bao, "Yuan Bao, I'll come play with you when I have time."

Yuan Bao graciously wagged his tail at him.

"Alright, you've shown off enough, let's go check out our new home."

Lin Chuxia patted Yuan Bao's head, and the dog immediately picked up his belongings and trotted into the yard with her.

From the nearby residential building Feng Dajun saw his wife's entire face pressed against the window and spoke with dissatisfaction, "What are you doing again? Sneaking around all day, what does that look like? If you want to watch, just go outside and look openly."

Sister-in-law Feng motioned with her hand, "Come here quickly. There's another small car at Mr. Qin's house, a few people are moving stuff into the house, what are they up to? Carting things in cart by cart, just to show off? Mrs. Qin is also a deceitful one, always saying she's from the countryside, but even city folk don't have the means like they do, right?"

It was about the Qin Family again, Feng Dajun's face soured.

"You should stop staring at others. Whatever kind of life they lead is their own business; we just need to live our own lives well."

"I just can't stand Mrs. Qin, so young and full of lies, crafty as a sieve. You don't know, a few days ago she even told me that she knows how to farm, could plant anything. Look at her, does she look like someone who can farm? Who from the countryside has such fair skin?"

Speaking of this, Feng Dajun had something he wanted to ask her.

"I heard from Mr. Qin that you've been asking to plant vegetables in their yard?"

Hearing this, Sister-in-law Feng's nerves tensed up, cursing Lin Chuxia in her heart.

But for such a trivial matter, that woman actually went to complain to his Da Jun.

She forced a smile on her face, "I just saw their yard sitting idle, and I wanted to help her out. Since you and Mr. Qin were transferred from the same place, and she has just followed, I thought I'd visit more often and help out if I could," but she didn't appreciate it.

Feng Dajun knew what she was thinking without her having to say it.

After all, the two had lived together for so many years.

"Do they need your help? When I said let's live in a yard, you insisted on an apartment. Now that we live in an apartment, you're concerned about someone else's yard. Xu San Ni, can't you just settle down a bit?"

Sister-in-law Feng felt aggrieved by his words, "Am I not calm enough? Ever since I came out here with you, I have been honest and polite, smiling and welcoming others, not even daring to speak loudly. Others look down on me because I come from the countryside, but it doesn't matter if they don't respect me, do you also think I embarrass you? Sure, you too come from the countryside, but at least you've become someone, it makes sense if you look down on me now. If one day you divorce me, find a city wife..."

"What nonsense are you talking about? When have I ever looked down on you?"

Feng Dajun frowned and cut her off.

Sister-in-law Feng looked pitifully at him, "Da Jun, I know I embarrass you, but I really have your best interests at heart. I know it's not easy for you at work. Everyone there has legitimate university degrees, and you, who got recommended through the work-study program, always have to look up to them. No matter how hard you try, they look down on you because of your background. I really feel for you, Da Jun. If there's anyone suitable, just divorce me and remarry, maybe find someone from the city. Though a city wife might not treat you as well as I do, and might not be as well received by the Yue Family, you would at least have a city wife and would be able to hold your head high in front of others..."

"What kind of talk is that? We've known each other since childhood, been married for years, and now we have Jingjing. Do you think I'm that kind of person?" Feng Dajun spoke with dissatisfaction.

"Of course, I know you're not that kind of person. I'm just upset about those people looking down on us. It's not your fault for being born in the countryside."

Her face showed pain, and tears were nearly falling.

"Only I know how hard you work, but what's the use of working hard? Look at Mr. Qin, he's not much older than you, and already holds the same position as you. Look at what they've been up to these past few days, surely earning more than you. Why? Just because they're city folk? And your director seems to favor Mr. Qin especially. The other day I saw them laughing and joking as they finished work. How is it

that you get treated differently? They look down on you because you come from the countryside. And the women next door, they all despise me and Jingjing, despise us for being country folk who don't know the rules..."

"Enough, let's not talk about this," Feng Dajun didn't want to discuss this topic, "I've spoken to the local elementary school a few days ago; Jingjing is nearly 9 and can't be delayed any longer. I told the teachers to let her directly join the second grade. I will teach her the first-grade material, and she should be able to catch up."

Sister-in-law Feng wanted to say that it was just a girl; why should he bother teaching her after a hard day of work when following first-grade would be enough.

But then thinking about her daughter going to school with a bunch of first-graders, she felt it would be embarrassing and thus agreed with a nod.

"That could work, but I wonder how much the tuition is? I'll check if we have enough at home."

"There won't be much tuition; I've already paid for her. You just need to take her to buy some notebooks and pens, and the school will provide the textbooks."

"Alright, I got it."

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Lin Chuxia had her little home neatly arranged, and before they could visit her eldest sister, Qin Juan and Ningning came over for a visit.

Seeing the two of them, Lin Chuxia warmly welcomed them into the house.

"Big sister, I was thinking of visiting with Qin Yang over the weekend, but didn't expect you to come first."

"I and Ningning didn't have anything today, so we just came over to take a look."

Qin Juan had come to snoop. As soon as they reached the yard, she could tell that this home was arranged very differently by her sister-in-law.

Indeed, whether it was the yard or the house, everything was arranged warm and decently.

Her second brother had married a good wife, who knew not only how to earn money but also how to live life.

She had learned from letters from home that her sister-in-law could do business, not only earning money for herself but also helping their eldest brother and the rest to make money.

It was a fortune for the Qin Family to have such a daughter-in-law, fostered over several lifetimes.

Now both her younger brothers, including their wives, were enviable figures in the village. Even their parents basked in their glory, with everyone saying how fortunate the old couple was.

Both sons were successful, and their daughter married well; daughter-in-law and son-in-law were both commendable.

#### Chapter 344: Something Doesn't Feel Quite Right

"Big sister, have some water."

Lin Chuxia's words interrupted Qin Juan's thoughts, and as she lifted her head, she also forced down the bitterness in her heart.

"Don't be busy, let's sit down and chat."

Lin Chuxia washed an apple, first gave a handful of candy to Ningning, and then peeled the apple for her.



Ningning was still so timid, sitting quietly on the sofa with big eyes taking in the surroundings. Finally, she whispered to Qin Juan, "Mom, little uncle's house is really nice."

Lin Chuxia liked children, especially those who were pretty and well-behaved human cubs. How could there be any reason not to like them?

"Ningning, do you want to stay at your little aunt's house for a few days? I'll take you to go boating in the park."

Ningning also liked her beautiful little aunt, who always smiled and spoke softly to her. Aside from mom, auntie and grandma were the kindest to her, with little aunt being the most gentle.

She looked at her mother expectantly, but Qin Juan laughed and said, "Look at her, she really wants to stay. But she can't. I've arranged for her to enroll in elementary school, she's going to register at the school tomorrow. The school has already started for a while, she'll fall behind if it's any later."

Ningning was a bit older than Zhuangzhuang.

Although Lin Chuxia found it strange that Ningning hadn't started school in September, it was the family's private business, and she wasn't the type to pry into everything.

The two then chatted about domestic life for a while, especially about Lin Chuxia opening her bun shop, Qin Juan was genuinely happy for them.

"Our Qin's Buns Shop on Construction Road in the city is also our family's, big sister can come and try it out some time, just mention my name."

Qin Juan already knew about the bun shop and responded with a smile, "Alright, I'll make sure to try it when I have time."

As they talked, it was almost noon. Lin Chuxia asked Qin Juan to wait for Qin Yang to come back as she was going to buy some groceries to entertain the guest.

But Qin Juan stood up, insisting on leaving.

"Big sister, you haven't seen Qin Yang yet."

Of course, Lin Chuxia wanted to invite her to stay for a meal, it was the most basic hospitality.

However, Qin Juan refused to stay, "We'll meet some other time, now that you're in the city, we're not going to lose touch, are we?"

She insisted so firmly that Lin Chuxia couldn't keep her any longer and could only say, "Then, I'll visit big sister's house with Qin Yang over the weekend."

This visit wasn't just to see the big sister; it was mainly to let the big sister's in-laws know that they had come to the city.

They were Qin Juan's maternal family, and as juniors, it was only proper to pay a visit to big sister's in-laws.

Qin Juan was still warm and gentle, "No need, actually I didn't mention it before, Ningning's grandfather is sick, he's been recuperating at home lately, and we don't want any disturbances. When things settle down at home, I'll invite you and Yangyang over."

"Since he is sick, we should come and visit, after all, we are relatives," Lin Chuxia said politely.

"No really, there's no need," Qin Juan quickly waved her hand, then feeling her reaction might have been a bit strong, she laughed and said, "It's not a serious illness, he'll get better with some rest. After all, you have things to take care of here, it's not too late to talk about it once everything is settled."

"Alright then, I'll go with what big sister says."

Lin Chuxia personally escorted Qin Juan and her daughter to the entrance of the residential complex and watched them walk away. As she turned around, she saw Qin Yang return.

"It's really not fortunate timing for your return; big sister just left."

"Big sister was here?"

Qin Yang followed the direction she had just looked towards, but there was no sign of anyone in the distance.

"Big sister and Ningning came over. I asked them to stay for dinner, but big sister wouldn't agree to it no matter what."

The two of them chatted as they walked back.

Qin Yang nodded, "She probably has other things to take care of at home, and her husband's family probably can't do without her."

Although he was always away for school and work and did not usually involve himself in family matters, he could still sense that big sister played an important role in that family, and usually, her husband did not like her to stay at her maternal home for long.

It seemed he was very attached to big sister.

Yet, if you were to say that big sister and her husband were very affectionate, Qin Yang always felt that something wasn't quite right.

Perhaps big sister and her husband were both the introverted type.

Lin Chuxia glanced at him, then silently looked away and quietly said, "Maybe you're right. Big sister mentioned that Ningning's grandfather is sick, and they might need to take care of him."

That explained it, and Qin Yang nodded in understanding.

The two quickly returned home.

There were two loofahs brought from the old home, and Lin Chuxia was preparing to make dumplings with a loofah stuffing.

Qin Yang helped her with the dough, and while Lin Chuxia was peeling the loofah, she suddenly said, "Do you understand what kind of person big sister's husband is? I heard from mom that when their family went through some troubles before, no one wanted to marry into such a family. It was because big sister's husband's grandmother had a good relationship with our grandmother that they married big sister to him. From this point, big sister should be living well in her husband's family, shouldn't she?"

After all, they had requested for her hand in marriage.

Qin Yang paused, as if this question was a bit beyond him, but he still tried his best to share what he knew with his wife.

"Back then, I was still in high school, and the situation was probably just as mom told you. After big sister got married to her husband, he treated her very well. Big sister is also capable. Although her husband's family situation wasn't great, our family helped out a little, and they managed to get by. Also, less than half a year after big sister married over, the policy changed, and big sister's husband's family had their situation settled by the policy, jobs were reassigned, and their life improved. Later on, her husband got transferred to the city for work, and the whole family followed."

Qin Yang glanced at Lin Chuxia, then continued, "Everyone says big sister has good fortune. Those aunties who thought that marrying big sister into that family was like pushing her into a firepit, now think she married into a good family. It's hard for us country folks to marry into a city family, just the household registration is a big obstacle. But then the policies loosened, even if rural people don't have food vouchers in the city, they could still buy and sell food freely to solve their dietary needs. In short, when any girl in the village gets married, they always mention big sister, hoping to have the same good fortune as her."

Lin Chuxia nodded; she had often heard these kinds of discussions when Qin Lihua got married.

"Does big sister's husband's family only have one son?"

Qin Yang nodded, "Just him, but he does have three older sisters, all married off early. When the Zhang Family ran into trouble, the three daughters, afraid of being implicated, all kept their distance. I'm not quite clear on what their relationship with the Zhang Family is like now."

After talking so much, Qin Yang finally noticed something was amiss, "What's the matter? Did big sister say something to you?"

"Big sister didn't say anything; she's always happy that our life is getting better and better. But somehow, I feel like she isn't living as well as we imagine."

Qin Yang immediately looked at her, "What do you mean?"

Lin Chuxia shook her head, "I don't know, it's just intuition. Big sister is too gentle; I always feel that with her personality, if she's in a troublesome mother-in-law's house, she would be the one being bullied."

Qin Yang chuckled upon hearing this, "I thought it was something serious. Big sister has always been this way, the kindest and most understanding. With her temperament, it's impossible for her not to get along with her in-laws. Moreover, initially, the Zhang Family asked for her hand in marriage; there is no way they would treat big sister badly."

Chapter 345: If You're Not Ruthless, You Won't Stand Tall

"Put oneself in others' shoes, Qin Yang felt that if one married under those circumstances, no matter what, he had to treat his wife with utmost respect and care."

"The saying goes - a wife from humble beginnings should not be deceived."

"Especially since the older sister is beautiful, gentle, virtuous, and well-mannered."

"However, Lin Chuxia was not so optimistic."

"One can tell if a person is living well from their eyes."

"Qin Juan's eyes only sparkled when she mentioned her parental home, filled with joy."

"But when Lin Chuxia asked about her in-laws, although her words didn't reveal anything, her gaze was entirely different from when she mentioned the Qin Family."

"Moreover, Ningning's temperament is also a big problem."

"Children from happy families are confident and sunny, and might even become spoiled brats and little tyrants; either way, they shouldn't be like Ningning."

"Seeing Ningning reminded Lin Chuxia of Sister-in-law Feng's Feng Jingjing; although Ningning was slightly better, she was just timid."

"But that cautious demeanor made people feel..."

"What are you thinking about?"

"Seeing her lost in thought, Qin Yang asked again."

"Lin Chuxia shook her head, hoping it was just her overthinking."

"Today, she inadvertently saw the older sister's hands; those were definitely not the hands of someone living an easy life."

"But none of this could prove anything."

"If you're really worried, let's visit this weekend, I miss my sister too."

"A few days later, I told my sister today that we'd visit this weekend; she said it's inconvenient, I promised her we'd go another time."

"That works too."

"Both of them got the filling and dough ready and then started making dumplings together."

"Lin Chuxia rolled the wrappers, and Qin Yang filled them, finishing them in no time."

"The shredded pork and loofah stuffed dumplings, with thin wrappers and tender filling, burst with meaty and loofah flavors and even had a savory broth – both Lin Chuxia and Qin Yang loved this alike."

"It's a pity that the older sister didn't stay for the meal, she likes it too, so Mom used to grow a lot of loofah every year; back when we were poor, we couldn't afford much meat, maybe just add an egg."

"Qin Yang reminisced about his childhood."

"Every time, the dumplings were counted; my older brother and I were big eaters, and we would never have enough during good meals, so dad and mom would eat a little and prod us to eat more, and my older sister, fearing I couldn't beat my brother, would secretly give me her share. Once, she overfed me so much that I had indigestion for two days while she went hungry."

"Lin Chuxia couldn't help but laugh, 'Why were you so gluttonous?'"

"Was this the Qin Yang she had understood before?"

"Qin Yang shrugged helplessly, 'I was young then, unaware of being full when eating, and we could eat white flour dumplings only a few times a year, of course, everyone wanted to devour them.'"

"Your relationships with each other are really good," Lin Chuxia sincerely lamented."

"In the Lin Family, it's also three siblings, but all they did was scheme against each other."

"In her past life, the eldest sister had always been scheming how much money she could get from her, using mom and brother without hesitation."

"The brother was simple-minded and was used as a pawn in the schemes by her mom and older sister."

"And she spent her life figuring out how to keep her family honest, so they wouldn't disrupt her life."

"This lifetime, she suddenly didn't want to scheme anymore, and unexpectedly, life became peaceful."

Originally, being selfish seems to reduce so many troubles.

It really is true that being too sensible leads to disadvantages.

One must be ruthless to stand firm.

Kind people are taken advantage of, even by their brothers, parents, and children.

Most of the time, those with kind hearts are the ones who get bullied.

People seek benefits and avoid harm; persimmons prefer the softer ones.

Lin Chuxia thought of her eldest sister again; with such a gentle nature, did the Zhang Family truly appreciate and treat her well?

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With each autumn rain, it gets colder; after several such rains, the weather has completely cooled down.

These past few days, Lin Chuxia heard some news that the textile mill in Ancheng County wasn't doing well, and there might be some changes at the factory.



In recent years, state-owned enterprises have been on a decline under the impact of privatization.

Especially the textile and garment industry, which slid even further due to the introduction of foreign capital in the south.

Lin Chuxia was concerned about the textile mill not for anything else, but because her bun shop in Ancheng County rented a storefront from the textile mill's property.

If Lin Chuxia guessed correctly, the changes in the factory included the sale of these seemingly unnecessary properties, so she planned to take some time to go back and take a look.

She was very satisfied with the location of the two-story building of the textile mill.

Jia Liang also had something to discuss with Lin Chuxia; he had been pondering over it for a long time.

"Now that each day is colder than the last, the cold dishes are selling less and less. However, many customers are asking if there are hot dishes available, particularly those who drink. They don't need anything too complicated, just a stir-fried egg and shredded potatoes, something warm to eat. We've lost some customers because we don't offer hot dishes. I am thinking, maybe we should hire a chef. We have a large kitchen, and adding a chef for hot dishes wouldn't be too restrictive. I just don't know if my idea is feasible?"

Jia Liang was also worried that his idea might be too inventive, as the two bun shops in Ancheng County only sold buns.

Lin Chuxia did not answer his question directly but instead asked, "Do you have someone in mind for the chef?"

Jia Liang was startled and scratched his bald head embarrassingly, "Indeed, there is someone, but he's not one of my former brothers."

Due to the incident with Tian Jinzhu, Jia Liang had some reservations about his previous companions.

Worried that Lin Chuxia might misunderstand, he quickly explained.

"He's been to our shop a few times to buy buns. We chatted coincidentally, and I learned he used to work at the State-Owned Restaurant. The State-Owned Restaurant has also undergone restructuring, right? The boss got his brother-in-law in there, who has no skills and only knows how to bully others using his connection. The guy has a fiery temper. One day, he had an argument with the boss's brother-in-law and flatly quit. He asked about work in our place. It's not that I pity him, but the mention of it also made me think that adding a chef for hot dishes in our shop is a good idea. There's also an empty floor upstairs."

When Lin Chuxia was looking for a storefront location in the city, she had asked Jia Liang to search according to the standards of the Ancheng County branch, which was also a two-story building, and so far, only the ground floor was utilized.

Lin Chuxia originally had this idea too but was worried about inadequacies regarding manpower and management. She feared it might turn into a scramble, better to practice with the bun shop for a while first.

"That's a good idea. When he comes over, have him prepare some dishes, and we can try them together."

When choosing a chef, merely looking at a resume is certainly not enough; one must also assess their cooking skills.

"Alright, I'll notify him tomorrow."

Getting Mr. Lin's approval gave Jia Liang an indescribable sense of accomplishment.

Lin Chuxia was infected by his excitement and pointed upstairs, "Let's go up and take a look first."

Jia Liang joined her upstairs.

The upper floor was originally designed as a large open space, a single flat floor without any partitions, reportedly used as an exhibition hall by some unit.

"Later, let's partition the upstairs into private rooms, keep two rooms around thirty square meters each; the rest can be made into rooms of around ten square meters."

In this era, the average citizen attending a meal at a restaurant was still a minority; relationships among various units were more common.

Providing a relatively private place gives an advantage in industry competition.

#### Chapter 346: Humiliation

"Since we're hiring cooks, let's hire two. We'll check out the one you mentioned first, and then you can try to recruit another one."

"If we renovate upstairs, dine-in can be paused for a few days. Pay attention to the kitchen, no unnecessary personnel should enter."

"And then there's staff scheduling and recruitment of new employees—those plans need to start now."

Lin Chuxia arranged everything one by one, and Jia Liang nodded repeatedly, "I understand, Mr. Lin."

Lin Chuxia watched him following behind and couldn't help but laugh at his honest and obedient appearance.

Who would have thought that he used to be a big shot on the streets?

Not to mention turning the clouds with a flip of a hand, he definitely had ability and credibility on the streets.

"By the way, did you go to the matchmaking appointment that Aunt Jia arranged for you? How was it?"

Jia Liang was still memorizing Mr. Lin's instructions, and he was caught off guard by the sudden change of topic.

"Why would you bring that up, Mr. Lin?"

"Work matters are important, but personal life is too. Tell me, how did you feel about the other party?"

Seeing his reaction, Lin Chuxia knew for sure that he had gone to the matchmaking.

She was quite curious.

Jia Liang felt a bit embarrassed by Lin Chuxia's question and sighed while looking out the window.

"Don't mention it. The matchmaker told my mom that although she's a bit older and not good-looking, she's capable. But when we met, that woman hardly spoke two words. At first, I thought she was just shy, but when I tried to talk to her alone, she showed her true colors. She stuttered, and it seemed like she had some mental problems. My mom was so angry she almost fought with the matchmaker. Even though I wasn't impressive in my early years, in my mom's eyes, I didn't deserve..."

Jia Liang felt too embarrassed to say that the woman wasn't just unattractive, she seemed to have intellectual issues upon seeing her.

Lin Chuxia frowned. Although Jia Liang, being bald and large-faced, looked tough, he wasn't ugly.

Yes, he is a bit old, but now he has a decent job. Could his prospects be that bad?

Little did she know, they purposely fixed him up with a woman with poor conditions because they saw that Jia Liang and others came from a lower background and were just helping out with individual businesses.

"Don't worry too much, it must be that fate hasn't arrived yet. When the right time comes, no one can stop your love life."

Jia Liang smiled, "I'm not in a hurry, it's just my mom. But after this, she might give up on getting the matchmaker for me."

After all, the old lady had taken a liking to a young waitress in his shop and kept thinking about getting him to bring her home as a daughter-in-law.

Jia Liang had no such intentions. Even a rabbit doesn't eat the grass by its burrow.

Moreover, the young girls in the shop didn't look like daughter-in-law material. He's much older, nearly old enough to be their father; he couldn't bring himself to do it.

After leaving the Bun Shop, Lin Chuxia rode her bike directly to the fabric store.

The last time she picked up the quilt cover, she had already given the clothing style to the fabric-seller lady. This time, she was there to pick up the finished clothes.

She had made a small suit for herself, and these past few days, she had also taken measurements for Qin Yang.

She saw a piece of woolen fabric at the fabric store, suitable for making suits.

Nowadays, suits are too broad with thick shoulder pads, and the trousers are also baggy. Lin Chuxia really didn't like that style.

But Lin Chuxia didn't plan to custom-make future-style skinny cropped trousers for him.

Fearing that Qin Yang would be laughed at by his colleagues for not being able to afford trousers and having to wear pants that expose his ankles,

Passing a street, Lin Chuxia saw Qin Juan hurrying on the opposite side, she wanted to greet her but held back.

She glanced at the pedestrians and vehicles on both sides, then turned around with her bicycle.

Then followed Qin Juan from a distance.

Qin Juan seemed to be in a hurry and did not notice Lin Chuxia behind her, until she entered a restaurant directly at the entrance.

Lin Chuxia looked at the sign; it was apparently a privately-owned restaurant, it seemed to be doing well, she could see many customers through the glass, but Qin Juan was nowhere in sight.

This restaurant had a storefront facing the street and a yard at the back, which also had a separate door.

Lin Chuxia locked her bike aside and went straight to the backyard.

The yard gate was closed, but she could hear voices inside.

"I'm asking you, why are you like this, always late? There are so many people waiting right outside to use the plates. If business is delayed, can you take responsibility?"

"I'm sorry, boss, I really had something urgent at home today. I won't be like this next time."

"You always have something 'urgent' at home, I'm not unreasonable, but you can't push your luck, everyone doing business has it tough, I do pay your wages, don't I?"

"Then... then maybe you could deduct some of my wages, boss."

"You even have to tell me that, of course I'll deduct from your wages. Being late every day, deducting fifty cents won't cut it anymore; I have to deduct two yuan today."

"Boss, I don't even earn one yuan after washing dishes here all day. You deducting two yuan..."

"This is your lesson, if I don't deduct more, you'll be late again next time."

Lin Chuxia couldn't listen any longer, and kicked the door open.

The restaurant owner was startled and glared at her, "Who are you?"

Qin Juan, seeing Lin Chuxia, also stood up in shock, "Sister-in-law!"

Lin Chuxia gazed directly at the owner with anger in her eyes, "She's already given you the reason, why must you be so aggressive, docking a day's wage isn't enough, you want her to work for free? Is this really a punishment or just bullying the honest?"

Upon such an accusation, a trace of guilt flashed in the owner's eyes, yet he still retorted with his neck stiff.

"Didn't I give her a chance? Ask her how many times she has been late this month. If it wasn't for my generosity, such an employee would have been fired long ago, and wouldn't earn a single cent."

"I don't need the money, who needs your few bucks," Lin Chuxia stepped forward and grabbed Qin Juan, "Sister, let's not work here anymore, let's settle the account and leave."

Seeing that the other party was tough, the owner realized it would indeed be a problem if Qin Juan left, as he would be short-staffed.

"What settlement? She wants to leave without finishing the work and still talk about settling accounts? Ask her what she promised me initially. If she doesn't complete a month, she can forget about settling accounts."

By this point, Qin Juan had also recovered, and quickly advised, "Sister-in-law, it's my fault for being late, it's not the boss's fault, it was agreed to work for a full month."

"Sister, he's bullying us, we don't need to earn this money, we don't have to take such humiliation."

"You young lady, how can you say that? What 'taking humiliation'? Ask Qin Juan how I treat her. With her qualifications, who else would hire her besides me? Qin Juan, say something fair, am I intentionally docking your wages?"

Qin Juan smiled apologetically at the boss, "I'm sorry boss, my sister-in-law doesn't know the situation, I'll explain it to her."

Seeing that Qin Juan was resolving the situation, the boss gave one more cold look at Lin Chuxia, huffed, and turned back to the front.

Qin Juan then apologized to Lin Chuxia, "Sorry sister-in-law, I know you mean well for me, but I was at fault to begin with, taking these returning late days would upset anyone."

#### Chapter 347: Disrespectful to Parents

"Big sister, this isn't something to be angry about. It's right for him to deduct your salary, but him taking multiple times your salary is just bullying."

"But the boss was just talking. He won't really deduct it. Actually, he's quite a nice person. Xiaxia, when I first spoke to the boss, I agreed to work for the whole month. Since I've said so, I have to continue."

Chuxia slightly frowned, "Big sister, is there something troubling you? Are the Zhang Family treating you badly, prompting you to come out and wash dishes?"

Those hands, no longer delicate, didn't just turn rough from housework, but from washing dishes or doing other heavy tasks.



"No," Qin Juan smiled, "Why would you think that? Ningning has started school recently and there was nothing for me at home, so I thought about getting a job. I can't do much else, so I took on washing dishes for others."

"Is it really just that?"

Qin Juan nodded again.

"Even if you want to find a job, you could go to our family's Bun Shop. Why suffer here? We don't have to work here. If need be, forget about the money, I'll compensate you."

Chuxia was still worried about Qin Juan being there.

Qin Juan's face beamed with reassurance, "I'm really not being treated poorly. The boss is actually quite generous, and this place is close to my home, which makes it convenient for taking Ningning to school. The Bun Shop is a bit too far."

"Really?" Chuxia was still somewhat doubtful.

Qin Juan patted her arm and winked at her, "How about I call the boss back and let him tell you personally?"

She gave another charming smile, "It's really okay, I've just been continuously late these last few days, and that's why the boss got angry. He's usually easy to talk to."

"Big sister, we are your family. If you're in trouble, you must tell us. Qin Yang and I are right here for you, we'll back you up no matter what happens. In our hearts, you are the most important."

"I know," Qin Juan said and then changed the subject, "Where are you heading? Haven't had food yet? Why not try the food at our restaurant? It's my treat."

"No need, big sister, I have to get back. I've been out too long; Qin Yang will be worried."

"Then hurry back, I'm really fine."

Chuxia finally nodded and whispered, "If the boss is unreasonable again, just stand up to him. You can't let yourself be taken advantage of. If needed, we'll help you fight."

Qin Juan couldn't help but laugh.

Watching Chuxia walk away, the smile slowly faded from Qin Juan's face, and her eyes began to redden.

"Xiaxia, I'm sorry. It's not that I don't appreciate what I have, but I can't burden you."

Mom and Dad say we are the pride of the village; how can I smear my siblings' reputations?

At dusk, Qin Juan finally finished a day's work, her hands soaked to a pale white.

"Boss, I will definitely come early tomorrow. These past days there have truly been issues at home, I'm sorry."

Even though the boss's face was stern, his attitude was not as harsh.

"Good that you know. I wasn't eager to deduct your salary today. Just be careful in the future. You should head home now."

Qin Juan thanked him again and then trudged home, exhausted.

As soon as she reached the doorstep, she heard Ningning crying. Qin Juan's face changed, and she rushed into the house.

She saw Ningning standing in front of the stove, crying miserably with her little hand scalded red, and the child's grandmother, Zhang Wenbin's mother, was still scolding beside.

Qin Juan didn't utter another word; she hurriedly pulled Ningning to the tap and rinsed her with cold water.

"Mommy, it hurts so much!"

Seeing her mother, Ningning finally dared to cry out in pain.

Her pain made Qin Juan's heart ache even more.

Her little hand was a patch of bright red, with several blisters forming.

"How did this happen?"

Before Ningning could answer, Mrs. Zhang had already given a response.

"Just a girl, always treated like a precious child; how old is she now, and she still can't cook?"

"Crying for what? It's because your mom doesn't let you do this or that; now you've hurt yourself cooking. If you're going to blame someone, blame your mom."

"A miss with a maid's fate, not everyone can have the life of a miss—utterly useless. How did our family raise two such good-for-nothings? The elder one just eats without doing any work, and the younger is the same. Like mother, like daughter. What's the point of going to school? You might as well just stay at home to wash and cook, might even prevent yourself from getting burned while cooking."

"Mom, how can you say that?"

Qin Juan couldn't take it anymore and spoke out directly, "Ningning's not even six years old, and you're making her cook. How can you bear it? She is your own granddaughter."

"I'm doing this for her own good. She's just a girl—how will anyone want her if she doesn't learn to cook? Do you think our Zhang Family is so kind to feed you, an idle person?"

Mrs. Zhang sneered with disdain, her eyes in a squint.

"Mom, you always say I'm idle. May I ask you, who washed the clothes for all these years, who cooked the meals, who took care of everything inside and outside the house? I really didn't know idle people could be so busy. It seems it's those who play cards all day that are truly busy."

As soon as Mrs. Zhang heard the mention of playing cards, she became instantly agitated.

"What do you mean? What's wrong with me playing cards every day? I have a son, and my son is willing to take good care of me; do I need your criticism? I haven't even complained about you freeloading at home every day, yet you're complaining about your elders. Is there any daughter-in-law as unfilial as you? We are truly blind to have married you, a daughter-in-law who is a disaster for our family, wanting to ruin me, an old lady, no less?"

"I didn't mean that; I was simply speaking to the facts."

"Psh, speaking to the facts! You are unfilial..."

Mrs. Zhang roared, causing the men in the house to come out as well.

Old Master Zhang, annoyed at the disruption to his TV watching, frowned and said, "What's all this shouting about? Can't you let a person watch TV in peace?"

Zhang Wenbin also looked exasperated.

Mrs. Zhang, seeing her savior, pulled her son and pointed at Qin Juan while scolding.

"Look at your wonderful wife. I hardly said a thing, and she starts taking issue with me. I've worked for this family all my life, and now I'm getting criticized for playing cards. Have I ever complained about her eating our food for so many years? There's no justice in the world! I've seen enough, and I don't even need to wait until I'm old—I might as well jump into the river now, to prevent you all from resenting me later."

"Wenbin, I've wronged you by finding this kind of daughter-in-law, someone who can't help you in the slightest and is a troublemaker to boot. If I had known the daughters of the Qin Family were like this, I would rather have you remain a bachelor than let you marry her..."

"Come here," Wenbin grabbed Qin Juan's arm, pulling her into the house.

Qin Juan was still rinsing Ningning's hand under cold water when she saw her mother being angrily dragged away by her father, frightening Ningning into crying loudly.

Mrs. Zhang slapped her, "Crying for what? Mourning? Without you, a harbinger of disaster, would the house be in this state?"

Trying to hold back her tears, Ningning sobbed spasmodically.

#### Chapter 348: Let's Get Divorced

Qin Juan saw Mrs. Zhang hitting Ningning, her eyes almost bursting with rage, trying to break free from Zhang Wenbin, but he was holding her tightly.

"Zhang Wenbin, Ningning is your daughter, she is so young and your mother let her cook and burned her hands, didn't you see? Now she is hitting the child, do you even deserve to be a father?"

With a "slap," Zhang Wenbin slapped Qin Juan across the face.

"I don't need you to tell me whether I deserve to be a father or not. It's because you are such a disappointing mother that Ningning has to cook at such a young age. In the end, it's all because you are incompetent."

Qin Juan, covering her face, saw both Old Master Zhang and Mrs. Zhang come into the room, looking on as if it were a spectacle. The oppression she had endured for years finally erupted.

"I was incompetent? Was it not your Zhang Family that came begging for my hand in marriage? I had a job too, but when I was giving birth, your mother behind my back gave my job to your third sister to please her, now the whole family is blaming me. Zhang Wenbin, have you forgotten what it was like when you first started working? Have you forgotten how your family had no jobs nor ration when I first married into your family and had to rely on my family for food? You say I'm heartless, where is your conscience?"

Zhang Wenbin's face turned from green to red, those many years of humiliating life he had long forgotten, but now Qin Juan was bringing it all up again.

"You wretched woman, if I don't teach you a lesson today, you really think you're the king of heaven."

After saying that, Zhang Wenbin raised his hand again.

Old Master Zhang and Mrs. Zhang were still making a fuss on the side.

"Hit her, hit her hard, this woman deserves a beating every three days to keep her in line; look at her now, she's trying to ride on our heads."

"Yes, hit her, hit her until she gives in."

"How dare she bring up the past. Do you think if the Zhang Family wasn't in dire straits back then, they would have married you? You really think you are a celestial maiden?"

Qin Juan, looking at these hideous faces, closed her eyes in despair, then reopening them with a fierce determination.

She aimed toward the door and rushed outside with all her might.

For the first time, she wanted to escape this home, this cage-like home, regardless of everything.

Mrs. Zhang was standing at the front door, cursing when she saw Qin Juan rushing towards her, she screamed in fright.

"You... what are you going to do... Ah..."

Unable to dodge, Mrs. Zhang was fiercely knocked away by Qin Juan, her head thudding against the door frame, causing her so much pain she couldn't get up for a long while.

The back of her head was incredibly painful, a warm flow seemed to trickle down.

Mrs. Zhang touched it with her hand and felt blood all over it, she fainted immediately.

Old Master Zhang saw his wife injured and pointed at Qin Juan to Zhang Wenbin, "Chase her, break her legs."

Without needing Old Master Zhang's instruction, Zhang Wenbin had already chased after Qin Juan the moment she ran outside.

Qin Juan was trying to grab Ningning, who was still in shock, to run out, but she wasn't able to pull her when she saw her child already picked up by Zhang Wenbin.

Being held in Zhang Wenbin's arms, the little one looked like a small chick, with only her little arm being pulled by Qin Juan, her little face full of terror.

"Mommy, Mommy..."

Zhang Wenbin sneered, "What? Thinking of running away? Hitting my mom and trying to flee? Let's see where you can go now."

He said, pulling Little Ningning back further, Qin Juan still holding Ningning's hand, knowing it would hurt the child's arm to keep pulling, but she couldn't let go.

"Wenbin, for the sake of our marriage, please let me go, let's get a divorce, you've been wanting to find a wife from the city anyway, isn't it okay if I let you?"

"Divorce?" Zhang Wenbin scoffed, "Qin Juan, do you really think you can rely on your family to support you? Thinking of divorcing me, what a dream. Do you want everyone at work to point fingers at my spine? Or do you know I'm about to be promoted and deliberately bring up divorce, just to get benefits? Let me tell you, there's no divorce with me, only widowhood. Be good and I can turn a blind eye, but if you dare try anything like today, if you dare hit my mom, I will make sure you never leave this house."

Zhang Wenbin finished speaking and harshly yanked the child in his arms.

Little Ningning cried out in pain, and Qin Juan quickly let go of her hand.

The next moment, the child was thrown aside, and Qin Juan's hair was grabbed by the other party.

Little Ningning was terrified and started sobbing loudly, "Mommy, mommy..."

Old Master Zhang frowned, "Wenbin, why are you making such a fuss letting the whole neighborhood hear? If there's an issue, resolve it inside the house."

Qin Juan's scalp hurt from being pulled, and she knew today's issues couldn't end peacefully. Probably encouraged by Lin Chuxia's words today, Qin Juan, for the first time, fiercely grabbed Zhang Wenbin.

"Damn, you wretched woman, how dare you grab me."

The heavy fists, larger than sandbags, hit harder than ever before.

Qin Juan endured the pain, gritted her teeth, and grabbed a teacup from the table, hurling it at the man.



"Rebellious, absolutely rebellious, Wenbin, I've told you countless times, you can't indulge this woman, look now, she's becoming defiant?"

Old Master Zhang, while pointing and cursing at Qin Juan, picked up the broom at the door and struck her fiercely...

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"What are you thinking about?"

Qin Yang saw his wife zoning out across from him, and offered her some food with chopsticks.

Lin Chuxia slightly frowned, not sure how to explain.

"Qin Yang, I saw your elder sister again today. She was working as a helper in a restaurant, and she was scolded by the boss for being late. I wanted her to work at our shop, but she thinks it's too far."

Qin Yang hadn't expected his elder sister to be cleaning in a restaurant.

When he was in the Northwest, he and his sister corresponded through letters, and he always thought her husband treated her well. She didn't need to work and just took care of the kids and did household chores at home.

He also knew what his wife was worried about.

"Where does big sister work? Tomorrow after I finish work, you take me there to see."

"Okay."

Lin Chuxia agreed.

Perhaps his sister had some things she felt uncomfortable saying to her, but would talk to Qin Yang.

The next day, Qin Yang deliberately left work a bit early.

The weather was somewhat chilly today. Lin Chuxia, who was cold, had already put on a wool coat; Qin Yang was alright, only wearing a sweater under his jacket.

The two rode their motorcycle to the restaurant where Qin Juan worked.

Knowing Qin Juan wouldn't be at the front, they directly went to the back door.

The back door was unlocked. Just as they reached the entrance of the courtyard, they saw the boss squatting there, washing dishes while constantly mumbling something.

As they approached, they heard him clearly.

"This Qin Juan, getting more and more senseless, always late, and she still blames me for docking her pay. With such an employee, if it weren't for my kind heart, who else would hire her? Next time she comes, I'll give her a piece of my mind."

"The kind-hearted boss, what exactly do you want to tell Qin Juan?"

Chapter 349: Pitiful?

A bright female voice startled the boss from behind, nearly causing him to fall on his butt.

When he turned around, he saw a young girl smiling at him eerily.

The boss recognized the girl at a glance as some relative of Qin Juan.

"What are you doing, do you know that scaring people can literally scare them to death?"

The boss was startled and said irritably.

Qin Yang directly shielded Lin Chuxia behind him, and Lin Chuxia was not afraid to confront him, "If you haven't done anything wrong, what are you afraid of? Where's my elder sister? Why are you talking behind her back?"

"You're looking for your elder sister, I'm looking for her too. She said she wouldn't come, and here I am waiting to use the dishes," the boss said waving his hand, full of resentment.

Qin Yang glanced at the greasy dishes and frowned slightly.

Does elder sister usually do this kind of work?

"Are you saying Qin Juan didn't come to work today?"

"Didn't come, nor did she take any leave," after finishing his words, the boss looked at Lin Chuxia again, "You see, I don't want to deduct her wages on purpose. Look at her work attitude, fishing for three days and drying nets for two, let alone being late and leaving early, but today she simply didn't show up at all. If it weren't for pitying her, why would I hire someone like that?"

"You said you pity her?" Qin Yang caught the keyword in the conversation.

"Yeah, having a child and still having to work, isn't that pitiful? The child is also well-behaved, just sitting quietly on the side, not making a sound for half a day, but now it's better, I heard the child went to school, Qin Juan doesn't have to worry about her child anymore..."

Qin Yang didn't continue listening to his rambling, "Thank you boss for taking care of my elder sister."

"It's nothing, Qin Juan works efficiently, and even if she's late, it never delayed my work... Hey, why are you leaving? If you see Qin Juan, tell her to come earlier tomorrow..."

Qin Yang pulled Lin Chuxia and walked out, hopped on the motorcycle and said to her, "Let's go check on elder sister's home."

Before, his wife said something and he didn't take it to heart, but today, after hearing the boss's words and seeing his elder sister's working environment, Qin Yang felt that he had been too naive before.

Perhaps elder sister's life isn't as good as he imagined.

The Zhang Family also lived in a residential compound, not close to where Qin Yang worked, but it didn't take long to get there by motorcycle.

Qin Yang had never been here before, and had only inquired about his elder sister through letters.

Fortunately, residents in a company's residential compound were mostly colleagues, so after asking around, they quickly found the elder sister's house.

Uncertain of the situation and being their first visit, they even bought a bag of fruits at the entrance of the compound.

It was dinner time, and the Zhang Family's courtyard was quite quiet.

Qin Yang knocked on the door, and soon a well-dressed, slightly overweight woman, who seemed to be in her fifties or sixties and probably older than Mrs. Qin but better maintained, came out.

Lin Chuxia's gaze fell on the bandage on the woman's head.

Qin Yang recognized her and greeted her politely.

She looked back and forth between Qin Yang and Lin Chuxia before smiling after Qin Yang introduced himself.

"Oh my, so it's Qin Juan's brother, look at this, after so many years I almost couldn't recognize you, and this is your wife?"

Qin Yang nodded and Lin Chuxia also followed his lead, calling out, "Mother-in-law."

Mrs. Zhang clicked her tongue, "I've heard you married a beautiful wife and it sure is true, look at this girl, so handsome, definitely a city girl, such fair and delicate skin."

Qin Yang looked inside the house, "Mother-in-law, where's my elder sister?"

Normally, if they were speaking outside, the people inside should be able to hear them. Big sister would know they've arrived and wouldn't fail to come out to greet them.

Mrs. Zhang clapped her hands, "Such bad timing, Qin Juan went to work. If I had known her maternal family was coming, I would have had her take the day off."

Mrs. Zhang was all smiles, and even asked Zhang Wenbin, who was just coming out from inside the house.

"Do you know where Qin Juan works? Why don't you go get her and tell her that her maternal family is here? With my head injury, I'm unable to prepare a proper welcome for them. It would be great if Qin Juan could come back and buy some nice groceries."

Despite saying so, Mrs. Zhang showed no intention of inviting them inside.

Zhang Wenbin smiled at Qin Yang and said, "Your sister told me you transferred over here. I was actually thinking, we could swing by during the weekend. You've just moved, so there must be a lot of things to get done; we can lend a hand."

"No need, brother-in-law, the house is already sorted out. But if you and big sister wish to visit, we're always happy to have you."

Qin Yang's reply was indifferent, and he glanced inside again.

Zhang Wenbin seemed to realize just then, "Look at us, so caught up chatting that we forgot to invite you in! How silly of us, right? Oh, and mom, why haven't you invited them inside yet? Wenbin, go fetch your wife."

Upon hearing this, Zhang Wenbin was about to leave when Qin Yang said, "No need, brother-in-law. I just came from where big sister works; she didn't go in today, so Xiaxia and I thought we'd come over to check in."

"Not at work?" Mrs. Zhang looked puzzled at Zhang Wenbin.

The latter slapped his thigh, "Oh, silly me, my memory! Juanzi didn't go to work today. She said she was taking Ningning to buy a couple of pieces of clothing. The weather's getting cold, and the kid grows so fast. Last year's clothes are all too small now."

As he spoke, he looked outside, "It's getting late; she should be back any minute now."

Lin Chuxia, however, had her eyes on the injury on Mrs. Zhang's head, "Mom, how did you get hurt? It looks like it's a recent injury from the last couple of days."

Mrs. Zhang touched the back of her head, "Ah, let's not even mention it. I was cooking for the kids and slipped on the kitchen floor. It's true what they say, the older you get, the less useful you become. Not only did I not help out, but I even caused more trouble for them."

"Oh, I see. You should definitely be more careful then."

"You can say that again."

Qin Juan was not at home, and neither Lin Chuxia nor Qin Yang stayed at the Zhang Family's place.

Once outside, Lin Chuxia said with a stern face, "They're lying."

Qin Yang looked at her.

"Big sister isn't irresponsible, right?"

Qin Yang nodded, "Big sister has the kindest nature. She's gentle with everyone and tries to accommodate everybody."

"That's why, how could big sister go shopping with Ningning while she had work waiting for her? Even if she really wanted to take Ningning shopping for clothes, big sister would have asked for leave from her boss."

Moreover, Zhang Wenbin might have concealed it well, but Lin Chuxia still noticed the scratch on his neck, and the injury on Mrs. Zhang's head was too abnormal.

Qin Yang's expression darkened immediately, and he turned to go back to the Zhang Family's house.

Lin Chuxia stopped him, "We don't know the situation now. If you go in like this, the Zhang Family will definitely do everything to stop you. Let's first go to the Bun Shop to call some people."

Besides Mrs. Zhang, there were also Zhang Wenbin and Old Master Zhang in the Zhang Family. Although the two men could force their way in, under unclear circumstances, if anything should happen, it's better to have more outsiders as witnesses.

"You find a place to wait for me, I'll go get some people."

Qin Yang could ride his motorcycle fast.

"Alright, I'll wait for you here then. If big sister really took Ningning shopping for clothes, they should be back by now."

This position was on the must-pass route to the Zhang Family's house.

#### Chapter 350: Making Trouble Unreasonably

Qin Yang went fast, and in less than half an hour, Lin Chuxia heard the sound of a motorcycle again.

Qin Yang returned, bringing along Jia Liang and a worker from the Bun Shop.

The worker wasn't exactly a young lad either; he had a large face and thick neck, around 40 years old, named Lu Dafa.

"Xiaxia, has your elder sister returned?"

Upon seeing Lin Chuxia, Qin Yang asked first.

It was already dark at this point, and if they went shopping with the kids, they should have returned by now.

Lin Chuxia shook her head, her face showing mounting concern.

"Mr. Lin, let's just go inside and see for ourselves. If they have nothing to hide, they won't stop us from entering," Jia Liang was the most experienced with this type of situation.

"Let's go and check again."

They wouldn't feel at ease today until they saw their elder sister.



Lin Chuxia took the prepared foods brought by Jia Liang and knocked on the Zhang Family's door again with Qin Yang.

Zhang Wenbin was clearly bewildered when he saw Qin Yang and Lin Chuxia appearing at the door again.

"Qin... Qin Yang, why have you come back again?"

Lin Chuxia scanned several rooms. It was dark now and the lights were on in the house.

The room on the west side was pitch black, and based on the usual layout of a household, with three main rooms: the east is where Mrs. Zhang and Old Master Zhang stayed, the west should be Zhang Wenbin and Qin Juan's room.

"Oh, I bought some prepared foods on the way, thinking elder sister would like this, so I brought some over for you. Has elder sister not returned yet?"

"Oh, that's very kind of you. Your elder sister hasn't returned yet."

While Zhang Wenbin spoke, he did not invite them into the house.

Lin Chuxia and the others didn't think much earlier, knowing that the elder sister wasn't home and didn't plan to stay long.

Now that they thought about it, even though Zhang Wenbin verbally invited them in earlier, Mrs. Zhang and he were blocking the way completely, clearly not intending to let them in.

"It's so late and she hasn't returned yet, does the brother-in-law know which shopping center elder sister took Ningning to? I can have Qin Yang go look for them since it's already dark."

"There's no need for Qin Yang to go, I was just about to go myself, I'll go find them now," Zhang Wenbin said and then went to push his bicycle.

Mrs. Zhang also added from behind, "Exactly, it's so late. I told you to go look for them earlier, but you insisted on finishing the news broadcast. Is the TV more important than people?"

"Mom, I'm wrong, I'll go find them now."

Zhang Wenbin displayed an agreeable demeanor.

Lin Chuxia directly pulled Qin Yang along, "Then, please go find them quickly, brother-in-law. Qin Yang and I will wait inside."

Zhang Wenbin was startled, "Isn't Qin Yang coming with me? It'd be faster if the two of us looked together?"

Mrs. Zhang also guarded the doorway, laughing along, "Indeed, it's faster together. It's such a big place, who knows where she might have gone?"

At this moment, Qin Yang's expression had completely cooled down, "Where exactly has my elder sister gone?"

"Qin Yang, what do you mean by that? If you ask me, who should I ask? Your elder sister is an adult, and if she takes the kids out for some fun, I certainly can't tie her up and stop her from going, can I?" Zhang Wenbin's temper flared as well.

Mrs. Zhang, looking peeved and exasperated, gave Qin Yang a look that suggested he was being completely unreasonable, her narrow eyes dangling as she said, "Your brother-in-law had been working all day, I'm here injured, and your elder sister hasn't come back yet. We haven't even said anything, how come you and your family are the ones acting hard-done-by now?"

Qin Yang had no patience for idle talk and barged into the house.

Old Master Zhang was in the house and seemed like he was about to say something upon seeing Qin Yang's furious demeanor.

Qin Yang went directly to search for someone. The living room was clear at a glance, the light in the eastern room was on and the door wasn't shut, he had seen through the glass earlier that there was no one inside.

Qin Yang then pushed open the door to the western room; with a "clack", the light turned on. The room was clean and tidy, equipped only with a bed and a wardrobe, simple and orderly.

Still not giving up, Qin Yang opened the wardrobe, inside the clothes were neatly arranged.

He then lifted the bedsheets to look under the bed.

Zhang Wenbin stood at the door, his face showing resignation mingled with suppressed anger, "Qin Yang, are you satisfied now? I don't know what you are trying to do, your elder sister is a grown adult, and how could I possibly hide her? It's been said already, she went out to play with Ningning. You simply don't believe it, I don't know what you have been told to harbor such a big misunderstanding about me. Don't you know how I feel about your sister?"

Upon saying this, he glanced at Lin Chuxia.

Mrs. Zhang also showed a face full of impatience, "Today, just because you are Qin Juan's brother, we have let this go; otherwise, I would have called your parents here to have a proper talk. You coming to our house in the middle of the night to rummage through our things and demand people, if someone didn't know better, they might think we've done something nefarious. Do you still care about Wenbin's reputation? Alright, seeing that you are the younger generation, I won't make a big deal out of it either, just go back. When Qin Juan returns, I'll have her find you. My head is killing me from all the trouble you've caused."

Upon hearing this, Zhang Wenbin hurried to support Mrs. Zhang, "Mom, is your wound hurting again?"

Then he turned to Qin Yang with an apologetic look, "Seeing my mom like this, I won't keep you here any longer. I'll have Qin Juan come over to see you tomorrow, whatever matter you siblings have, settle it then, and stop causing trouble at home."

Qin Yang frowned, his lips tightly pressed.

Lin Chuxia made a quick decision and turned to walk towards another room.

"Hey, where are you going?"

Zhang Wenbin let go of Mrs. Zhang and followed her.

Old Master Zhang was in the outer room, and upon seeing Lin Chuxia heading into their room, quickly intercepted her at the doorway.

"The main door is over there, you're going the wrong way."

Zhang Wenbin also caught up, "Sister-in-law, isn't this inappropriate? This is my parent's room. You came to our house, and even if you were unreasonable in my room, how could you run into my parents' room? Don't you know the basic courtesy?"

By now Qin Yang had also followed, hearing Zhang Wenbin accusing his wife, he moved to shield her with his body.

"Xiaxia is just worried about my sister. We're all family here, why can't she have a look?"

"Heh, what's the issue? To think you'd even ask that. I'd like to question you instead. Qin Juan just went out with the child for some fun. What do you two mean by this? Even among relatives, isn't this too much? Since you don't care about decency, let me also tell you that you're not welcome in our house, please leave now."

Lin Chuxia faced him and asked, "Brother-in-law, are you feeling guilty?"

Zhang Wenbin glared back, "What would I feel guilty about?"

"If brother-in-law is not feeling guilty, then let me have a look in that room, and if I've indeed been rash, I'll apologize to you all."

"I don't need your apologies. Why should my room be open for you two," Mrs. Zhang also stood by the room door.

Lin Chuxia narrowed her eyes slightly and called out to the outside, "Jia Liang."

Jia Liang and Lu Dafa had been waiting outside the whole time and upon hearing Lin Chuxia's summon, they moved inside one after the other.

Jia Liang, a tall and large man with a bald head, was an intimidating presence.

Lu Dafa, beside him, didn't back down either, also sporting a buzz cut and a robust figure.

Seeing the two entering, Zhang Wenbin's face grew even uglier.