

Switched M 461

Chapter 461: Fifty-Fifty Split

"I'll make a call first, then leave the child with Aunt Jia. If there's no problem, we can set off. It's just that for manpower, I can only contact a driver, we might still need one or two men."

Without Chuxia's involvement, she'd be willing to risk everything to go alone.

But since Chuxia had been so dedicated to her, she had to consider not only her own safety but also Chuxia's.

"I'll take care of hiring manpower."

Chuxia had already thought it through. She called Houzi over, and Jia Liang followed as well.

The Bun Shop can be managed by the older sister during this period.

At the end, Wang Tianxue took out a stack of money from her bag.

"This is the money from selling my labor and my savings, not much, just two thousand six hundred. Take it, as our capital for purchasing goods."

Chuxia accepted the money without ceremony, as it was supposed to be a partnership, she wouldn't take a cent, but this would become a burden on Tianxue.

However, she took out two hundred yuan and gave it back, "You have a child, you can't be left without a single penny. As we agreed before, we'll both earn a salary at the beginning, and split the year-end bonus. The split will be fifty-fifty, of course, this includes losses too."

Tianxue looked at her annoyed, "As long as we bring the goods back, there's no possibility of loss. Besides, even if the goods from the south are lost, we still have the goods from the clothing factory. Chuxia, I can listen to you on other matters, but I don't agree with this bonus ratio. You paid for the

shopfront and the initial renovations, I am aware of that. You've already invested so much, how can I compare? I'll just take a twenty percent share in the store."

Even without counting the cost of the property, the clothing store they were opening would require tens of thousands in goods alone.

She only had those two thousand plus, the rest depended on Chuxia.

"The money I invested is mainly into the property, besides, your technical resources are invaluable as an investment."

Indeed, the store's property was also purchased by Chuxia.

She certainly didn't want to be the landlord of a successful business and have someone else benefit from her investment.

Moreover, in today's market, it was always good to own more property.

Initially, buying the three-story building was a challenge, but once Qin Yang knew she wanted it, he personally helped her acquire it.

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When the clothing store opened, they needed not only a supplier but also to arrange the staff.

Chuxia's first thought was to have Liu Na by her side.

This young woman had matured after the incident with Feng Zhong, and had been dedicated to her work at the Bun Shop.

Moreover, Liu Na had a good appearance and education, which made her quite suitable.

She also wanted to bring Qin Jianjun along, but the boy hadn't graduated yet and had night classes.

This trip would take at least ten days to half a month; they couldn't delay his studies.

So, she simply handed over the store's recruitment to him, as a test.

Liu Na's job was very easy to accept, she agreed almost without hesitation.

"Mr. Lin, wherever you tell me to go, I'll go. As long as I'm working with Mr. Lin, I'm willing to do anything."

The young girl's eyes sparkled with hope as she said these words.

"Alright, then today's shift ends here. Go back and rest, and follow me tomorrow."

After instructing Liu Na, Chuxia also spoke to the older sister and Jia Liang.

Jia Liang was already notified and well-prepared.

"I'll make a call in a little while, tell Houzi to come over first. There was no problem when Factory Director Su was contacted a few days ago; he even told the boss that Xiyang Food Factory has plenty of staff, and to use them as needed."

Chuxia nodded in understanding; she knew her initial batch of employees were all very handy and would definitely play a significant role.

It seems that Su Wensong knew her best after all.

On the other side, knowing that Liu Na was transferring, the staff of the restaurant bid her farewell one after another, telling her not to forget the brothers and sisters of the restaurant.

Having worked with these people for nearly a year, she had already developed feelings for them, so naturally, Liu Na wouldn't forget.

After finishing talking to everyone, Liu Na walked over to Gao Lele.

Before, she couldn't bring herself to lower her pride, and she also didn't want to bring up anything about that person again.

Now that she was leaving Qin's Restaurant, some things had to be ended.

"Lele."

Gao Lele's eyes were full of smiles, "What's up, is there something else?"

Many words of congratulations had been said just now, and in their view, working closely with the boss undoubtedly represented reaching the pinnacle of life.

Liu Na pursed her lips and under her earnest gaze, said, "Lele, I owe you an apology. I blamed you without discriminating right from wrong regarding the Feng Zhong incident. But in my heart, I've always known that Feng Zhong being fired by the boss was his own fault and had nothing to do with you. On the contrary, you were the victim in that matter. It's me..."

"Tsch, I thought it was something serious," Gao Lele interrupted her, "That's old news; I've long forgotten about it. What I really want now is for you to keep your eyes open and find a satisfactory Mr. Right."

Liu Na's lips displayed a bitter smile. She had no plans of marrying again; she already...

Right now, all she wanted was to work hard following the boss and repay his kindness.

Someone passed by, and Gao Lele's gaze was immediately drawn away.

Liu Na followed her line of sight and saw Qin Jianjun walking over to Mr. Lin, talking to her about something.

Laughing, she said, "Let's not talk about whether I can find my Mr. Right. I think your Mr. Right seems not too far away."

Gao Lele blushed from being teased and scolded her a bit.

Liu Na's smile faded, and she said earnestly, "Qin Jianjun is a good man. Though I'm not great at judging people, I believe I haven't misjudged this time. You go for it, I'm waiting to enjoy your wedding candy."

After speaking, she didn't wait for Gao Lele to react and ran off with a laugh.

Gao Lele's laughter turned bittersweet as she saw Qin Jianjun coming back, and she quickly readjusted her mood.

"Jianjun."

"Is there something you need, Lele?"

Qin Jianjun stood up straight, walking very neatly, which was a pleasing sight to see.

Gao Lele's heartbeat quickened, "Um, do you have time this weekend? I heard you don't have classes on weekends."

"Is there something you need?" asked Qin Jianjun.

Indeed, he didn't have classes on weekends.

Seeing him not immediately refuse, Gao Lele mustered her courage again and said, "I heard that the lotus leaves at People's Park are out. It's very beautiful when boating..."

"Sorry, Lele, I'm afraid I don't have time, this weekend I need to take care of the kids."

If Aunt Jia and the others were to leave this week, his older sister would have to watch over Qin's Restaurant, and Ningning would have no one to look after her this weekend.

Although Ningning was very obedient, it was the time for him to help Aunt Jia and his aunt share the burden, not to be thinking about having fun.

Aunt Jia also had work for him.

Gao Lele's eyes lit up, "It's okay, you can bring the kid with you and we can all play together."

"It's better not to, I really don't have time," Qin Jianjun refused again.

Gao Lele's bright eyes dimmed, and as she saw Qin Jianjun turning to leave, she suddenly called out to him, "Jianjun..."

Chapter 462: Blockhead

Qin Jianjun turned his head.

Gao Lele continued, "My mom set me up through a matchmaker, wanting me to meet this guy on the weekend. I don't really want to."

Qin Jianjun finally realized something and thought for a moment, "If you don't want to see him, then don't. Marriage is a lifetime commitment. Now the state advocates for freedom in love and marriage. Your parents shouldn't arrange your marriage. Have a good talk with them. As long as your reasons are sound, I think they will understand."

After Qin Jianjun left, Gao Lele couldn't hold back her tears anymore.

Qin Juan watched the two from not far away, frowning. When she saw Qin Jianjun approaching, she asked quietly, "What's going on?"

Qin Jianjun scratched his head, "It's probably something to do with her family. Her mom mentioned a suitor and wants to set up a meeting this weekend. She doesn't want to meet him and asked me to go boating in the park this weekend instead. But I don't want to go either; the shop is so busy, where do I have the time to go boating?"

Lin Chuxia laughed when she heard what he said. Seeing no one around, she whispered, "Look here, you silly boy, her family talks about a suitor she doesn't want to see, and she specifically asks you to go boating in the park. Can't you understand what that means?"

As for Gao Lele's little crush on Qin Jianjun, she and her elder sister had noticed it a long time ago.

Thinking about young love, what they're looking for is exactly this kind of clueless and unripe feeling, so neither of them had pointed it out.

But after all this time, this naive nephew of theirs is not just unripe; he's just utterly clueless.

Without a little reminder, he probably will never get married in his lifetime.

Qin Juan also asked him with a speechless expression, "What do you think of Lele?"

In her opinion, Gao Lele is quite nice: pretty, sweet-talked, and with a good personality.

Her nephew standing with her looked like a handsome couple, quite well matched.

Most importantly, after working together for such a long time, they knew each other well.

Qin Jianjun was scared stiff by his fourth aunt and Aunt's words. He wasn't dumb, he just hadn't thought about it that way.

Now looking at Gao Lele, it was like facing some dreadful flood or savage beast.

"Fourth Aunt, Aunt, I really didn't mean it that way. I'm still young; I just want to study well, work well, and get my diploma first. As for other things, I really haven't thought about them."

"You could think about it, you're almost a 20-year-old young man. Now the state advocates for free love, if there is a suitable young lady..."

"No, no," Qin Jianjun hurriedly interrupted Lin Chuxia, "Fourth Aunt, I really don't have that on my mind. In my plans, at least I should consider marriage when I'm at the age of Fourth Uncle. I genuinely don't want to get married and have children too early."

By the end, his face turned red first.

It was unclear whether he blushed out of embarrassment or urgency.

Lin Chuxia and Qin Juan exchanged a glance, seeing clearly the boy really wasn't thinking about it.

"Alright, don't rush. If you don't have that in mind, just keep your distance from her. Once she understands your stance, she'll drop the idea."

After all, the window paper hadn't been pierced, and Qin Jianjun couldn't directly tell Gao Lele he didn't like her; that wouldn't leave the young lady with any dignity.

It also happened that they were planning to transfer him to the shopping mall side. With time, she'd probably forget.

"When you're not busy later, clean up and come over to my place. Your second aunt is home cooking something delicious for us, she specifically asked me to call you and your aunt over."

Qin Juan also smiled, "Your eldest sister-in-law can't stay idle. She came to the shop a few days ago wanting to help out too."

"Right, we're going south in a few days. Your eldest sister-in-law said she wanted to stay at your place. She has mentioned it twice now; probably she's calling you over today to talk about it."

Lin Chuxia left, leaving only Qin Yang and Zhang Guilan at home.

Although the sister-in-law and the younger uncle were not like the elder uncle and younger aunt, always a topic of gossip in doubtful circumstances, Zhang Guilan still feared that they might cause idle talk and bad rumors for Lin Chuxia and her family.

Although Lin Chuxia didn't care about those things, she thought about Zhang Guilan who would be giving birth in a month or two.

Jiang Hong did have her baby half a month early. If she's not at home and Qin Yang goes to work, and there's no one familiar like Zhang Guilan in the employee residential complex, that would be trouble.

It's also good to move in with Qin Juan; she can take care of her, and neighbor Aunt Jia is also familiar with Zhang Guilan.

If anything happens, Aunt Jia could help call for assistance.

Upon hearing this, Qin Juan readily agreed, "I was just about to discuss this. It's perfect for Sister-in-law to come to my place. I worry when Ningning is home alone while I'm busy. This way, they can keep each other company."

Qin Juan once again sighed with gratitude, there's nothing like having relatives by your side.

Despite living with the Zhang Family for eight years, she had never felt the warmth of a family.

But her own relatives, no matter how long they are apart, always keep each other in their hearts.

Especially during such unreserved moments with her sister-in-law and younger siblings, she felt more than ever that she has always been a part of this family.

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Meanwhile, Zhang Guilan had just returned from the market with groceries.

In fact, there were still vegetables at home, and meat in the fridge. Lin Chuxia didn't want her to go to the market alone.

But she thought it was fine. The market wasn't far from the residential complex, and it wasn't quite off-work hours yet, so the market wasn't crowded.

For a family dinner, they ought to prepare several more dishes anyway.

This fish, for example, was lively and fresh; everyone, especially the younger siblings, loved fish.

Zhang Guilan was pondering whether to steam or braise the fish when someone nearby greeted her.

"This Sister-in-law seems new here. How are you related to Mr. Qin? Are you here visiting relatives?"

She saw a woman of similar age not far away, eyeing her curiously.

Zhang Guilan only knew Sister-in-law Fu, their neighbor, an older sister-in-law. She hadn't met this person before.

But she knew the residential complex was occupied by Qin Yang's colleagues and their families. Smiling, she replied, "I'm his sister-in-law, just here to visit them."

She definitely couldn't broadcast having extra children.

Sister-in-law Feng sized up Zhang Guilan again, "A real sister-in-law?"

Zhang Guilan nodded, "Yes, a real sister-in-law."

"You all must be close. Mr. Qin is so outstanding at work, his older brother must be very successful too, right? What does he do?"

Zhang Guilan frowned slightly; this person was rather nosy. Still, it wouldn't be polite to snub her.

She didn't know this person's relationship with Qin Yang; she wouldn't want to create problems for her brother-in-law.

"He doesn't do much, just farms at home."

After saying that, Zhang Guilan turned to leave, only to be blocked by the woman, who continued to scrutinize her with an unabashed stare, and finally laughed, "Farming? Sister-in-law, you don't look like someone who farms."

In the past two years, Zhang Guilan had managed the Bun Shop, leaving home early and returning late. Through summer, she hardly got any sun.

Her once wheat-colored skin from farming had long turned pale.

Plus, being well-nourished during pregnancy, she really looked fair and plump.

When she first came to the city, Lin Chuxia, worried Zhang Guilan would feel suffocated, took her shopping in the city malls. The clothes Zhang Guilan wore now were all newly bought and indeed looked quite respectable.

Zhang Guilan felt uncomfortable under her scrutiny, knowing she looked different from before, so she didn't explain further, simply saying, "It's just dressing up a bit to visit relatives. Well, I shouldn't keep you, I have to get home for cooking."

Chapter 463: Heading South

Fearing that Sister-in-law Feng would ask more questions, Zhang Guilan turned around and left with the fish.

Sister-in-law Feng's words were already on the tip of her tongue, but there was no chance to speak them now. Watching Zhang Guilan's pregnant belly move briskly away, she sneered.

Lin Chuxia must have warned her beforehand, otherwise why would she run off?

Just look at them, do they seem like the farming type at all?

Her gaze fell back on the pregnant belly that became obvious as Zhang Guilan turned around.

It looks like she's about to give birth, isn't she?

A sister-in-law who's about to give birth living at her brother-in-law's house?

Sister-in-law Feng thought of a possibility. As soon as Feng Dajun finished work, she couldn't wait to share it with him.

When Feng Dajun heard that she was gossiping about someone else again, he frowned in distaste.

"Why can't you stop focusing on other people? What does it matter to you how they live their lives or who comes to their house? Are you bored or what?" He scolded.

Seeing his reaction, Sister-in-law Feng felt helpless and frustrated. She pulled him into the inner room and whispered indignantly, "Who wants to focus on them? I just think there's something fishy about that woman. What wife with such a big belly stays at her brother-in-law's house? I think she might be violating the family planning policy, and came to hide at Mr. Qin's place from the family planning office... and Qin Yang is actually helping her break the policy..."

"Shut up," Feng Dajun said coldly, interrupting her, "I'm telling you, keep those thoughts to yourself. Don't say anything at home, and especially not outside. If I find out you're spreading rumors about others, you can pack up and go back to your hometown."

His icy voice made Sister-in-law Feng shiver uncontrollably. Viewing his furious demeanor, the grievances in her heart finally burst forth as she sat down on the ground and bawled.

"I don't want to focus on others, I want to live my own life well, but I just don't understand why others can have whatever they want. If they want to have a second child, they do, but why is it so hard for us to have another one? That woman is obviously a city-dweller, and city folks can have a second child, so why can't I, a country person, have one too?"

Feng Dajun was annoyed by her crying. He warned her, "Keep crying. The building isn't soundproof. Let's see if you embarrass yourself when the neighbors hear."

Sister-in-law Feng immediately clamped her mouth shut, but continued sobbing.

Seeing that she seemed to get the message, Feng Dajun continued, "It's true you're from the countryside, but don't forget, I'm not a farmer anymore. And now I'm a formal staff member in my unit, a leader of some sort. If you really want to have a second child, that's fine, I'll just go back to farming too."

Sister-in-law Feng started crying again. "Why is my life so hard..."

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Everything was arranged, and Lin Chuxia booked train tickets to Rong City.

There were six people in the group: her, Wang Tianxue, Liu Na, Jia Liang, Hou Xiaobao, and a driver found by Wang Tianxue.

Six people filled one sleeper compartment, which also made the trip safer.

This era was not like the future, where a smartphone could handle everything, even the money for loading goods was in cash.

The currently circulating currency was still the ten-yuan "big unity" bills, and for this trip, they were purchasing at least twenty thousand yuan worth of goods. Lin Chuxia openly told Wang Tianxue she was carrying twenty-five thousand yuan in cash.

Fortunately, she had her space; the money bag was just a cover.

Otherwise, just that twenty-five thousand yuan in cash would make quite a big bundle.

Trains were rampant with pickpockets at the time; they'd snatch something and then escape at the next stop, and by the time the victim realized their loss, the thief would be nowhere to be found.

All things considered, without knowing about her space, such an arrangement was the safest.

This was their first time going to Rong City to purchase goods, and taking the train was relatively more convenient.

Upon reaching Rong City, they could then find a truck for delivery. Those professional long-distance trucks had experienced drivers who could avoid a lot of trouble.

With this first experience, the next time they went to Rong City they wouldn't need as many people, and she could drive there herself. Furthermore, if there weren't a lot of goods, they could also opt for rail freight.

An introduction letter was essential. Lin Chuxia had already notified everyone to get theirs ready.

That night as she was packing her luggage, Qin Yang just stood there, watching her with an anxious expression, his eyes full of concern.

"My wife, what if I write a request, pretending to be an inspection trip down south? Wait for me a few days, maybe it'll get approved."

After learning that Lin Chuxia was going down south to purchase goods, Qin Yang had tried asking his boss for time off.

As one might expect, a day or two was fine, but this trip would take at least ten days to half a month, and without a legitimate reason, the boss naturally wouldn't approve.

Because of this, Qin Yang had been feeling down for several days.

Lin Chuxia smiled at him, "What, do I need to bring family members along with me on a business trip? What are you, an accompanying male secretary?"

Qin Yang wished he could be Lin Chuxia's male secretary. "I just don't feel at ease with you going alone."

"How can I be alone, there are six of us. Don't worry, I'll be fine. Besides, you know my skills; even if I really encounter danger, I have the ability to protect myself."

"What skills do you have? Do you know who those thugs are? If they dare to commit crimes, they might just as well murder and set fires next."

Seeing Lin Chuxia joking and not taking it seriously, Qin Yang said sternly.

Over the years working outside, he had heard all sorts of things.

One north, one south; the safety situation was far worse than their own area.

On one side, people risked crimes due to rapid development, while on the other, it was a case of "the mountains are high and the emperor is far away."

Lin Chuxia was still so young, and society was far more sinister than she could imagine.

Seeing that Qin Yang was now taking a scolding father's tone, Lin Chuxia quickly adjusted her attitude as well.

She gently swayed his arm and flattered him, "I got it, you already told me this before, and I've taken it to heart. Don't worry, nothing will happen to me. If we really run into danger, we'll give them the money, the goods, in any case, we won't let ourselves be in danger over money."

Hearing her say this, Qin Yang finally looked a bit relieved, "You better remember what you've said."

"Don't worry, I cherish my life more than anyone else does. I still have to save it to have babies with you."

"This... you don't have to take it so seriously, you're busy as it is. Let's just leave it to fate."

Lin Chuxia hadn't gotten pregnant this month, and Qin Yang felt like he had already tried his best.

A few days ago, Lin Chuxia's period came, and Qin Yang felt that compared to his wife's happiness, perhaps a child wasn't that important.

He had heard that being busy at work and under a lot of pressure could make it hard for someone to get pregnant.

That's to say nothing of Lin Chuxia's work, which, just when she thought she would have some downtime, she was about to open a shopping mall.

This would demand more of her efforts than her prior Bun Shop or restaurant.

Another thing was that Qin Yang had noticed Lin Chuxia truly loved children.

Chapter 464: Liu Guoqiang

No matter if it's Zhuangzhuang, Niuniu, Ningning from her family, or Li Wei's son, or Sun Lanlan's son.

When she sees the children, her eyes light up, and she's extremely patient with them.

Perhaps because of this, every month when her period comes, her mood becomes very low and disappointed.

She even asked herself what she would do if she couldn't have a baby.

She really wanted a child of their own.

Qin Yang hadn't expected Lin Chuxia to take the matter of having children so to heart.

Perhaps it was this that put pressure on her, that's why...

Lin Chuxia didn't know what Qin Yang was thinking and had already packed her luggage.

This time, they were just going to stock up goods, so they traveled light, only bringing a few changes of clothes, considering they'd be on the train for several days, and it would take a few more days once they arrived.

Fortunately, the weather was warm, and the clothes were thin, so they didn't take up much space.

Their train was at 9:40 in the morning. When Lin Chuxia arrived at the train station, the others were already there.

Apart from carrying backpacks, Jia Liang and Hou Xiaobao also carried two big bags full of food.

Jia Liang noticed her gaze and explained, "Once we're on the train, we should try to move around as little as possible. The food on the train might not be good, so I brought extra."

"You've thought it through thoroughly."

Before, when Lin Chuxia took the train by herself, she didn't know how many meat buns and such she had stored in her space.

Suddenly traveling with strangers, she had almost forgotten.

Wang Tianxue saw that she was only carrying a handbag and was shocked.

She quickly stepped forward, pulled her aside, and spoke in a low voice, "Have you secured the money? Just carrying it like this?"

With it in hand?

Just thinking about the more than twenty thousand yuan inside for their goods, Wang Tianxue's heart trembled.

More than twenty thousand yuan, now how many are millionaires?

According to her idea, this time was just a test run, there was no need to stock too much inventory.

After all, she had planned to start from setting up a street stall.

However, Lin Chuxia felt that a trip wasn't easy to make, and the transportation cost for ten thousand yuan worth of goods was the same as that for twenty thousand yuan worth of goods.

Also, their shopping mall's scale was considerable, she didn't want everything to sell out as soon as they opened.

Wang Tianxue was amused by her words at the time.

Whose business sells out on the first day of opening?

But she didn't dampen Lin Chuxia's spirits—the clothing styles from the south were indeed more popular than the local ones, so she didn't insist further.

In any case, that was all the money she had.

If the boss wants to invest more, she, the employee, could only try to make sure the boss spends the money to his satisfaction.

But seeing her so casual, she couldn't help but grumble.

Even if she doesn't take money seriously, if it were really lost, their trip would be in vain.

Lin Chuxia gave her a reassuring look, "Don't worry, it's all secured. I have everything under control."

Well, nothing more could be said at this point.

Wang Tianxue glanced at the three big men opposite and thought that since everyone was in the same carriage, it would be fine to just keep an extra eye out.

"Chuxia, this is Liu Guoqiang I told you about."

Wang Tianxue introduced the driver she brought to Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia had spotted the unfamiliar man among the group early on.

He was over 1.7 meters tall and looked quite sturdy.

In his early thirties, he had a handsome face, especially those bright eyes.

When Wang Tianxue introduced him, Liu Guoqiang stepped forward and briskly extended his right hand, "Mr. Lin, hello, I'm Liu Guoqiang."

Lin Chuxia shook his hand and raised an eyebrow, "Discharged from the army?"

"Yes, I served for eight years and have been retired for several years now."

Lin Chuxia had always admired military personnel. Not only did Liu Guoqiang look respectable, but his every movement still bore the traces of a soldier, which immediately endeared him to her.

When the time came, the six of them followed the crowd into the station to have their tickets checked.

The crowd was at its largest and most chaotic then.

They spontaneously formed a circle around Lin Chuxia, one to prevent others from bumping into her and another to protect her bag.

Only when they entered their own carriage did they finally breathe a sigh of relief.

Jia Liang and Hou Xiaobao were the most nervous among them.

Having been involved in such activities before, they knew all too well the methods of the pickpockets and could tell at a glance who was the most suspicious in the crowd.

When they reached their seats, Hou Xiaobao was still feeling shaken as he told them, "It's indeed a long-distance trip to Rong City. Just now, when boarding, there were more pickpockets in the crowd than you could count on both hands. I even saw someone slash open a man's bag and steal his money."

"Slash open a bag?" Liu Na exclaimed in surprise.

This was her first long journey, and she had only heard about pickpockets on trains. Hearing Hou Xiaobao describe so many, she cast a worried glance at Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia was already aware of these things from her past life and was not surprised.

At that moment, she was checking out the six bunk beds.

Conveniently, it was three men to one side and three women to the other.

On the men's side, Houzi took the top bunk, Jia Liang the middle, and Liu Guoqiang the bottom.

On the women's side, Liu Na, being the youngest, took the top bunk. Lin Chuxia settled in the middle, with Wang Tianxue on the bottom bunk.

Wang Tianxue had wanted Lin Chuxia to take the bottom bunk since the middle bunk among the three-tiers was the most uncomfortable, but Lin Chuxia refused.

Hou Xiaobao continued to talk about pickpockets, with Liu Na now sticking close to Lin Chuxia, unblinkingly eyeing her bag for fear someone would actually come over and slash it open.

Finally, Wang Tianxue could not stand it anymore, "Nana, do you know what you're doing now? It's like holding a lamp to search for something in the daytime – too conspicuous."

Lin Chuxia laughed along, "It's just the six of us here, and if outsiders come near, we'll be alert right away, don't worry, it's fine."

She put her bag in the innermost part of the bunk. The bunk was open, so if anyone came in, they would notice immediately.

Jia Liang also nodded, "Mr. Lin is right. Just relax here; we'll all be watching out."

Lin Chuxia reminded them, "Outside, stop calling me Mr. Lin, do you want to make me a target? Just call me by my name, and Brother Liu, you can just call me Chuxia."

Liu Guoqiang nodded, then glanced at Hou Xiaobao.

Seeing that his look was meaningful, Lin Chuxia couldn't help but ask, "Brother Liu, what were you doing before? After demobilization, you should have been given a job arrangement, right?"

Liu Guoqiang retracted his gaze and spoke indifferently, "Police."

"Clang!"

Hou Xiaobao, who was climbing onto the upper bunk, nearly fell off in surprise.

Lin Chuxia suppressed her laughter and continued, "Sister Tianxue mentioned that you're currently self-employed, so why not continue with the police?"

Self-employed was Lin Chuxia's euphemism for being jobless.

This time Wang Tianxue brought him over, firstly to ask for his help and secondly for Lin Chuxia to meet him and see if he could be retained to work in the mall.

However, Lin Chuxia found her own question too abrupt and hurriedly added, "I'm just asking casually, if it's not convenient, you don't have to answer."

Liu Guoqiang laughed, "There's nothing inconvenient about it. I had a comrade-in-arms who, due to some family situations, couldn't settle into a job. In my opinion, he needed such a job more, so I gave it to him."

Chapter 465: That's Really Not Necessary

Lin Chuxia glanced at Wang Tianxue.

In their previous lives, there wasn't such a person beside them, but now it seemed that Sister Tianxue had a good eye for people.

After settling down and chatting for a while, it was time for lunch.

Jia Liang brought some buns and dishes packed from the restaurant, and the meal was quite decent.

Even though the food had cooled down, the weather was hot, so it didn't matter.

But there were no ready-made meals afterward, just some bread, biscuits, and vacuum-sealed cooked food from their company, like beef sauce and chili sauce.

Having eaten and drunk their fill, there wasn't much to do, so everyone lay down in their spots to take a nap.

Lin Chuxia had brought two books, but the carriage was too chaotic at the moment, and she couldn't focus on reading, so she simply closed her eyes and forced herself to 'shut down.'

But she was soon awakened by the heat.

The train at that time didn't have air conditioning; it only had windows open for ventilation, blowing in hot wind.

The narrow window crack still couldn't dispel the foul air inside the carriage.

As the train journey went on, the smell inside the carriage got stronger.

People were intermittently passing through the corridor, their voices fluctuating.

Lin Chuxia felt that Qin Yang had indeed spoiled her.

After Wang Tianxue left in their previous lives, she too had traveled alone to the south for business.

Once, unfortunately, her sleeper carriage was shared with four big men and an elderly lady.

Even though she had the lower bunk, the old lady lacked decency, sternly lying above and refusing to switch places, even when the conductor came to persuade her to make way for the elderly.

There were also two with stinky feet.

Once their shoes were off, not just their area, probably half of the carriage was filled with the smell.

That time, she ended up sitting in the connecting passageway between two carriages for two days and a night.

Meeting Jia Liang's gaze, Lin Chuxia whispered, "I can't sleep; you go ahead and rest, I'll watch."

While they rested, Jia Liang kept watch.

Jia Liang didn't decline and took out two newspapers from his bag, asking her if she wanted to read.

Lin Chuxia held up her book and gestured, "I'll read this."

Her book hadn't been flipped through much when Wang Tianxue also sat up, saw her awake, and invited her to sit on the lower bunk.

Once she came down, Wang Tianxue handed her a cup of water.

Lin Chuxia took a sip of water, gazing at the trees and fields moving backward outside the window, and sighed heavily, "Taking the train is really exhausting," more than thirty hours.

"Once this trip is over, it'll be fine; my cousin lives over there, we can discuss and later on, we can ask her to send whatever goods we need on our behalf."

Wang Tianxue's cousin lived in Rong City, that was the connection she previously mentioned.

After a while, other people also woke up one after another; the weather was hot and noisy.

Houzi, seeing everyone bored, took out a deck of cards and straightforwardly started playing poker.

Houzi, being such an extroverted person, was calling everyone over to play cards, yet his eyes kept stealing glances at Liu Guoqiang.

Finally, he mustered the courage, barely smiling as he asked Liu Guoqiang, "Brother Liu, want to join us for a bit?"

Liu Guoqiang seemed easy to talk to; even while sitting, his back was straight, hands naturally resting on his knees.

Just his sitting posture alone gave off a righteous and resolute vibe.

He nodded in response, "Sure."

Houzi sneakily glanced at Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia smiled slightly, "I'll play too. Playing Upgrade? I'll team up with Brother Liu?"

Houzi, seeing his savior, said with a smile, "Liu Na's family and I brought folding stools."

Liu Guoqiang and Lin Chuxia took the sleeper berths, while Houzi and Liu Na sat on folding stools, and the four of them started playing card games.

Wang Tianxue was sitting next to Lin Chuxia, helping her watch the game, Jia Liang didn't have a lower berth and was lying on the middle berth where he could almost see everyone's cards, but he still focused on Liu Guoqiang's cards.

With the entertainment, time passed a bit faster.

In the evening, the lights were turned on in the carriage, and everyone packed up the cards.

For dinner, they bought meals from the train along with their own home-cooked meat sauce, which was enough to fill them up.

After dinner, everyone stopped playing cards and lay back in their beds to rest.

As night fell, the carriage quieted down significantly, and with the temperature dropping, it became much more comfortable.

Houzi had slept at noon, so he was quite energetic now and stayed up to watch.

Seeing that Liu Na opposite him wasn't asleep either, he leaned on his berth and quietly talked to her.

Houzi and Liu Na were acquaintances even though not very close.

After the Qin Family Village's vegetable greenhouses were built, the fresh vegetables needed daily by Qin's Restaurant in the city were all delivered by Houzi, including meat and eggs from the village's chicken and pig farms.

One could say that not a single drop of "fertilizer" flowed into others' fields.

Houzi, who frequently traveled to the city, had also made nodding acquaintances with the staff of the restaurants there.

Of course, his connection with Liu Na wasn't just that.

After Feng Zhong went missing, Jia Liang had asked Houzi to look for Feng Zhong in An City.

He knew a bit about what happened between Feng Zhong and Liu Na.

Knowing that the boss had brought this girl on the trip, Houzi felt a bit of sympathy and pity for her from the bottom of his heart.

He cursed Feng Zhong countless times in his mind, a nice girl wasted by that asshole Feng Zhong, truly a piece of garbage.

Just then, a ruckus suddenly erupted outside, filled with cursing, crying, and screaming...

Followed by the sound of hurried footsteps approaching.

Lin Chuxia sat up abruptly, and seeing this, everyone else also watched the aisle warily.

Liu Na was the most timid, and she panicked completely, "Sister Lin, it seems like someone is shouting to catch a thief."

She stared intensely at Lin Chuxia's bag, thought for a moment, then climbed down and sat directly with Lin Chuxia on one berth.

Between them was the handbag.

Lin Chuxia:"..."

That wasn't necessary; there were only a few changes of clothes inside.

Jia Liang jumped down from the middle berth, and Liu Guoqiang also stood up, "I'll go and check."

He walked out, and Jia Liang stood at the entrance of the sleeper compartment.

He was naturally strong and bald, looking like a guard deity, obviously not someone easy to provoke.

This caused those who were sticking their heads out to watch the commotion to retract their heads.

Soon, the noise quieted down, and Liu Guoqiang came back.

"It's all right now, there was a thief caught red-handed in another section. Besides the train police, there are plainclothes officers on the train, we just need to be careful, and there won't be any problems."

He spoke casually, but Lin Chuxia, with sharp eyes, noticed a big rip on his sleeve.

As expected, later a police officer came over, thanked Liu Guoqiang in person, and said he had acted heroically; without him, another suspect might have escaped.

It turned out to be a gang committing the crime.

Houzi quietly explained to Liu Na from the upper berth, "This train is heading to Rong City, from north to south, there are probably many people like Mr. Lin on this train. In the eyes of pickpockets, they are all fat sheep, their targets are big, obviously they come prepared, committing crimes as a gang, this is the most basic guarantee on the train."

Liu Na nodded continuously in response, exclaiming, "Thieves need guarantees too, huh."

Chapter 466: Arrival at Rong City

"Of course, if caught, getting beaten up is the least of worries. If things go south, you might end up in the cell, and it's not a pleasant place to be. You'd get nothing but unsifted cornmeal dumplings for meals, often just salted vegetables or none at all. Cabbage and radish soup would be considered good food there, yet even then, it's not guaranteed to fill you up..."

Thinking about those days, Houzi felt like wiping away his tear.

Seeing the conductor gone, Lin Chuxia teased Houzi, "Having food at all isn't bad. What, did you expect the government to serve you well after committing a crime?"

Houzi quickly flashed a grin, "Indeed, indeed. That's why one must stay on the right path. Whether swallowing bran or gnawing on vegetables, one must live uprightly, be worthy of the government above and deserving of one's parents below..."

Lin Chuxia turned her head and saw, sure enough, Liu Guoqiang had come inside.

This Houzi.

This little episode gave Lin Chuxia and others a deeper understanding of Liu Guoqiang; having him on the journey added a layer of security.

The rest of the trip went smoothly. During the day, everyone played cards to pass the time, and at night they took turns napping or gathered around to chat quietly.

Lin Chuxia saw Wang Tianxue gazing distractedly at the twinkling lights outside the window and moved closer to ask, "Missing your child?"

Xiao Long was nine months old, at his cutest age.

Aunt Jia had been looking after him these days.

"A bit," Wang Tianxue didn't hide it, "This is the first time I've been away from him for so long. I don't know if he'll fuss at night or if Aunt Jia can manage."

She looked at Lin Chuxia and suddenly asked, "Do you know why I insisted on making this trip despite leaving my child behind?"

Before Lin Chuxia could respond, she continued, "You should know why the Department Store's apparel sells well. Many of their goods come from the south, they have new styles, and whether it's the design, the fabric, or the price, it's all better than what's available at People's Mall. Actually, their goods come from Rong City. Yang Rui became head of the purchasing department because of this."

By this point, Lin Chuxia had guessed what was going on.

Wang Tianxue smiled slightly. Speaking with smart people was straightforward, "You're right, my maternal aunt in Rong City is in the clothing business. She has a wholesale stall and collaborates with several garment factories. Initially, Yang Rui came to Rong City to source goods through my aunt, and even now a significant portion of the Department Store's supply comes from her stall, and some also through her recommendations."

Lin Chuxia gripped Wang Tianxue's hand excitedly, "I support you, whatever you do, I'm behind you."

Wang Tianxue squeezed her hand in return, "Thank you, Chuxia."

"So, I originally viewed the Department Store as a prime business competitor, but with my aunt's connection, surely we can quickly..."

She had already mentally prepared to open a clothing store opposite the Department Store and People's Mall.

She knew the positions of those two malls were solid, especially the Department Store, which primarily supplied from the south, leaving them with little advantage in terms of products.

Originally, Lin Chuxia also thought about attracting customers with service, considering the haughty attitude of the state-owned store clerks. If she could implement modern service industry practices, she was sure to make her customers feel welcome, ensuring they'd prefer their clothing store.

But Wang Tianxue had just given her a pleasant surprise.

Given Wang Tianxue's disposition, the supply at the Department Store might soon encounter problems, providing them a good opportunity to solidify their foothold.

The train clanked its way forward, stopping intermittently, and by the evening of the next day, the group finally arrived at Rongcheng Railway Station.

Deserving one of the first cities to develop, the station was bustling even approaching midnight.

Street vendors shouted their wares, and the hot food on sale gave off an enticing aroma.

Hou Xiaobao, pulling Liu Na along, was the first to dart into the crowd and soon returned with several bags of delicious food, handing Lin Chuxia a portion first.

"Chuxia, have something to tide you over."

They hadn't starved on the train, but they hadn't eaten well either.

Lin Chuxia shared some items with Wang Tianxue who was beside her.

Hou Xiaobao handed a bag to Liu Na, and the remaining three men divided among themselves.

As Lin Chuxia ate, she walked and asked Wang Tianxue about the plans for the evening, "Are you staying with me tonight or going to your relative's house?"

"I'll stay with you all; it's too late now. I'll go to my cousin's place tomorrow, and you guys can come with me then."

That sounds good.

Lin Chuxia nodded her head.

Meanwhile, someone approached Jia Liang and Hou Xiaobao to ask them something. Jia Liang shook his head, and Hou Xiaobao looked quite interested.

Liu Guoqiang, however, kept a vigilant watch around, particularly scrutinizing the person talking to Hou Xiaobao.

That person seemed to notice his gaze, quickly wrapped up his spread-out package, and walked away.

Hou Xiaobao looked puzzled, "Hey, why did he leave? I haven't finished looking yet."

Lin Chuxia was curious, "What was he selling?"

Hou Xiaobao felt slightly embarrassed, but couldn't help revealing, "He was selling cassette tapes."

Lin Chuxia instantly understood.

There were already projectors using cassette tapes at that time.

Such mysterious transactions at the train station must be related to those cassette tapes.

She glanced at Jia Liang, wondering if his situation was similar.

Jia Liang quickly explained, "He was asking if we needed lodging, probably at some nearby small inn, which I declined."

"Yeah, let's find a car and go to the city to look for a regular guest house to stay."

As Lin Chuxia spoke, a few more people approached them asking if they needed lodging.

Some even tried to rub against the women holding bags, which Jia Liang and Liu Guoqiang promptly blocked.

"We already have a place to stay; no need, please keep away from us."

Liu Guoqiang carried an inherent righteousness in his voice, which was particularly clear, especially his eyes that normally felt spirited but now seemed rather intimidating.

As for Jia Liang, his glaring glance alone was enough to deter many from lingering around them.

Lin Chuxia once again silently admired, having these people with her on this trip was the right choice.

"I know a place to stay that's nice, safe, and clean, and it's not far from the wholesale market we're going to tomorrow."

Wang Tianxue led them forward and hailed a minivan.

Seeing the direction of the van, Lin Chuxia knew where Wang Tianxue was taking them, as she had been to Rong City with her in her previous life too.

However, to others, it was Lin Chuxia's first time in Rong City, so naturally, she had to be cautious with her reactions.

Sure enough, soon they arrived at the guest house, a three-story state-owned establishment.

After getting off, Hou Xiaobao admired the surrounding neon lights, "The south is really wealthy, aren't they? All these bright lights? Must cost a lot of electricity, and the buildings are so tall. Even the People's Mall in our area doesn't have buildings this tall. There are so many cars on the road too; I even saw a Mercedes earlier, I heard that's what rich people drive."

Chapter 467: Well, This Really Is Chen Shimei

Lin Chuxia smiled, "Rong City is just one of the first cities to develop. If you look further south at the open coastal cities, they're probably even more prosperous."

Hou Xiaobao was full of longing, "When I have the money, I really want to check it out."

Jia Liang glared at him, "Aren't you still saving up to get married? Stick with the boss and work hard, and you'll get your chance to see the world."

He whispered the latter part to him.

Naturally, Hou Xiaobao took the boss's words as gospel and nodded solemnly.

Lin Chuxia and Wang Tianxue had already reached the front desk, where the group of six, three men and three women, took two rooms.

It wasn't really to save money; when you're out and about, it's safer to stick together.

There was a restaurant next to the guesthouse. After settling in, Jia Liang didn't let them go out again. He and Hou Xiaobao went to the restaurant to buy some food and brought it back to eat.

It was only after everyone had eaten their fill, taken showers, and lay down on their beds that they truly felt comfortable.

"Let's sleep early, we'll be busy again tomorrow."

Wang Tianxue was indeed full of confidence.

Lin Chuxia couldn't help but ask, "Have you been to Rong City before?"

By asking if she had been here, she clearly wasn't referring to visiting her aunt by marriage to see family. Being so familiar with the guesthouse must be due to business interactions.

Wang Tianxue nodded, "I have. Yang Rui wanted to network upwards, so I thought of my aunt by marriage here in Rong City. I led him here on a few trips before. Later, when I was pregnant, he started coming here on his own."

Alright, what a Chen Shimei.

Lin Chuxia didn't ask any more questions and went to sleep.

To deal with someone like Chen Shimei, you need to let him fall from where he climbed up; that's what he gets for his disloyalty.

The next morning, everyone woke up bright and early.

Lin Chuxia hadn't slept well on the train, but last night she had a good rest, waking up looking radiant.

Houzi and the others knocked on the door, saying that they'd go out for breakfast together before going back to get ready.

Lin Chuxia changed into a white shirt and gray trousers and applied some lipstick before leaving.

As she finished applying it, she turned her head and noticed Wang Tianxue watching her.

She casually offered the lipstick, "Want some?"

She remembered, in her past life, this lady loved to look pretty, too—it was only after losing her child that she started to look dreadful.

Sure enough, Wang Tianxue took the lipstick, "I won't be polite then. Your lipstick is pretty. I'll buy one myself when I earn some money."

Lin Chuxia generously waved her hand, "I'll give you this one, I have others."

She turned to ask Liu Na, "Do you want to put some on?"

Liu Na quickly shook her head, as if she had chewed on a dead mouse.

The other two saw her disgusted expression and guessed the unspoken words, and they both laughed.

Wang Tianxue said, "Lipstick makes you look more lively."

Though she and her aunt by marriage were miles apart, they were very close.

Her aunt's family had issues when she was young, and her aunt even stayed at her house for a while.

The reason her aunt supported Yang Rui was to improve her life.

If auntie knew she and Yang Rui were divorced, she would definitely be worried about her. Dressing up a bit more beautifully would comfort auntie's heart.

The men were ready as well, and the six of them left the house together.

Lin Chuxia knew Wang Tianxue was here to visit relatives and had Jia Liang bring some packaged cooked food.

These were gift box packaging that only Xiyang Food Factory would have during the holidays, and these were specially brought for this occasion.

They could also be considered a local specialty.

Although Lin Chuxia had not yet met Wang Tianxue's auntie, who owns a wholesale stall in Rong City and was naturally not short of money, these gifts were just a small token of their goodwill.

Everyone grabbed breakfast at a street food stall outside and then headed straight to the largest wholesale market in the area.

Although it was the largest and busiest wholesale market in Rong City, it was congested with people and vehicles, even appearing quite chaotic.

The roads were the narrowest possible one-way streets, filled with scooter riders and small carts pushing goods.

Occasionally a car would pass by, incessantly honking its horn.

Wang Tianxue explained while walking, "There are several wholesale markets like this in Rong City. This one opened the earliest, is the biggest, and offers the fairest prices. My auntie is one of the earliest merchants here, has some influence in this area. Later on, we don't have to rush picking out goods. We can have a look around first. When it's time to get goods, my auntie will assign someone to help us."

Worrying that others might misunderstand her intentions, she emphasized, "With our Northern accent, in the eyes of these owners, we are like ripe targets. Even without auntie's connection, it's better to have a guide. Even if you pay a commission, it's better than going at it aimlessly. Of course, after you get

familiar, a guide might not be as necessary. But initially, it's very important. Plus, not all guides are trustworthy; there are those who have been bought by the owners of the stalls..."

Lin Chuxia and the others listened attentively.

In her past life, Lin Chuxia only found out these market intricacies after Wang Tianxue had already developed her network here.

Jia Liang and Hou Xiaobao also felt they were gaining new insights from this trip.

It wasn't until they reached the inside of the market that Wang Tianxue stopped talking, while the others were already too engrossed by the sights to listen.

Hou Xiaobao was astonished, his mouth agape, "It looked big from the outside, but it's even bigger inside. I've never seen so many clothes in my life."

In fact, it wasn't just clothing. This should be a comprehensive wholesale market, or as Wang Tianxue said, this market was the first to develop. At that time, it wasn't very well planned, which also made it seem less formal.

The clothes occupied the majority, but there were also undergarments, shoes, socks, various accessories, and small electronic products...

You could say they had everything you could think of.

Jia Liang gave him a disdainful glance, "Look more and talk less. Like a bumpkin, you're embarrassing me."

Though he said that, his eyes also revealed a hint of amazement.

Liu Guoqiang was better off, following behind the group calmly.

Liu Na closely followed Lin Chuxia and Wang Tianxue, for fear of getting separated from the group.

The stall owners, seeing a group of well-dressed and world-wise people, immediately started calling out to them, "Boss, stocking up? Come take a look, everything we have is trendy."

"Boss, need any underwear? The kind that foreign ladies like to wear, guaranteed to sell well."

"Wholesale prices for ten pieces or more. Come in, have a look, feel free to pick and choose..."

Wang Tianxue had already briefed them about the situation, so Lin Chuxia and the others didn't linger and followed Wang Tianxue straight to a wholesale stall.

A woman with curly hair, slightly plump, wearing gemstone jewelry on her fingers and ears, came forward to greet them.

"Tianxue, you're early, aren't you?"

Seeing that she didn't even have any luggage with her, clearly not looking like she had just got off the train, the woman's face turned sour.

"I've told you to call me ahead of time when you're coming, so I can pick you up from the station. Why did you run over here secretly? Where's the kid, did Yang Rui not come? Is he at home with the child?"

She glanced over the group and fired off a series of questions.

Chapter 468: How Did You Finally Come to Your Senses?

Wang Tianxue stepped forward, took the woman's hand, and handed over the prepared foods brought from her hometown as well as the health products bought on the way.

"Aunt, look at you, asking so many questions all at once, I don't even know which to answer first. This is my friend, the one I mentioned over the phone, here to stock up."

Wang Tianxue introduced Lin Chuxia and a few others to her aunt, and then introduced her aunt to them.

Aunt, upon seeing Wang Tianxue's friends, chuckled and said, "Everyone here calls me Sister Fang or Aunt Fang."

Following Wang Tianxue's seniority, Lin Chuxia and the others addressed her respectfully as Aunt Fang.

Aunt Fang's gaze lingered particularly on Lin Chuxia, "So this is your business partner? Finally saw sense, did you?"

The latter part was directed towards Wang Tianxue.

Wang Tianxue smiled, "It's a long story, Aunt. It's their first visit, let them take a look around first."

"Sure, feel free to look around. The market is quite big. If you see anything you like, tell me later. I'll treat you to lunch, and after lunch, we can take our time choosing."

"Thank you, Aunt Fang. We'll go take a look around first."

Lin Chuxia knew that Wang Tianxue and Aunt Fang had more to talk about, and they themselves wanted to explore the market first.

After everyone left, Wang Tianxue followed Aunt Fang into the back lounge and then spoke, "Aunt, Yang Rui and I are divorced..."

Meanwhile, Lin Chuxia and her group had already walked further inside.

In her past life, Lin Chuxia had come to Rong City for business negotiations, and the situation then was very different from stocking up now.

Thus, it was her first time visiting Rong City market in both her past and present lives.

As she walked further inside, she realized that not only was the market large, but the variety of goods was also impressive.

There were clothes of varying grades, including high-end fabrics, mid-range apparel, mainland styles, and Hong Kong trends—the market had it all.

"Nana, take a look and see what you like, I'll buy it for you later."

Lin Chuxia turned to Liu Na and said.

Liu Na hurriedly waved her hands, "Boss, I don't want it, I have clothes to wear."

She felt fortunate enough to have come along for the ride; she couldn't possibly ask her boss to buy her clothes as well.

Lin Chuxia smiled, "Don't worry, just pick anything you like. I'd like to know what kind of taste our girls back home have."

Hearing this, Liu Na understood, "Then, I'll pick what I like."

"Sure, go ahead."

Lin Chuxia had an excellent taste, but it might not necessarily suit the current market.

Liu Na and Gao Lele often shopped for clothes; both young ladies dressed nicely and likely had good taste, probably more aligned with the current aesthetic preferences.

Houzi, hearing this, also got interested, "I'll pick a few pieces too."

Jia Liang's eyes twinkled, wanting to join them.

Lin Chuxia stopped them, "Just have a look; our wholesale prices later will be much cheaper than the retail prices, no need to waste that extra money."

Mainly because men's fashion had limited styles, there really was no need to be overly fussy.

The group spent half the day in the market; their feet ached from walking yet they hadn't seen the entire market.

Seeing that it was time for the appointment, they headed back to Aunt Fang's place.

Wang Tianxue and Aunt Fang were still chatting, always smiling; it was unclear what they were discussing.

Seeing Lin Chuxia and the others return, Aunt Fang asked, "How was your walk? Have you found any targets?"

"It was alright," Lin Chuxia replied, "There are just so many styles of clothing here. We felt enlightened just walking around; as for a specific target, we're still not sure. We're waiting to hear what Sister Tianxue and Aunt Fang suggest."

Aunt Fang saw the bags in Lin Chuxia and the young girl's hands behind her, her smile deepening with meaning.

"This is a small matter, just follow Aunt Fang's arrangements when you're in Rong City, come on, let's go eat first."

Aunt Fang called a young girl over at the stall and instructed her, then led a young man along with a few others out of the market.

At the parking lot by the market entrance, Aunt Fang directly assigned, "You three gentlemen can ride in Xiao Xu's car, the rest of you get in my car."

Two sedans, Aunt Fang's was imported, and Lin Chuxia couldn't help but raise her eyebrows.

It's really nice to be a rich woman.

Aunt Fang was very generous, the restaurant she took them to was a famous seafood city in Rong City.

As soon as they entered, the splendid grand hall left everyone staring in awe.

Had they not seen Lin Chuxia and Wang Tianxue calmly following Aunt Fang inside, even Jia Liang would not have dared to enter such a place.

Stepping on the shiny floor, Hou Xiaobao didn't even know which foot to move first.

Lin Chuxia and Wang Tianxue flanked Aunt Fang, talking as they walked.

Liu Na didn't dare to step forward and feared being left behind, so she followed closely behind Hou Xiaobao.

There was no choice, although among the three men she was more familiar with Jia Liang, he used to be her manager and she was scared of him.

Instead, it was Hou Xiaobao; the two had been chatting and playing cards on the upper bunk of the train and had gotten quite familiar.

Hou Xiaobao was initially nervous too, but seeing Liu Na like this, he forcibly straightened his back.

He couldn't lose face as a man.

The lunch was lavish, Aunt Fang reserved a private room and ordered a seafood feast.

Not to mention the others, even Lin Chuxia couldn't name many of the dishes.

Aunt Fang was very enthusiastic, afraid they weren't used to eating the dishes, she explained how to eat the seafood while they ate.

Seeing Hou Xiaobao bite into a large shrimp, she smiled and told him to peel it first.

Hou Xiaobao smiled, Aunt Fang was kind, which made it less embarrassing for him, and he sincerely said, "This is my first time eating such a big shrimp, I was wondering why I couldn't bite through it, turns out I had to peel it. If not for Aunt Fang, I really wouldn't have known."

Everyone laughed again, and the atmosphere warmed up.

After a full meal, it was time to get down to business in the afternoon.

Aunt Fang had Xiao Xu follow them as their guide.

Xiao Xu had worked under Aunt Fang for many years, and during the meal, Lin Chuxia could see that Aunt Fang trusted Xiao Xu heavily.

"Let's go, let's start with our own stalls first, anything suitable will be given to you at the lowest price, then we can look at others, you can tell me what range of goods you want beforehand."

Picking goods naturally prioritized Aunt Fang's place, if they ran out of stock later, a single call to Aunt Fang would get it resolved, it's reliable being with one's own.

Xiao Xu pointed to the stalls in front of them, "This one, this one, and over there too..."

Lin Chuxia was almost shocked, "Are all these Aunt Fang's?"

Wang Tianxue nodded, "Aunt is really good at business."

This isn't just good.

Before coming here, Wang Tianxue mentioned her aunt had a stall, and she really thought it was just one.

Now, this entire street was nearly hers.

Lin Chuxia sighed deeply, with such connections, it would be a shame not to make money.

"We need a mix of low, medium, and high-quality goods, but no matter the quality, it must be good."

These days, it's not easy for people to earn money, whether it's expensive or cheap, everyone values durability.

A coat is not considered worn out until it tears, and some even patch it up and wear it for two more years.

So, durability is the best reputation.

Chapter 469: Broadening Horizons

Xiao Xu took a deep look at Lin Chuxia, "Miss Lin is quite knowledgeable about the business."

"Not really, I only know a bit."

With Lin Chuxia's remark and the experience from City Department Store, the afternoon stock selection went smoothly.

However, they needed a lot of merchandise with a wide variety of styles, and they didn't finish picking all of it even after a busy half day.

In the evening, Wang Tianxue was called away by Aunt Fang, and the five of them returned to the guest house.

Although they were extremely tired that day, to the point where their feet felt like they would fall off, everyone was very excited.

After dinner and a shower, they all quickly went to sleep to save energy for continuing the next day.

It was currently summer, but in two months it would start to cool off, so this time they purchased not only summer clothes but also a good amount of autumn wear, jackets, shirts, jeans, casual pants, and overalls.

They also made a point of selecting a large batch of various trendy trench coats.

When Wang Tianxue saw a lingerie store, she walked straight in.

The lingerie here is different from what is currently being sold in the north; most of them have padding.

Nowadays, in the north, they are still selling close-fitting granny vests, of course, 'granny vest' is a term from the future.

Lin Chuxia looked at the three men behind her, who were looking everywhere but the lingerie store, and Liu Na, who only stared at her toes, wishing she could see flowers bloom from looking so hard, and pressed her hand to her forehead.

In the end, she still chose Liu Na.

She didn't just bring Liu Na to help Wang Tianxue pick up stock; she wanted to let Liu Na see the world, and this was also part of the world.

If even picking up stock was embarrassing, how would she manage to sell it later?

Liu Na knew this and, seeing Lin Chuxia enter the store calmly, examining the lingerie unabashedly, and discussing styles with Sister Tianxue, she immediately felt ashamed.

Although her face was still red, she boldly moved closer to listen to the discussion between the two and the store owner.

One could say that this day was full of gains; the clothing at this market was indeed cheap, but that cheapness was only relative to the retail price. If one really discussed it, the price of mid-to-high-end clothing now compared to wages was not cheaper than clothing in the future.

At this time, the country's light industry was not developed. A few years earlier, good quality fabric had to be purchased with ration coupons, and the prices were grindingly high.

Now with the reforms and opening up, even foreign enterprises have been introduced in the south, greatly improving this situation, but prices are still not cheap.

Take, for example, the woolen coat that Lin Chuxia bought before; it cost nearly two hundred yuan, and now a cadre's salary is just over one hundred yuan, with workers earning even less.

Of course, that belonged to high-end clothing.

Mid-end clothing was better, but a decent suit jacket would also cost several tens of yuan.

Jeans, which were just becoming popular, had a wholesale price close to ten yuan, which could sell for twenty yuan in the north.

The remaining ordinary goods were easier to discuss, usually having wholesale prices of just a few yuan.

Because Lin Chuxia and her team were opening a department store, aiming to compete with City Department Store and People's Mall, their main purchases were mid-to-high-end clothing.

Lin Chuxia saw several clothing brands in the market that would sell well in the future and ordered a substantial amount of their stock.

By the afternoon of the fourth day, they had almost spent all their money.

She wasn't concerned; there was still cash in her space. However, Wang Tianxue kept track of the expenses, knowing that Lin Chuxia brought a total of twenty thousand yuan this time.

Before Lin Chuxia could speak, Wang Tianxue was the one to speak out first, "I've spoken to Aunt Fang; she said we can owe some of the money for the goods she supplied. Once we sell them and make money, we can transfer it to her, or we can settle it with the next shipment. This would also give us some room to maneuver."

That was a solution, and Lin Chuxia readily agreed.

Now that the payment for the goods was settled, the two decided to browse some more.

By the sixth day, everyone was much more relaxed, mostly just leisurely browsing and occasionally making a deal if something suitable came along, the urgency was now gone.

From the day before yesterday, Houzi stopped coming with them, and occasionally Jia Liang would also disappear for half a day or a whole day, as Lin Chuxia had arranged tasks for them.

As all of them were brought by Lin Chuxia, no one else objected to her assignments and everyone did what they were supposed to do.

In the afternoon, the truck arranged by Aunt Fang arrived.

It must be said that having Aunt Fang's connection saved them a lot of trouble.

The driver was a man in his forties, with a strong Rong City accent.

The man already knew from Aunt Fang what they were hauling and where it was going.

He thought the two men were the decision-makers and started discussing the price directly, "With Aunt Fang's relationship, I'll give you a discount of one hundred yuan; nine hundred yuan including the gas. Otherwise, this trip would cost at least one thousand yuan to start. Besides, I'm just the driver; if we hit trouble on the road, I can offer advice based on my experience, but whether we can sort it out is up to you. You should know that long-distance driving isn't always smooth. However, I will do my best with my ability and experience to ensure the safe delivery of the goods. But I must speak frankly, if we truly encounter danger, I must ensure the safety of my truck."

After finishing his words, he looked at Jia Liang. Although Liu Guoqiang looked like an honest man, with his years of experience in the market, the bald man appeared to have more of a boss's air.

Unexpectedly, Jia Liang's gaze was directed towards the woman opposite him.

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Master Xu, is it?"

The man nodded, "Yes, are you the person in charge here?"

Lin Chuxia smiled slightly, "I understood all that you said just now, but I'd like to discuss another deal with Master Xu. Once the goods are delivered, there's no need for Master Xu to return with an empty truck. I'd like to haul some goods back to Rong City, how would you charge for that?"

"That depends on the goods."

"Vacuum-packed ready-to-eat food and canned meat sauce, roughly a few thousand pounds."

Master Xu took only a moment to agree, "Since it's a round trip, I'll charge you eight hundred yuan for the return."

"Master Xu, you should know, with Aunt Fang's relationship, we will have many more trips to and from Rong City..."

"Make it fifty less, a total of 1,650 for the round trip."

"1,500 yuan, and I'll guarantee that Master Xu won't have to return empty-handed in the future."

"Alright, then it's settled," Master Xu thought for a moment and agreed, showing his straightforward nature.

Next, Lin Chuxia asked Wang Tianxue, Liu Na, Liu Guoqiang, and Xiao Xu to join in selecting and loading the goods.

With the styles confirmed, selecting and loading became much simpler; they just needed to ensure the counts and styles were correct.

Lin Chuxia and Jia Liang went to another location.

This was a factory warehouse area not far from the main street, slightly desolate due to its distance from the garment wholesale market and its location off the main street.

When they arrived, Houzi was smoking with a man on the roadside.

Seeing Lin Chuxia and Jia Liang, Houzi stepped forward to greet them first, "Boss, these are the rooms, and there's a yard in the back. I think the area is quite spacious. I've inquired about the paperwork at the Housing Management Bureau; it can be processed anytime."

Lin Chuxia nodded and looked at the other man.

The man extinguished his cigarette the moment he saw Lin Chuxia and her party and quickly came forward, addressing her, "Boss."

Chapter 470: The Office

Houzi introduced, "This is Ah Hua."

Lin Chuxia nodded slightly, glanced around the warehouse with Jia Liang, and said, "Let's go do the paperwork."

Hou Xiaobao was slightly startled, "Do the paperwork now? I've arranged a meeting with the person in charge, Mr. Lin can take another look at the property."

"No need, I trust you guys," Lin Chuxia said as she took the lead, hands in pockets.

Noticing the others weren't following, she turned back and said, "Come on, I don't even know where the housing authority is."

Houzi chuckled, "It's just ahead," and quickly jogged forward.

"The price should be this, I also thought it was high, thinking they were taking advantage because we are from out of town. Ah Hua said this price is already very fair."

Lin Chuxia had an idea in her mind; indeed, the price was more than double than what it was at their place, but this wasn't a planned economy. With Rong City developing so well, land was naturally expensive.

"Is Ah Hua a local?"

Ah Hua had been following behind them, and upon hearing Lin Chuxia's question, immediately replied, "I'm from Rong City. I used to work in a factory here, but the factory went down due to the recession. Then the government wanted to build a new market place and took over our factory. Us workers were laid off, relying only on government subsidies felt unreliable, so I thought of finding another job."

Lin Chuxia gave him a look, sensing he was a straightforward person.

The group arrived at the housing office, and the paperwork went smoothly.

Money exchanged hands, and the name changed; Lin Chuxia now owned her piece of land in Rong City.

She was satisfied with the speed of the process and checked the registered area, which was over eight hundred square meters.

After receiving the keys, Lin Chuxia revisited the property; aside from the warehouse being a bit run-down, there were no major issues.

"Jia Liang will stay in Rong City for a while to clean up this courtyard. It will serve as our office here."

After sorting things out at the apparel market, Lin Chuxia had Hou Xiaobao and Jia Liang investigate the local market, mainly to promote their Xiyang's prepared food products.

Jia Liang had been busy running the market these days, and Houzi had found this courtyard.

Ever since meeting Aunt Fang, Lin Chuxia had been thinking about setting up an office in Rong City.

Whether it was the apparel business or her upcoming venture with Xiyang, this office was essential.

For the beginning stage of the business, this office would serve her business needs, and when it was no longer needed, she could just demolish it and build a small villa as her private property.

Rong City had pleasant weather, and it was a nice getaway from the north; just thinking about it made her happy.

Jia Liang was reliable, and he had experience managing Qin's Restaurant; leaving this task to him was definitely no problem. This area also needed to develop some people.

Once things stabilized here, it wasn't too late for Jia Liang to return.

As the sun was about to set, Lin Chuxia took her group back to the market.

The truck was already loaded with half of the goods, and Wang Tianxue was overseeing it personally.

"Sister Tianxue, how is it going today?"

Wang Tianxue glanced at the list in her hand, "We still have goods from two more places; once these are loaded, the rest are all from Aunt Fang's stalls."

Lin Chuxia nodded, dealing with Aunt Fang's apparel was much easier.

"Tomorrow I want to invite Aunt Fang for a casual meal," Lin Chuxia relayed to Wang Tianxue that she had bought a property in Rong City for an office.

Although nobody had asked about Houzi and Jia Liang these days, Lin Chuxia had shared her thoughts with Wang Tianxue.

Their apparel products needed a long-term supply, and even though they didn't need to come each time, it was best to have someone here permanently, not relying entirely on Aunt Fang.

Wang Tianxue smiled, "You are efficient. Alright, I'll talk to her in a bit."

Shortly after, the goods from the other two places arrived.

Houzi jumped onto the truck to help Liu Guoqiang and others load it.

That was it for the day; after loading half a truck, it had to be parked here at the market, and Houzi volunteered to stay and guard the truck, but Jia Liang stopped him.

"Go back and get some sleep. I'll watch it these two nights, you still need to keep an eye on the road."

They planned to finish loading the truck tomorrow and set off the day after.

Houzi didn't insist this time. With Jia Liang staying in Rong City, it indeed made more sense for him to watch over the next two nights.

The next day, Lin Chuxia had Jia Liang arrange a meal, formally inviting Aunt Fang and Xiao Xu for lunch.

Firstly, to express gratitude to Aunt Fang and Xiao Xu for their care and help these days, and secondly, to discuss the new office with Aunt Fang.

Aunt Fang had already heard from Wang Tianxue that Lin Chuxia had established an office in Rong City. She was truly impressed by this woman's sharp judgment and decisive action.

Being in business herself, she knew the difficulties a woman faced in the business world, but also understood the advantages they had.

The first time she saw Lin Chuxia, with her neat attire and vibrant appearance, she took an immediate liking to her.

A beautiful woman like this in the business world, as long as she was smart, was definitely not ordinary.

That evening, she talked a lot with her niece.

From initially learning her niece had such a shrewd business partner and advising her to learn and observe while being cautious, to later learning about her niece's divorce and custody win with Lin Chuxia's help, she felt her niece was fortunate.

"Miss Lin, you're too modest. You can rest assured about this. Tianxue has already told me about her divorce. With the help Miss Lin has given to Tianxue, our office here will be under my protection. If there's anything you need, just come to me. I'll handle it, and it's no big deal for me."

Lin Chuxia quickly raised her glass, joined by Jia Liang and others, to express gratitude to Aunt Fang, "I've known Aunt Fang to be straightforward, so I shamelessly came to seek your help."

Aunt Fang also waved her hands smilingly, "Here in Rong City, I cannot guarantee everything, but I won't let your people be bullied. Also, since Yang Rui wronged Tianxue, there's no need to talk about past favors with me anymore. I didn't know before, but we have always supplied them with goods. In a few days, it's time to supply again, and I will cut off their source directly. I heard from Tianxue that your store is also opening by the end of this month."

Lin Chuxia instantly understood.

Yan City's apparel sales at the Department Store were doing the best, relying heavily on goods from the south.

Lin Chuxia had heard from Wang Tianxue that initially, when People's Mall was being established, it impacted the business of the Department Store. During that time, when Yang Rui and his competitor were competing for the position of purchasing director, Wang Tianxue contacted Aunt Fang in Rong City and brought Yang Rui here to purchase.

Their bold move at that time showed their determination; managing the first batch of goods was also quite a hassle.

Gradually, as they established relationships, the Department Store flourished, securing and stabilizing the position for Yang Rui.

By cutting off their supply now, Aunt Fang was not only getting back at Yang Rui but also creating opportunities for their marketplace.