

Switched M 481

Chapter 481: Is She Worthy?

Li Dongmei's small face blushed furiously as she hung her head low. "Granny, I... I must go back now."

Mrs. Zhang grunted, and Li Dongmei hurriedly ran out with quick steps.

Zhang Wenbin came out of the house slowly, casually buttoning up his shirt.

Mrs. Zhang spat disdainfully, "Slut," then looked up at her son, "When are you going to marry her? Don't just indulge yourself. I'm already old, and I still have to wash clothes and cook for you every day. My old back is about to break."

Zhang Wenbin thought for a moment, "Mom, how much money do we have left?"

Mrs. Zhang immediately raised her voice, "What do you need money for? Do you think there's any left? All the money has been taken by that little bitch, and you know it. We don't have any money now, not a single penny."

Zhang Wenbin slightly frowned. It was true that Li Wenhong had taken their money, but she only took the cash from his room.

He knew that although his mother's room had been searched, the money she hid would not have been taken by Li Hongwen.

Before he got fired from his job, he had given most of his salary to his mother every month.

"You're always telling me to get married, but when has getting a wife ever been free of cost? I've heard that marrying a wife in the city now requires a grand betrothal gift."

As soon as Mrs. Zhang heard this, her eyes widened, "What? You want a grand betrothal gift to marry that little slut? Is she, a muddy-legged country girl, worth such a thing? Does she deserve it?"

Although Zhang Wenbin also felt she wasn't worthy, the thought of the neighbor village's bride who had received a grand betrothal gift weighed on his mind. This wasn't just about whether Li Dongmei was worthy or not; it affected his own pride.

"Even if we can't afford a grand betrothal gift, we should at least have a decent one, right? Mom, think about it, this is my second marriage. If it's too poor, and word gets out to the Qin Family, I don't want them laughing at us."

Mrs. Zhang also feared losing face but was even more reluctant to spend money.

"Don't rush this matter. Let's see how they react first. Although it's your second marriage, we're city folks. Marrying Li Dongmei is a favor to her. We can't appear too eager and lower ourselves," she dismissed the idea of a grand betrothal gift.

"If they appreciate our status, we'll happily settle this matter. If they try to take advantage of us, we won't be bullied. Their daughter is already with you; what's there to fear? Once she becomes pregnant, they'll have to beg you to marry her. By then, forget about a grand betrothal gift, we won't marry her unless they provide a substantial dowry."

At these words, a glint of anticipation flashed in Zhang Wenbin's eyes.

He was well aware of Elder Mrs. Li's attitude. If Li Dongmei indeed became pregnant, he expected Elder Mrs. Li would actually come begging.

Meanwhile, Li Dongmei had just returned home and was called into the house by Mrs. Li.

With drooping eyelids and a heavy voice, she asked, "Where have you been?"

Feeling somewhat guilty, Li Dongmei spoke up, "Where else could I go, but to sell vegetables with my brother?"

With a slap, Mrs. Li hit the edge of the bed, "You say you went to sell vegetables with your brother again? Your brother has been back for a while; where did you go to sell vegetables with him?"

Li Dongmei shivered with fear, then stepped forward to hug Old Mrs. Li's arm, grinning slyly as she spoke, "Mom, at first I went to sell vegetables with my brother, but later on Wenbin called me over to discuss the marriage."

Upon hearing that she was indeed with Zhang Wenbin, Old Mrs. Li's face darkened even more—she hadn't agreed to this marriage yet.

As Li Dongmei spoke, she watched Old Mrs. Li's expression closely. Seeing her dismay, she quickly added, "Wenbin, knowing that you cherish me, didn't want me to marry a divorced man, so he called me over to discuss it first. He doesn't want me to feel wronged either. When the time comes, he'll give me a generous bride price, a complete set of furniture and electrical appliances. Mom, Wenbin is not what you say; he treats me pretty well."

Mrs. Li's face softened a little upon hearing this.

Even though she looked down on Zhang Wenbin being a divorced man, if the other side was indeed offering a substantial bride price of a complete set of appliances, it showed they were serious about her daughter, and she might not refuse.

"Let's wait for him to formally propose then," Old Mrs. Li remarked, glancing sideways at Li Dongmei, "Keep yourself in check these days, and don't go running to men's houses for no good reason."

Li Dongmei muttered to herself, wasn't it you who told me to seize the opportunity in the first place? Now you're telling me not to visit men's homes.

If she hadn't been as diligent, given Zhang Wenbin's personality, he might not have been interested in her.

Li Dongmei believed happiness was something she had fought for herself, even the substantial bride price from Zhang Wenbin was something she slowly negotiated for, wasn't it?

Regarding whether to continue visiting his place, of course she would; what if Zhang Wenbin caught the eye of another woman if she truly stopped?

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Huamei Mall was grandly celebrating its opening with all clothing at a 10% discount for the first three days.

During these three days, the mall was unprecedentedly busy, with daily sales approaching five figures.

Not just Wang Tianxue, even Lin Chuxia hadn't expected business to be so good.

Originally, they thought that after the three-day discount period, the mall would quiet down for a few days, but sales only dipped slightly, with foot traffic still far surpassing Department Store and People's Mall's usual numbers.

On the third day after the mall's opening, Wang Tianxue had already phoned her aunt in Rong City to restock.

Although this batch of goods was significant, compared to their first trip to Rong City, it was much less and could be easily transported by train.

Lin Chuxia was extremely busy these past few days; with the business booming, everyone was rallied, and as the owner, she still had to coordinate many of the new operations.

Wang Tianxue managed the inside while she took charge of the outside. The two cooperated well in sync.

That day, as she just returned from outside and entered the mall, she felt something was off and heard a commotion.

She saw not far away someone was pointing at one of their employees, speaking accusatorily. The criticized employee was none other than Qin Jianjun.

Lin Chuxia went straight over, and at the same time, Wang Tianxue, who had been called by the staff, also just came downstairs from upstairs.

And the lead woman on the other side continued to rant disdainfully, "I know that in these recent years of reform and opening up, you country folks are allowed to come to the city for work, but don't think having a job makes you equal to city people. Having a job doesn't mean you are entitled to rationed grain. Aspiring for social class transition isn't as simple as just coming to the city. Turn around and look, what's a rural family like, and what's a city family like? There's a chasm between the two. Lele is young and doesn't understand these things, but we parents won't be fooled by you. I advise you to give up. Our daughter will only look for a match with equal social standing, and she definitely won't choose a bumpkin like you from the countryside..."

Chapter 482: A Man's Responsibility

Lin Chuxia looked at the incessant woman and finally caught some clues.

Then she observed Qin Jianjun standing straight, facing the woman's accusations without any hint of shame, much less an angry rebuttal.

He caught a glimpse of Lin Chuxia's arrival, smiled slightly, and said, "Fourth Aunt, these are Lele's parents. Can we talk in your office?"

Upon hearing Qin Jianjun's address, Gao Lele's mother looked at Lin Chuxia, her eyes changing slightly, but she soon regained her usual haughty demeanor.

"I was wondering how such a bold and brazen poor country boy could be, it turns out he has backup."

Lin Chuxia wasn't upset, "Backup might be overstating it. After all, we from the countryside have no significant background; even if we have some money, we're just individual entrepreneurs. We can't compare with city folks."

The woman glanced at her, giving her a look of acknowledging her understanding.

Lin Chuxia pointed upstairs, "Alright, this isn't the place to talk. It affects the environment. Since you're the parents of Gao Lele, let's talk upstairs."

Gao Lele's mom also worried about her daughter's reputation, but the duo's attitude somewhat eased her irritation.

Upon reaching the office, her tone was rare softer.

"You're his Fourth Aunt, right? You look young, but since you are an elder, I think it's better to discuss this matter with you."

Lin Chuxia made a welcoming gesture, signaling her to proceed.

Gao Lele's mother glanced at Qin Jianjun and continued: "I came here today with one purpose: Our Lele can definitely not marry a country man. Initially, we as parents didn't want to get involved, but these two children took things too far. Lele even rejected the match I arranged for her, someone I meticulously chose from our local Yan City people, working in a government office, young and talented, a match for our family. I know young people can be foolish, I don't want Lele to regret later. She's my only daughter and I definitely cannot allow her to marry a foreigner."

She then turned to Qin Jianjun, "If you really care about Lele, stay away from her, stop pestering her. She's out of your league. If you continue to enamor her, it'll never be possible to pass our threshold."

Lin Chuxia chuckled softly, drawing the woman's attention, "What are you laughing at? In my view, you too have responsibilities in this matter. As his elder, aren't you ashamed of what has happened? I know in your patriarchal view, you're eager to bring in a city bride to bolster your family's status, insisting on not sacrificing your face at the expense of trapping our daughter forever in an immoral match."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "I fully understand what Big Sister is saying. But did you ever inquire why Qin Jianjun decided to work here at the mall instead of continuing at the Bun Shop?"

"It's just a job transfer, isn't it? I heard that the mall and the Bun Shop have the same owner. I also know that my Lele has been eager to work at the mall these days, just because of this poor boy."

"It is a job transfer indeed, but also to keep Gao Lele and Qin Jianjun from seeing each other too often."

The woman was even more puzzled, "What do you mean?"

"It means just what it says. Qin Jianjun is still studying and neither he personally nor his family are planning for him to marry so soon, so he was transferred to the mall. I thought by not seeing each other, Lele would gradually lose interest."

"You mean our Lele was pursuing him?" The woman's face flushed, "Impossible, it must be this boy who fooled our Lele."

She couldn't accept that her daughter liked a poor boy, and this poor boy wasn't even interested in her daughter.

Lin Chuxia was about to say more, but Qin Jianjun spoke up first, "I have never deceived Gao Lele, I can also assure you, I will not have anything to do with Gao Lele in the future. Gao Lele is a good girl who deserves to be matched by her parents with someone more suitable, that person is definitely not me. Please be assured."

Receiving Qin Jianjun's earnest assurance, the woman was a bit stunned.

Then she also stood up, "Since that's the case, remember your words from today."

Then she turned to Lin Chuxia, "I've imposed enough."

Once the couple left, Lin Chuxia gave Qin Jianjun a thumbs up.

Throughout this ordeal, Qin Jianjun was innocent, yet Gao Lele's parents caused a scene in the mall without knowing the whole story, embarrassing their daughter publicly. Despite that, Qin Jianjun did not argue but instead took them to the office to talk, protecting Gao Lele's dignity.

Had he wanted, he could have clarified that from the beginning to the end it was Gao Lele's unilateral interest, even the Bun Shop staff could testify he never deceived her.

He did not do so; instead he assured Gao Lele's parents he would distance himself from her.

Whether in public or before colleagues and Gao Lele's parents, he vigorously maintained Gao Lele's dignity.

This was a man's responsibility.

Qin Jianjun never expected Fourth Aunt to see through his intentions. He scratched his head in embarrassment and smiled, "Though I don't like Lele, I can't let her think all her affection was wasted. Consider it a repayment for her feelings."

"Well done, boy, you're promising."

He didn't feel inferior because he was from the countryside, nor did he feel intimidated by Gao Lele's parents, handling the situation with neither subservience nor arrogance, simply to reciprocate a girl's sincere affection.

Although he couldn't reciprocate her feelings, he ensured she didn't lose face in public.

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When Lin Chuxia returned home at noon, she talked to Zhang Guilan about Qin Jianjun.

They had picked up Zhang Guilan on their way back from picking up goods.

These days Lin Chuxia was quite busy, but still less than Qin Juan who always returned from work quite late.

Whenever possible at noon, Lin Chuxia and Qin Yang would come back home to have lunch.

Zhang Guilan was also visibly pleased after listening, "Our Qin family's men, though they might appear careless, they are the kindest at heart."

"As parents lead by example, their children follow," said Lin Chuxia.

Qin Liang and Qian Chuncao's character was really commendable.

Even under Qin Wen's constant attempts to stir discord between them, he was unsuccessful.

And regarding Qin Lihua, Qian Chuncao still feels apologetic towards Lin Chuxia.

Speaking of Qin Lihua, Zhang Guilan also sighed, "I don't know how that child turned out this way. I heard that he and Cai Jun also dabbled in some business at home, and they are getting by, they recently had a baby girl. It happened right before Sun Lanlan's incident, when big sister was busy with the greenhouse and couldn't care for her during her confinement."

"One reaps what one sows," said Lin Chuxia, "let's not talk about her anymore. Sister-in-law, didn't you want to check out the mall this afternoon? I'll take you there, see if there's any clothing you like, my treat."

Chapter 483: I Think I'm About to Give Birth

Knowing that Lin Chuxia and the others had opened a shopping mall, Zhang Guilan had long wanted to visit.

It was just that the mall had been too crowded the past few days, and Lin Chuxia didn't dare let her go; these two days were less busy, and with nothing on her schedule for the afternoon, it was the perfect time to accompany her for a stroll.

Zhang Guilan said with a smile, "I have my own money, can't always have you giving me stuff. It's not like I can wear any fancy clothes; I want to buy a couple of items for your brother."

"Sure, our mall's men's clothing is really nice. The outfit Qin Yang is wearing is one I picked out for him. There are many more styles. When the time comes, sister-in-law, you can pick out some; brother will look really handsome in them."

As the two were chatting, Zhang Guilan's brow furrowed slightly.

Lin Chuxia immediately noticed something was off, "What's wrong, sister-in-law?"

Zhang Guilan, having been through this before, took a moment before responding, "Looks like the mall visit is off the table, I think I'm about to give birth."

Lin Chuxia was suddenly alarmed, "Sister-in-law, when is your due date again?"

These days had been so hectic that she had lost track of the date; calculating the days, Zhang Guilan had been in the city for nearly two months, and indeed, her due date was approaching.

Zhang Guilan first reassured her, "It's okay; I have an idea of how it will go. This is just the beginning, probably won't give birth immediately, the due date was actually in two days..."

Mid-sentence, she paused again.

It must have been another contraction.

Lin Chuxia couldn't sit still any longer; no wonder her brother had been running to the city so often these past days—the due date was indeed near.

Lin Chuxia immediately asked Qin Yang to make a call to inform her brother to come over first.

It is the most vulnerable and helpless moment for a woman to give birth, and at this time, her husband must be by her side.

"Sister-in-law, let's not delay further; let's head to the hospital first."

Zhang Guilan had already prepared to give birth here; the items needed for childbirth had been ready for a while, all packed in a bag in her room.

Lin Chuxia first helped her pack a few changes of clothes, picked up the bag, thought of something else, and then ran to the kitchen to grab a few meat buns.

They were supposed to have meat buns for lunch today, but since they found the kitchen too hot, Lin Chuxia and Zhang Guilan chatted idly outside.

The meat buns were just about ready not long ago, and Qin Yang was picking them from the steamer in the kitchen.

By now, the stove had been turned off, and only half of the buns had been picked when Qin Yang dropped them to make the call from his unit.

"Sister-in-law, while the pain isn't too bad, eat something; you'll need strength for childbirth."

Lin Chuxia handed her a big meat bun right away.

Seeing her so anxious, Zhang Guilan said with a smile, "You eat too, I'm really fine. When I was giving birth to Zhuangzhuang, I was in pain for a whole day, this is nothing in comparison."

"But we can't be careless; I've heard the second childbirth usually goes faster. We'll feel at ease once we're at the hospital. Get in the car first, watch your step; we'll wait for him at the entrance of Qin Yang's unit."

Knowing that her sister-in-law was concerned, Zhang Guilan didn't say much more, obediently got into the car, and continued nibbling on the meat bun.

Lin Chuxia, having no appetite for meat buns now, made sure Zhang Guilan was seated securely before pressing down on the gas and taking off.

Upon reaching the entrance of Qin Yang's unit, they saw Qin Yang hurrying out.

"How did it go? Did you get in touch with big brother?"

"He's been contacted; big brother answered the call himself; he should be able to rush over soon."

Ancheng County is just over a hundred miles from the city; Qin Han could reach here in a little over an hour by car.

Qin Yang opened the driver's side door, and Lin Chuxia quickly gave up her seat, moving to the passenger seat.

"To People's Hospital. I talked it over with big brother before; if sister-in-law is giving birth, we'll go to People's Hospital; their medical facilities are better."

Qin Yang had already restarted the car.

"Try to drive faster, but also keep it steady. My sister-in-law's belly hurt again just now."

Lin Chuxia reminded.

"Right, it's noon now. Won't there be no doctors at the hospital? Never mind that, let's talk about it when we get there. There should be someone on duty at least."

"Does People's Hospital have an emergency department? Should we go to the emergency?"

"I think we might need to. Giving birth is a big deal. It must be urgent," Qin Yang replied hesitantly.

"I wonder when big brother will arrive. What if the doctor asks for a signature? Can a brother-in-law and his wife sign as family members?"

Zhang Guilan finished eating a meat bun then heard the couple in front continuing their endless back-and-forth. She took out another meat bun from her pocket and handed it over.

"You might as well eat something too. I brought so many I can't finish them all."

Qin Yang: "..."

Lin Chuxia: "..."

Upon arriving at the hospital, the situation was not as complicated as Lin Chuxia and Qin Yang had thought.

There were doctors on duty in every department, especially in the gynecology and obstetrics department. The doctor was on ward duty and, upon hearing that a pregnant woman had arrived, first inquired about some basic information regarding Zhang Guilan.

At this time, unlike the future where you would need to create a medical record and perform regular check-ups for childbirth, hospitals in the city didn't even have ultrasound equipment.

However, the doctor's medical skill was truly good. The doctor only had Zhang Guilan lie on the bed, first listening with a stethoscope, then feeling her abdomen, and said directly, "Everything looks good. The baby's position is correct, and it has already moved down into the pelvis. Could family members please step outside for a moment? I need to perform an internal examination."

With that, she drew the curtain.

Qin Yang was not allowed to enter from the beginning. Lin Chuxia was worried for Zhang Guilan, but now in the examination room, there would be no embarrassment with the curtain drawn.

Soon, the doctor pulled the curtain back open and asked Lin Chuxia, "Are you a family member of the patient? Her sister?"

Lin Chuxia nodded; a sister-in-law is also a sister after all.

"Has the husband of the patient arrived? The cervix has dilated six centimeters already. She'll be entering the delivery room shortly. If the husband is on his way, he could help support her. Her water just broke during the internal check."

Lin Chuxia's face turned pale, "That fast?"

Isn't it supposed to be painful for a whole day?

Zhang Guilan had just eaten three big meat buns and didn't seem to be in much pain.

Jiang Hong even seemed fast, but she was contorted in agony.

The doctor was quite patient, "Subsequent births are usually quicker. You all did well to react quickly. Some don't even make it to the hospital and give birth on the way."

Hearing this, Lin Chuxia didn't dare delay anymore and helped Zhang Guilan off the bed.

The delivery room was just to the side. When Qin Yang saw her helping Zhang Guilan out, he got very tense. "How is it? Where are we heading?"

"The doctor said sister-in-law is about to give birth. We're going to the delivery room."

Qin Yang wanted to step forward to help but wasn't sure if he should reach out. The doctor, unable to stand it any longer, said with a stern face, "What kind of husband are you? Give her a hand. Her water broke; she must be uncomfortable now."

Qin Yang's face turned beet red.

Zhang Guilan smiled and said, "Doctor, he's not my husband. My husband is out of town and hasn't made it back yet. This is my brother-in-law and his wife. I'm fine, I can manage on my own."

The doctor glanced at the two of them again, her expression softening, "You sisters-in-law seem to get along quite well. I even thought she was your real sister. Well, hurry along then. By the time your husband rushes back, you might have already given birth."

Chapter 484: Pretty

Lin Chuxia took Zhang Guilan to the delivery room and was promptly sent out. There were only two people inside, a doctor and a nurse.

At this moment, Lin Chuxia was feeling a bit weak in the knees. She had helped Jiang Hong get to the hospital last time, but for some reason, now she was a bit scared.

Perhaps it was because her elder brother wasn't there, so she felt a stronger sense of responsibility towards her sister-in-law.

Qin Yang noticed her unease and held her little hand, "It will be alright."

"Still no word on where big brother is. Do you think sister-in-law is doing okay?"

Lin Chuxia had never given birth in either of her lives, but whether watching TV dramas or witnessing Jiang Hong's delivery, wasn't every one of them in excruciating pain? Sister-in-law's reaction seemed off no matter how you looked at it.

Qin Yang shook his head; he was even more clueless.

He glanced at his wristwatch, not knowing where his elder brother could be at the moment, just hoping he would arrive soon.

Then he took another look at his wife's complexion.

When Li Wei's wife gave birth last time, the howling was so miserable it terrified his wife.

If sister-in-law really starts screaming later on, will it scare his wife even more about giving birth?

If it really frightens his wife, he will have a serious talk with his elder brother no matter what.

Just as he was thinking, the door of the delivery room moved slightly, and both of them turned their heads in unison.

They saw the nurse open the delivery room door, coming out with a small blanket, "It's a girl, mother and daughter are both safe."

Seeing the stunned looks on their faces, the nurse approached and handed the baby directly to Lin Chuxia, "The mother needs to be cleaned up, she can come out later, you can take the baby for now."

Lin Chuxia held the baby and swallowed hard. Looking down at the little being in her arms, it was a tiny, red, and rosy bundle with thick, wet, and jet-black hair.

She looked at Qin Yang, "It's over this quickly? It hasn't even been twenty minutes since she went in, right?"

Qin Yang was also stunned, "Could it be a mistake? Is this someone else's child and sister-in-law hasn't given birth yet?"

Lin Chuxia shook her head, "Sister-in-law was the only one in there."

At this moment, hurried footsteps came from the corridor. Qin Han arrived in a sweat, running up to them, "Where's your sister-in-law?"

Lowering his head, he saw the baby in Lin Chuxia's arms, his eyes suddenly brightened, "This... is this mine?"

Lin Chuxia finally snapped back to reality and handed the baby to the child's real father, "There you go, your little girl. Sister-in-law is still inside, mother and daughter are safe, she should be out after they've finished cleaning her up."

Upon hearing this, Qin Han's smile widened to his ears, "My little girl? I have a daughter now, so pretty, my daughter is beautiful."

He handed the baby to Qin Yang, "Take a look at your niece, isn't she cute? Look at this little hair, these big eyes, this little nose, and little mouth..."

Qin Yang furrowed his brows, glanced once, then looked seriously again, and finally nodded under his elder brother's expectant gaze, "Cute."

The delivery room door opened again, and the nurse called out, "Relatives of Zhang Guilan? You can take her to the ward now, give her some water to drink, she can go home after urinating."

"Ah, good."

Qin Han hurried to respond, carrying the baby over to Zhang Guilan.

"Wife, look at our daughter, she looks just as pretty as you."

Zhang Guilan was extremely joyful at the sight of Qin Han's happy expression.

The long-awaited child was finally here, and it was a girl, now they had both a son and a daughter.

Once in the ward, Zhang Guilan was concerned that her brother-in-law and his wife had not eaten yet because of her, "I'm fine now, you two should hurry back and have something to eat, you must be hungry after being busy for half the day."

Lin Chuxia: "Sister-in-law, don't even mention it, that was too quick, I am not even feeling hungry yet."

It was the first time she knew childbirth could be this quick.

Gui Lan didn't expect having a second child to be so easy, and smiled awkwardly.

"Then go back and grab something to eat. It's fine with just your brother here with me."

Chuxia looked over to Qin Han, who was still grinning foolishly at the baby and said, "Did Big Brother rush over from our hometown without having any food? I'm not hungry yet, how about I stay with sister-in-law for a while and let Qin Yang take Big Brother to grab a bite?"

Qin Han immediately shook his head like a rattle-drum, "I'm fine, I don't need to go anywhere, there are some buns left over from your sister-in-law, I can just eat those, I'm good right here."

Seeing the unambitious state of his big brother, Qin Yang couldn't bother to say much and just took Chuxia back home.

After lunch at home and without much delay, they brought brown sugar water and boiled eggs to the hospital.

Qin Han was tidying things up while Gui Lan had already changed into clean clothes and covered her head with a scarf.

Seeing the two, she laughed and said, "The doctor said I can go home now. Your big brother and I discussed it, and we decided not to go back to your place but straight to our hometown. The grandparents are also waiting to see the baby."

It was the middle of summer, and Qin Han had driven over, so there was no fear of catching a chill.

Planning to spend the confinement period in their hometown was already talked about before.

Chuxia nodded, "That's good, after all, staying at home is more comfortable."

Having her mother-in-law to take care of her, and her husband by her side.

Chuxia knew that Gui Lan had been longing for the children these past few days.

Zhuangzhuang last weekend came to see Gui Lan with Qin Han, and she almost cried because she missed him so much.

Being at home surrounded by family members is better for the mood, and helps to prevent postpartum depression.

Qin Han had already completed the hospital discharge process.

Chuxia helped carry the baby, Qin Yang carried the stuff, and Qin Han wanted to carry Gui Lan to the car, but Gui Lan pushed his hand away and firmly stood up on her own, put on shoes and walked out.

This time, Chuxia truly opened her eyes in surprise.

Even Qin Han was stunned for a moment, then hurriedly followed after Gui Lan, like a little eunuch, "Wife, slow down, you've just had a baby."

Chuxia thought to herself, right, sister-in-law, you've just had a baby and you're walking out briskly, you should at least acknowledge the hardships women endure giving birth.

But Chuxia also believed what the doctor said, having a second child really is easier.

After sending off Qin Han and Gui Lan, Chuxia and Qin Yang returned home.

With one less person in the house all of a sudden, Chuxia felt a bit unused to it.

The belongings of Gui Lan in the guest room were packed into a handbag, and the bedding was taken out to the yard to sun, with plans to wash the beddings whenever there's time.

With a washing machine at home, Chuxia wouldn't make life hard on herself.

Qin Yang made a round trip to his work unit, finding nothing urgent he came back early.

Arriving home, he saw his wife absentmindedly hitting the bedding with a stick, her mind clearly not present.

He knew, his wife longed for a child, and seeing her sister-in-law having one today, she would think about it even more.

Indeed, that's why he couldn't sit still at the office either, so after a quick word with his colleague, he came back.

"Let me do it," Qin Yang took the stick from Chuxia's hand.

Chuxia didn't refuse, stepped back under the pomegranate tree, and admired the fruits on it.

This was planted by Chuxia after they moved here last year; the seller told her that it was a three-year-old tree and would bear fruits the day after being planted in the ground.

Indeed, this spring it bloomed with more than a dozen flowers, and now there were seven or eight pomegranates hanging on it.

Chapter 485: The Event That Changed Her Life

Qin Yang was fluffing the quilt and didn't hear Lin Chuxia's voice. When he turned his head, he saw his wife staring blankly at a few pomegranates on the pomegranate tree, and his heart skipped a beat.

Before he could speak, he heard Lin Chuxia ask, "Qin Yang, what's the date today?"

"It's the 29th, July 29th."

Lin Chuxia nodded her head.

July 29th, 1987.

In her past life, something happened on July 29, 1987, that changed her life significantly.

Back then, their business had just started to pick up; they were no longer just selling vegetables, and she and Li Guangyuan had opened a snack shop.

The snack shop was doing well, but it was still just a snack shop.

Up at the crack of dawn and working till dusk, she was both the owner and the waitress, managing almost everything in the shop on her own.

One day, Li Hongmei suddenly came to the shop and said that since it was so busy and she was idle at home anyway, she might as well help out at the shop.

She was puzzled; her two younger sisters-in-law were lazy and only dreamt of marrying city folk, keeping themselves prim and proper, absolutely avoiding any hard work — what made her think of helping out at the shop?

Li Guangyuan was happy to have some help and agreed before she could say anything.

As expected, Li Hongmei helped out for two days and then disappeared on the third day, along with the income from the shop's drawer.

Li Hongmei had heard that the clothes at the Department Store in the city were fashionable southern goods, so she took the opportunity to help out and stole the shop's money to buy new clothes directly by taking a bus to the city.

But who would have thought that as soon as she reached the city, she was targeted by a pickpocket. Not only was her money stolen, but she was also nearly abducted by human traffickers.

Thankfully, a kind-hearted person called the police.

She and Li Guangyuan also went to the city to pick her up after being notified.

Having fetched her, instead of being repentant, Li Hongmei insisted on buying new clothes.

Lin Chuxia didn't want to indulge her sister-in-law, but Li Guangyuan didn't dare to oppose her.

In the end, Li Guangyuan accompanied Li Hongmei to the Department Store, while Lin Chuxia wandered alone through the city.

As she wandered, she reached the riverside; the environment was serene, a gentle breeze caressing her face, refreshing her spirit.

She sat there watching the flowing river water, and after an unknown amount of time, she heard someone screaming for help.

She saw a child struggling in the river, going up and down, the children on the shore crying and calling for help.

It was noon at the time, the riverside was quiet, and there was no one around.

Lin Chuxia didn't think twice and jumped into the water to save the person.

However, she overestimated her capabilities. The river appeared calm, but the current was not slow. Additionally, the child being around ten years old, was quite strong when struggling.

She was grabbed by the child and couldn't shake him off, managing just to swim with one arm.

But the strength of one arm was insufficient to carry two people; soon, her strength failed, and she began to sink with the child clinging to her.

She couldn't even feel the cold of the water; her only thought was that it was over.

After all, they were still several meters away from the shore, and she truly had no strength left.

It wasn't just about saving the child anymore; she feared she might die herself.

Just when she was sinking and about to lose consciousness, she heard the sound of the water ...

Later, when she woke up, she and the child had been saved, and the person who rescued them left after seeing them safe on the shore.

As she had no strength left for a while, she sat there for a long time.

Later, the child's parents found her and insisted she was the child's savior.

She explained that there was another rescaper, but the fact remains that she was the first to jump into the water to save the child, especially since the children on the shore also recognized her as the first to rescue.

The child's parents were not ordinary people; later on, more than once, they helped her, allowing her business to grow even larger.

Also, because of that rescue, she sustained injuries that resulted in her being childless for life.

One could say that rescue changed the course of her life.

It was the end of July, and she remembered that the incident happened towards the end of October, just three months away.

Lin Chuxia gently caressed her abdomen, pondering whether her infertility was due to her rescue attempt or if she was initially...

"What are you thinking about?"

Qin Yang's voice brought Lin Chuxia back from her thoughts.

Pointing to the pomegranates on the tree, "There are quite a few this year; likely even more next year. I wonder if they will be sweet when ripe."

Bearing pomegranates symbolizing many children, would they have their child?

"Definitely sweet," Qin Yang stated confidently. "By the way, didn't you mention last time that County Magistrate Bai had contacted you, hoping you'd find time to return to An City? When do you plan to go back? There's something I wanted to discuss with you. I may need to travel soon for work; there is a project that requires my on-site inspection. If this project gets approved, I will be responsible for a larger area and might be busier than now. Seeing you're quite busy lately and there will be a lot on your plate back in An City, should we hold off on trying for a child? If I end up traveling frequently, I wouldn't feel comfortable knowing you're pregnant."

Lin Chuxia smiled slightly, "Okay," she knew Qin Yang had sensed something.

"I plan to go back next week, the second batch of goods at the store should be arriving in the next couple of days; I'll see how things are."

"Good, I'm leaving the day after tomorrow for my trip, it'll be good for you to go back home."

It would keep her busy and distract her from her thoughts.

County Magistrate Bai must have something planned, and while Qin Yang usually worried about Lin Chuxia being too busy, he now preferred her to be preoccupied to avoid overthinking.

This time, Qin Yang's business trip was not to any remote area, but near the capital, which reassured Lin Chuxia.

The day after Qin Yang left for his trip, the goods arrived at the store, and Lin Chuxia directly went with Liu Guoqiang to the train station to pick up the goods.

The shipment was substantial. Liu Guoqiang brought along two helpers, one of whom was a soldier who had previously served under him.

Not all enlisted soldiers are guaranteed a job after three years of mandatory service. The man had originally hoped to use connections to work in a factory, but for various reasons, it never panned out.

When she had returned from the south, Lin Chuxia had told Liu Guoqiang that she could employ any ex-military personnel needing jobs around him.

Employees with national service experience were completely trustworthy.

"Mr. Lin, I've checked all the invoices, no issues. Should we load the truck?"

The speaker was He Chenhui, introduced by Liu Guoqiang, about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, newly married.

"Okay, start loading."

Lin Chuxia took the invoice and put it in her bag.

Watching the packages being loaded, she started helping directly.

Liu Guoqiang was alright with this; he had been in contact with Lin Chuxia when they went to the south together and knew she wasn't fragile, especially since he had witnessed her fighting robbers and knew she was trained.

Trained and quite capable, she couldn't be weak.

He Chenhui was stunned seeing Lin Chuxia lift a bundle of clothes, "Mr. Lin... let us handle this."

That bundle of clothes weighed at least seventy to eighty pounds. Mr. Lin looked like a slim, frail woman.

Chapter 486: She Won't Give Up

His gaze turned to Lin Chuxia's feet again.

She was still wearing high heels.

Lin Chuxia didn't care at all, "Stop wasting time, let's hurry up, the mall is waiting."

Recently, their mall's business has been booming, especially over the weekends.

Many trendy items were sold out.

Their stock included items from the south as well as nearby clothing factories. Wang Tianxue had a good eye, but compared to the southern goods, the local clothing styles were still lacking.

They were waiting for this batch of goods to inject some fresh blood.

"Okay," He Chenhui responded, seeing Liu Guoqiang working as usual, he didn't speak further and started loading the merchandise swiftly.

By the time the truck reached the back door of the mall, Wang Tianxue was already waiting there.

Seeing the goods on the truck, she revealed a satisfied smile, "Not bad, now I can relax."

"You talked to Aunt Fang about this, how could she let you down?"

Soon after the mall opened, Wang Tianxue had called Aunt Fang to ask for some goods.

Then, she made another call a few days later.

After those two calls, given Aunt Fang's fondness for Wang Tianxue, she would certainly not neglect this batch of goods.

Wang Tianxue smiled, instructing people to unload, then spoke to Lin Chuxia, "I checked the accounts yesterday. Apart from the payment we wired to Aunt Fang last time, there are still 16,000 yuan on our books. Once this batch of items sells, I plan to take another trip to the south. By then, the autumn wear should be available, and I'll check out the styles."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Okay, do you need me to come along?"

"No need for that, I'm thinking of bringing Liu Na along. That girl is really capable, has a knack for business. I think taking her on another trip and, if future needs arise, letting her handle it alone next time would be good, with Aunt Fang watching over, nothing will go wrong."

Lin Chuxia thought for a moment and agreed, Liu Na was indeed capable.

"Bring one more person, Qin Jianjun. Jia Liang should be back in a couple of days from Rong City. Besides Houzi, there's another person there from Xiyang Food Factory, Qin Wu. After finishing the business, you and Houzi can come back together."

Qin Jianjun had been wanting to go to the south for a while now, having mentioned it several times, and Qin Wu was also there.

A few days ago, Su Wensong called, Qin Wu was doing really well there.

Right now, their Xiyang's beef sauce and chili sauce were gradually gaining a foothold in the Rong City market.

They couldn't leave their office unmanned, so Qin Wu had decided to stay there temporarily until the market in Rong City stabilized, then they would send someone to take turns.

Lin Chuxia thought this arrangement was fine, and soon Hou Xiaobao could also be rotated back from there.

...

The next day, sure enough, Jia Liang returned from Rong City.

He went straight to report to Lin Chuxia almost without rest after getting off the train.

The work situation at their office was pretty much as Su Wensong had described over the phone, with Jia Liang providing more detail.

Ah Hua had become an official employee of their office, and Aunt Fang had introduced a couple of well-vetted individuals.

By the time he returned, the renovation of their office was completed and their staffing was no longer an issue.

"Alright, these matters can be reported anytime, you look exhausted. Go home and rest a bit, Aunt Jia has been missing you. Don't worry about the meals, take a couple of days off. Come back to work once you've rested."

Lin Chuxia directly gave Jia Liang some time off.

Jia Liang grinned, "Okay, then I'll head back first. Call me if you need anything, Mr. Lin."

Lin Chuxia nodded. After he left the room and some time passed, she saw through the office's glass window that he had already reached downstairs.

However, the direction he took was not the way home, but the opposite direction.

Qin's Restaurant, just past lunchtime, still had two tables of customers and most of the wait staff had started to relax.

Those who were free could now have their lunch.

Steamed buns were always plentiful, but eating them for a long period could get tiresome.

Today, the kitchen had prepared stewed green beans and steamed bread—take whatever you want to eat.

"Lele, what are you thinking about? The pork stewed with green beans today smells incredibly delicious. If you don't head there soon, it'll all be gone."

Gao Lele came back to reality and nodded at her colleague who was speaking, then also headed to the kitchen to get some food.

Before she entered the kitchen, she ran into Qin Juan coming out of it.

Suddenly changing direction, she followed Qin Juan to a table.

Qin Juan puzzledly asked, "Lele, why aren't you eating?"

Gao Lele pursed her lips and finally asked, "Sister Juan, has Qin Jianjun been to your place recently? Is he not in Yan City?"

That day when she returned home, her mom told her not to go looking for that poor boy anymore and to give up on him, insisting that not only would her family never allow her to marry someone from outside the area, but also that the poor boy already knew he wasn't worthy of her and had hidden away, so she would never see him again.

Only then did she learn that her parents knew about her feelings for Qin Jianjun and had gone to see him personally.

She had always known her parents disapproved of outsiders, especially since Jianjun's family was from the countryside.

But deep down, she knew that Qin Jianjun was different. He was ambitious and capable, surely to be much stronger than many city folks in the future.

She didn't know how to convince her parents, only that she loved the kind of man Qin Jianjun was.

She refused the matches her parents had found for her and even threatened to never marry if not for Qin Jianjun, but she never anticipated that her parents would have gone to Qin Jianjun personally.

In that moment, she felt extremely mortified.

Qin Jianjun didn't even know her feelings, yet her parents had approached him like that.

What would Jianjun think of her parents, or of her?

She really wanted to explain to Qin Jianjun in person, but Gao Lele had discovered she couldn't find him anymore.

She had gone to the Huamei Mall several times, trying to find him after work to no avail, so she tried during work hours, but still couldn't find him.

She realized that Qin Jianjun was avoiding her.

Just like her mother said, he would never meet her again, but not for the reasons her mother believed.

She wanted to explain things clearly to him. Even if Qin Jianjun truly didn't like her, it should be her place to clarify, not her parents...

She couldn't give up.

Hearing this, Qin Juan put down her utensils.

Gao Lele's parents visiting Qin Jianjun at the mall had been mentioned to her by Lin Chuxia.

Being Qin Jianjun's aunt, Qin Juan was furious when she heard about it.

Their family's kids were all decent, and as his aunt, she knew too well whatever was going on between Qin Jianjun and Gao Lele.

They were doing nothing wrong, yet they had people barging in, publicly shaming them in front of colleagues.

Looking down on country folk, looking down on farmers—who really is nobler than whom?

Qin Juan even recalled Zhang Wenbin's family, who also looked down on country people, yet when they were in desperate need to find a wife for their son, they shamelessly came to the Qin Family asking to

marry her. When city people had no land or food, they relied on her rural parents-in-law for aid, but as soon as their fortunes turned, they reverted to despising country people.

Chapter 487: Protecting One's Own Child

Her nephew was cultivated and even in that situation, he bore his responsibilities as a man, taking into account Gao Lele's feelings.

At this moment, as Gao Lele asked this, she also guessed the reason.

"Lele, Jianjun didn't go anywhere. Stop looking for him; you two are not suitable."

Qin Jianjun had no plans to marry for the time being, and he was even less interested in Gao Lele. Qin Juan didn't want to trouble her nephew with the Gao family any longer.

What if they went looking for him at his school next time?

What about her nephew's reputation?

A mother's duty is to protect her own child.

Tears fell directly from Gao Lele's eyes when she heard this, "Sister Juan, I'm sorry. I didn't know my parents went to find Qin Jianjun. He must be angry with me. Please tell me where he is; I want to explain to him."

"Lele, Jianjun doesn't need your explanation, and he won't be mad at you. Don't worry, I, as his aunt, know exactly what kind of person he is. The way he's acting now is probably just to avoid further trouble for both of you."

"Trouble?" Gao Lele, with tears falling drop by drop from her downcast eyes.

So she was a trouble to him?

It made sense. Her parents must have caused him a lot of trouble.

"Sister Juan, I really want to apologize to him," and also wanted to ask him if he truly didn't feel anything for her?

If there was even a slight feeling, as long as he said so, she would dare to confront her parents.

Even if it meant leaving that home, she still wanted to be with him.

Qin Juan could clearly see Gao Lele's thoughts and said directly, "I will pass on your apology to Jianjun. Lele, some things can't be forced, especially considering your parents' attitude. We have the freedom to love and marry whom we want. I'm not saying that you must always obey your parents, but I believe their hearts are the same—they want the best for their children. He's avoiding you because that's his stance."

Gao Lele nodded, finally saying no more.

At that moment, a soft call came from the entrance, "Manager Jia."

"Manager Jia, you're back."

"Manager Jia, have you eaten?"

...

Jia Liang was just walking in from the entrance.

While responding to the small talk from the young staff members, his eyes swept across the lobby and finally rested on Qin Juan sitting in the corner.

A gentle smile flickered in his eyes.

He walked towards her without hesitation.

As he approached, he noticed Gao Lele by her side, with red-rimmed eyes, clearly having just cried.

Seeing Jia Liang return, Gao Lele initially felt a surge of joy, then a sinking feeling as she lowered her eyes, "Manager Jia."

If... if Jia Liang had come back a bit earlier, she could have applied to transfer to work at the mall.

Then maybe, she would have known right away when her parents went to the mall looking for Qin Jianjun and prevented the situation from escalating to this point.

Maybe there was still a chance for her and Qin Jianjun.

Unfortunately, it's all a matter of what could have been.

Seeing Gao Lele leave in disappointment, Jia Liang quietly asked Qin Juan, "What happened?"

Qin Juan was also happy to see Jia Liang; with such a big shop handed over to her, she always felt insecure.

Seeing Jia Liang return, she immediately felt a sigh of relief.

"It's not about the shop," surrounded by colleagues, she didn't plan on discussing Gao Lele's affairs at that moment, so she just asked, "Have you had lunch? Did you just get off the train?"

He held a briefcase in his hand and wasn't so clean, obviously just having come back.

It was only now that Jia Liang realized something, a flash of annoyance in his eyes.

He hurried over here after reporting to Lin Chuxia, these past few days all he could think about was the person in front of him, eager to see her but had forgotten that after traveling on the train for several days, he must be in a sorry state.

Qin Juan was a person who liked cleanliness.

"I... I..."

Before Jia Liang could say anything, Qin Juan had already pushed the food in front of her towards him, "I just served myself and haven't eaten a bite, you eat first, I'll go get some more."

His sister-in-law had said their trip had not been easy.

Jia Liang had been in Rong City for such a long time, and he was working hard, nowhere was as comfortable as home.

Qin Juan knew that they had set up an office in Rong City, and she was sincerely happy for her brother and sister-in-law, and also delighted that they had such supportive and capable employees.

Jia Liang's cheeks turned a bit red as he took the bowl, and happily agreed, "Eh, OK."

The two didn't separate tables, during this time Qin Juan had been managing the restaurant, and now that Jia Liang was back, it was her duty to report on the situation of the shop.

So they just ate and talked, and after finishing their meal, they continued discussing in the office.

Yang Rui came out of the General Manager's office looking frustrated, and immediately saw Tang Lili not far away, his eyebrows frowning along.

He stepped forward to pull her aside, and asked in a low voice, "What are you doing here? Have you finished the work up front?"

Tang Lili pouted, dissatisfied as she started talking, "What else to do, they all know I'm a temp worker, all the dirty and tiring tasks are left to me. I don't want to do it anymore."

She glanced in the direction of the General Manager's office, "What did you say to Manager Wang? When will you get me turned into a regular employee? I don't want to be a temp anymore; it always feels like I am inferior to others, especially that Lv Xiaoxue. Isn't her job just bought with money, and actually bought out of mine? She's swaggering in front of me every day, acting so arrogant, and she's even got the other colleagues ostracizing me. It infuriates me; I think she was brought over by your ex-wife just to annoy me."

After talking for a while, she didn't hear Yang Rui joining in, so she tugged at his sleeve, "Are you listening to me? Did you talk to Manager Wang or not?"

Yang Rui was pondering over Lv Xiaoxue's matter; he had never imagined his ex-wife would be so decisive.

Not only had she divorced him, but she had also sold the job to Lv Xiaoxue.

When he found out about this, he had also argued with Manager Wang about it. The job that had belonged to Wang Tianxue was already given to Tang Lili; how could it be sold to someone else again.

The HR department said that when Tang Lili came, it was only in the name of filling in, and the position was still under Wang Tianxue's name, and filling in was also managed by him. Now that the concerned party arrived, of course, she had the most right to deal with her job.

No matter what, by the time he received the news, Wang Tianxue had already completed the procedures, and it was too late to say anything.

He could only, leveraging his relationships in the mall, get Tang Lili a temporary job.

Now hearing Tang Lili's dissatisfaction, he spoke impatiently, "What more is there to say? You know the situation in the department store. It's good enough they're not laying people off, getting you a temp job was already an exception."

"I don't care, I just don't want to go back and face those people," Tang Lili's eyes darted around, "Or else you talk to Manager Wang, transfer me to your side. Aren't you going down south for the goods? I've never left Yan City, why not let me go with you? I can help you out with ideas. Our store's clothing isn't really good stuff, and you know my taste; I can pick some fashionable goods for you, we'll definitely outshine Huamei Mall across the street."

Chapter 488: Business Is Business

"Mentioning Huamei Mall across the street, Yang Rui's face also darkened.

He had just been reprimanded in the general manager's office.

After the supply issue arose in the south, he kept arguing with Manager Wang for more time to coordinate, hoping to restore the supply from the south as soon as possible.

In his heart, he knew for sure that Wang Tianxue must have said something to his aunt.

At first, he didn't worry about it; Wang Tianxue, no matter what, was just a cousin once removed. The department store has had connections with his aunt for so many years, how much interest lay between them? He couldn't believe that his aunt would actually cut off the department store's supply entirely. Perhaps it was just for show, to deceive Wang Tianxue.

But to his surprise, no matter how he tried to contact them or what incentives he offered, his aunt would not budge.

Not only that, but other suppliers introduced by his aunt also stopped supplying their department store.

Watching as Meihuo Mall across the street restocked with new products, Manager Wang lost his temper.

He gave a one-week deadline to solve the supply chain issue or else his tenure as the purchasing department director of the department store would be over.

"Are you sure you want to go to the south with me?"

Yang Rui looked at Tang Lili. Although it would not look good if his aunt saw him with her, if he didn't mention it, his aunt would just think she was an employee of the department store.

Tang Lili had a good eye. If his aunt wouldn't loosen up, they would indeed need to look for new partners.

Hearing Yang Rui relent, Tang Lili lit up, "Of course, I've got our marriage certificate with you. We're husband and wife as one, of course I wish for you to do better and to show that Wang woman that without her, you'll only be more successful."

Yang Rui liked hearing that, "Alright then, later you tell your team leader and finish work early. We'll go back to pack everything up, and set off tomorrow."

"Okay, I'll listen to you," Tang Lili sweetly replied, "But first, once the supply issue is resolved, you'll have to make up for the wedding ceremony. I can't be unclearly together with you like this. Later, you must invite everyone from the mall."

"Don't worry about it, things have just been too busy lately. Once all this is taken care of, we'll organize it. How could I bear letting you follow me without clarity? Haven't we got our marriage certificate? The state recognizes us."

"Cut it out, it's not just about the state's recognition. I also want everyone at the mall to recognize that I'm your wife, rightful and proper..."

.....

After arranging everything in the city, Lin Chuxia and Qin Juan sent their regards and went back to Ancheng.

County Magistrate Bai had the intention to talk to her about Old Food Factory during the grand opening of Huamei Mall, a matter Lin Chuxia always remembered, but wasn't in a hurry to address.

Lin Chuxia had anticipated the bankruptcy of Ancheng Food Factory a long time ago, and although she could see County Magistrate Bai's responsible attitude the second time he approached her.

Nowadays, besides the Old Food Factory, Ancheng had only Xiyang Food Factory as a related industry, he was indeed considering over a thousand employees of Ancheng Food Factory.

But Lin Chuxia was a businesswoman, and in business, she spoke the language of business.

In this life, although she did many things with a heart full of gratitude and the desire to benefit more people, she wouldn't be a saint.

She was all too aware of the principle that gratitude turns to grudges over trifles. Constantly showing your benevolent side only shows weakness and vulnerability in the eyes of others.

Passively offering doesn't mean making a sale; it's exposing your softest parts to the other party.

If the other party is grateful, that's good. Otherwise, they may feel that the knife hasn't been thrust deep enough, and they've not gained enough benefits.

The last thing to gamble on is human nature.

Lin Chuxia hadn't even reached the entrance of Qin Family Village, when from afar she saw a bustling scene of people and cars."

It's the location of the Qin Family Village vegetable stall.

At this point, all the greenhouse vegetables had been sold out, but the open-field vegetables followed closely behind.

Wang Cheng, true to his reputation for experience, rode the wave of previous popularity to get the vegetable stall up and running.

She had heard that nowadays, many farmers who grow vegetables don't patronize the county vegetable stalls; they only recognize the Qin Family Village Vegetable Market.

Seeing it for herself, the rumors were indeed true.

Lin Chuxia didn't continue and changed directions, returning home through another entrance of the village.

When she got home, she first went to check on Zhang Guilan and the child.

These days, Mrs. Qin hadn't been helping out at the agricultural supply store; she had been at home taking care of Zhang Guilan's postpartum needs.

Zhang Guilan didn't feel it was necessary; it was now summer, and she wasn't afraid of catching a cold. She even wanted to take advantage of the cooler weather, unafraid of the breezes when stepping outside. Since it was her second child, she found the birth much easier compared to the first and thought she didn't need much looking after.

But Mrs. Qin wouldn't allow her to move around too much, insisting she rest well on the kang bed.

She earnestly advised her, "You can't take your confinement lightly. You might not feel it now, but when you're old, all the ailments will catch up to you. Now that our family can afford it, you should be even more careful. You developed back pain after having Zhuangzhuang, and now that you've had Yaoyao, you should take this opportunity to heal your back pain during confinement. Confinement illnesses need to be treated during confinement. Surely you won't be able to have more children after this, so you must listen to me. Recover well, and you'll enjoy your latter days."

Qin Han had already named his daughter; her official name was Qin Li Yao, and her nickname Yaoyao.

His eldest son, Zhuangzhuang, was a boy and now with the birth of a baby girl, his family was blessed with both a son and a daughter. Qin Han couldn't wait to bring Zhang Guilan back from the city so he could name their daughter.

Zhuangzhuang spent two days and nights flipping through a paperback dictionary, nearly wearing it out, before deciding on this name.

Little Yaoyao had been born for over a week now. She had lost her birth-swollen appearance and red skin, looking fair and tender, with a hint of a milky scent.

Especially those large eyes, inherited from the Qin Family, with their large pupils, were incredibly charming.

"Sister-in-law, you should listen to Mom about this, just bear with it and stay put," Lin Chuxia said while playing with little Yaoyao.

Mrs. Qin glanced at Lin Chuxia and pursed her lips.

A few days ago, her younger son had called specifically to tell her not to mention having children in front of Lin Chuxia.

She used to be anxious about her younger son and his wife having children, often bringing it up.

Then, learning that they were planning to have children, she was elated for several days.

But no one expected that, despite the couple's usual smooth sailing, they would encounter difficulties when it came to bearing children...

She had long noticed that her daughter-in-law adored children; there wasn't a kid in the family who didn't love this little aunt.

Now that the couple was having troubles conceiving, who knew how much heartache her daughter-in-law was feeling.

As a mother-in-law, she didn't feel it was right to console her on this matter.

What could she say? Anything she said would be like stabbing her daughter-in-law in the heart.

So she might as well heed her son's advice and not bring it up.

"You two chat, I'll go cook. Tonight we'll make Xiaxia's favorite stuffed luffa dumplings," suggested Mrs. Qin as she collected her thoughts with a smile.

Zhang Guilan quickly said, "Mom, I want dumplings tonight too, I don't need chicken soup anymore. I'm fed up with chicken soup and fish soup every day."

Chapter 489: Acting Foolish

Mrs. Qin was not as easy-going with Zhang Guilan, "That won't do. You just had a baby, you need to replenish. If you're healthy, the baby's milk will be good too."

"I have enough milk as it is, any more and she can't even finish it..."

Mrs. Qin ignored her complaints and left her with a view of her back.

Zhang Guilan looked toward Lin Chuxia with a face full of grievances, "Look at this flesh on me, I didn't lose weight after giving birth, I actually gained more."

Lin Chuxia smiled and comforted her, "You can lose weight later, right now you should listen to your mom, she's right."

The two chatted for a while longer, and when it was about time, Lin Chuxia went to the kitchen to help Mrs. Qin make dumplings.

Qin Han came back early today, just as he walked in, the village chief's voice came from the door.

A few people went out to greet him.

Seeing Lin Chuxia, the village chief chuckled happily, "I heard they saw your car just now, I guessed it was you who came back. There happens to be some issues in the village that I would like to discuss with you. When will you have time? We all trust your opinion. We can hold a small meeting then, and you can help us strategize."

"Oh, is Uncle Qin planning something new again?"

Qin Shusen is a go-getter, and over the last two years, Qin Family Village has transformed day by day, all thanks to the leadership of Village Chief Qin.

The village chief chuckled, "It's not exactly a new plan, just these little things that we must do well, and we can't be inconsistent like fishing for three days and drying nets for two. The greenhouses that were built in early spring were not easy to manage. Technician He had told us before that in autumn, we could cover the greenhouses again to extend the growing season. I've already spoken to the County Agricultural Bureau. Technician Hu, Technician Li, and Technician Yang will come to guide us on the autumn greenhouse vegetables. I specifically wanted to discuss it with you."

It's now August, and by June the vegetable greenhouses were mostly uncovered.

Technician He from the Agricultural Research Institute came to guide on the spring greenhouse vegetables and had already returned.

Now, any issues with the greenhouses in Qin Family Village are coordinated through the County Agricultural Bureau.

It must be said, Technician Yang from the Agricultural Bureau was highly valued by Technician He. When leaving, he repeatedly reminded Village Chief Qin that if there were issues, they could contact Technician Yang and his team, stay in close communication, and if necessary, call him.

Even though he has left, Qin Family Village's greenhouses still have a place under his care.

Lin Chuxia understood and nodded, "Okay, are you in a hurry for this matter? I might need to go to the county in a couple of days."

"No rush, you go ahead with your tasks, I will wait for your time."

After discussing this with Lin Chuxia, the village chief turned to look at Qin Han.

"Is your wife and child doing well?"

Speaking of his daughter, Qin Han's smile was irrepressible, "Very well, thanks to Uncle this time. When the baby turns one month old, you must come over for a celebratory drink."

The village chief pressed his hand down, "I'll definitely have the drink, but we still have to handle this matter as we must. Now that the child is born, this is a case of overpopulation, and the fine still needs to be paid. These days, the family planning office has been looking for me as well."

"Uncle, I understand, just tell me how much the fine is? I'll pay it soon."

The village chief was amused by his attitude, "You lad, seems like you really have some money," he raised a finger, "It's like this now, Uncle can't do much. If it could be less, I would've fought for you, but your case was reported, so it's considered a major overpopulation case..."

Qin Han nodded, "No problem, village chief, I know we violated the policy, and although the fine is heavy, I'm happy it's for my daughter."

"That settles it then, I've passed on the message, I should be heading back."

Mrs. Qin still wanted to keep the village chief for a couple of drinks, but this time the village chief did not agree and walked out with his hands behind his back.

Qin Han quickly followed to see him off.

Lin Chuxia watched as the two stood in the outer courtyard chatting for a while, after which Qin Han cheerfully saw off the guest, but as he turned back, his face immediately darkened.

Mrs. Qin looked at him with concern and asked, "What's wrong, is there anything else?"

"Mom, it's nothing. Don't worry. Tomorrow I'll go and pay the fine, and once it's paid, there'll be no problems."

Lin Chuxia then asked, "Bro, do you have enough money?"

The village chief gestured with a finger, representing one thousand yuan.

"Enough," facing his family, Qin Han regained his smile, "Not just one thousand, even if more zeros were added, I can still manage it."

Mrs. Qin glared at him, "Stop talking nonsense, do you think money is too hot to handle? Look how reckless you are."

Qin Han chuckled, "I'm just speaking casually in front of family."

But thinking back, two years ago this one thousand yuan would have really made him anxious.

Back then, the mere few bucks or teens from farming—who would have thought about today's situation?

Last year, from the Bun Shop's annual profit sharing, they got several hundred yuan.

This year, with the agricultural supply store, he calculated the debts paid back by villagers recently and made several thousand yuan just from that.

He had never seen so much money in his life.

He thought of this and looked at Lin Chuxia again.

Without his sister giving them this confidence, he and his wife wouldn't dare to have another child.

In the future, he should tell his daughter, her coming into this world was all because her aunt craved an accomplished person.

...

At night, Qin Han entered the room and started talking to his wife about the family planning office.

"In a moment, get me one thousand yuan, tomorrow I'll go handle the paperwork, and once it's done, I will feel relieved."

"Okay, wait a sec."

Zhang Guilan groped her way to the bed, opened the bed cabinet, took out a small cloth bag, counted a stack of banknotes, and handed them to Qin Han with some distress.

"It was hard to save up, I heard the penalty for having an extra child isn't that much."

Qin Han took the money and snorted, "Who asked our family to offend someone and get reported?"

Talking about this, Zhang Guilan was also unhappy.

Two months of anxiety.

"Who exactly did we offend? I've thought it over and can't figure it out. Was it something you did while setting up the greenhouse that caused resentment?"

This year they opened the agricultural supply store which involved a lot of interactions with villagers, it's easy to inadvertently offend someone.

Qin Han's eyes darkened, "Sometimes it's not about whether we want to offend someone or not. Some people are just malicious and can't stand to see others doing well. They don't know their own worth, arrogant and narrow-minded, leading their lives in a mess and then they blame others for not being able to bear seeing others living better lives. No matter how cautious you are, it helps nothing against such people."

Zhang Guilan furrowed her brows too, "If that's really the case, there's nothing we can do. We can't just live in fear of their resentment, right?"

"Of course not, the more they dislike seeing us, the better we must live."

"You're right," Zhang Guilan sighed, "Why are people like this? Back in the work team, whether someone worked more or less, there were those who would report to the team leader. Now, with household responsibility system, policies are more open, and the government doesn't manage these issues. People should just strive on their own abilities, why bother resorting to such petty schemes looking at what others have."

Chapter 490: A Leader Must Have Presence

"Nothing chills the heart more than these schemes, especially when they come from so-called loved ones."

"Huh?" Zhang Guilan did not understand this statement.

Qin Han did not elaborate further, just saying, "When you get a chance, tell your sister-in-law as well, our family's relationship with Qin Wen and his wife is done. Even the second brother said there's no brotherhood anymore, and just like Erli, even if there's still a blood relation, I won't acknowledge Qin

Wen as my brother. You sisters-in-law don't need to take them seriously either, just treat them like strangers when you see them."

Well, now Zhang Guilan understood.

No need to ask about who reported them, it must be that couple.

No wonder, they've been trying to have a child for a year with no news.

Seeing others having children one after another, they must be jealous.

Zhang Guilan felt not an ounce of sympathy for Qin Wen and his wife, watching her own son and daughter so incredibly happy.

To deal with those people, you have to infuriate them.

"Hisss..."

Zhang Guilan was just about to pick up her daughter and couldn't help but gasp.

Qin Han heard the noise and instantly turned around, "What's wrong, wife?"

She frowned, holding her chest, with a face full of grievance.

"What else could be wrong? I said I didn't want soup tonight, but Mom insisted I drink the chicken soup, and now I'm lactating again. Your daughter is sleeping so soundly, I tried to feed her a bit, but the little thing wouldn't eat. And your son, just now I told him to eat and that stinker just ran away as if I was trying to poison him..."

Hearing this, Qin Han couldn't help but laugh.

Zhang Guilan got annoyed, "You're laughing? Go get me the breast pump, what a curse. When we had Zhuangzhuang, we weren't well off, Zhuangzhuang was a big eater and there still wasn't enough milk, which was worrying. Now we have enough milk, but can't even use it, it's even more frustrating... Hey, what are you still standing there for? Hurry up, I'm about to burst..."

"Wife, why bother with all that," Qin Han said cheekily as he moved closer.

Zhang Guilan looked at him puzzled, "What do you mean?"

"I'm saying the breast pump is so inconvenient, it's just an excess of milk, let me help you."

Before Zhang Guilan could respond, Qin Han was already taking action.

"You... you shameless man..."

Zhang Guilan's face turned red, and she dared not speak too loudly, since she had in-laws next door.

Qin Han succeeded all too quickly, a face of satisfaction, mumbling unclearly, "Waste is shameful."

Zhang Guilan: 你真是个不要脸的男人

I think you're the one who's shameless.

...

Heard that Lin Chuxia came back, the next day Wang Cheng and Su Wensong both came looking for her.

It wasn't because there was some urgent work for her to arrange—both Xiyang Food Factory and Qin Family Village's vegetable station were running smoothly.

Especially the vegetable station, which had undergone tremendous changes in the two months since Lin Chuxia was away. Wang Cheng couldn't wait to report this to her.

After the greenhouse vegetables were out of season, Wang Cheng didn't neglect the Qin Family Village's vegetable station; instead, he continued to help find markets for their vegetables, turning it into a small vegetable wholesaling point.

With the foundation set by the previous greenhouse vegetables, the entrance to the Qin Family Village had now become a vegetable wholesale market, bustling like a fair every evening and morning.

Lin Chuxia had seen this for herself when she returned yesterday, which was unlike anything described over the phone.

At this moment, seeing Wang Cheng, Lin Chuxia truly appreciated his capabilities.

Wang Cheng looked nothing like the roadside mechanic he used to be.

Dressed in a clean white shirt, black trousers, leather shoes, and neatly trimmed hair, he looked even more spirited than when he was working at the vegetable station.

With money in hand and people at his command, a leader must look the part.

And he couldn't let Lin Chuxia lose face.

However, Wang Cheng was humble, "This is all thanks to the leadership team of Qin Family Village for their support. Otherwise, the rooms by the village entrance wouldn't have been enough. In spring, seeing more people coming to our station, the village chief requisitioned the land next to it. Now, everyone from ten miles around knows about our Qin Family Village vegetable market. But we still hold the management rights, and actually, Brother Hu and I were considering something. We were going to call Mr. Lin for advice, but since Mr. Lin is back, let's discuss it face to face."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Go ahead."

"It's like this, Mr. Lin, you might have seen when you returned, the area at the village entrance is not small, and now at our market, apart from our village people, many vendors come to sell, and wholesalers come to buy there. Our original sales point is indeed saturated. Bringing in wholesalers can help with market development, but as for the management, we were thinking maybe we need to regulate it a bit more."

Lin Chuxia understood right away; they wanted to charge a management fee.

Whether selling or buying, charging a management fee at the market isn't unusual.

"Who else is involved in management apart from you guys?" Lin Chuxia asked.

"It's mainly us, and when it's crowded, the village chief sends a few young men to help maintain order. Every day, the market generates a lot of vegetable waste—some discarded leaves, some damaged goods. Basically, we expect everyone to take it away, but we can't always keep up. At the end, some decent stuff gets taken home for chicken feed, and for the rest, the village chief assigned someone responsible for the cleanliness of the market, and the village pays their salary."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "I ran into the village chief when I came back yesterday; he also seemed to have something to discuss with me. We can consider this together later. We are providing the land and labor from our Qin Family Village, it makes no sense to work for nothing. But once we start collecting management fees, it will affect the traders too. Brother Wang, you go back and discuss a proposal with Brother Hu and the others, like the charging standards, under what conditions to charge fees, under what conditions it's free, etc. The more detailed, the better. Then we can all discuss it together with the village.

This money definitely can't be enjoyed by them alone; the village supports the vegetable station heavily and should share in the benefits.

"Also, when it comes to charging fees, our vegetable wholesale market needs to be more standardized, like weighing. We not only need to provide heavy scales for everyone's free use, but also eliminate market underweighing. When the time comes, we should set up a designated weighing area, buy several scales for everyone to use, and also consider lighting and other aspects. If we are charging fees, we need to improve our services."

Wang Cheng listened, his eyes brightening, and he almost wished he had a notebook to jot it all down.

"Alright, I understand, Mr. Lin. I'll call a meeting when I go back."

After discussing the market, Su Wensong also brought some news.