

## Switched M 451

### Chapter 451: The New Son-in-Law Pays a Visit

Although they were far from Qin Family Village, their commotion was too great, attracting onlookers from afar.

Some, finding it quite the spectacle, put down what they were doing and headed their way.

Zhang Wenbin felt utterly humiliated and, with his anger having nowhere to vent, kept a stern face as he urged Li Dongmei to quickly help with the bicycle.

Li Dongmei also felt humiliated and summoning unexpected strength, she single-handedly pushed the bicycle up to the side of the road.

Zhang Wenbin followed and got up as well.

Once on the main road, without hesitation, they pedaled away as if escaping.

Not until they had gone a good distance did Zhang Wenbin look back, his face so dark it seemed ink might drip from it.

By the time they entered Xiaoqingshan Village, a suffocating gloom still hung heavy over Zhang Wenbin's chest.

Li Dongmei also felt the chilly tension behind her and tried to break the ice with random chatter, finally making Zhang Wenbin's tone sound less grim.

The Li Family had long known that today Li Dongmei would bring her new husband home, to the extent that even Li Guangyuan didn't set up his stall today.

Lin Jiayi was especially dispatched by Old Mrs. Li to buy meat and cook early in the day.

It was not easy for Li Guangyuan to make money, yet Old Mrs. Li demanded that she buy two pounds of meat, and mentioned that as Li Dongmei's siblings-in-law, they should give a dowry of 200 yuan.

This displeased Lin Jiayi greatly.

What's this about giving more dowry money just because they are from the city? It's only a second marriage for someone who's been divorced.

Now hearing the noise at the door, knowing that her sister-in-law returned with her husband, Lin Jiayi wanted to pretend she didn't see them, but upon lifting her head and seeing the person behind Li Dongmei, she stood frozen in place.

She may not have had many encounters with this man in a previous life, but Lin Jiayi was absolutely certain that this man should be Qin Juan's big sister's husband, Zhang Wenbin.

How could Zhang Wenbin be together with Li Dongmei? And how did he become a second marriage prospect? Had he divorced Qin Juan?

Lin Jiayi clearly remembered that in her previous life Zhang Wenbin never divorced Qin Juan.

Looking at Zhang Wenbin now, despite his relatively neat clothing, he seemed a world apart from the city official he was in the past life.

Even, judging by his appearance, he looked several years older than the Zhang Wenbin she saw later.

Lin Jiayi rubbed her eyes, wondering if she was mistaken, when she heard Li Dongmei introducing him to Old Mrs. Li and Li Guangyuan who had come out to greet them.

"Mom, big brother, this is Zhang Wenbin, just call him Wenbin," said Li Dongmei.

Zhang Wenbin was also sizing up the yard at the time.

The dilapidated wall surrounded three shabby rooms, and the yard too was in disarray.

Farming tools were piled on one side, firewood on the other, with chickens and ducks running all over, their droppings everywhere.

One could even smell a stinking odor in the air, as if coming from the pigsty.

Zhang Wenbin thought of Qin Juan's home, also a rural household, but the Qin Family's yard was always tidy and clean.

The Qin Family also raised chickens and pigs, but they were all penned up, certainly not running amok and defecating all over the yard.

As he was thinking, he felt something soft underfoot. Looking down, he noticed chicken droppings on the sole of his shoe.

Li Guangyuan had already come to greet him, after all, this was the man his sister brought home, likely soon to be his brother-in-law.

Li Guangyuan greeted Zhang Wenbin, but saw that the other didn't even glance at him and was looking down at something with disgust.

Following his gaze, he saw the chicken droppings Zhang Wenbin had stepped in.

With a laugh he said, "Our countryside is like this, can't compare to you city folks, just rub it off and it'll be fine."

While speaking, he even demonstrated to Zhang Wenbin how to scrape the chicken poop off his shoe soles on the ground.

Zhang Wenbin wished he could just throw the shoes away but knew it wasn't possible, so he had no choice but to bear the disgust and learn to scrape his shoes against the ground like Li Guangyuan.

After he had scraped the chicken poop clean, he followed Li Guangyuan into the house.

Old Mrs. Li watched the new son-in-law who hadn't yet entered the door, her gaze growing even deeper.

Li Dongmei saw the look on her mother's face and knew it wasn't a good sign, hurriedly calling to Zhang Wenbin, "Brother Bin, didn't you buy some pastries for Mom?"

Then she turned to Old Mrs. Li with a big smile and said, "Mom, Brother Bin knows you like peach pastries, so he specially bought the best ones from the grocery store in town."

At this moment, Zhang Wenbin also remembered that this was his first visit to someone's home, and he had come empty-handed.

Even though he wasn't fully satisfied with the Li Family, he did want to marry Li Dongmei as his wife, and his upbringing wouldn't allow him to visit without bringing anything.

But when he turned to look at the handle of the car, where was the shadow of any pastries?

Li Dongmei was also stunned, suddenly recalling how they had to rush on the road earlier because of the villagers' rubbernecking, hurriedly pushing the bicycle away, and actually forgetting the pastries.

It was Zhang Wenbin's first visit to her home, and of course, Li Dongmei didn't want him to lose face, so she quickly explained, "Oh dear, look at my memory. Brother Bin clearly gave me money to buy the pastries, and I managed to forget. Mom, don't be angry. I'll give you the money in a bit, whether it's money or pastries, it's all Brother Bin's kind intentions towards you."

Old Mrs. Li knew her daughter's little schemes all too well, but what she thought was even more likely was that Zhang Wenbin had never intended to buy pastries for her.

Perhaps the money for the pastries mentioned by her daughter was added by the daughter herself.

Thinking about her older son-in-law, whom she didn't have much respect for, he at least brought three gifts when he first visited.

Her younger daughter boasts about her city-dwelling son-in-law, yet he didn't even bring a crumb of pastry.

This was clearly a sign of looking down upon them.

Regardless, since the guest had arrived, they still had to be treated well, so Old Mrs. Li had Lin Jiayi quickly prepare a meal, while she went inside the house.

Lin Jiayi watched the scene unfold as if it was a joke, feeling somewhat unreal.

But she didn't say anything, and surprisingly, a sense of schadenfreude arose in her heart.

She remembered Qin Juan's husband was no good fellow, later hearing that he would beat his wife, often leaving Qin Juan covered with bruises.

It was only when her own daughter came to the Qin Family for help that they found out what kind of life Qin Juan had been living through those years.

Qin Han and his wife had turned upside down the Zhang Family; Zhang Wenbin's reputation at work had suffered, which led him to restrain himself a bit.

Although she didn't know how Qin Juan managed to divorce in this lifetime, somehow Zhang Wenbin got entangled with the younger sister-in-law.

Lin Jiayi was quite looking forward to seeing whether they could make it work.

Weren't they always complaining about the matches she found for Li Hongmei not being good enough?

Didn't they think that her matchmaking was throwing them into a pit of fire, looking down on the people she found for them?

She wanted to see what kind of spectacle Li Dongmei and Zhang Wenbin could make of their life together.

Lin Jiayi wasn't disappointed indeed, as trouble erupted during the meal.

Today's two pounds of meat, Lin Jiayi cooked most of it into braised pork, and a small part was stir-fried with vegetables.

Selling vegetables at home, the meal at noon appeared quite lavish.

Eight dishes, both cold and hot.

When serving, Li Dongmei, to cater to Zhang Wenbin, placed the braised pork, which should have been in the center, in front of him.

Throughout the meal, Li Guangyuan kept toasting, Zhang Wenbin barely drank a few sips of alcohol, but he went on eating meat, one piece after another without end.

A big bowl of braised pork was almost entirely consumed by Zhang Wenbin's stomach.

Chapter 452: She Just Wants to Watch the Show

Old Mrs. Li's expression was already so unsightly.

Li Dongmei sensed something and served Zhang Wenbin a chopstick-full of stir-fried celery, "Wenbin, try this stir-fried celery with meat. It's really fragrant, and celery is expensive now."

Zhang Wenbin glanced at the chopstick-full of stir-fried celery in his bowl, and disdain flashed in his eyes.

Especially with Li Dongmei's remark about it being expensive.

How expensive could it get?

Reminding him that celery is expensive, as if he's that superficial, caring about the price of a dish?

Such a country bumpkin, without any sophistication.

Li Guangyuan added tea to his cup, "Wenbin, drink some water, it's getting cold."

Zhang Wenbin looked at the rim of the cup but didn't touch it.

Lin Jiayi sneered internally, these two clueless ones, he disdains your family's dirty cups.

Sure enough, after the meal and having a bowl of meat, Zhang Wenbin, probably overwhelmed by the meat and desperately thirsty, called Li Dongmei over.

Right in front of everyone, he made Li Dongmei scrub the cup clean before he finally drank a cup of water.

After drinking that cup of water, Zhang Wenbin didn't stay at the Li Family's place for much longer, he rushed off to wait for the public bus that passed by the village to head to the county, and left by himself.

It was as if he feared that staying at the Li Family for even a moment longer would make him catch lice or something.

Li Dongmei naturally ran to personally see Zhang Wenbin off onto the bus.

Lin Jiayi cleared away the dishes and, seeing Old Mrs. Li's gloomy face, could hardly keep from laughing out loud.

This is the city dweller you've been yearning for.

Not long after, Li Dongmei returned, humming a tune as she walked, clearly in a good mood.

Lin Jiayi wanted to relish the drama, so she quickly threw aside the dishrag and pretended to go inside to soothe the children.

In the room, Li Dongmei was eagerly asking Old Mrs. Li, "Mom, what do you think of Wenbin? He's alright, isn't he? Don't mind that he didn't talk much today, he was just being reserved. He was even worried about making a bad impression on his way here. Oh, right, here's some money he gave to buy you some snacks, you keep it. You know, Wenbin hurt his arm a while back and it hasn't fully recovered, so he gave me the money to buy something for him, and it's my fault for forgetting."

Old Mrs. Li's face was stern, looking at Li Dongmei's joyous expression, she sighed inwardly.

After all, it was her own dear daughter, and she knew her daughter's desire to marry a city dweller.

Of course, she also hoped her daughter could marry a city man and enjoy a better life, and even when her daughter mentioned the man was divorced, she didn't see it as a problem.

But today, upon meeting him, Old Mrs. Li still hesitated.

"Dongmei, didn't you say that man was only a few years older than you? Looking at him, he must be in his thirties, right? That's not just a little older, plus he's divorced. It won't do; let's look for someone else."

Old Mrs. Li couldn't directly say that the man looked down on their Li Family, uncertain of how he would treat her daughter in the future.



Afraid that speaking the truth would hurt her daughter's self-esteem.

Being born into such a family wasn't her daughter's fault.

"I've heard that these divorced folks could have some issues. If he was that good, why would his first wife divorce him? I've thought it over, you're still young. Let's wait a few more years, maybe you'll find someone even better."

Upon hearing her mother's disapproval, Li Dongmei became obstinate.

"Mom, what are you saying? What's wrong with being divorced? Wenbin's divorce was because that woman was no good. I've asked around; his ex-wife didn't work, was lazy and gluttonous, and to top it off, wasn't filial to her in-laws. That's not all, she was also a spendthrift who had no clue how to manage a household. The worst part is she was unfaithful. Even their child might not be his, so when they divorced, Wenbin didn't even take the child. Divorcing such a woman was letting her off easy."

Whether Old Mrs. Li believed this or not, Lin Jiayi certainly didn't.

Watching Li Dongmei's righteous indignation, my heart sneered coldly.

She heard? I'm afraid she heard it from Zhang Wenbin's mother.

Although I don't like the Qin Family, I also know that Qin Juan is nothing like what Li Dongmei describes.

She is a woman with such a good temper that it's almost pathetic.

Dare to put a green hat on Zhang Wenbin? I'm afraid that green hat is the one Zhang Wenbin put on Qin Juan.

I remember, in my past life, Qin Juan seldom returned to the Qin Family, and I only saw her a few times, a mere bag of bones, a complete pushover.

But what does that have to do with me? I'm just here for the spectacle.

Today, Li Guangyuan was also displeased with this man, but he dared not speak out in front of his mother and sister, just stood aside, puff puff, smoking.

Old Mrs. Li, seeing that she can't persuade her daughter, suddenly became furious.

First, she turned to Li Guangyuan and roared, "I've told you long ago, we have distinguished guests at home today, and asked you to tidy the house properly. This is the time to support your sister, but you did the opposite, not even preparing a few decent dishes, thinking a bowl of braised pork would be enough to send them off."

Lin Jiayi's eyes widened in disbelief, what does she mean by 'a bowl of braised pork would be enough to send them off'?

I would also like my family to send me off with a bowl of braised pork.

But she also knows that Old Mrs. Li isn't really complaining about the lack of dishes she prepared; most likely, she's still upset for not getting a taste of that meat.

Worried that the fire might turn on her, she took her son and left the room.

Old Mrs. Li, after scolding her son, intended to scold her daughter-in-law, but seeing the daughter-in-law had left, turned to scold Li Guangyuan again.

After driving everyone away with her scolding, she looked at her youngest daughter and could only sigh in despair.

In the evening, Lin Jiayi finally saw Li Dongmei, who had been locked in her room all afternoon, in the kitchen.

Now looking at the little sister-in-law, her eyes were red as if she had been crying.

I don't know what Old Mrs. Li said to her that afternoon.

Turning her eyes swiftly, seemingly casual, she spoke, "Today it's our fault for not being thorough in preparation; we should have stewed a chicken. I see our new brother-in-law Wenbin is elegant and not like the men from our village; he deserves a good welcome."

Li Dongmei looked up at Lin Jiayi, "You only realize now? No wonder they say people from your village lack foresight. The Zhang Family usually enjoys fish and meat, but coming to our house, they just got a bowl of braised pork."

Lin Jiayi rolled her eyes internally.

I couldn't tell they were used to fish and meat at the Zhang Family; Zhang Wenbin looked more like he hadn't eaten meat in ages.

On the surface, though, she agreed with her, "Right, right, but no worries, we have a long future ahead. Next time brother-in-law visits, sister-in-law can prepare something more lavish."

At these words, Li Dongmei's mouth twitched in grievance, "Sister-in-law, what do you think of Wenbin? Mother thinks he's too old and it's already his second marriage, and suggests I wait a few more years."

Lin Jiayi immediately knew what Old Mrs. Li had been saying to Li Dongmei all afternoon, and judging by the little sister-in-law's reaction, she seemed almost swayed.

She nodded without hesitation, "He seems quite good indeed, elegant and gentlemanly. Although there are some... But that's just the pride of city folks, isn't that why people from the city aren't accustomed to our rural places?"

Aren't you always complaining about the countryside? Thinking that city folk are all the rage? I'll just play along.

Li Dongmei suddenly looked up, "Sister-in-law, you think so too?"

Lin Jiayi chuckled awkwardly, as if unsettled by her enthusiasm, "How could I be involved? It's you who's getting married, you have to make your own decision; no one else can replace you. After all, you're the one who's going to live with it, so it's up to you what kind of life you want."

Ask me to say it? Lin Jiayi isn't so foolish.

If I really said something and later something goes wrong, the blame would fall on my head.

#### Chapter 453: Reported

Li Dongmei seemed to have made up her mind, "I also think he's good, I want to live the life of city people, and I've accepted the idea of a second marriage."

Only then did Lin Jiayi speak, "What's wrong with a second marriage? Some people are just too old-fashioned. In the city, people don't just get married twice—third and even fourth marriages happen, and people fight to get married. Plus, city folks are educated. People say that educated people have higher quality, and they treat their wives well."

Li Dongmei's cheeks flushed immediately, "I just feel that he's really good, I'm just afraid that my mom won't agree to the marriage..."

Lin Jiayi suddenly changed the topic, "Speaking of marriage, when I went to buy meat today, I saw a family in the village holding a wedding banquet. It was a staff member from the commune who married a girl from the village. I heard that the man's family was not willing at first, but the woman was tactful. She got pregnant before anything much happened, making the man's family have no choice but to agree, and they had to throw a big banquet."

"Ah, getting pregnant before marriage, she'd be drowned in spit!"

Li Dongmei completely forgot the previous topic, her eyes wide open in shock.

"Hey, let them talk, what does it matter if they say unpleasant things? Does it cost anyone a piece of flesh? On the contrary, the woman married the man and now has a husband who works as a staff member in the village. She's set for life with plenty to eat and drink. If the man becomes successful and becomes an official, she'll be a madame. Then, what can others say? Anything they say is just sour grapes."

Lin Jiayi finished speaking and looked outside at the darkening sky, "Oh no, I haven't fed the chickens yet, and it's getting dark."

Li Dongmei watched Lin Jiayi's hurried figure, her mind filled with the saying about sour grapes.

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Shortly after Lin Chuxia returned to the city, Zhang Guilan followed.

It wasn't that Zhang Guilan insisted on following Lin Chuxia to the city; she had no choice.

That day, Qin Family Village's vegetable truck was on time to deliver vegetables to Qin's Restaurant. However, it was Qin Han who drove the truck, bringing with him Zhang Guilan.

By the time Lin Chuxia got the news, Qin Han had already brought Zhang Guilan and Qin Juan to the family quarters.

Zhang Guilan looked pale, whether from the journey or something else.

When she got off the truck, Qin Juan spoke up worriedly, "I told you to come to my place, it's closer to the restaurant after all. Look at how pale you are, and you're pregnant. What if something happens?"

Zhang Guilan had already spotted Lin Chuxia and waved at her. Lin Chuxia quickly walked up and took her hand.

Finally, Zhang Guilan spoke weakly, "I feel unsettled wherever I stay, but if I stay by my sister-in-law's side, I can have peace of mind."

Although Lin Chuxia didn't know what had happened, seeing Zhang Guilan's condition, she quickly reassured, "Then stay at my place, stay as long as you want. Have you guys eaten? I'll go and prepare something for you."

Zhang Guilan shook her head, "I can't eat right now."

Qin Juan also said, "Xiaxia, you talk to them. I'll go to the kitchen and prepare some food."

Qin Juan had stayed with Lin Chuxia for a while before, so she was familiar with the kitchen.

The guest room had been vacant since Qin Juan moved out, and Lin Chuxia didn't want to ask Zhang Guilan too many questions—she settled her in the guest room to rest first.

Once everyone was settled, Lin Chuxia asked Qin Han, "What exactly happened?"

Qin Han's face was filled with indignation. Without Zhang Guilan present, he did not hide the coldness in his eyes.

"We've been reported. The report was anonymous. I don't know what they told the family planning office, but they found out our second child is a violation."

"How could this happen?"

Lin Chuxia's voice involuntarily rose several notches.

Nowadays, the family planning policy in the city is such that couples can only have one child, whether it's a boy or a girl.

In the countryside, if the first child is a daughter, it is permissible to have a second child after a four-year gap, and families like Qin Wu's meet the policy requirements.

However, families whose first child is a boy are not allowed to have a second child.

This is also due to the consideration that rural labor often involves heavy and tiring work which requires strong manpower.

But Qin Han's family did, in fact, violate the policy by having a boy, Zhuangzhuang, as their first child, and now Zhang Guilan is almost 8 months pregnant, the child in her womb has long taken shape.

Qin Han nodded and said, "First thing this morning, the village chief came to deliver the message, telling us to lay low for a while, so we quickly packed up and left."

Lin Chuxia nodded; she was of course aware of the current direction of the policy.

"Just put your mind at ease by leaving your sister-in-law here with me. I'll take good care of her until she's done with her postpartum confinement, then she can go back."

Seeing her attitude, Qin Han couldn't help but smile, "There's no need for that. As soon as your sister-in-law gives birth, we can take her back. Mom is waiting to help with the postpartum care."

Qin Juan cooked two bowls of noodles and also fried sunny-side-up eggs, one for Qin Han and one for Zhang Guilan.

Actually, there was ready-made food at Qin's Restaurant, but Zhang Guilan wasn't in the mood to eat. Now that she had seen Lin Chuxia and rested for a while, she felt hungry.

After they each ate a bowl of noodles, Lin Chuxia repeated what she said to Qin Han to Zhang Guilan.

Finally feeling settled, Zhang Guilan felt at peace seeing Lin Chuxia.

She replied with a smile, "I'll have the cheek to stay with my brother's wife for a while. It was just these past few days that Wu's wife came to visit and told me to rest. Now, look, I've found a place to rest in the city."

"Sister-in-law, why be so formal with me?"

Qin Juan also joined in, "Exactly, you can stay here with your brother's wife for a few days, then stay at my place for a few more whenever you feel like it. Isn't life leisurely and carefree? You just focus on nourishing your pregnancy. I don't believe they will be able to chase us down here."

By this time, Qin Han and his wife finally felt at ease.

Qin Yang came back at noon, and Qin Juan also brought Ningning over, and the family had a lively meal together.

In the afternoon, Qin Han returned to An City. Afraid that Zhang Guilan would overthink, Lin Chuxia suggested they go out for a walk after she had napped and seemed well-rested.

Zhang Guilan happily agreed.

During the opening of Qin's Bun Shop in the city, she actually had stayed in the city for a while.

But back then, she was preoccupied with watching over the Bun Shop all day, worried about not doing a good job with the task entrusted by her brother's wife, so she had no mood to stroll around.

Seeing that she will give birth in just over a month, and now having some free time, it was a good opportunity to make some little clothes and blankets for the baby.

Qin Han left her with enough money, and now that their monthly income was substantial, Zhang Guilan didn't need to be frugal.



They didn't go to the Department Store, Lin Chuxia directly took her to a small fabric store that Jiang Hong had introduced to her when she first came to the city.

Indeed, once they arrived at the store, Zhang Guilan's eyes lit up.

Nothing makes women forget their troubles like shopping.

The fabric shop owner was beaming from ear to ear, introducing her to several kinds of good-looking and comfortable cotton fabrics.

In the end, Zhang Guilan and Lin Chuxia left carrying quite a few items.

They had just gotten into the car and hadn't driven far when they saw a crowd up ahead blocking the road.

At the same time, Lin Chuxia spotted a familiar figure...

Chapter 454: Does What You Said Before Still Count?

Lin Chuxia parked the car to the side, reminding Zhang Guilan to wait for her in the car while she got out alone.

At this moment, the voices nearby became clear.

There were the angry voices of teenagers, the cursing of a man, and the wailing of a child.

The onlookers were even more abuzz with discussions.

"I heard this man has someone on the side, that young man is the woman's brother, he's here to stand up for his sister."

"Oh dear, how can he stand up like this, he can't even win in a fight."

"Exactly, isn't it said this man is truly despicable? He wrongs his wife, lets his brother-in-law hit him a few times to vent, but he dares to fight back."

"If you ask me, such a man should just get divorced..."

Lin Chuxia pushed through the crowd and could clearly see the situation inside.

Yang Rui from the Department Store was entangled with a teenager.

The teenager was clearly no match for Yang Rui, yet he fiercely lashed out at Yang Rui.

Yang Rui, seemingly driven to desperation, initially just dodged but started to fight back later.

As he fought back, Wang Tianxue nearby also became anxious, but she was still holding a child in her arms, afraid to harm the child.

Just as Yang Rui was about to strike again, a small hand grabbed his wrist.

Dazed, Yang Rui took a fierce punch to the face, the pain pulling him back to his senses, he angrily looked at the person who grabbed his hand.

"What... Mr. Lin?"

Yang Rui still had a memory of Lin Chuxia.

At the same time, Wang Tianyu and Wang Tianxue also saw Lin Chuxia.

The siblings reacted differently.

Wang Tianyu, full of joy, said, "Sister Lin, what are you doing here?"

Thinking back to how if Sister Lin hadn't helped, he wouldn't have been able to hit this bastard and would have been punched instead, he felt even more grateful to Lin Chuxia.

Wang Tianxue didn't expect her brother would know Lin Chuxia, her gaze toward Lin Chuxia became more complex.

Lin Chuxia nodded at Wang Tianyu, shook off Yang Rui's wrist forcefully, and sarcastically said, "What kind of ability is it for a grown man to lay hands on a woman and child?"

Yang Rui also realized his predicament and was displeased with Lin Chuxia's sarcasm.

"Mr. Lin, this is my family matter. You don't know the full story and intervened, I haven't minded that, but please watch your words and don't make reckless comments."

The moment he mentioned Lin Chuxia, Wang Tianyu couldn't hold back.

"Is Sister Lin making reckless comments? My sister bore your child while you messed around with another woman on the side, how can you be fair to my sister? You are just acting like a hooligan, I am going to sue you for hooliganism."

Many of the onlookers, who had gathered after Wang Tianyu and Yang Rui started fighting, now knew the whole backstory and looked disapprovingly at Yang Rui.

Although in recent years, with the loosening of policies, hooliganism has hardly been mentioned.

Yet such immoral acts are still despised by people.

Yang Rui felt humiliated being watched by the crowd, his face grim as he looked at Wang Tianxue, "You think it's honorable to disgrace yourself in public like this? Wang Tianxue, you never used to be like this, don't exhaust the last bit of goodwill between us."

Wang Tianxue scoffed, "You and I ran out of goodwill a long time ago, don't flatter yourself."

"You... I tell you, I am not going to divorce. If you want to leave, you leave, but the son stays with me. Don't even think about taking my son away."

After dropping these words, Yang Rui directly swept his sleeve and left.

Wang Tianyu wanted to chase after him but was stopped by Wang Tianxue.

"Sister, we can't let him leave like this."

"What else can we do if we don't let him go? Fight him again?"

Wang Tianyu's face flushed with embarrassment; he is her brother and should stand up for his elder sister, yet he could never beat that scoundrel.

Worrying, he looked at his big sister. "Then what do we do? Are you not going to divorce him?"

Just thinking about that possibility, Wang Tianyu felt that his sister was suffering a great injustice, and the youth became angry again, "If it really comes to it, I'll call dad and uncle over, the family will support you."

Wang Tianxue looked at her brother with a bitter smile, recalling what her mother had told her a few days ago: Why divorce? You're an adult, how do you still not understand? Your brother finally got into university, bringing glory to our Wang Family, and now you're dragging him down? Not to mention having a divorced elder sister at home, how will he even start a relationship, saying you've divorced and become a remarriage prospect, what kind of in-laws will you find in the future? Which man doesn't make mistakes? Yang Rui has said he would change, just scare him for a couple of days, then go back to your normal life. Think about the children; children definitely can't be without a mother.

"Mom, the children will not be without a mother; they will just be without a father."

"Nonsense, do you still think about leaving with the child? Not to mention whether Yang Family agrees, your father and I do not agree. Bringing a child back, how will you marry in the future? What do you want the village to think about our family? Do your father and I still want to be respected?"

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Her thoughts recaptured, Wang Tianxue turned to Lin Chuxia and handed over the child in her arms to her brother, "Take Xiao Long over there to play, I need to talk to Mr. Lin."

Wang Tianyu did not know when his elder sister got to know Sister Lin; he had not yet told his big sister about the favor Sister Lin had done for him.

However, seeing his elder sister's expression, he didn't hesitate, took over his nephew, and went to a distant tree to play.

It was only after they walked far away that Wang Tianxue spoke, "I... visited Qin's Restaurant before."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "I heard about it, guessed it was you."

Wang Tianxue pursed her lips, "Do your words from before still hold?"

Looking at her brother's reaction just now and remembering that her brother had seen the sister who helped him at Qin's Buns Shop, along with Qin's Restaurant, Wang Tianxue had already figured something out.

It's just a fleeting meeting, why would anyone help you?

Good-hearted Lin Chuxia? Or because you're from the same An City? Wang Tianxue did not think so.

But Wang Tianxue didn't care anymore.

The reaction from her maternal family these days, Yang Rui's persistence about their child, she had already given up everything.

As long as there was hope, she would not give up, even if it cost her life.

In her eyes, Lin Chuxia saw determination.

The Wang Tianxue she knew in her previous life, apart from the desperate woman at the beginning of their collaboration, later became a woman repeatedly returning in disappointment after losing her child.

Even so, she never gave up.

This is a girl who, once determined, never gives up easily, full of tenacity.

Lin Chuxia nodded, "It counts, Wang Tianxue, I feel we are fated, though I don't know what I can help you with, just ask, and I am willing to help you."

Wang Tianxue chuckled lightly, "I never believe in fate, but as long as you help me gain custody of the child, I'm willing to go through fire and water for you, ask me to do anything."

Lin Chuxia: "..."

Sister, I really did it for our connection.

Chapter 455: I Choose You

Lin Chuxia got back into the car, where Zhang Guilan was still waiting obediently, her eyes filled with concern.

"Do you know those people? Why did they start fighting in the middle of the street? I just heard some gossip, saying that the guy found another woman, is this the same as with that surnamed Zhang?"

In her sister-in-law's eyes, Zhang Wenbin was the most shameless and worthless man in the world.

Lin Chuxia saw that the siblings had left and started the car again.

"While replying to her, "It's more or less the same. Cheating during his wife's pregnancy, originally thought that his wife was pregnant with a daughter and planned to divorce after the birth, intending to find another woman to bear him a son. But who knew the wife would give birth to a boy, so he regretted it."

"Pah, what a piece of work, such people should be made barren! What's wrong with daughters? Does their family have a throne to inherit or what? Where would he come from without women? Did he crawl out of his father's stomach?"

Lin Chuxia couldn't help but laugh, worried that Zhang Guilan was getting too worked up, she quickly consoled, "Sister-in-law, don't be angry. There are all sorts of people in this world, and we can't expect everyone to be good. But sometimes, being able to help those pitiful women, I'm willing to extend a hand."

She naturally couldn't tell her sister-in-law about her past acquaintance with Wang Tianxue.

Zhang Guilan nodded, thinking back to Qin Juan's past hardships, she started to feel sympathy for the woman holding the child she had just witnessed.

"What are you planning to do to help?"

Lin Chuxia didn't hide anything and told her what she had just arranged with Wang Tianxue.

"She's called Wang Tianxue. After she found out her husband was having an affair, she decided to divorce. Sister-in-law, as you know, it's hard to get divorced these days, especially for women. But Wang

Tianxue would rather be a shattered piece of jade than an intact tile. She not only wants a divorce, but she also wants to fight for the custody of her son."

"That's right, she should get her son back. That jerk wants other women to bear him a son, let them do it."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "But the husband is unwilling. Her current situation is very similar to what happened to our eldest sister back then, no job, which is not advantageous in a custody battle."

"What can be done then?" Zhang Guilan grew even more sympathetic towards that woman.

Being pregnant herself, it was excruciating for her to imagine giving away the child she had arduously given birth to and not being able to even see the child's face afterward; it would be like cutting out a piece of her own flesh.

"Can't it be like with Juanzi back then, first find her a job, then find evidence against her husband and sue him?"

Lin Chuxia shook her head, "Of course, finding her a job is necessary, but her husband's situation is not quite the same as Zhang Wenbin's."

Zhang Wenbin worked in the government sector where private life is strictly controlled, which made catching him cheating effective.

With Yang Rui, that approach might not work.

...

Lin Chuxia and Wang Tianxue had agreed to meet at Qin's Restaurant to discuss the next steps of their plan, and Tianxue's job was to be arranged at Qin's as well.

However, Tianxue had an eight-month-old son who obviously couldn't work in the restaurant.



Lin Chuxia had made plans early on, allowing her to substitute at the restaurant or even giving her some living expenses in advance.

Furthermore, knowing that Wang Tianxue had been staying in a guesthouse these days and couldn't return to her home, Lin Chuxia directly offered her a place in the staff dormitory.

After hearing her arrangements, Wang Tianxue looked at her with a wary and dubious gaze, "Why do you want to help me so much? I am well aware that I have no particular merits to deserve such efforts on my behalf."

Lin Chuxia had worked together with her and knew her personality too well.

Tianxue was proud and not the type to be meekly obedient.

But Lin Chuxia felt like teasing her, "Didn't you say it yourself yesterday? As long as it helps you gain custody of your child, you would go through fire and water for me. Maybe I just want someone who would be willing to pledge their loyalty to me."

Wang Tianxue frowned slightly, then shook her head, "It doesn't seem likely. I've been to Qin's Restaurant a few times; I can see that you're not short-staffed. Moreover, coming with a child, I would only be a burden to you, a nuisance, with no value to you at all."

Wang Tianyu did not feel reassured about his sister; he had not left yesterday and had now come to Qin's Restaurant with Wang Tianxue.

Hearing his sister speak like this, he grew anxious, "Sister, Lin truly is a good person. When I first met her, she was like a heroine. Sister Lin stepped in because she saw big sister's plight—Yang is just too despicable. Sister Lin's actions were nothing short of heroic intervention."

Wang Tianxue glanced at her brother.

Last night, her brother had repeated countless times how good Lin Chuxia was.

She knew that Lin Chuxia had helped her brother out of a tight spot once, and her brother was very grateful for that.

But helping him and her current situation are two different things.

Over the past six months, she had been trying hard to sever ties with Yang Rui, employing every tactic she could think of, yet he refused to give up custody of the child.

How could Lin Chuxia possibly help her?

It wasn't a simple issue; why would she bother bringing such trouble upon herself?

Seeing her guarded demeanor, Lin Chuxia was at her wits' end.

"Now you don't have many options, do you? There are only two paths before you: continue to tangle with Yang Rui, either not divorcing or giving up the child's custody, or trust me to help you win your child's custody."

Wang Tianxue made her choice in a mere moment, "I choose you," she said, willing to lay down her life if need be. She couldn't give up her son, no matter what.

Lin Chuxia smiled understandingly and extended her right hand, "I trust my own judgment of people, and I think you should have that confidence too."

At that moment, Wang Tianxue hesitated no longer and shook her hand, "Mr. Lin, regardless of the outcome, I, Wang Tianxue, owe you my gratitude. In this life, through fire and water, my life is yours."

"What would I need your life for?"

Lin Chuxia looked at her, still a young woman, her gaze lifting at the corners.

Tianxue, in this lifetime I want you to live happily.

...

Even though Lin Chuxia had told Wang Tianxue to focus on her child, now that she had become an employee at Qin's, Wang Tianxue did not want to be a worthless person just waiting for Lin Chuxia's help.

She first sent her brother away, telling him to return to school and study hard.

Then she entrusted her son to Aunt Jia.

This was something she found out only after moving into the staff dormitory yesterday; a small courtyard not far from the dormitory belonged to their store manager, where she had also met Aunt Jia.

Aunt Jia, having nothing else to do at home, was quite happy to help take care of the child.

She even joked about getting some practice in advance, to adjust, so she would be ready to look after her future grandchildren.

She even refused the childcare fees Wang Tianxue offered her.

As for Wang Tianxue herself, she officially started working at Qin's Restaurant.

Lin Chuxia was also busy on her end. She contacted Tang Lili through Manager Zhao at the Department Store and arranged a meeting with her.

The two met in People's Park, located opposite the City Department Store.

Seeing that the person who called her out was Lin Chuxia left Tang Lili puzzled.

She remembered Lin Chuxia, and that memory wasn't a pleasant one.

But since the message was relayed by the manager, she couldn't just turn around and leave.

"Speak, what do you need me for?"

#### Chapter 456: Tears of Joy

Lin Chuxia did not mind her attitude and patiently explained her purpose for seeking her.

Upon hearing that Lin Chuxia was in cahoots with Wang Tianxue, Tang Lili instantly knew why she felt annoyed the moment she saw this woman.

She sneered, "Why should I help you? What does it matter to me whether Wang Tianxue wants the child or not? Isn't she the one wanting a divorce? She's been talking about it for so long, all bark no bite. I think she is playing hard to get. Since you are here, help me relay a message to Wang Tianxue— if she wants a divorce, just do it quickly. Yang Rui doesn't love her anyway. Dragging it out is pointless. Didn't she find Yang Rui impure? Isn't she acting all noble? Just don't end up being a hypocrite in the end."

"I don't know if Wang Tianxue is noble or not, but I do know, Comrade Tang, that you cannot afford to be noble, and are even despised by others."

Lin Chuxia came to negotiate with her not as a lesser person, nor would she agree with Tang Lili just because she sought her help.

Tang Lili's eyes widened in shock, "What are you talking about?"

"Isn't it true? You knowingly engaged in an affair with a married man during his wife's pregnancy, intruding into their marriage. A few years earlier, and your actions could have been considered criminal."

She came to negotiate with Tang Lili, but that didn't mean she would indulge her.

A morally corrupt woman had no right to criticize anyone else for being noble.

Tang Lili's eyes nearly spat fire, "What criminal? Yang Rui and I are truly in love. Yang Rui doesn't love Wang Tianxue at all. Their marriage was arranged by their parents, a remnant of feudal society. Ultimately, she is the one usurping the nest. We are merely correcting this mistake."

She abruptly stood up and turned to leave, "Mr. Lin, don't forget you came begging to me today. Since you're not sincere, I don't need to waste my time here."

"Who said I'm not sincere? Helping you get rid of trouble is the greatest sincerity. Don't you want Yang Rui to get a divorce quickly?"

Tang Lili's steps halted abruptly, "What did you say?"

"Just like my earlier suggestion, you persuade Yang Rui to give up the child's custody rights. I assure you, as long as Wang Tianxue gets the custody, she won't stand in your way anymore."

The condition Lin Chuxia had just negotiated was for Tang Lili to convince Yang Rui to give up Xiao Long's custody rights.

Out of everyone, only Tang Lili had the capability to do so.

Seeing Lin Chuxia circle back to her earlier point, Tang Lili sneered, "Why should I listen to you?"

Tang Lili knew very well how much Yang Rui wanted his son; persuading him to give up his child's custody rights was nearly impossible.

She had brought it up once before, only to be rejected by Yang Rui.

Lin Chuxia continued, "You aren't listening to me, this is mutually beneficial, isn't it? You should understand the difference for Yang Rui to remarry you with or without this child. You certainly don't want to marry him just to become a stepmother, do you?"

She saw Tang Lili's reluctant gaze and continued, "Wait until you two have your own children. If it's a boy, he would still be overshadowed by this child as a younger brother. If it's a girl..."

Lin Chuxia didn't continue.

Tang Lili's mind suddenly shook—why else would Yang Rui cheat on her, if not thinking Wang Tianxue was carrying a daughter.

If he really obtained custody rights, not only would she have to be a stepmother, but if she later had a daughter, would there even be a place for them in the home?

Ultimately, she would be raising another woman's son, aiding someone else's marriage.

But then...

Lin Chuxia's voice rose again, "If you can persuade Yang Rui to give up the child's custody, once Yang Rui and Wang Tianxue divorce successfully, I will give you two hundred yuan as a bonus for decorating."

Just to keep you despicable couple together forever.

At that moment, Tang Lili hesitated no more, "Alright, I agree, I will try my best to persuade Yang Rui to give up the child's custody rights."

.....

Following that, Wang Tianxue and Lin Chuxia were gathering court evidence of Yang Rui's affair while waiting for news from Tang Lili.

During this period, Yang Rui even went to Qin's Restaurant, where he knew Wang Tianxue worked, and demanded that she hand over the child to his mother.

It was then revealed that Yang Rui had brought his mother from his hometown to the city to convince Wang Tianxue to give up the child's custody.

Remembering that in the past, Wang Tianxue's child was lost due to Yang Rui's mother, Lin Chuxia feared that Wang Tianxue would waver.

Fortunately, not only did Wang Tianxue not falter, but she also drove Yang Rui out of the restaurant.

With Qin Juan and Jia Liang around, Yang Rui could not take any advantage at Qin's Restaurant.

During these days, Wang Tianxue had become familiar with the people at Qin's.

Especially Qin Juan, who could deeply empathize with Wang Tianxue's plight and even offered her courtyard for them to live when Wang Tianxue expressed concerns about the child affecting the residential quarters.

Finally, the day of the court hearing arrived, and Lin Chuxia also received news from Tang Lili. Yang Rui agreed to give up the child's custody, although he hadn't explicitly said so, but there was a slight shift.

Any shift was a good sign.

They also collected quite a bit of evidence of Yang Rui's infidelity.

His affair with Tang Lili was almost common knowledge in the Department Store, making gathering such evidence quite easy.

Since the divorce was against her family's wishes, Wang Tianxue's parents did not attend the court.

Her younger brother, Wang Tianyu, wanted to take leave to come, but Wang Tianxue refused.

Her brother's studies had already been affected because of this issue; she couldn't distract him further.

As Wang Tianxue's friend, Lin Chuxia had to be present, and Zhang Guilan, heavily pregnant, also came, along with Qin Juan who took leave to attend.

Even Old Mrs. Jia, holding a child, was sitting in the audience.

Furthermore, Qin Jianjun had also helped in getting his teacher to serve as Wang Tianxue's defense lawyer.

With the support of this teacher, the trial went smoother than they imagined, and despite Yang Rui not fully giving up on the child, the lawyer's defense coupled with various pieces of evidence proved that Wang Tianxue, as the biological mother, was more suitable to raise the child.

An hour later, the court ruled in favor of Wang Tianxue's divorce petition, and the custody of Yang Xiaolong was granted to her.

Hearing this verdict, Lin Chuxia, Qin Juan, and others stood up and applauded, Wang Tianxue was moved to tears.

The past half a year had been extremely tough for her.

She had prepared for the worst; if she couldn't secure her child's custody, she'd unwillingly divorce that man and reapply for custody when financially able.

But everything changed after meeting Lin Chuxia.

Tearfully looking at the audience, she now had friends like Lin Chuxia, a sister in misfortune like Qin Juan, and a kind neighbor like Aunt Jia.



These people were not her relatives but were more than family to her.

Her gamble on these friendships paid off; what could taking her life mean compared to this?

Looking at Lin Chuxia, she finally broke into a tearful smile.

Chapter 457: More Like We Knew Each Other in a Past Life

"Enough, crying one moment and laughing the next, you're acting like a little lunatic."

Lin Chuxia handed her a handkerchief with a smile to comfort her.

Wang Tianxue had long since dropped her wariness towards Lin Chuxia, and took the handkerchief to wipe her face. "Mind your own business, I'm happy, and I've given you my fate, don't I have the right to be happy for a few days?"

It's strange when you think about it, how relationships between people can really be peculiar.

She and Qin Juan had shared experiences, and from the day they met, they could feel each other's sincerity and goodwill.

Living together, they were like two wounded little animals, huddling together, licking each other's wounds, and keeping each other warm.

They shared everything with each other and became the best of friends.

Yet with Lin Chuxia, despite the fact that Wang Tianxue had only interacted with her regarding the divorce and knew very little about her other affairs,

there was even a point where she was guarded at every turn.

However, somehow, without realizing it, she had let down her guard. Every time she discussed matters with Lin Chuxia, it felt unusually comfortable, whether it was Lin Chuxia's way of speaking or her temperament, it was all to her liking.

It was as if they were friends who had known each other for a long time.

No, it was more like they had known each other in a past life.

Qin Juan often joked that they were two of a kind, and she really felt that way.

This side of the group, bustling around Wang Tianxue, left the court in high spirits.

They had only just reached the parking lot when a figure suddenly burst out from an angle, heading straight for Old Mrs. Jia.

At that moment, Old Mrs. Jia was still holding a child, and Wang Tianxue's face changed dramatically when she saw who was coming, quickly stepping forward to block the person.

Lin Chuxia also reacted quickly, standing beside Wang Tianxue, guardedly observing the old lady in front of them who was dark and thin with triangular hanging eyes.

The figure saw Wang Tianxue, opened her mouth and cursed, "You little whore, a worn-out shoe, nobody's secondhand goods, hand over my grandson, he's my grandson, give him back to me..."

It turned out to be Wang Tianxue's ex-mother-in-law, Yang Rui's mother from the countryside.

Old Mrs. Yang had known all along that her daughter-in-law had a child, but she was preoccupied with staying at home and didn't want to come to the city to help with the baby.

This time, it was only because her son had promised she could take the baby back to her hometown to raise that she came.

Who knew that after so many days, she hadn't even seen the child, and her son turned out to have divorced the daughter-in-law.

Old Mrs. Yang didn't care about the daughter-in-law's divorce; her son was capable and would certainly marry another daughter-in-law.

But that previous daughter-in-law always wanted to be in charge of everything and never listened to her.

It might be okay not to keep the daughter-in-law, but she couldn't afford to lose the grandson.

Especially when she saw the chubby little boy Old Mrs. Jia was holding, Old Mrs. Yang's eyes nearly burst with rage.

"You ungrateful wretch, our Yang Family pampered you with good food and a good life, but look at you, making a fuss and divorcing my son. Did you really think our Yang Family can't do without you? After leaving my son, let's see who else would want you. Hand over my grandson now, he's the seed of our Yang Family, don't you dare take him away."

Wang Tianxue said coldly, "The court has now awarded me custody of the child."

"I spit on that, awarded you custody, who knows what kind of relationships you, that worn-out shoe, have with those people, hand over the child to me..."

Her mouth was full of foul language, almost spitting on Wang Tianxue's face.

That hand, full of black dirt under the nails, also reached out for the child in Old Mrs. Jia's arms.

Old Mrs. Jia had long looked down on this shameless family.

Old Mrs. Jia, widowed young, had to endure the oppression from her in-laws and uncles, and knew all too well the challenges women face.

That's why she had such sympathy for Qin Juan.

Recently, Wang Tianxue was staying next door, and the child was being looked after by Old Mrs. Jia.

Both Qin Juan and Wang Tianxue were, in her eyes, excellent women.

Seeing Old Mrs. Yang press on unrelentingly, Old Mrs. Jia spat directly on her face.

"Pah, who are you calling a slut? Who's the second-hand good? I see it's you, you old bitch, who's the slut and second-hand trash. Your whole family is full of sluts, second-hand goods. Had a good daughter-in-law and didn't cherish her, instead found sluts outside, just a bunch of matching sluts; you want a grandson, let your son find a mistress and have another for you, a family like yours, composed of sluts and second-hand trash, doesn't deserve such a good child..."

Old Mrs. Jia's fighting spirit really could be something.

Originally, Old Mrs. Yang stood there with a sense of entitlement, now she was speechlessly rolling her eyes due to Old Mrs. Jia's scolding.

She stalled for ages, without managing to retort a single word.

Yang Rui came over with a stern face, with Tang Lili by his side.

Yang Rui first glanced at Lin Chuxia and the others, then dissatisfiedly said to Wang Tianxue, "We were husband and wife after all, how can you just stand by and watch them bully mom?"

Wang Tianxue sneered, "Sorry, let me correct that, that's your mom, and it was your mom who insulted me first. My friend couldn't stand it and spoke up for me. What, your mom is allowed to curse but others can't refute?"

"But she is an elder, can't you give her some space?"

Old Mrs. Jia was about to curse someone again, but Wang Tianxue spoke first, "An elder? Whose elder? I respected her as one because I married you, and that was out of respect for you. But now that we're through, I have no dealings with you, and she means nothing to me. Why should I give her space? Because she's mean and foul-mouthed?"

"You..." Yang Rui was so angry his face turned crimson, "Wang Tianxue, I never thought you could be so unreasonable. Thankfully, I've divorced you, otherwise, who knows when I would have been deceived by your act. But let me remind you, even if we're divorced, Xiao Long is still my son, running with my blood."

"He is your son, so don't forget to give me the child support on time each month, otherwise, I wouldn't mind telling my son his dad is already dead."

Yang Rui was infuriated to the point of bursting; ever since, this is how Wang Tianxue has been talking to him, sarcastically. If it weren't for the custody of his son, he would have divorced her long ago.

"Mom, let's go."

Not wanting to talk to her anymore, Yang Rui pulled Old Mrs. Yang and was ready to leave.

Old Mrs. Yang was reluctant to leave her grandson and was still cursing, insisting on taking the child with her.

Wang Tianxue and the others paid them no more heed, opened the car door, and got in.

Wang Tianxue helped Old Mrs. Jia into the car first, then thanked her, "Auntie, thank you so much for just now."

Old Mrs. Jia was somewhat embarrassed, "I just can't stand that old man, his son is no good either, and they have the nerve to blame their daughter-in-law. But from what I see, you would not be bullied even without me; I say women should have just the character like yours so they don't get pushed around."

"As a mother, I have to be strong; I was forced into this," Wang Tianxue said with a smile.

Lin Chuxia started the car in front, turned her head and looked at her, "You're being a bit modest with that statement."

Qin Juan chuckled along, "I also think Tianxue is being too modest. But I should really learn from you in the future."

#### Chapter 458: Looking Cheap

Several people laughed and chattered as they drove away, very satisfied with the outcome today, truly a joyous occasion for all.

"I'll treat you all to lunch, let's have a good meal at Qin's Restaurant."

"With the little money you have, better save it for buying formula for my nephew. Inviting me to spend at my own restaurant? Aren't you just slapping my face?"

"I call this keeping benefits within the family."

.....

Giggles and joyous sounds came from the car passing by; through the glass, Wang Tianxue's happy face was clearly visible.

Old Mrs. Yang stomped her feet in anger, "You just let that little bitch take away my grandson like that? How useless can you be, being controlled by a woman. Go get my grandson back now."

Yang Rui, looking at the departing car, fell deep in thought: When did she become so close to Lin Chuxia?

He never heard her mention knowing such a friend.

Yang Rui was sure, without Lin Chuxia, Wang Tianxue would never have gotten custody of Xiao Long.

Tang Lili was also in a good mood today, with that little brat out of the way, couldn't her future days be however she wished?

Moreover, she now had the two hundred yuan Lin Chuxia promised her tucked in her pocket.

Seeing the reaction from Yang Rui and Old Mrs. Yang, Tang Lili scoffed internally but still thoughtfully took Yang Rui's arm.

"Brother Yang, are you regretting it?"

Yang Rui regained his composure and shook his head without hesitation, "Why would I? I was just thinking about our future. I'll redecorate the house and then come ask for your hand in marriage."

He understood too well the kind of person Wang Tianxue was—a woman with a tough personality.

Since she knew about Tang Lili, their marriage was definitely untenable.

He had already prepared himself for the divorce.

But why did he feel so hollow inside after it truly happened?

It must be his attachment to his son.

But no matter, there are always more women, and there can be more sons.

.....

At noon, Lin Chuxia reserved a private room to celebrate Wang Tianxue regaining her freedom.

Old Mrs. Jia was also invited.

Although her son worked there as a manager, Old Mrs. Jia seldom visited the restaurant, not wanting to interfere with her son's work. This was the first time she dined as a customer in the restaurant and in a private room no less.

Jia Liang didn't call for a waiter and served them himself, respectfully handing over the menu.

Lin Chuxia handed the menu to Old Mrs. Jia first, "Auntie, what would you like to eat? I'll read it out for you."

Old Mrs. Jia was still admiring her son in this role.

After raising him for over thirty years, this was the first time she saw him so properly dressed while working.

His respectful, considerate, and polite demeanor was exactly like something out of her dreams.

Hearing what Lin Chuxia said, she was pleasantly flustered, "Oh, no need, I won't pick, I'm fine with anything, you guys order."

"Don't say that, since Brother Jia is serving us, you must pick something."

Lin Chuxia smiled and glanced at Jia Liang.

Jia Liang chuckled, "Mom, since Mr. Lin insists, why not choose something? Don't you like fish? The restaurant has boiled fish, braised fish, squirrel fish—choose whatever you'd like, after all..."

He glanced at Lin Chuxia, "the boss is treating today."



Old Mrs. Jia laughed heartily, glancing at her son, "Do you have to speak like that? Well then, I'll have the braised fish, I like that."

"Alright, braised fish it is," Lin Chuxia then passed the menu to little Ningning.

Taking care of the elderly still requires caring for the young.

Although Ningning often visited the Bun Shop, it was her first time properly dining in a private room.

At the moment, she was as restless as if she had nails on her seat. Hearing her aunt say she could order the food, she first asked Qin Juan, "Mom, can my brother now live with us forever?"

Though she was young, she had been listening to Aunt Xue and her mom talk these days and could understand some of it.

She knew Aunt Xue was also planning to move out with her brother, and there was someone in Aunt Xue's household who was unkind to them like that person.

Now, seeing everyone so happy, she guessed something.

Qin Juan smiled and rubbed her little head, "Yes, Ningning, do you like living with Aunt Xue and your brother?"

Ningning nodded vigorously, "Yes, I like Aunt Xue, I like my brother, and I like Grandma Jia."

Old Mrs. Jia smiled again and glanced at her son.

Her son was watching Qin Juan and her daughter, his smile almost reaching his ears, looking immensely delighted.

Wang Tianxue really liked Ningning, this sensible little girl, and immediately took a handful of candies from her pocket for her.

Ningning only took two pieces, earnestly telling Wang Tianxue, "The rest are for my brother."

This made everyone laugh again.

Wang Tianxue directly stuffed the candies into the little girl's pocket, "Brother is still young, these candies are for Ningning from Aunt Xue."

The meal was lively and satisfying.

After the meal, Old Mrs. Jia wanted to take the kids home, and Qin Juan also needed to take Ningning back to school, so Lin Chuxia simply did all the driving.

In one trip, she first dropped Ningning off at school, then took Old Mrs. Jia and Xiao Long.

Nine-month-old Xiao Long was already babbling.

Although Lin Chuxia couldn't understand the babbling, Ningning was joyfully talking to him.

Still reluctant to leave the car at the school, she said, "Brother, wait for sister at home, I will come back to play with you after school."

Xiao Long: "Ba bu ba bu..."

Receiving a response from her brother, Ningning cheerfully ran towards the school with her backpack.

Seeing a classmate ahead, she ran over, "Feng Jingjing, are you waiting for me?"

Feng Jingjing withdrew her gaze from the school gate and looked at Ningning without responding.

Ningning didn't seem to wait for her reply and took out two candies from her pocket and put them into her hand.

"Here are some candies," mom said that eating sweets make your mood better, and it won't hurt anymore.

Feng Jingjing looked at the candies in her hand and paused for a long while before speaking, "Why are you giving me candies?"

They didn't even know each other.

She knew that she was a new student from the first grade, and also a relative from that family.

But they really had no interaction with each other.

Ningning didn't know what to say, but she also knew not to reveal others' shortcomings, so she simply said, "I have good news, I have a younger brother now, and from now on, mom, Aunt Xue, and my brother, we will live together. This is the candy Aunt Xue gave me, I am sharing it with you."

Feng Jingjing's hand paused with the candy, she looked up at Ningning, then stuffed the candy back, and even dropped one on the ground, "I don't want your candy."

Before Ningning could say anything else, Feng Jingjing had already turned and ran.

Ningning looked at the candy on the ground, though she didn't know why Feng Jingjing ran away, she felt that she seemed very unhappy.

.....

After dropping off Old Mrs. Jia, Lin Chuxia took Wang Tianxue back to their previous apartment building.

There were still some things belonging to Wang Tianxue that needed to be taken.

#### Chapter 459: Unwilling to Give Up

Not sure if Yang Rui has had a prick of conscience, wanting to leave a last shred of dignity for both of us, or if it's an agreement to part ways and never see each other again.

This time, Wang Tianxue returned home and, unusually, didn't run into anyone. The key was still under the flowerpot where it used to be.

Wang Tianxue only packed her and her child's belongings, not taking anything they had bought together.

In Wang Tianxue's words, another glance at this home made her feel sick.

After moving everything to the place she shared with Qin Juan, looking at the small living space, Wang Tianxue hesitated before speaking.

"Mr. Lin..."

"How many times have I told you, just call me by my name, Lin Chuxia, Chuxia is fine too."

In her previous life, Lin Chuxia and Wang Tianxue were close friends who could talk about anything. They struggled through hardships together, sometimes sleeping head to head on a pile of clothes or sharing a bowl of noodles when exhausted.

She felt uncomfortable with the formal address of "Mr. Lin".

Wang Tianxue smiled, finding Lin Chuxia to be a righteous and straightforward person, which made the following words seem easier to say.

"I plan to resign and not work at the Bun Shop anymore."

"What do you want to do?"

Lin Chuxia did not ask why, knowing that Wang Tianxue was different from her elder sister.

"I'm thinking of starting a small business. I had a job before I got pregnant and have saved some money. Now the market is open to everyone for business, and I want to give it a try. What do you think?"

"Of course, it's a good idea. Tell me, what kind of lucrative business are you planning to do? Maybe you can bring me along to make a fortune together."

Lin Chuxia acted like an excited fangirl, almost making Wang Tianxue lose her train of thought.

"Chuxia, I don't have any lucrative deals. Just before having the child, I worked in a Department Store selling clothes. I know a bit about the clothing business. I just want to get some clothes from a clothing factory to sell in a stall, to make some profit, enough to support myself and Xiao Long."

As in her previous life, Lin Chuxia did not participate further in this topic but instead retorted, "Is it really just for supporting you and Xiao Long? If that's the case, wouldn't it be better to work at the Bun Shop? No capital is required, no risk of losing money, and you've got colleagues from the Bun Shop looking out for you. You won't have to worry about wind, rain, or sun..."

Wang Tianxue looked at her and finally sighed, "It's not just for that. I've always had an unresolved anger inside me. I had a job before giving birth to Xiao Long, which was at the Department Store. It was Yang Rui who, taking advantage of my advanced pregnancy, told me to stay at home to rest and not worry about work. He said he'd find someone to fill in for me and after the baby was born and got a bit older, he would have that person return the job to me..."

She did not continue, but the hatred in her eyes was evident.

Lin Chuxia finished her unspoken words, "So, he gave your job to Tang Lili?"

"I'm not satisfied. Even if I win the lawsuit and gain custody of Xiao Long, I won't let them go for everything they've done. I want them to pay back for the injustice done to my brother."

"Alright," Lin Chuxia clapped her hands, "Tianxue, I support you. It's not fair they make mistakes and you and your child have to suffer. Watching that scumbag and that cheap woman live a good life... Actually, I've been looking for a shop lately. I was planning to open another branch of Qin's Restaurant or something else. I've decided now, let's open a clothing store."

Wang Tianxue turned her head abruptly to look at her, "A clothing store, you want to go into business with me?"

"Yes, if not with you, then with whom?"

Wang Tianxue thought, was Lin Chuxia always this capricious in making decisions?

Whether helping her back then or starting a business now.

"Aren't you afraid to open a shop with someone like me who has never done business before, losing money in the end?"

Lin Chuxia waved her hand generously, "In business, there's no such thing as a sure win without losses. But I believe, with our combined wisdom, we won't lose money. Not to mention making a huge profit, but at least we'll be sound businesswomen."

Her words made Wang Tianxue laugh, "Lin Chuxia, you really have a thick skin. Who talks about themselves like that? But you're already a well-known businesswoman now, there's really no need for you to get involved in this mess again."

She was about to embark on an unknown path, and she knew that Lin Chuxia pitied her, and although she was thankful, she didn't want Chuxia to take on any more burdens for her.

"What do you mean by stirring up trouble? I call this being visionary. Give me a straight answer, can you do it or not? First of all, if you say no, I won't think you're looking out for me because you're afraid I'll

lose money. I'll just assume you have a profitable business and you're not including me. If that's the case, then our sisterhood is over."

Lin Chuxia pretended to be angry and stood up to leave.

"Alright, alright," Wang Tianxue said, looking at Lin Chuxia's unreasonable demeanor and quickly held her back to compromise, "Let's do it together then. But I really don't have that much money to open a shop."

"Don't worry about the money. When the time comes, you just need to put in more effort."

"Okay then, you put in the money and I'll put in the effort; I'll work for Boss Lin."

"Much obliged, Boss Wang," Lin Chuxia extended her right hand.

Wang Tianxue, looking at the delicate and fair hand, suddenly felt her eyes well up with tears.

It was this very hand that pulled her out of the abyss, and now it was reaching out to lead her forward again.

She shook it firmly, her voice choked with emotion, "Chuxia, thank you."

...

In the following time, Lin Chuxia began preparing to open a clothing store.

She hadn't developed any new business recently. Partly because the Qin Family Village's vegetable greenhouses and Xiaoqingshan Village's yellow peach trees were just getting started, and even though she wasn't managing them directly, she needed to contribute ideas in many aspects.

Now that both ventures were flourishing, she could take some time to open a clothing store.

Actually, this move was already part of her plan.

In her past life, she had opened a clothing store with Wang Tianxue, and they had worked their way up step by step to eventually own a department store.

Only that happened years later in the past life.

In this life, since she met Wang Tianxue, she had moved the plan forward.

Not only had she brought it forward, but she also planned to take bigger steps.

When Zhang Guilan heard they were going to open a department store, her eyes lit up, "Sister-in-law, is there anything I can help with?"

She had been resting at her sister-in-law's place during her pregnancy, doing nothing but eating and sleeping.

Her sister-in-law took such good care of her that she didn't even let her cook.

Used to being busy at the Bun Shop, she felt uncomfortable having nothing to do.

Sometimes when she was unbearably bored, she would go to Qin's Restaurant to see if there was anything she could help with.

But instead of finding something to do, both Lin Chu and Qin's Restaurant, with Qin Jianjun and Qin Juan watching over her, wouldn't let her lift a finger.

The staff followed their lead and didn't allow her to touch anything.



Even when she returned home, Qin Juan, worrying about her, would personally escort her back.

If she couldn't make it, she would have Jianjun go instead.

It turned out to be more trouble than help.

After that, Zhang Guilan didn't feel right going to Qin's Restaurant anymore.

But now, it was perfect; her sister-in-law was about to open a new store and would certainly be very busy—she could finally be of help.

Chapter 460: Allowance

Lin Chuxia had long noticed that Zhang Guilan couldn't sit still; even being idle made her uncomfortable. She thought for a moment, "Sister-in-law, I need to find a shop in the coming days and will definitely be busy. I might need to trouble you with cooking at home."

Even though it wasn't related to shop matters, cooking was definitely manageable.

Zhang Guilan readily nodded, happy as long as she wasn't left idle, anything was fine.

Qin Yang responded quite calmly to the news.

He knew that his wife couldn't stay idle.

Opening a clothing store was excellent, and it was to be located in the city.

That way, his wife wouldn't run home as often as before, where she would stay for ten days or half a month at a time.

"Here is my paycheck, which should contain two months' wages, and some bonuses. You take it and use it."

This was Qin Yang's attitude; whatever his wife wanted to do, he would support her.

Lin Chuxia didn't hesitate, "Then I'll take it now," and after thinking for a while, she took out US\$ 30 from her pocket and gave it to him, "This is your allowance for the month."

Qin Yang was stunned by the word 'allowance' for a while but then smiled, "Thank you, dear. I doubt I'll be able to spend all US\$ 30."

"You're allowed to save it up if you don't spend it."

Lin Chuxia spoke without a second thought, amusing Zhang Guilan, who covered her pregnant belly and laughed heartily.

Qin Yang also inquired about where Lin Chuxia planned to open the clothing store.

After Qin Yang moved to the city, he had explored the shopping malls with his wife several times and had a fair understanding of the layout of the malls in the city.

Firstly, there was the City Department Store, which was the only Department Store in the city owned by the state, and the most trusted mall by the public.

Then there was the People's Mall, newly established in recent years between state-owned and privately-owned properties, backed by the municipal government.

Both these malls were located in the busiest sections of the city, and were the first choices for the daily consumption needs of the people.

He was concerned that small, individual shops wouldn't have an advantage against giants like the Department Store and People's Mall.

People were more likely to trust the Department Store and People's Mall.

Regarding this, Lin Chuxia already had a plan, but just gave Qin Yang a secretive smile, "It's a secret; I need to do some investigations first."

What could one do if the wife didn't tell her plans?

Just spoil his wife.

Eventually, they found a suitable location, and Lin Chuxia changed her tune.

The location she fancied was diagonally across from the Department Store, almost creating a triangular competitive situation with the Department Store and People's Mall.

The location was good, but securing it was not easy. Eventually, they still consulted Qin Yang to see if he knew anyone to help.

It was his duty to help when his wife needed him.

This location was decided by herself, and Wang Tianxue understood Lin Chuxia's ambition with just one look, while also feeling a surge of motivation.

One could say that Lin Chuxia was very much to her taste.

After finding the store, she and Wang Tianxue personally supervised the renovations.

The design of the store also involved discussions between them.

Even Wang Tianxue, who had seen her share of sophistication, had to admit Lin Chuxia's insight and capabilities.

Working with such a person, she really found her guardian angel.

The store was progressing rapidly, and Wang Tianxue finally received some news about her work.

Lin Chuxia could tell from her mood that it was good news and she already had her answer, "How is it? Finally satisfied?"

In the past six months, Wang Tianxue finally felt some grievances being aired, "It's okay. Manager Zhao even tried to have me consider Yang Rui's feelings, trying to mediate between us, not realizing that Yang Rui and I have turned into enemies. What face does he even have here? Moreover, Tang Lili is just a homewrecker, I'd let a homewrecker take over my job over my dead body. Did they really think the divorce would end everything?"

Lin Chuxia couldn't help but chuckle softly; so this was the direct tone Wang Tianxue developed.

She had thought the outspoken character of Wang Tianxue from her previous life had developed after many years of struggling.

"So, what are you going to do about the job? Returning to work at the Department Store?"

Wang Tianxue glanced at her, "How could I? I've already handed over the job; I have a colleague whose sister-in-law has been jobless since graduating high school last year. Her father-in-law works at the Bureau of Industry and Commerce, so I sold the job cheaply to her sister-in-law."

"Smart move, Sister Tianxue."

Vengeance achieved and connections made, if it wasn't for her child's issue making her lose interest in her career in her previous life, Wang Tianxue's intelligence and vision might have led her to outperform even Lin Chuxia.

"Okay, I'm thinking of heading down south next."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "I was thinking the same. In a few days, the store will be ready, and we need to seriously consider our sources. We'll have to pave our way slowly."

"No need, I have connections," Wang Tianxue said nonchalantly glancing at Lin Chuxia.

This was unexpected for Lin Chuxia; she clearly remembered from her past life that Wang Tianxue started from street vending before they began collaborating and heading south.

Right, it seemed she quickly made connections on her side.

Could it be that she already had these connections, but because she had no capital, she had to start from street vending in the previous life?

Thinking this, Lin Chuxia grinned, "I see now. You didn't want me to join you before because you had your own ways of making money and didn't want to bring me along."

Wang Tianxue knew her tease but still explained, "Not at all, sister. I just felt it wasn't right to ask for your investment just based on words since I came empty-handed. I thought of getting some success first before pulling you in, knowing you are a bit impulsive."

"Who isn't in a rush to make money? Now everything is nearly set up, and with connections in place, it's hard not to make a fortune. Sister Tianxue, let's schedule our trip. This first trip, we should go together."

Not that Lin Chuxia mistrusted Wang Tianxue, but transportation currently was not like in the future.

There were no highways, mostly provincial and county roads, and some places didn't even have a proper roadway.

Although there were fewer vehicles on the roads at that time, it didn't matter if the roads were bad.

Long-distance travel was challenging not only because of the roads but also because the society was not as safe as in the future.

There were no extensive surveillance systems along highways, no omnipotent GPS, not even mobile phones.

In case of danger, aside from manually seeking help from a police station, there were hardly any other options.

This also gave some criminals an opportunity to exploit, especially targeting freight long-haul trucks.

Asking truck drivers for money was the lesser evil; bolder criminals might even steal the cargo.

Having seen the prosperous and smooth infrastructure of the future, Lin Chuxia knew the importance of smooth roads, which is why she admired Qin Yang's work and their plans even more.

Wang Tianxue had plans, but right now many things were beyond her control alone.

Listening to Lin Chuxia, she felt reassured.