

Switched M 491

Chapter 491: Settling the Accounts

Ever since Bai County approached Lin Chuxia, she tasked Su Wensong with keeping an eye on Ancheng Food Factory.

In truth, Su Wensong didn't need Lin Chuxia to point it out; the situation at Ancheng Food Factory was obvious all along. As the manager of Xiyang Food Factory who was also in the food industry, it would be difficult not to know about it.

However, with Lin Chuxia being far away in Yan City, and with so much work on her hands, Su Wensong did not trouble her with these matters.

Now, however, it seemed like a good time to bring it up for discussion.

"Mr. Lin is already aware of what happened before. The Old Food Factory has been seeking reform, hoping to revitalize itself through shareholding reform. However, its prospects were not seen favorably by anyone, and after the fuss last year, it just fizzled out. Later on, I heard that the Old Food Factory wanted to adjust its food processing structure. I didn't quite see how they adjusted specifically, but I made a point to inquire about it recently. The so-called adjustments were merely tweaks to the original food formula and industry structure, barely any different from before. As for the outcomes of these adjustments, as we can see now, there's no difference from before."

"Pfft—"

Wang Cheng couldn't help but laugh at this point.

"I say, the Old Food Factory is just flailing about in vain. With the market opening up, it's bound to weed out some industries. Not to mention others, I myself haven't eaten anything from the Old Food Factory for many years. The taste is mediocre, the prices high, and even without Xiyang Food Factory, the Old Food Factory would have been doomed to bankruptcy eventually."

As early as the year before last, he had seen the biggest change brought about by market liberalization: under competition, only the fittest survive.

Su Wensong nodded in agreement.

"In summary, after the failed reform of the Old Food Factory, there were several other attempts at different plans internally, none of which were effective. Liu Guoyi had his fair share of trials when he was at the food factory. After Ji Xingwei took over, he probably aimed to stabilize the situation at the Old Food Factory. The county stepped in and had the bank loan them some money. Over the past two years, our Xiyang has been pressing them hard, and I'm afraid they are at the end of their rope. I've heard internal news that they might be planning to liquidate their assets."

If they've come to the step of liquidating their assets, bankruptcy is not far off.

I originally thought that the vegetable stand would be the first to decline, but I did not expect the Old Food Factory to go down even sooner.

Lin Chuxia couldn't help thinking about last year when County Magistrate Bai personally approached her to discuss the Old Food Factory's shareholding reform. By that time, the situation at the Old Food Factory must have already been grim, having reached the point where change was unavoidable.

Yet, she turned down the matter, and looking over the whole of An City, there was no one else with the capability or financial strength to support this cause.

Or perhaps, those people had already seen through the true nature of the Old Food Factory and were not willing to take the risk.

No matter what, the Old Food Factory still went bankrupt.

"Bai County approaching me is probably for this reason," Lin Chuxia had a hunch, "Wensong, come with me to the county government tomorrow."

"Okay."

A flash of understanding swept through Su Wensong's eyes, and he responded with a smile.

Lin Chuxia then remembered her good friend, "How is Lanlan doing? I heard she went back to work at the Bun Shop? Can Granny Su manage on her own with the child at her age?"

Speaking of his grandmother and wife, Su Wensong also showed a look of helplessness.

His wife had been keen on returning to the Bun Shop, wanting to get back to work after childbirth.

It was only after much persuasion from him and his mother-in-law, saying resting more postpartum was beneficial for her health, that she agreed to complete a full month and a half of confinement.

Nevertheless, as soon as that period ended, she was restless, constantly running off to the Bun Shop.

Luckily, the Bun Shop was just in the annex of their home.

He thought if one day they couldn't keep up with caring for the child, his wife would no longer be able to manage the Bun Shop and would focus on childcare instead.

However, Granny Su cherished her great-grandson deeply, looking after him without taking her eyes off him, handling everything methodically. Except for nursing, which required his wife's personal involvement, his wife hardly needed to lift a finger for anything else.

This allowed his wife to fully immerse herself in work even more.

He remembered advising Granny Su last time – at her age, looking after a child was demanding, and his current salary was more than enough to cover family expenses. It might be better to let his wife take care of the child for now.

He felt this kind of talk had no effect on his wife, but surely Granny Su would find it convincing.

After all, the daughter-in-law is filial, and if she knew Granny was struggling to take care of the child, she certainly wouldn't leave the child entirely with Granny.

Then Granny got anxious, asking him if he was displeased with her for being old, not wanting her to touch the child?

She even said that if they wanted her to live a few more years, they should let her take care of the child; watching over her great-grandson would make her eat an extra two bowls of rice.

If they wouldn't let her take care of the child, it would be better to send her straight to meet Grandpa.

Speaking so heavily, he didn't dare to bring up the matter again.

Now that he had left it to them, Granny took care of the child and was happy every day, and his daughter-in-law managed the Bun Shop, bustling and not without joy.

The next day, Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong went to the county government together.

County Magistrate Bai was in a regular meeting, but when he heard that Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong had arrived, he immediately ended the meeting.

Seeing Lin Chuxia bring Su Wensong with her, a trace of amusement flickered in his eyes.

"Lin, I have been waiting for you so eagerly, how is it going, did you get everything sorted out in the city?"

County Magistrate Bai had his secretary make tea for them and took a sip from his own cup.

"Not bad, the market there has finally gotten on the right track."

"This young lady, you really make me look at women with new respect, the saying 'women hold up half the sky' almost seems lacking with you, Lin Chuxia—it's like you could puncture the sky."

County Magistrate Bai chuckled, but as he saw Lin Chuxia's spirited and assertive demeanor, he could barely reconcile it with the image of the simple and unadorned daughter-in-law in homespun from before.

In his position, of course, he met plenty of people.

Before the reform and opening up, as a servant of the people, he carried forward the tradition of hard work and simplicity, and the people around him were also low-profile in their behavior and work.

After the opening up, especially in the last two years, privately-owned businesses emerged like bamboo shoots after a rain, and he had seen a few newly rich as well.

It could be said that Lin Chuxia's cleverness lies in knowing when to appear before others, in what identity and demeanor.

Originally, when she was struggling alone, snatching food from the mouth of state-owned enterprises, she naturally needed to be low-key and simplistic.

He still remembered when she faced the provocations from Ancheng Food Factory, standing before him, neither humble nor arrogant, her every word clear and resonant.

At that time, she was clad in plain cotton clothes, her hair neatly combed back behind her head, just like the girl next door.

At first glimpse, one couldn't help but feel compassion.

Seeing her thin shoulders bearing the hopes of hundreds, not fearing power and obstructions, he involuntarily wanted to stand up for justice on her behalf.

Now she was dressed in a sharp business suit, her hair in large waves, her lips in bold red, and her feet in high-heeled shoes.

In both attire and aura, she yielded to no one.

She was here to discuss the Old Food Factory with him on equal footing.

County Magistrate Bai internally shook his head and chuckled; no matter what he was thinking, this woman probably wouldn't suffer any loss.

Lin Chuxia was indifferent to County Magistrate Bai's teasing.

County Magistrate Bai was now in his mid-forties and was old enough to be her father in terms of age.

After exchanging a few polite greetings, they got down to business.

Chapter 492: Not Yielding an Inch

County Magistrate Bai took the lead in bringing up the issue of Ancheng Food Factory, and based on the information previously disclosed by Lin Chuxia, the main topic of discussion was still the resettlement of over a thousand employees of the factory.

As long as this matter could be properly resolved, other aspects were negotiable.

Today, before coming here, Lin Chuxia had already discussed this matter with Su Wensong, and she had made her mind up, having been on the same page with Su Wensong.

Su Wensong had no objections to her decision, and now Lin Chuxia spoke directly about her thoughts.

"I understand the intention of County Magistrate Bai, but as you are also aware of Xiyang Food Factory's situation, Xiyang has been established for merely two years, with only over three hundred employees. To expect Xiyang to take on the livelihood and production responsibilities of over a thousand more employees is absolutely impossible. It's not that I don't want to help—it's really beyond our capabilities," she said.

County Magistrate Bai flashed a slight smile and said, "Lin, if you say your capabilities are limited, you are underestimating yourself. You know what I value isn't Xiyang Food Factory."

"County Magistrate Bai, you think too highly of me," replied Lin Chuxia.

For a moment, the office fell silent, only the sound of the teacup lid touching the cup could be heard.

Lin Chuxia sipped her tea gently without any rush to make a statement, while County Magistrate Bai seemed to be lost in thought.

After a while, County Magistrate Bai said, "Don't hesitate to speak your mind. You young people always have more ideas. You know my purpose. As long as we can resettle these thousand-plus employees, the county is willing to make concessions on other conditions."

"County Magistrate Bai, asking me to resettle these thousand-plus workers is like giving me an impossible problem to solve."

Lin Chuxia stood her ground firmly.

What a joke, she was all too aware of what those state-owned enterprise employees were like. She was Lin Chuxia with a kind heart, not the Virgin Mary.

Wouldn't it be better to use the money to serve more people in need than to support these parasites?

Moreover, while County Magistrate Bai kept emphasizing the issue of resettling the thousand-plus workers, she had yet to see any specific benefits.

With the conversation reaching this point, County Magistrate Bai understood Lin Chuxia wasn't going to leap without seeing the rabbit.

Taking a deep breath, he said, "The County Committee and the leadership of Ancheng Food Factory have already consulted. We prioritize addressing the staff resettlement issue of the factory. We were actually

more inclined to integrate Ancheng Food Factory into Xiyang Food Factory, with all of Ancheng Food Factory's assets being used in exchange for the resettlement of its employees. The management rights of Ancheng Food Factory would also be transferred to Xiyang, while other aspects would still remain in the hands of the County Committee. This is also to take responsibility for these thousand-plus employees."

Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong exchanged glances, as this outcome was within their expectations.

But...

"County Magistrate Bai, I know that the county leaders are also considering the workers' best interests, and the workers of Ancheng Food Factory are fortunate to have a leader like you. However, every issue has two sides. I also want to relieve the government from a tight spot, and you know my situation as well, with shallow roots and little experience. If we were to take on all these thousand-plus employees, in the end, we might fail to solve their problems, and even Xiyang's few hundred employees might end up in jeopardy. I don't suppose that's what the leaders would like to see either. I've been thinking about this issue since our last meeting in the city, trying to find a solution that not only addresses the government's urgent needs but also doesn't affect Xiyang's current production. Ideally, we could achieve a win-win situation that could also contribute to our hometown's tax revenue..."

County Magistrate Bai nodded, a hint of amusement flashing in his eyes, and said, "If only all our private enterprises had your level of awareness, Lin. Go ahead, since you have plans too, let's lay them out. Whether it's feasible or not, let's work together to find a solution."

"Right, it's like this, we can consolidate the assets as suggested by the county leaders, but as for the employees, it's definite that we can't take on a thousand-plus..."

After nearly two hours of negotiations, they finally reached a preliminary consensus.

The assets of Ancheng Food Factory would be transferred to Xiyang, along with the management rights, while Xiyang would be responsible for conditionally integrating Ancheng Food Factory's employees.

Employees under fifty years old for men, and under forty years old for women, could participate in the assessment of the reorganized food factory's workforce. Those who meet the assessment criteria would become official employees of the Food Factory.

The next steps would involve negotiations between County Magistrate Bai and Ancheng Food Factory, as well as scheduling the upcoming meetings between the two sides.

Lin Chuxia knew that Ancheng Food Factory was about to experience some significant disruption.

Even if a portion of the employees were to be integrated, there would certainly be various complaints from those who were not resettled, and even among eligible employees, there would be dissatisfaction due to the assessment system hanging over their heads like a guillotine.

Of course, that was a worry for the county leaders and the management of Ancheng Food Factory.

She was just waiting to handle the handover procedures.

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Lin Chuxia was right; as soon as the workers of Ancheng Food Factory heard the news, they were all incensed.

Ancheng Food Factory had been a longstanding establishment of Ancheng County with generations of families working there.

Now, men over fifty and women over forty who were not yet of retirement age were facing elimination.

"Does this mean we older ones are retiring early?" someone curiously asked.

"What are you thinking, Old Sun? They're just saying that we're too old and not as effective as the young workers. They don't want us. We're going to be laid off."

"Laid off? Then we'll have no income at all? How are we going to live? Is the government going to abandon us?"

"Don't even talk about those of us who've reached a certain age. Even those of us who haven't need to take some exam. I never had to take any test when I took over my father's job at the Food Factory. Who knows what they're going to test? I think Xiyang Food just remembers the grudge from two years ago; they just don't want to deal with us factory workers."

Thinking of the past feud with Xiyang Food Factory, the people of Ancheng Food Factory had vivid recollections. Who would have known after all that turmoil, Xiyang emerged unaffected, leaving themselves with such a problem.

"We can't just accept this. Handing us over to Xiyang is like giving them free rein to manipulate us."

"Right, we can't just accept this. Xiyang has bad intentions. I remember that woman; they say women are petty, and she's holding on to past events, wanting us to beg for a living like dogs before her."

"That's true. Let's go talk to the leaders. We can't just let them slaughter us."

In the midst of the crowd, someone weakly said, "If we don't let them exploit us, well, we haven't been paid for nearly half a year. We've seen the situation in the factory. Even if we don't let Xiyang merge and take over, sooner or later the factory is going to close down. Then it won't just be the younger workers who are integrated into Xiyang, but all the factory workers will be laid off..."

Chapter 493: The Lucky Star of Qin Family Village

"I heard that the treatment at Xiyang Food Factory is really good, the basic salary is 50 yuan a month, and if you work well, there are bonuses. There's also overtime pay. I have a distant cousin working at Xiyang Food Factory. Last month, their factory had increased sales in the south, and they worked overtime for half a month. Although it was tiring, the total salary, overtime, and bonuses all added up to more than a hundred, matching the salary of a cadre."

"Moreover, I heard that Xiyang Food Factory doesn't easily hire people, and they primarily recruit from Qin Family Village. It's not easy for outsiders like us to get a job there."

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The crowd fell quiet for a moment, and then someone suggested, "Then we also need to clarify things; we can't be sheep led to the slaughter."

"Right, we must find out clearly. We're older, but with age comes rich work experience. Why shouldn't they hire us?"

"Let's go and ask."

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Lin Chuxia is not concerned about any disputes among the workers at Ancheng Food Factory. Right now, she is sitting in the large office of Qin Family Village, listening to Village Chief Qin and a group of village cadres discuss development issues in Qin Family Village.

In the past few years, Qin Family Village has developed quite a few industries, including profitable chicken farms and pig farms, which led the villagers to consider using this money for meaningful communal projects.

The first thought was to build roads.

As the saying goes, if you want to be rich, build roads first.

Although Qin Family Village is favorably located and is actually a well-off urban village, it is still a village.

Currently, the development in Ancity County is just so-so. The three main roads are all small asphalt roads leading to various villages.

The village plans to connect these roads.

Moreover, with the vegetable market at the entrance of Qin Family Village taking on the scale of a wholesale market, with people and vehicles coming and going, a decent road is necessary.

Especially after a rain in summer, it's really not easy to walk.

Village Chief Qin specifically called Lin Chuxia over not to involve her in the road construction project but for something else.

"When Technician He left, he mentioned the autumn greenhouse vegetables. Now the hot season is almost over. The village held a meeting and counted that quite a few people are eager to grow autumn greenhouse vegetables. Currently, the situation is that the greenhouses built in the spring can still be used after a bit of cleanup, without much investment needed. However, many people initially built the greenhouses in partnership with others, and by autumn, they want to have their own, some families even want two. Although the greenhouses from spring made a bit of money, building new ones is still a bit strenuous."

Lin Chuxia nodded; she understood the situation without needing Village Chief Qin to elaborate.

Initially, the spring greenhouses were something she supported everyone in building. Contracts were signed, and when the greenhouses started earning money, a portion was used to repay the capital invested.

Lin Chuxia's side had already tabulated that the investment in the spring greenhouses had gradually been recouped after the greenhouse vegetables hit the market.

Whether it was the investment in the greenhouses or the credit at the agricultural store, the villagers of Qin Family Village conscientiously repaid bit by bit according to the initial agreement.

Especially the vegetable greenhouses area, Lin Chuxia initially didn't intend to make a profit from this, but to her surprise, not only did the Qin Family Village's vegetable greenhouses develop smoothly, but the sales were also strong.

As a result, adhering to the initial contract not only made the villagers a small profit, but Lin Chuxia also earned revenue from the vegetable station.

The money from the vegetable station was accounted for by Wang Cheng and given to her. Recently, Lin Chuxia bought a house in Rong City with this money.

"Originally I thought that, in the autumn when we build greenhouses, the village could support part of it. But after doing the calculations, if we support the villagers, there won't be enough money to build the roads," Village Chief Qin was a bit embarrassed to broach the subject of seeking investments.

Lin Chuxia straightforwardly said, "Building roads is important, Uncle Qin, you tell the villagers, the policy for the autumn greenhouses will be the same as the spring greenhouses. Xiyang can support everyone, still according to the spring contract. Those who are interested can go and sign the contract with Wang Cheng."

Village Chief Qin slapped his thigh immediately, "Okay, I'll go back and tell the villagers right away. Lin, you are truly the lucky star of our Qin Family Village."

"Uncle Qin, you're too kind, this is all part of my duty," Lin Chuxia saw that the village didn't bring up other matters, so she took the initiative to bring up another topic, "Additionally, Uncle Qin, about the market at the entrance of our village, I'd like to consult with the village about managing it more formally, what do you think?"

It's not that the village chief didn't want to mention it, but initially when Lin Chuxia's people built the vegetable station at the village entrance, it was to facilitate the villagers in selling their vegetables. Whether it's the vegetable station at the village entrance or the market that has developed from it, both can be credited to Lin Chuxia's people.

Now hearing Lin Chuxia mentioning this, the village chief's eyes also brightened, glanced at the person next to her, then said, "Go ahead."

Lin Chuxia brought Wang Cheng today, regarding the market management, Wang Cheng drafted a constitution the other day, and had shown it to Lin Chuxia before coming, who felt there was no issue.

She didn't beat around the bush and let Wang Cheng speak directly.

Wang Cheng first handed the prepared materials to the village chief, while explaining to the others, "Our village entrance sees a significant daily flow of people, and the wholesale market has reached a substantial scale. We are asking the village to send people to assist in managing the market order and also to establish a paid service for the previous sanitation issues, and to collect market management

fees. Of course, this fee applies only to outsiders. For our villagers of Qin Family Village, whether buying or selling vegetables, all fees are waived. Additionally, regarding the use of the management fees, aside from being used for the wholesale market-management, the remaining revenue will let Qin Family Village keep 50%."

With Wang Cheng's words, not only the village chief but also the other village cadres sat up straighter.

They, being market farmers themselves, of course knew about the practice of paying management fees when selling vegetables at markets.

Whether at a fair or in the county's night market, a management fee is always a steady income.

If their Qin Family Village wholesale market also standardized the collection of fees, then wouldn't the village have an additional source of income?

Now, the daily influx of people buying and selling vegetables at their village entrance isn't small. If they really started to collect management fees...

"Lin, if we really start collecting fees, won't they stop coming to our village to sell vegetables?"

After the village chief spoke, the others also looked over.

Lin Chuxia smiled and said, "There will definitely be such cases, but I don't think this will stop the development of Qin Family Village's vegetable wholesale market. We have the resources, Brother Wang can contact trucks to buy vegetables. As long as the vegetables have good sales channels, there's no worry about no one coming, and once there are more people selling vegetables, those looking to make a profit by reselling won't be few."

Village Chief finally laughed, "Alright, we'll listen to you this time."

"Since Uncle Qin is listening to us, the village needs to give full support to the wholesale market. First of all, just like Uncle Qin said about the road, the market area must be prioritized, and there's also the lighting issue, the market needs to be equipped with lighting fixtures. Additionally, depending on the

situation, whether the land needs to be expanded, and when there are more people, it's best to build a row of simple rooms next to the market to rent out as snack stalls..."

Chapter 494: Qin Family Village Vegetable Market

Lin Chuxia spoke more, and the Village Chief's eyes shone brighter, "Alright, alright, we'll listen to you. Whatever you say, the village will follow suit."

Village Chief Qin already envisioned the scene; if the Qin Family Village Vegetable Market really developed to that extent, would the village still need to put in money? 50% of the income going to the village, that's a solid profit for the village.

Not only that, maintaining order, cleaning up the market garbage, all would be done by people from Qin Family Village, arranging yet more jobs and wages for many.

Before even finishing the whole discussion, the village cadres were already so happy they couldn't stop grinning.

"By that time, we'll also rebuild the few warehouses at the vegetable station, and construct a few more buildings nearby to use as offices," Village Chief Qin had everything planned before Lin Chuxia could say more.

"Don't worry about the space, the land at the village entrance originally wasn't in demand, that whole area is still village property. If it comes to it, we can reallocate the land, keeping that whole area reserved."

"Uncle Qin, there's no need for reallocation of land. The villagers have all built new greenhouses on their plots."

Lin Chuxia couldn't help but interject, prompting laughter from everyone.

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When she returned home in the evening, Zhang Guilan also heard about the An City Food Factory.

During dinner, she prodded Lin Chuxia with questions, "Does this mean the An City Food Factory is going to be yours in the future?"

She looked proud and somewhat mocking, "I really want to see the look on Liu Guoyi's face when he hears this news. To say that demoting him was letting him off easy back then, we should have let him watch An City Food Factory decline step by step, come begging to us himself, and we might not even agree. Acting all high and mighty without the ability, pah!"

Little Zhuangzhuang lifted his small face, blinking his innocent big eyes, "Mommy, you spat into my bowl."

Qin Han directly took Little Zhuangzhuang's bowl for himself, "That's your mom, what's wrong with her spitting into your bowl? You used to pick food out of your mom's mouth when you were little. Give it here, I don't mind; this bowl is for you."

Little Zhuangzhuang eyed the large bowl placed back in front of him by his dad, still seeing the traces of his dad having eaten from it. He pursed his lips, then took back his own smaller bowl, "Actually, I don't mind Mommy either."

"Good boy, that's the way," Qin Han praised and chuckled as he took his own bowl back.

Zhang Guilan ignored the father-son duo and continued talking with Lin Chuxia, "When are you going to take over An City Food Factory? Do they have to change the name after that? Should it be called Xiyang Food Company too? No, that won't do, they can't be the same. Maybe it should be called the branch office of Xiyang Food Company, it still has to be associated with our food company."

She chuckled to herself, "I've always said, a company is more impressive than a factory, see, I wasn't wrong, was I? If I wasn't still confined for postpartum recovery and could leave the house, I'd really like to go see."

"Sister-in-law, it's not about taking over An City Food Factory, the county simply granted me the management rights and part of the assets of the factory. As for what it will be called, that's still up for discussion in the next step. These things don't happen overnight. If you're interested, once you're out of confinement, you can visit the new factory."

Lin Chuxia did want to take over, but she indeed didn't have the capacity for it right now.

County Magistrate Bai was aware of her capabilities, and the current proposal was indeed the most beneficial for both parties.

It remained to be seen whether the employees would appreciate the leadership's actions by the county.

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Once the village's plans were in place, implementation followed swiftly.

The development of Qin Family Village Vegetable Market was made the top priority by the village.

Previously, the vegetable station and market served only Qin Family Village. Even if villagers from other places came to sell or buy vegetables, it was considered personal dealings.

Now, Qin Family Village planned to regulate the wholesale market and ensure all the procedures were thorough and in order.

The next day, Village Chief Qin, accompanied by Wang Cheng, went to the town to apply for the necessary procedures for the Qin Family Village Vegetable Wholesale Market.

Bulldozers, tractors, and other equipment were busy for two days, and the whole wholesale market had been completely transformed.

Electricians had wired the market and installed a sufficient number of lights at the four corners.

Previously, bricks and wood had also been gathered next to the warehouse, in preparation for building a house.

Once the procedures for the wholesale market were in place, Village Chief Qin excitedly went to find Lin Chuxia.

"Chuxia, do you have time the day after tomorrow? I've checked the calendar, and it's a good day. Now that we've got all the procedures sorted out, I'm thinking we have to create some buzz, let the people in all the surrounding villages know about our Qin Family Village Vegetable Market. We'll hire a drum band to play all day, and invite the county's projectionist to show movies here for a few days. What do you think?"

"Sure, Uncle Qin, I have time. You've really thought of everything. This way, our Qin Family Village Vegetable Market will be well and truly on the map, and its reputation will significantly increase," Lin Chuxia agreed wholeheartedly.

With Lin Chuxia's endorsement, Village Chief Qin felt the kind of pride one feels getting praised by a teacher in school or by the boss at work.

Even though Lin Chuxia was about his daughter's age, Village Chief Qin just loved hearing her praise.

"Then I'll speak to the town and see if the mayor has time to come over. We'll have a ribbon-cutting ceremony or something. That's all the rage now, isn't it? Chuxia, you'll have to be part of the ribbon-cutting too. Our Qin Family Village's development owes a lot to you—you've played a major role."

"Okay, I'll let Wang Cheng prepare a bit on his part, so we can make the event festive and lively."

Not only did they want the event to be lively on the day, but Lin Chuxia had also asked Wang Cheng to do some promotion.

Actually, ever since the construction work for the wholesale market began, the people of Qin Family Village hadn't kept it a secret when asked.

The regular vegetable sellers to Qin Family Village had known for a while that the village was going to formally establish a vegetable wholesale market.

Now that the date for the market opening was set, in just a couple of days, almost everyone in the neighboring villages knew about it.

On the day of the market opening, Qin Family Village was surrounded by people as early as possible.

The auspicious time for the opening was set for 10:58 in the morning. The market was decorated with red and hung with colors, Wang Cheng had bought lots of firecrackers, and the drum band hired by the village chief started playing early in the morning, creating a lively atmosphere.

Village Chief Qin even gave the village school a day off, and the kids were running around the market, happier than during the New Year.

Lin Chuxia got up early and dressed up carefully.

Her attire was definitely formal: a white blouse with lace collar, khaki pants, and white high-heeled shoes.

She styled her hair in big waves, tying some of it back while the rest draped over her shoulders.

She also put on makeup for herself.

Zhang Guilan snuck out to take a look, and upon seeing Lin Chuxia's appearance, she couldn't stop praising how beautiful she looked.

Lin Chuxia spoke helplessly, "Sister-in-law, you should really go back inside. If Mom catches you sneaking out again, she'll scold you."

Zhang Guilan made a sour face, "It's too stuffy inside, and there's not even a breeze today. Why are you acting just like Mom?"

"Mom's just looking out for you," Lin Chuxia didn't see anything wrong with the older generation's customs.

After giving birth, women often have a severe deficit in vitality and blood, so it is good to be cautious about everything.

Chapter 495: Market Opening

Zhang Guilan didn't want to argue about this and glanced outside, whispering, "Sister-in-law, are you driving there?"

"Huh?"

"If you are driving, can you take me to have a look? It's such a big event in the village, it sounds very lively."

"Sister-in-law, please spare me, mom will scold me, no no, I'll walk there..."

Lin Chuxia hurriedly waved her hands, she didn't want to be scolded by her mother-in-law.

Zhang Guilan wanted to say something, but Little Zhuangzhuang ran in from outside.

"Little aunt, it's so lively at the east end of the village, so many people, lots of firecrackers, they even gave us candy just now, here's some candy for you."

A piece of hard candy was pushed into Lin Chuxia's hands, and it was then Little Zhuangzhuang noticed Zhang Guilan beside her, his eyes widened, "Mom, why are you also outside?"

Zhang Guilan looked at Lin Chuxia with even more grievance, "You see, the whole family went to enjoy the fun, leaving me alone at home."

"Mom, isn't sister still with you?" Little Zhuangzhuang chimed in, seeing his mother's stern look, he quickly handed another piece of candy, "Mom, have some candy, it's okay if you are alone at home, I'll watch the excitement for you and tell you about it, I heard there's also a movie tonight, I'll tell you about it after I watch it."

Zhang Guilan, "..."

I really thank you.

In the end, Lin Chuxia didn't take Zhang Guilan out, but she didn't have the heart to leave her alone at home either.

It was still early, and she took a detour to the market, first stopping at their family's agricultural supply store.

Since Zhang Guilan had given birth, Mrs. Qin needed to look after her confinement, and Qin Han was dutifully tending the store.

She told Qin Han about Zhang Guilan's situation, the car was at home, whether to take her out to join the fun, she left it to her brother.

Indeed, hearing the car was at home, Qin Han was tempted.

"Then, sister-in-law, can you mind the shop for me? I'll pick up your sister-in-law to check it out, she's been pent up these days."

"Sure, you go, I'll watch the store."

The shop was equipped with a telephone, Lin Chuxia figured Qin Yang should be back from his business trip by now, perfect timing to give her man a call.

Qin Han walked out happily, but just as he reached the doorway, he stepped back and asked in a low voice, "Mom's not home, right?"

Lin Chuxia, wearing a smile, "No, my eldest sister-in-law and aunt came early in the morning, took mom away, she's probably at the market watching the opera."

"Alright, I'll head back then."

Lin Chuxia watched Qin Han leave, then returned inside.

Mr. Qin wasn't at the store today either, vegetable wholesale market opened, villagers of Qin Family Village all put down their work to go to the market to enjoy the festivity, leaving the agricultural supply store unattended.

Lin Chuxia sat down by the telephone and dialed the number, soon a man's deep voice came through, "Who is it?"

"Qin Yang, it's me, did you come back from your trip?"

Hearing the man's voice, Lin Chuxia's eyes softened involuntarily.

"Chuxia," Qin Yang's voice also lifted a few tones, losing the earlier nonchalance, "I came back yesterday, when are you coming back? Is everything handled over there?"

Living alone previously didn't feel like much, but now, just the thought of being all alone at home made Qin Yang feel like something was missing.

Lin Chuxia knew Qin Yang missed her, "It might still take a while, things at Ancheng Food Factory are a bit complicated, there's also some issues here at Qin Family Village."

She pointed the phone towards the window, the agricultural supply store was also near the village entrance, not far from the vegetable wholesale market.

At that moment, the clanging and banging sounds from the market occasionally drifted over.

A moment later, Lin Chuxia asked, "Did you hear that?"

"Uh? It's a bit noisy, where are you calling from?"

Lin Chuxia didn't hold back, her voice filled with excitement, "Right in my big brother's agricultural supply store. Today our Qin Family Village has set up a vegetable wholesale market, right where the old market was. It's so lively in the village today, mom and dad are over at the market watching the excitement. Let me tell you, these past few days have been tough on sister-in-law. Just now, big brother sneakily went home to take sister-in-law out to enjoy the hustle and bustle. Big brother is really good to sister-in-law, just not sure who'll get scolded when mom finds out..."

Lin Chuxia was covering her mouth and giggling while she spoke.

Qin Yang was infected by her laughter, and his lips couldn't help but curl up, "I guess both of them will get scolded."

Lin Chuxia thought about that scene, her eyes curving, "Then in the future when we encounter such situations, you have to protect me, I don't want to get scolded."

"Don't worry, mom wouldn't bear to scold you."

...

After talking for a while, Lin Chuxia saw a jeep stop in front of the agricultural store and then hung up the phone.

Qin Han really did bring out Zhang Guilan, also carrying the little one.

Zhang Guilan didn't dare to get too close to the crowded areas, just sitting inside the jeep with the window rolled down, watching the bustle from a distance.

She was really about to burst with anticipation.

"Alright, sister-in-law, let me handle it, you go ahead with what you need to do."

Qin Han knew that today Lin Chuxia was still the main character and quickly took over her role.

Lin Chuxia saw that it was indeed about time.

When they arrived at the vegetable wholesale market, from afar they could already see the village chief smiling so widely his eyes disappeared.

Mayor Guo had arrived, currently listening to the village chief and Wang Cheng report about the vegetable wholesale market.

Upon seeing Lin Chuxia, the village chief hurriedly waved at her.

Mayor Guo and Lin Chuxia were old acquaintances, "These days, seeing Mr. Lin really isn't easy."

"Hello Mayor Guo," Lin Chuxia was the first to extend her hand.

After exchanging a few pleasantries, the village chief's reporting was about done. Seeing it was now 10:30, the opening ceremony officially began.

First, the village chief took the stage to give a speech.

Just as the village chief said a few words, a black Santana drove along from the faraway countryside road.

These days, cars were rare, Santana even more so.

Those who could ride in a Santana were usually leaders.

Lin Chuxia had already recognized that it was County Magistrate Bai's car, and to her surprise, County Magistrate Bai had also come.

To her knowledge, the village chief hadn't invited County Magistrate Bai.

It's not that the village chief didn't want to, but rather Qin Shusen himself thought being just a small village leader from Qin Family Village, he wasn't qualified to invite someone of the county chief's stature.

The village chief's speech was still ongoing, but Lin Chuxia along with the accountant and security chief stood up to welcome the guests.

The car stopped, and sure enough, it was County Magistrate Bai who got out.

He first glanced at Lin Chuxia, then looked over the newly established vegetable wholesale market and directly said to Lin Chuxia, "Did you stir this up again?"

Although Qin Ming and Sun Guodong, as village cadres, could exchange a few words with the Mayor of Guo Town, when it came to the county chief, they really couldn't converse much; they had hardly even met him before and could only accompany from behind.

Lin Chuxia responded with a genial smile, "It's not really stirring up, it's the trend of the times. The villagers of Qin Village have always lived off farming, and with the vegetable greenhouses, establishing a vegetable wholesale market is not only convenient for the villagers of Qin Village but also for the nearby folks."

Chapter 496: County Magistrate Bai Arrives

"You are indeed a doer," County Magistrate Bai hinted meaningfully, "Let's go and listen to Mr. Qin's speech. Mr. Qin is also quite the go-getter. An old hand like him meeting a young activist like you - Qin Family Village is truly blessed."

"I can't take the credit, it all depends on the village chief," Lin Chuxia said modestly, making a welcoming gesture.

Mayor Guo had already stood up over there.

With County Magistrate Bai arriving, he had to yield the seat of honor.

County Magistrate Bai, however, was not shy and took the seat again.

The village chief was still speaking; his few pages of speech indicated thoughtful preparation. His brief speech filled everyone with passion, and the applause from below was continuous.

Especially the villagers of Qin Family Village, each of them seemed as if they were invigorated with a shot of adrenaline.

County Magistrate Bai said with a smile to Mayor Guo, "Look, just look, Mr. Qin is really getting more and more capable. With a leader like Qin Family Village, Ancheng Town must make the most of it. The development of Qin Family Village is there for all the people of the county to see. We really need to create a few more villages like Qin Family Village."

Mayor Guo nodded in agreement, "Exactly, this year's advancement award undoubtedly belongs to Qin Family Village. At every village cadre meeting, I encourage everyone to learn from Qin Family Village. But they say that they too want to learn from Qin Family Village, yet they don't have a Lin Chuxia."

Both men's gazes fell on Lin Chuxia at the same time, and they smiled helplessly.

Especially County Magistrate Bai, not to mention Qin Family Village relying on Lin Chuxia, didn't he also rely on Lin Chuxia for what he wanted to accomplish?

"Next time they say that, you tell them to also cultivate a few leaders. If there's no Lin Chuxia, they can have a Zhang Chuxia or Li Chuxia."

Lin Chuxia, who had been silently listening: "..."

The village chief saw County Magistrate Bai below while giving his speech, and in his excitement, he nearly forgot his following lines.

In the past, it was always County Magistrate Bai speaking on stage, with them listening below. Today's occasion gave him the feeling of being highly esteemed by the county leadership.

The speech was followed by the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Lin Chuxia had already asked Wang Cheng to prepare again, adding County Magistrate Bai to the event.

"County Magistrate Bai, Mayor Guo, please."

Lin Chuxia personally guided both men on stage. Amidst the wave of applause and cheerful music from the audience, the Qin Family Village Vegetable Market ribbon-cutting ceremony was completed, and the Qin Family Village Vegetable Wholesale Market was officially established.

County Magistrate Bai had another meeting in the afternoon and had to leave after the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

He took Lin Chuxia aside, "The matter at Ancheng Food Factory has been basically settled, just currently dealing with employee assessments. Most of the staff are still very dissatisfied with this, of course, the county leadership will definitely support your work. It's just that the new leader has yet to appear, which makes the staff restless. See if you have time to come to the county in the next day or two, we should sit down and discuss the next steps, and then make another trip to Ancheng Food Factory."

"I was just thinking the same," Lin Chuxia didn't demur this time. Since he had decided to take over Ancheng Food Factory, he had to seriously consider his own interests, "Tomorrow, I will go there with Factory Director Su."

"Good, I'll wait for you in my office."

County Magistrate Bai was also very satisfied with Lin Chuxia's attitude.

After seeing off County Magistrate Bai, Lin Chuxia and the village cadres hosted several leaders from the town.

Besides the Vegetable Wholesale Market, they also discussed some other industries in the village, including the upcoming road construction project in Qin Family Village.

To the village chief and Lin Chuxia's surprise, the town provided additional funding to support the construction in Qin Family Village.

Although it wasn't much, it was enough to show the attitude of the town's leadership.

.....

The next day, Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong went together to the office of the County Magistrate.

County Magistrate Bai was already waiting in the office. Besides County Magistrate Bai, there were two comrades from the county government responsible for facilitating the integration of Ancheng Food Factory and Xiyang Food Factory.

Also present was Ji Xingwei, the director of Ancheng Food Factory.

Once everyone had arrived, County Magistrate Bai initiated the discussion about the specific plan for Ancheng Food Factory to be incorporated by Xiyang Food Factory.

The details did not deviate much from what had been previously mentioned to Lin Chuxia. Moving forward, Lin Chuxia would start to handover work with Ji Xingwei gradually, as well as to take stock of Ancheng Food Factory's property situation.

During today's meeting, Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong listened attentively, as it related to their personal interests, especially regarding the division of assets. Both parties unanimously agreed to sign the agreement.

Before that, Lin Chuxia had requested to inspect Ancheng Food Factory herself.

County Magistrate Bai naturally had no objections. Once the general details were set, it was already noon.

County Magistrate Bai arranged for everyone present to dine at the county government canteen and to head directly to Ancheng Food Factory in the afternoon.

The county government canteen's standards were quite good. Lin Chuxia took a plate and chose three dishes, one meat, one vegetable, and one cold dish, requesting one tael of rice.

After getting her food, she first went to find a seat, preparing to sit and wait for Su Wensong while eating.

Just as she sat down, someone approached from the opposite side.

Ji Xingwei, with a cheerful smile, put down his tray, "Can I sit here?"

The table was a long one seating four people. Lin Chuxia nodded, "Sure."

Only after Ji Xingwei sat down, he began to speak while picking up his chopsticks, "I didn't expect to see Mr. Lin again under these circumstances," he paused for a moment, glanced at Lin Chuxia with a smile, "Maybe Mr. Lin had foreseen this?"

Lin Chuxia focused on eating, swallowing the food in her mouth before speaking, "Yesterday, the vegetable wholesale market of Qin Family Village officially opened. The Qin Family Village Vegetable Market covers an area of more than twenty acres, accommodating up to five thousand people and hundreds of vehicles. Two weeks ago, I opened a clothing mall in Yan City, maintaining daily turnover in the four-digit range. Last month, Xiyang Food Factory entered the Southern Market, establishing an office in Rong City. Every two weeks, a batch of goods is sent to the south, with Rong City as the center, distributed outwards."

After finishing her speech, Lin Chuxia continued to eat, while Ji Xingwei already felt overwhelmingly ashamed.

It seemed like she was talking about unrelated topics, but Ji Xingwei understood every word, which were all responses to his earlier presumption about Mr. Lin foreseeing the situation.

She was telling him that in her eyes, Ancheng Food Factory was of no significance; she had never taken it seriously.

This woman was bold indeed, and truly had the capital to back it up.

The Southern Market, huh? He only knew that the food from Xiyang Food Factory indeed tasted better than that from Ancheng Food Factory, which was why it won the market, but in reality...

Ji Xingwei laughed quietly and did not continue to speak, bowing his head to eat earnestly.

What's there to say? It would only be self-humiliating.

Su Wensong brought over his food and saw Ji Xingwei sitting opposite Lin Chuxia, so he exchanged customary pleasantries with Ji Xingwei and naturally sat down next to Lin Chuxia with his tray.

After lunch, the group went directly to Ancheng Food Factory.

The county had always emphasized that the ownership belonged to the county itself. To put it plainly, all assets of Ancheng Food Factory, including the right to use the land, were to be transferred to Lin Chuxia, in exchange for resolving the employment issues of over a thousand workers from Ancheng Food Factory.

As for what Lin Chuxia would do with these assets and how she would manage them, the county gave her ample room to operate without interference.

Chapter 497: Meeting That Woman Lin Chuxia

Lin Chuxia was quite satisfied with the outcome, although she hadn't dared to think about acquiring the land as well.

First and foremost, she didn't have enough money on hand; even if Ancheng Food Factory was to be sold to her, she couldn't afford it.

The car entered Ancheng Food Factory, and Lin Chuxia was looking out the window the entire time.

To tell the truth, this was Lin Chuxia's first time entering Ancheng Food Factory, and it truly lived up to its reputation as an old factory. The area was large, more than three times the size of their Xiyang.

There were people coming and going in the factory area, and despite the factory undergoing major changes, production had not stopped.

Seeing several small cars drive in, some employees paused to watch.

When the car stopped in front of the factory director's office, other leaders from the factory also came over.

Factory Director Ji gave a brief introduction, and the group proceeded to enter a workshop.

Meanwhile, the workers who had heard the news were getting restless.

Especially some who had been to Xiyang Food Factory to cause trouble before; they recognized Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong.

Seeing them together with the factory director and the county leaders, the rumors they had heard all matched up.

They couldn't concentrate on their work, and in groups of threes and fives, they began to talk.

"Did you see that? Our food factory is really going to be acquired by Xiyang. Doesn't this mean we, the old employees, are really going to be unemployed?"

"I don't think it's that simple. First the older ones, and the young people will need to be assessed. We are now like fish on a chopping board, totally at their mercy."

"What else can we do if we're not at their mercy? We've caused a fuss these days, and what has come of it?"

"No, we still have to talk to the leaders about this. It was different a few days ago; it wasn't Lin Chuxia. We didn't know how Lin Chuxia and her team thought, but since they've come to our food factory today, we need to talk to the leaders and make things clear. Even if they lay us off, we need to understand why clearly."

"Right, let's go ask the leaders and get some clarity."

"Let's go and meet with that woman, Lin Chuxia."

.....

Lin Chuxia and the others had just visited a few workshops when a commotion started outside.

Soon, the factory official approached County Magistrate Bai and apologized, "The factory workers heard that the county leaders and the leaders from Xiyang Food Factory had come, and they all want to meet with the leaders."

Hearing this, Ji Xingwei also spoke, "The factory had conveyed the county's intentions previously regarding the arrangement of male workers over fifty and female workers over forty. These employees have always been conservative and did not react too strongly to the factory's decision. However, since it relates to their future livelihood, I think they would like a clear explanation from the leaders."

County Magistrate Bai turned to Lin Chuxia, "Lin, regarding this issue, should we speak to everyone about it today?"

By now she had also seen the situation in the factory.

As for the asset liquidation issue, the state's assets were accounted for, and Lin Chuxia had seen Ancheng Food Factory's files a few days ago and had a plan in mind.

She nodded, "Then let's organize the workers; it's indeed time to talk."

She was well-prepared for it.

And time was limited; these issues would have to be resolved sooner or later.

Lin Chuxia disliked dragging things out; resolving them a day earlier would allow her to return to the city a day earlier.

Quickly, the factory gathered the workers in the auditorium, and some representatives stood at the front, ready to speak and ask questions at any time.

Ji Xingwei first introduced Lin Chuxia and Su Wensong. The rest he had already explained to the workers. Now the session was handed over to the workers and the leaders from Xiyang.

Lin Chuxia took the stage directly.

The auditorium of Ancheng Food Factory was not small, but at this moment, nearly all the factory workers were gathered here, creating a dark and oppressive mass. Coupled with the hot weather, it felt somewhat stifling.

Lin Chuxia scanned the employees present and wasn't fazed by the atmosphere.

Her voice was calm, and she used the PA system, trying to ensure every worker present could hear clearly.

She first repeated the county's decision, but some in the audience, impatient, shouted loudly, "We don't want to hear this, Mr. Lin. We already know this. What we want to know is, does Xiyang really not want the old employees? Is it Mr. Lin's decision or the county's decision? And what about the evaluation? Will it be conducted by Xiyang?"

"Right, what are the criteria for this assessment? Don't talk it up, and then it turns out that Xiyang doesn't actually want any of our factory workers, filtering us all out. If that's the case, what's the point of the assessment? Just tell us to leave."

"That's right, if it's the county's assessment, we support it. If Xiyang is doing the assessment, who knows if they will hold grudges? We must clarify this today in front of the county leaders."

.....

Lin Chuxia didn't rush to interrupt them, allowing everyone to express themselves before continuing.

"In principle, male workers above fifty and female workers above forty cannot participate in the assessment. This is not only a decision of Xiyang Food Factory but also the county's. And the assessment will be conducted by staff from Xiyang Food Factory..."

Lin Chuxia had barely finished speaking when the auditorium erupted.

Ji Xingwei quickly took the microphone and repeated several times "Silence, let Mr. Lin finish," until the crowd gradually calmed down.

You could even hear some people whispering complaints, "What's the point of listening, the result is the same no matter how much we listen; might as well let everyone leave."

Lin Chuxia didn't overlook these comments, "If everyone is willing to voluntarily leave and give their opportunity to someone else, we certainly welcome that."

The face of the person who spoke stiffened.

Lin Chuxia continued, "Everyone is aware that Xiyang Food Factory is just a private enterprise. It hasn't been in operation for long and lacks experience, thus it cannot incorporate over a thousand employees from Ancheng Food Factory. The county leaders and Ancheng Food Factory officials are aware of this situation, and I think everyone present understands this logic. If Ancheng Food Factory wants to continue to develop, it can only rely on reform, and the involvement of Xiyang is part of that reform. I hope that in the coming days, we will learn together, make progress together, and restore Ancheng Food Factory to its historical position. This requires our joint efforts."

She paused, "I've heard some say they're afraid Xiyang Food Factory will bear grudges. I don't understand what grudge you're speaking of. I believe I've always acted fairly and with integrity. The coming assessments will also follow the standards used for Xiyang Food Factory's employees. Everyone is free to inquire about what those standards are. Ancheng isn't so big, and it shouldn't be hard to find out such information."

"Mr. Lin, how many employees does Xiyang actually want to take on?"

"Yeah, Mr. Lin, could you give us a rough number, so we have an idea?"

Some people shouted from below.

Lin Chuxia answered, "After screening by age and the assessment, all employees who pass will become official employees of Xiyang. Of course..."

Chapter 498: Defeated and Convinced

Lin Chuxia's tone shifted again, "Don't think that everything will be smooth sailing after the assessment. As you know, I started as an individual business owner and naturally, my management differs from the old system of Ancheng Food Factory. In my eyes, hard work pays off, and those who are capable should be heavily relied upon. I believe you don't want to be mediocre, so let me see your abilities. If it turns out you are all just incompetents who could drive the factory into the ground, this place is not a dump."

Her gaze was clear and resolute, "For those who stay on as employees, I don't care how you worked at Ancheng Food Factory before. In the first month, everyone will be paid according to Xiyang Food Factory's wage standards, with a basic salary of fifty yuan. Afterwards, pay will be adjusted according to

individual capabilities. If you claim to have been outstanding in the Old Food Factory and had a high salary, then you need to show me. Isn't that reasonable?"

After she finished, there was a moment of silence in the auditorium, followed by someone in the crowd shouting loudly, "I agree, that's exactly right."

"Right, I support this."

"Mr. Lin, I was just an intern at Ancheng Food Factory and haven't been made permanent. Does this mean I could become a permanent employee after passing Xiyang's assessment? And if I do well, I can even get a raise?"

Lin Chuxia nodded, "That's right, everyone will start from the same starting line. I only look at capability and performance."

After Lin Chuxia's speech, the workers of Ancheng Food Factory were somewhat excited.

Before, they were certain that being absorbed by Xiyang Food Company, they would face discrimination and had even thought about differences in work or wages.

Lin Chuxia's opening remarks affirmed their suspicions, and they thought as long as they had a job that paid, it was better than being unemployed, but her later words ignited hope in them.

The basic salary was fifty yuan. How many years had it been since their wages increased in the Old Food Factory?

In recent years with fast economic growth, salaries had increased to different extents in various organizations and factories, but at Ancheng Food Factory, timely salary payment was a luxury, let alone wage increases.

So, most of them were earning less than forty yuan.

Now, with an immediate increase of over ten yuan, and potentially more to come with good performance, there really would be bonuses.

Each one of them had bright eyes.

Who wouldn't want to work well? But previously, salary increases depended on seniority and connections.

Otherwise, it didn't matter how much or little you worked, or how well or poorly you performed. As long as no major mistakes were made, you simply had to endure and wait for your time.

But who was content just grinding away day after day?

Now given a chance where one could earn more solely based on their ability, who wouldn't want that?

"Mr. Lin, I'm willing to work under you. When is the assessment?"

"Right, Mr. Lin, we support the integration and reform."

"Yes, I can't wait now."

...

Young workers were eager to try, and the older employees were not willing to be left behind.

"Since Mr. Lin has set up an assessment, why can't we older folks take part in it? I don't think I'm any worse than the younger ones."

"Yes, Mr. Lin, we've worked at Ancheng Food Factory all our lives, we have rich experience, don't underestimate us in tests."

"Mr. Lin, I can step down, but my son just graduated high school this year, can he take part in Xiyang Food Factory's employee assessment?"

...

Lin Chuxia smiled slightly, waited until everyone had said their piece, and then spoke, "As I mentioned earlier, considering the current capabilities of Xiyang Food Factory and the situation at Ancheng Food Factory, we can't take in so many employees at once, which is why we have age-based assessments. I know this issue of age weighs on many, and there's a sense of unfairness. And I admit, although some may be older, their ability might not be weak, but this is the reality, and it's beyond my control, I hope you all can understand, but..."

Lin Chuxia looked at the few older workers who had the most concerns, "Let me assure you all, once the factory's workflow stabilizes and we have a need, our food factory will recruit further. Whoever is capable will be considered, as long as you pass the assessment, you could become a member of the food factory. Also, if there are young adults in your households wanting to work at the food factory, they will be given priority as long as they pass the assessment."

"Mr. Lin, you must keep your word."

As soon as Lin Chuxia finished speaking, someone voiced their concern.

"Yes, Mr. Lin, I heard that Xiyang Food Factory prioritizes the villagers of Qin Family Village. Just as Mr. Lin said, if we're recruiting again and we encounter candidates from Qin Family Village, who will be prioritized, us or them?"

While the workers at Ancheng Food Factory used to look down upon Xiyang Food Factory as a private enterprise, saying is one thing and thinking another.

Employees at Xiyang Food Factory get their salaries every month, get bonuses for good performance, and overtime pay.

Though a private enterprise doesn't sound as secure as their iron rice bowls, an iron rice bowl that doesn't yield a salary isn't worth much.

Isn't it said that a cat, whether black or white, that catches mice is a good cat?

While they claimed to look down on the people of Xiyang Food Factory, they actually couldn't wait to be a part of it.

They dislike the priority given to Qin Family Village's villagers but covet their benefits.

People tend to act in their own interest.

As soon as that person finished speaking, everyone else expectantly looked towards Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia smiled and said, "You all know, I am a villager from Qin Family Village, naturally I will favor my own people, but from now on, since Ancheng Food Factory will be under Xiyang Food Company, behind closed doors we're also family, just like the flesh on palms and the back of the hand, all treated the same."

As Lin Chuxia finished, there was enthusiastic applause from the audience.

"Mr. Lin speaks well, from now on we'll listen to Mr. Lin."

.....

County Magistrate Bai and Ji Xingwei hadn't anticipated that Lin Chuxia would be able to win over the workers of Ancheng Food Factory so quickly.

They, too, had done considerable groundwork with the workers before, but none of their efforts had ever matched today's outcome.

They had been trying to pacify them all this while.

The workers had been holding back their frustrations, and even today when they came to the factory, there were concerns that their pent-up emotions might explode.

County Magistrate Bai couldn't help but sigh, he had not misjudged her; despite her young age, she was worldly-wise.

And only someone so astute could be this clear-headed.

And Ji Xingwei's feelings were indescribable.

Thinking about how he tried to belittle Lin Chuxia back at the county government made him feel utterly embarrassed.

He felt thoroughly convinced in his defeat.

Lin Chuxia saw the look in Ji Xingwei's eyes and knew what he was thinking.

The words she shared with Ji Xingwei during dinner were indeed intentional.

Chapter 499: Everywhere She Goes, Warm Sunshine Follows

She didn't establish Xiyang Food Company to target anyone; the market is open, and fair competition is welcome. If Liu Guoyi hadn't tried to suppress them from the start, forcefully demanding their recipes, and later instigated Ancheng Food Factory's employees to cause trouble at Xiyang, the relationship between Xiyang and Ancheng Food Factory would have been one of fair competition, without interferences.

But Liu Guoyi had narrowed his own path.

Even so, Lin Chuxia never planned to do anything specific against Ancheng Food Factory. She had the energy and ability to develop other industries, and the outcome of Ancheng Food Factory was within her expectations but not in her plans.

Just like the words she shared with Ji Xingwei at noon, she had the money to support the villagers of Qin Family Village, and even those from surrounding villages, to build markets, promote industries, and isn't the number of people she'd be serving much more than the thousand-plus employees of Ancheng Food Factory?

In terms of making money, her Huamei Mall's sales figures approach six figures each month; isn't that faster than a soon-to-be-closed Ancheng Food Factory?

Ji Xingwei's words were really pointless.

Today's matter had come to a close; up next, Su Wensong would lead the team from Xiyang to formally take over Ancheng Food Factory. It's a job that isn't complicated but rather tedious.

Just as Lin Chuxia was preparing to step down from the stage, her eyes suddenly caught a figure at the entrance of the hall, and her gaze brightened instantly.

Su Wensong had been paying attention to her from the moment she stepped on stage. This girl, he watched her grow step by step.

And although he was clear about her capabilities, at moments like these, he couldn't help but feel full of admiration for her.

Working for such a woman, he felt not only no shame but a great honor.

So when Lin Chuxia looked towards the entrance of the auditorium, he noticed the change in her eyes immediately.

Turning his head, he saw that man.

He knew that Lin Chuxia had been back in her hometown for a while because of the Ancheng Food Factory issue.

He was also aware of the relationship between the two.

Seeing that County Magistrate Bai and Factory Director Ji were getting up, he stepped forward to greet them first.

"County Magistrate Bai, Factory Director Ji, as for the next steps..." At the same time, he signaled Lin Chuxia with his eyes.

Lin Chuxia knew Su Wensong would handle the rest and confidently walked toward the figure at the entrance.

"Why did you come today? When did you arrive?"

From his earlier stance, it looked like he had been standing at the entrance for quite some time.

Qin Yang raised a hand to tidy her hair, his eyes filled with a tenderness he wasn't even aware of, "During the time when those workers wouldn't stop raising questions."

When he arrived, the atmosphere in the auditorium was tense; he saw the chaotic scene, the workers' relentless queries, and people constantly pressing forward—his heart nearly leaped to his throat.

He knew what the state-owned enterprise workers were like, especially when it concerned their livelihood.

Harming someone's wealth is like killing their parents.

Even though none of this was Lin Chuxia's intention, in the workers' eyes, it was her Xiyang Food Factory that had cut off their means of living.

And now to be taken over by Xiyang Food Factory, how could they possibly accept it willingly?

With so many people, trying to get closer wasn't easy.

Before he could take any further action, he heard the calm and steady voice of his young wife.

He watched with his own eyes as those people were gradually pacified, as they changed from anger to negotiating calmly.

From faces filled with despair to ones brimming with hope.

He knew his wife was capable, but he had never witnessed such magical power from her.

She was like a sun; wherever she went, warmth followed.

"You must have been very busy these past few days, right? What else is there to do next? Do you want me to wait for you outside first?"

Qin Yang only came back to find that she wasn't there, which made him a bit uneasy, so he came over to check on her.

Lin Chuxia said, "It's okay now, I'm going to say hello to County Magistrate Bai and the others, wait for me, and then we'll leave together."

The matters of today had been almost settled, now it was fine to leave it to Su Wensong, the factory director of Xiyang Food Factory.

County Magistrate Bai had noticed the man beside Lin Chuxia early on. Seeing their close intimacy, he guessed the man's identity.

Ji Xingwei was curious and took a few more glances.

He had not expected that Mr. Lin, known for his decisive actions, would also have such a tender and gentle side.

Indeed, it was quite rare.

Lin Chuxia greeted them, asking Su Wensong to accompany the several leaders, and then she excused herself to leave.

Once outside, Qin Yang felt a bit embarrassed, "To just leave them behind and come out with me, is that really okay?"

He just missed his wife so much that when he arrived home and found that his wife wasn't there, and heard that she had come to Ancheng Food Factory today, he was even more worried and came looking for her.

Lin Chuxia waved her hand indifferently, "My husband has come all the way here. It would really be inappropriate to leave my husband aside. Don't worry, I've already paved the way for them. If I still need to micromanage everything, then it's time for Xiyang Group to change its staff."

"Xiyang Group?"

It was the first time Qin Yang heard this term.

Mulling over these few words, he could deeply understand the meaning behind them.

Lin Chuxia revealed a bright and radiant smile, "How about that? Although the official procedures aren't in place yet, Xiyang Group has already been established in my heart."

Currently under their management, they have not only Xiyang Food Factory, Qin's Buns Shop, Qin's Restaurant, but also Huamei Mall.

Additionally, the chicken farm and yellow peach orchard in Daqing Mountain Village are also part of the group.

This is the embryonic form of their group company. She believes that in the near future, its industries will only get better and better, and her Xiyang Group will continue to grow.

Qin Yang nodded seriously, "Then, to celebrate Mr. Lin's Xiyang Group, shall we go out to eat tonight?"

Lin Chuxia's eyes sparkled. Although the meals meticulously prepared by Mrs. Qin at home were very good, she hadn't spent time alone with Qin Yang for a long time.

"Then let's go have hot pot? I really want to have a taste of it."

"Alright, let's go eat hot pot."

Qin Yang was always willing to fulfill any of Lin Chuxia's suggestions.

In the past two years, Ancheng County has developed quite well, especially the private businesses keeping pace with the times, with many merchants doing quite well.

Lin Chuxia had noticed that restaurant a long time ago.

The front of the restaurant had four rooms, dark green windows, not a large facade, but the business was very good every day.

The words on the glass front door were painted in big red oil paint.

Every evening when passing by, one could see the bustling warmth inside.

Now it's still the tail end of summer; to be willing to eat hot pot while fanning oneself in this weather shows it must really be delicious.

Today the weather was a bit stuffy, the temperature inside the room didn't drop even though the fan was on.

Knowing that Qin Yang was afraid of the heat, Lin Chuxia decided they would sit at a table outside.

In An City, after the start of autumn in August, the temperature in the mornings and evenings will drop a bit, and occasionally there will be a light breeze.

As soon as they entered the restaurant, the enthusiastic owner came up with the menu.

Chapter 500: An Acquaintance

Lin Chuxia took the handwritten menu, her eyes glinting with amusement, "The owner has made this restaurant quite thoughtful, and the menu is pretty good too."

The owner was a young man in his early thirties, who smiled and said, "It's just so-so, it's for everyone's convenience after all."

Lin Chuxia nodded, doing business means one has to consider what the customers want and cater to their needs.

"Lamb rolls, beef rolls, beef tripe, duck blood, Chinese broccoli..."

Lin Chuxia knew Qin Yang's taste and ordered a whole bunch of different items, eventually choosing a spicy base for the hot pot.

Upon hearing this, Qin Yang advised, "Don't worry about me, just get a clear soup base, I like my sides spicy."

At that time, hot pot in An City was still the traditional northern-style with a charcoal-fired copper pot. It was authentic indeed, but the soup could only have one flavor; the half-and-half pot popular in the south had not made its way there yet.

"It's fine, let's have a mildly spicy one. I've been craving some spice myself, what's the joy in life without some spicy hot pot?"

Qin Yang chuckled as he saw the playful arch of his wife's brows.

He knew that when it came to spicy food, his wife was both weak and fond of it.

Brave in words, yet a lightweight in action.

But since she had said so, Qin Yang didn't counter her wish and specifically told the owner to make it only mildly spicy, and to make his seasoning spicy, but his wife's not spicy.

The dipping sauce was the restaurant's own sesame sauce, full of rich sesame aroma when served.

The water in the hot pot rolled to a boil, and Qin Yang first blanched a chopstick of lamb for Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia, in turn, blanched a chopstick full of beef tripe for Qin Yang.

When they both placed the cooked food in each other's bowls, they paused, then both smiled.

Lin Chuxia liked lamb, and Qin Yang liked beef tripe, and they each favored the other's preferences.

"Go ahead and eat, don't mind me."

Lin Chuxia rolled her blanched lamb in sesame sauce and stuffed it into her mouth, savoring it contentedly, while urging Qin Yang to eat as well.

"You haven't been eating well at home, have you? I can tell you've lost weight."

Qin Yang was blanching lamb leisurely and served her another chopstick-full before eating his, replying to her concern, "It's been alright, the food at the office has always been the same. Though, the food was indeed less satisfactory while I was away on the business trip, but it's not like I've lost weight, my portion sizes haven't changed."

"That's impossible, I can tell you've slimmed down, how can the portions be the same? Eat more, if it's not enough, we can order more."

Lin Chuxia really didn't want Qin Yang to go hungry.

The young woman grabbed pieces of meat with her chopsticks for him, and Qin Yang indeed ate quite a bit.

After the couple had their fill, they called the owner over to settle the bill, only to be told that someone else had already paid for them.

Following the direction given, they noticed a familiar face.

It was a family sitting at a table not far from them, a couple with their two children, enjoying hot pot.

"Sister Liu, Brother Wang, you're here dining as well, you're too kind. How could we let you pay for our meal?"

It was indeed Sister Liu, whom Lin Chuxia had first met selling peanuts and seeds at the train station, and Brother Wang, who sold fruit, both of whom Lin Chuxia later found out were a couple.

Sister Liu, who had always been close and talkative with Lin Chuxia, immediately smiled and said, "How could you be embarrassed? It's only proper for us to treat you. Both your Brother Wang and I are doing business with your family now. You are our God of Wealth now!"

This was something Lin Chuxia had heard from Sun Lanlan.

Over the years, the number of stalls at the train station had been growing, increasing the competitive pressure on Sister Liu and Brother Wang's business.

Sister Liu came to Sun Lanlan one day, as she knew that Qin's Bun Shop was run by Lin Chuxia, and wanted to inquire if their vacuum-packed ready-to-eat food, beef sauce, and hot sauce could be wholesaled for sale on the train.

Sun Lanlan had her reservations at the time.

Their bun shop was right next to the train station and also sold Xiyang's ready-to-eat food, beef sauce, and the like, whether unpackaged or vacuum-packed.

Many travelers would come to their bun shop to buy these products.

If Sister Liu started selling Xiyang Food products, wouldn't that be taking business away from Qin's?

Sun Lanlan didn't know Sister Liu, but Granny Sun did, and Sister Liu also mentioned her relationship with Lin Chuxia.

Sun Lanlan couldn't decide and so she called Lin Chuxia.

Of course, Lin Chuxia would not refuse.

Not to mention her relationship with Sister Liu, in Lin Chuxia's eyes, there's no such thing as cutting off a deal completely.

The train station's daily foot traffic is so huge, and Sister Liu's proactive selling approach is also a good thing for them at Xiyang.

Although it's possible that sales at Qin's Bun Shop might be affected, the sales of Xiyang Food would increase. Either way, they wouldn't lose out.

And the reality was even more surprising.

Ever since Sister Liu wholesaled the vacuum-packed ready-to-eat food as well as beef sauce and hot sauce from Xiyang to sell at the train station, sales at Qin's didn't decrease but instead steadily increased.

Many people found Xiyang's food tasty after trying it.

Locals who wanted to take An City's local specialties when going out would choose Xiyang's ready-to-eat food and sauces, and visitors to An City would also choose Xiyang's products as local specialties to take home.

Thus, Xiyang's reputation spread far and wide, and it even became one of An City's major features.

And Sister Liu, at the train station, had brisk business every day, earning almost as much in one day as she used to in a week selling sunflower seeds.

If it were in the past, they wouldn't have been able to afford to take the kids out to eat at all.

At most, they would slaughter two jin of meat and stew it at home.

Lin Chuxia chatted with Sister Liu a few times, those folks hadn't finished their meal yet, and she, along with Qin Yang, didn't linger, leaving the hotpot restaurant.

"That sister just now has quite an eye for things."

The two walked on their way home, Qin Yang spoke out in admiration.

Lin Chuxia nodded in agreement, "Sister Liu and her husband have always been very savvy. I heard that even before the reforms, the couple was selling things secretly at the train station, they can be said to be among the earliest individual entrepreneurs."

Lin Chuxia smiled like a fox, and Qin Yang laughed along.

What he meant by having an eye for things was not doing the individual business per se, but choosing Xiyang's products.

He had great confidence in his wife's abilities and her products.

When the two arrived at Qin Family Village, night had already fallen.

From far away, they could see lights on at the wholesale market at the village entrance, and people pushing bicycles with vegetable baskets coming and going.

More people gathered in one corner of the market, where a screen had already been set up.

Ever since the market opened that day, the village had hired a projectionist to show movies every day, and the village chief said it would last for a week.

Qin Yang stood at the entrance of the village, on the left was the street-facing agricultural supply store, and a bit further away, he could still see Xiyang Food Factory. To the right was the bustling vegetable wholesale market.

He used to study and work outside, and couldn't come home more than a few times a year.

The image of that rigid, conservative little village in his memory had long disappeared, replaced by this lively scene that seemed so much more vibrant.

Qin Yang reached out and held Lin Chuxia's small hand, which was small and just the right fit in his palm, yet felt extremely fulfilling.