

Switched M 501

Chapter 501: A Different Kind of Beauty

When they got home, the Qin Family had just finished dinner. Zhuangzhuang, carrying a military water bottle and moving a small stool, was vigorously pulling Qin Han outside while talking.

Seeing Qin Yang and Lin Chuxia enter from outside, Zhuangzhuang called out with his big eyes sparkling, "Little Uncle, Little Auntie, there's a new movie showing at the village entrance today. I've found out all about it; it's called 'Happy Ghost'. Little Uncle, Little Auntie, do you want to come watch it with me? Is Happy Ghost like me? Granny always calls me Little Happy Ghost."

Without waiting for Lin Chuxia and the others to respond, he turned to pull Qin Han, "Dad, hurry up, it's about to start. We were late yesterday."

Qin Han, clearly impatient, said, "Let your grandpa take you. I want to stay at home and watch TV with your mom."

"The TV show is not interesting. I want to go watch the movie with Dad. Dad, when you see me, your little Happy Ghost, in the movie, you won't always scold me 'naughty boy' and fawn over my little sister. Let's go, Dad, hurry up..."

The two of them chattered nonstop, walking and talking until they reached the gate and disappeared from sight, but Zhuangzhuang's tender voice could still be heard.

Lin Chuxia looked on with a smile, this silly boy, she remembered that Happy Ghost was actually a ghost movie.

Qin Yang then looked at her, "Do you want to go watch the movie together?"

"Sure," Lin Chuxia agreed without hesitation.

She hadn't watched a movie with Qin Yang in a long time, and now that everything had been resolved, it was a perfect time to relax.

As for whether it was a ghost movie or something else, Lin Chuxia didn't care at all.

As long as the person beside her was Qin Yang, that was enough.

Mrs. Qin, hearing their conversation, chuckled, "Go ahead, these days our village has been really lively. Yangyang, it would be great for you and Chuxia to join the fun."

Just as Mrs. Qin finished speaking, Zhang Guilan poked her head out from the house, "Mom, I want to go have some fun too."

"You go back and properly do your confinement," Mrs. Qin didn't even spare her a glance.

Zhang Guilan's face showed aggrievement, "Mom, the village is only lively these days. Once I finish my confinement, I won't be interested in these events. I've already fed the baby, and he's eaten and fallen asleep now. I'll just go out for a little while and promise to come back soon."

"You still promise me? What about last time? Weren't you at the market when it opened? No negotiation, hurry back. There's a breeze now; if you catch a cold, it will be your headache when you're older."

Lin Chuxia looked at Zhang Guilan's pitiful, pleading face, spread her hands to show she couldn't help, and walked away, pulling Qin Yang.

By the time they reached the door, she couldn't help but laugh, "My sister-in-law is really suffocated by her confinement. By the way, have you seen our little niece? Newly born kids change every day, Little Yaoyao is now chubby and white, really cute."

"Hmm," Qin Yang responded indifferently.

Lin Chuxia, unsatisfied, asked, "What 'hmm'? Did you see her or not?"

"Chuxia, how long do you think you will be at the food factory? I can only rest at home this weekend; I have to go back to work the day after tomorrow. Can you come back with me?"

Qin Yang changed the topic, not wanting to talk too much about children in front of his wife, fearing it would make her think too much and feel sad.

Lin Chuxia didn't continue the previous topic, but thought for a moment, "Maybe not tomorrow. Although things at the food factory are mostly settled, there might still be some changes. I won't be at ease until everything is thoroughly settled. My sister-in-law will be done with her confinement in a few days; I might as well wait until Little Yaoyao has finished her full month before I return."

"That's fine then, I'll head back first."

The two of them talked as they returned to the wholesale market.

The movie had already started, and from a distance, they could hear the audio effects of the movie – sometimes people screaming, sometimes bursting into laughter.

It was too crowded, and not just with people from Qin Family Village. Folks from villages and even families from the county ten miles away had come to watch.

Seeing no room, the couple didn't squeeze in.

Qin Yang glanced back, took Lin Chuxia's hand, and said, "Let's go, I'll take you somewhere else."

Qin Yang then led Lin Chuxia directly to the agricultural supply store.

The shop closed early, and the gate was locked.

Qin Yang asked Lin Chuxia to wait at the entrance, then he stepped back a few steps, took a running jump, and clambered over the wall effortlessly, flipping into the yard.

Soon, the small gate inside the courtyard swung open.

"Come over."

Qin Yang took Lin Chuxia's hand, led her into the yard, and re-locked the door. Then, he guided her to the ladder nearby.

"You go first," he hinted to Lin Chuxia with a gesture.

"Are we going up to the roof?" Lin Chuxia glanced up.

Qin Yang nodded.

Excited, Lin Chuxia eagerly started climbing the ladder, carefully making her way up.

Qin Yang followed closely behind her, protecting her.

These days, buildings usually had cement rooftops, and the agricultural supply store was no exception. Although the building was tall, the roof was flat and steady despite its slope.

Standing on the roof of the shop, they could not only see the bustling wholesale market but also the Xiyang Food Factory illuminated in the night, the tranquil Qin Family Village, and the county of Ancheng County glistening with stars in the distance.

Lin Chuxia suddenly stopped, transfixed.

A warm embrace enveloped her from behind, and she gently leaned back into it.

"I feel that life now is fulfilling and happy, Qin Yang, I am fortunate to have met you in this lifetime."

Qin Yang held her tightly and hummed in agreement, "Me too."

The two embraced, surrounded by the thick night air; not even a star or the moon were visible, hidden behind the clouds.

Yet, looking at the human hustle on the distant market, they could still appreciate a different kind of beauty.

However, the moment was short-lived, as lightning streaked across the sky followed by the rumble of thunder, and the wind started to blow.

The lights in the corner of the wholesale market swayed in the wind, causing the projector operator to stop the show, hastily packing away the screen and equipment.

People grabbed their stools and hurried home.

Suddenly, another flash of lightning, and a light bulb in the corner of the market flickered and went out.

A timid child hollered, stirring up even more noise in the crowd.

Someone yelled that ghosts were coming, others laughed heartily, louder than the wind and thunder.

Qin Yang and Lin Chuxia didn't dare delay any longer; they hurriedly climbed down from the roof.

The weather looked like it was set in for heavy rain, and they hadn't brought umbrellas.

Sure enough, just as they reached home, the rain began to fall.

Shortly, Qin Han, bare-chested, ran into the courtyard with a stool in the rain, followed by Little Zhuangzhuang draped in an oversized garment, running and calling out, "Daddy, Daddy, wait for me, I'm scared of ghosts."

He was draped from head to toe in Qin Han's white shirt, the sleeves flapping wildly as he ran, whipped about by the wind.

Those standing beneath the windows: "..."

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"Rumble—"

As the lightning and thunder continued, Qin Juan frowned as she looked out the window, holding Ningning closer.

Chapter 502: Self-Inflicted Affections

Little Ningning seemed to be asleep, yet she was moving her lips restlessly with unease, as if whispering something.

"Don't be afraid, Ningning, don't be afraid, mommy is here..."

Qin Juan kept comforting her.

At this moment, the light in the opposite room turned on, and Wang Tianxue, draped in clothing, came over and asked in a low voice, "How is it now? Any better?"

Qin Juan shook her head, and tucked Ningning in again.

Wang Tianxue stepped forward and touched Ningning's forehead, frowning, "It shouldn't be like this. She's been on fever medicine for so long, but the fever hasn't subsided at all."

Ningning looked listless since this afternoon.

Qin Juan didn't take it too seriously, as it's common for children to be sometimes moody. It was only when she was about to take Ningning home after finishing work at the Bun Shop that she realized Little Ningning had a low fever.

When they got home, she gave her fever medicine, hoping a good sleep would do the job.

Unexpectedly, several hours later, not only had the fever not subsided, it had become worse.

Now it was raining outside, and Qin Juan hadn't slept at all, her mood growing heavier with the rain.

At this moment, Little Ningning murmured softly, "Mommy, I'm cold..."

Qin Juan went to grab more blankets.

Wang Tianxue also looked very concerned, "Sister Juan, this won't do. We better take Ningning to the hospital. If her fever keeps up like this, it might be dangerous for the child."

While saying this, she prepared to leave, "Wait for me, I'll drop Xiao Long off next door and then go to the hospital with you."

Qin Juan didn't want to bother Wang Tianxue, but seeing Ningning's condition, she felt extremely anxious.

Wang Tianxue had already dressed again, put on a raincoat, wrapped the sleeping Xiao Long, and was about to leave.

Qin Juan quickly stopped her, "You can't do this, don't get Xiao Long sick too," it's still raining outside.

"It's okay," Wang Tianxue didn't listen and ran out the door.

Qin Juan wanted to say more, but Wang Tianxue had disappeared.

She couldn't delay any longer, quickly put on an overcoat for herself, and dressed Ningning in trousers and a jacket.

Just as she finished, Wang Tianxue returned, accompanied by Old Mrs. Jia and Jia Liang.

As soon as Old Mrs. Jia entered, she began complaining, "What kind of mothers are you both? When something happens, why not ask for help? You also took the child to my place; young children are delicate, what if she catches a cold because of this? As an old lady, I can handle less sleep, even staying up all night is fine for me."

Then she turned to Qin Juan, "And you, how could you bear it when your child is sick? How is she now? Look at her little face, it's all feverish. Shouldn't you rush to the hospital? Do you want to make her condition worse?"

Without waiting for Qin Juan to reply, she turned to Jia Liang behind her, "What are you waiting for? Quickly carry the child, be careful not to get your rainwater on her, yes, wrap her in your raincoat and don't delay, let the doctor examine her properly at the hospital, get whatever medicine or injections she needs. Fever in children should not be taken lightly, prolonged fever might damage the brain..."

Qin Juan had already seen Jia Liang behind Old Mrs. Jia, and even though she wanted to say that she could take the child to the hospital herself, before she could speak, Jia Liang had already wrapped Ningning in his own raincoat.

Old Mrs. Jia urged her, "You, as a mother, must keep up. Once Ningning wakes up, she'll certainly look for you. Don't worry about home, Tianxue and I will take care of it. Focus solely on the child now. Be careful, the road is slippery, if necessary, hold onto Jia Liang's arm – he's a big man, a fall won't hurt him much. If he really does fall, he can serve as a cushion..."

Qin Juan, "..."

She was well aware of Jia Liang's feelings, and precisely for that reason, she didn't want to trouble him with personal matters.

But she wasn't in control of the situation, and was forcibly pushed out of the door by Old Mrs. Jia.

Outside, the rain was getting heavier, the darkness overwhelming, occasionally lit up by a flash of thunder.

Qin Juan knew it wasn't the time to be overly sensitive, so she stopped talking and hurriedly followed Jia Liang out the door.

The hospital was eerily quiet now, the lights dim and yellow through the sheets of rain.

Jia Liang entered the hospital and went straight to find the doctor.

It was raining today, and late at night, there weren't many patients. The on-duty doctor was lying in the duty room sleeping, and was abruptly woken up by Jia Liang.

An initially impatient expression softened when faced with the tall and strong, bald Jia Liang, who also possessed a fierce-looking face. The doctor forcibly calmed himself.

"What's the situation?"

Qin Juan hurriedly stepped forward and explained Ningning's condition to the doctor.

Despite the high fever, it seemed trivial in the eyes of these doctors. The doctor took Ningning's temperature again. Given that the fever hadn't subsided after medication, he decided to administer an IV drip.

By then, Jia Liang had already handed Ningning over to Qin Juan, the doctor prescribed the medication, and Jia Liang went to pay and get the medicine.

After obtaining the medicine, the doctor set up the IV drip for Little Ningning, instructing the family to watch the child and to call him if needed.

After the doctor left, the ward quieted down.

Ningning was still half-asleep.

Outside the window, the rain had lightened, and without thunder and lightning, only the pitter-patter of raindrops could be heard.

Jia Liang moved a chair and naturally sat beside Ningning's bed.

Qin Juan, guarding beside Ningning's bed, tensed up. Seeing him fully focused on the child, her heart gradually relaxed.

Due to work, the two often interacted alone, usually discussing work matters.

But now, Qin Juan felt uncomfortable everywhere.

"Thank you so much for today. It's late, and you still had to come out with us. It should be fine here now; I think you should head back, you could still get some sleep before dawn."

Jia Liang glanced at his watch, "I'm not going back. Wang Tianxue had already found me and I had some sleep. You haven't slept all night, right? Lie down for a while, I'll watch the child; I'll call you if needed."

"I'm not tired, I..."

"Juanzi," Qin Juan was going to refuse, but Jia Liang interrupted her, "I know you don't look up to me, but I genuinely want to take care of you two. Just think of me as being presumptuous; I'm happy to help out. Please stop refusing, it really makes me feel terrible, so terrible that I feel like I don't even have the right to try to please the person I like..."

"I haven't, you are great, it's me..."

Qin Juan quickly denied, but was interrupted again by Jia Liang, "Since that's not the case, then just lie down and sleep for a while, and stop trying to chase me away."

He finished speaking and did not look at Qin Juan anymore, focusing intently on the IV drip.

Qing Juan moved her lips but eventually said nothing.

Not wanting to endure the awkwardness of sitting there just staring at each other, she lay down beside her daughter's hospital bed.

Chapter 503: Perfect

She just wanted to avoid the awkwardness of being alone with Jia Liang, but she didn't realize when she actually fell asleep.

When she woke up to the sounds, she saw Jia Liang had called the doctor, who was removing Ningning's IV.

She quickly stood up and respectfully moved to the side.

After the doctor finished removing Ningning's IV, he tested her temperature again.

The fever had gone down, but to prevent it from returning, the doctor prescribed some medicine.

"Take the medicine on time, and come back to the hospital if the high fever persists."

After giving all the instructions, the doctor told them they could go home.

Ningning had a fever all night and, although it had subsided, she was still very weak.

Even though she was awake, she looked listless.

It had stopped raining outside at some point, and dawn was breaking in the east, almost daylight.

Jia Liang put the medicine in his pocket, bent down to pick up Ningning, but Qin Juan quickly stepped forward, "I'll carry her."

"No need, I can carry her securely," said Jia Liang.

"I can carry her too," Qin Juan insisted.

It was raining heavily when they came, and the roads were bad. Given Ningning had a high fever, it was reasonable to let Jia Liang carry her.

But how could she let him continue carrying her on the way back?

Professionally, their paths crossed unavoidably, but personally, Qin Juan always tried to keep her distance from Jia Liang.

She was a divorced woman with a child; Jia Liang was capable, skilled, and could earn well—she really shouldn't waste his time.

Since she couldn't give him what he wanted, she shouldn't give him any hope. Even a child would understand this; how could Qin Juan not?

This time, Jia Liang didn't speak to Qin Juan anymore but directly asked Little Ningning, "Ningning, is it okay if Uncle Liang carries you?"

Ningning nodded earnestly, "Yes, Uncle Jia, thank you for bringing Ningning to the hospital, Ningning likes being carried by Uncle Jia."

Worried that Qin Juan might be unhappy, she turned and comforted her mother, "Mom, I want Uncle Jia to carry me."

She really wanted to say how strong Uncle Jia's arms felt and how broad his back seemed.

In the past when it rained on her way to school, she saw some classmates being carried or piggybacked by their fathers, and Uncle Jia made her feel like he was her father.

But she dared not say it, knowing her mother didn't like her father anymore; she was afraid to bring up her father and make her mother sad.

Having Ningning's approval, Jia Liang wrapped her up in a small blanket.

Although the rain had stopped when they first arrived, Ningning was bundled up in clothes and a small blanket.

Although the rain had ceased now, the temperature in the early morning after the rain was several degrees lower.

Ningning was still ill and shouldn't catch a cold.

After wrapping Ningning up nicely, Jia Liang naturally took off his jacket and handed it to Qin Juan, "Put this on, it's chilly outside."

Qin Juan quickly refused as he held the jacket up to her, "I'm not cold, you wear it."

Offering the jacket to her meant he would only be in a short-sleeved shirt.

Jia Liang stuffed it into her arms, "I'll get warm carrying the child. If you won't wear it, just hold it for me."

Without waiting for Qin Juan to refuse again, he lifted Ningning and walked outside.

Ningning wrapped in a blanket, only her little head exposed, lay on Jia Liang's broad shoulder and turned to remind her mom, "Mommy, listen to me. If you catch a cold, there will be no one to take care of Ningning."

Jia Liang took the opportunity to say, "Our Ningning is really sensible. Juanzi, even for the sake of the child and the Bun Shop, you can't afford to get sick. Everyone is waiting for you."

Qin Juan: "..."

In the end, she didn't insist and draped Jia Liang's coat over herself.

Despite the rain having stopped outside, there was still a lot of moisture in the air.

They had walked to the hospital last night, and naturally, they would walk back.

The streets at five o'clock were very cold and quiet, with only the occasional elderly person exercising and sanitation workers cleaning.

Jia Liang escorted her all the way home.

Wang Tianxue got up when she heard the door, having barely slept all night. Seeing Jia Liang carrying Ningning, she asked with concern, "How is everything?"

Ningning's fever had subsided by now, and she was feeling much better.

Hearing Wang Tianxue's voice, she peeked her little head from behind Jia Liang and sweetly called out, "Aunt Xue."

Seeing that the child seemed spirited, Wang Tianxue let out a sigh of relief, "You little rascal, you scared Aunt Xue to death."

After letting Jia Liang put the child inside, Wang Tianxue asked Qin Juan in detail about what the doctor had said. Knowing that the fever had subsided and medication was prescribed for observation over the next few days, she said, "These next couple of days you should pay close attention to the child. Why not take a couple of days off? The child is more important."

Qin Juan nodded, "Yes, I'll take good care of her, but no need for a leave. These days the manager still needs to collect payments, and the shop can't run without people. I'll just have her stay in the office."

"Stay in what office?" The voice of Old Mrs. Jia came from outside the door, and the old lady entered the room in no time, "The child is sick and you still want her to stay alone in the office? No one is going anywhere today. Both kids are coming with me. You're busy working and don't have time for children, I, an old lady, have plenty of time."

Upon hearing Old Mrs. Jia's voice, Ningning also sat up from the bed, "Grandma Jia."

Old Mrs. Jia walked over, tenderly touching her little face, "Oh my dear, did you suffer last night? Are you feeling a bit better? How about spending the day with Grandma Jia?"

A flash of joy crossed Ningning's eyes as she looked towards Qin Juan.

Qin Juan sheepishly spoke, "Aunt Jia, looking after Xiao Long is hard enough for you. At your age, how can you manage two children?"

"Who are you underestimating?" Aunt Jia spoke discontentedly, "Don't underestimate me. Even if it were a kindergarten full of kids, I could handle it. Besides, Ningning is so well-behaved, she hardly needs my fussing and sometimes she even helps me look after Longlong. That settles it then, Ningning, do you like Grandma Jia?"

Ningning nodded vigorously, "I like Grandma Jia, and I like little brother Xiao Long too."

With these words from Ningning, Old Mrs. Jia didn't need Qin Juan's consent. She left directly with Ningning.

Qin's Restaurant had breakfast business, and it was time for Qin Juan and Jia Liang to head out.

By taking Ningning with her, she allowed them both to go to work together.

Perfect.

Old Mrs. Jia's cunning plans were clearly effective, yet Qin Juan felt a deep sense of gratitude.

Just then, Jia Liang said, "I'm going to tidy up a bit, then it's time for work. Are you able to manage? Need to rest at home a bit longer, maybe start work later?"

"No need," Qin Juan shook her head. She had managed some sleep at the hospital late at night.

"Then wait for me a bit. I'll just be a moment, then we can go together."

Jia Liang said this without waiting for her to refuse and ran out.

Wang Tianxue looked at Qin Juan, her face teasing.

Caught off guard, Qin Juan smoothed her hair and dryly explained, "Aunt Jia's family has always been very warm-hearted."

Wang Tianxue nodded seriously, "Both Aunt Jia and Jia Liang are truly good, down-to-earth people."

Meanwhile, as soon as Jia Liang arrived home, Old Mrs. Jia pulled him aside.

Chapter 504: He Caiyun

"What's wrong with you? How could you not seize such a good opportunity? If I hadn't stayed up all night waiting for you, would you really have let Qin Juan take the child to the shop without bringing them to me?"

She glanced in the direction of the inner room, her voice very low, "Are you dumb? Juanzi cares about the child the most. If you can get Ningning on our side and make her close to us, would you still worry about not finding someone to marry? A child is the easiest to win over. If we treat her with genuine affection and consider her part of the family, there will come a day when we are rewarded with sincerity. I see that Ningning is a sensible child."

"Mom," Jia Liang called out in dissatisfaction, "I like Juanzi and I like Ningning too. I want to marry Juanzi because I want to provide a home for the two of them and live a good life together. Listening to you just now, it's as if I have some ulterior motive. Why are you now talking about using the child?"

Old Mrs. Jia was so angry that she hit him again, "What do you mean using? This is strategy. If you keep being so foolish, when will I ever be able to hold a grandchild? Even if I don't get to hold my own grandchildren, if you bring the person back home, I could settle for a granddaughter at least. Eventually, someone will call me Granny, not Grandma Jia."

"Alright, alright, I get it."

"Don't just understand, remember it."

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Qin Yang stayed in the village for a weekend before heading back to the city.

The affairs at Ancheng Food Factory were progressing steadily, so Lin Chuxia didn't need to watch over them constantly.

Having been back in An City for such a long time without visiting her master, Lin Chuxia, over the next few days when the business settled down, took alcohol, meat, and her master's favorite pastries to visit his courtyard.

Before reaching the gate, she could already hear the noise coming from inside.

Lin Chuxia stopped in her tracks; her master usually lived alone and had almost no relatives left. Those so-called relatives had severed ties with him over a decade ago.

During her acquaintance with her master, aside from Granny Su and a few old neighbors from the Bun Shop, she had even never seen him interacting with anyone else.

But listening carefully, the voices were indeed coming from her master's courtyard.

Without hesitation anymore, Lin Chuxia pushed open the door and entered the yard.

The loud noises became clearer, "You are Yanyan's maternal grandfather, look at how few people you have left below, at such an old age, why bother being stubborn with your own daughter? If you help Yanyan this time, as your granddaughter, how could she not be filial to you in the future? Look at your current living conditions, with these broken pieces of furniture, this rundown courtyard, only you treasure them. If I don't come over, nobody would even know if you died here."

Through the glass, Lin Chuxia saw a sharp-dressed woman standing opposite Old Sir He, gesticulating while speaking to him.

And beside her was a woman around 20, looking at Old Sir He with a face full of contempt and disdain.

Old Sir He waved his hand, "What does my death in the courtyard have to do with you? I don't need your filial piety. Give it to whoever you want. Just leave now; I don't want to see you."

"What are you talking about? I am your own daughter. Even if it was wrong for me to sever ties with you because of past events, it was under duress. After all, bone is connected to tendon, and I've also said that if you hand over the things to Yanyan, I will take care of you in your old age. Those things you are holding on to are just a pile of waste papers, I don't understand your stubbornness."

"Weren't you looking for it too? I've told you long ago, those things are gone. If you want to take care of me in my old age, then just do it. I can't help you with other things."

"You're lying," the woman's voice suddenly rose sharply, "You can fool others but not me, I'm your daughter, how could I not know you? You must be hiding those items. Do you really dislike seeing me do well? You say I severed ties with you, and you bear a grudge, but in reality, you never cared about us in your heart. In your heart, from beginning to end, there was only Construction, Construction is your own son, and we're all just foundlings..."

When that name was mentioned, Old Sir He's body suddenly began to shake.

Lin Chuxia pushed the door open and entered, stepping forward quickly to push the woman aside and support Old Sir He.

The woman stumbled from Lin Chuxia's shove, nearly falling flat on her rear if not for her daughter's support.

Seeing Lin Chuxia next to Old Sir He, her eyes fierce, "Who are you? What are you doing in our house?"

From the previous conversation, Lin Chuxia had already guessed the identity of the other party and couldn't help but let out a cold laugh.

"Your house? I wasn't aware that this house had other people besides my master. What are you doing here? I advise you to scram immediately, otherwise, I'll accuse you of trespassing."

"Master?"

He Caiyun's gaze shifted back and forth between Lin Chuxia and Old Sir He, suddenly understanding something.

"No wonder you said the items were gone, did you give them to her, am I right?"

The more she thought about it, the more it seemed to be the case; He Caiyun confronted Lin Chuxia directly.

"You threaten me with trespassing, and I should sue you too. This is our house, he's my dad, and you tricked him into being your master, and did you swindle the formula from his hands? Give it to me quickly, my dad may be senile, but I'm not. That's our family's ancestral secret recipe; if you don't hand it over, I'll have to sue you."

Lin Chuxia steadied Old Sir He and stood in front of him.

Old Master He knew Lin Chuxia's temperament; she became his disciple because he had insisted, and she was even less interested in the things he gave her.

Now, his daughter was pointing her finger at her, demanding something. With this girl's nature, she certainly wouldn't take advantage of it.

He urgently pulled on Lin Chuxia's sleeves, but she instead took his hand and gently squeezed it in reassurance.

Then she turned around and said with a light laugh, "Who I thought you were turns out you're my master's daughter and granddaughter. No wonder I don't recognize you. Master has always been living alone; I'd even thought he was a lonely old man..."

He Caiyun sneered coldly, "Now you know, huh? My dad isn't some old man without children. If you want to cheat something off him, you have to ask if we agree. Hand over the formula immediately; if we consider the past as not having happened, you can continue to be my dad's disciple. But my dad's craftsmanship isn't taught for free; you still have to pay tuition for schooling. I won't dwell on the past, but from now on, you are to give my dad a hundred bucks a month for tuition. Plus, you can't miss any of the customary teacher's gifts during the holidays."

Lin Chuxia appeared somewhat melancholic, "Oh dear, you're right about that. I just worry that master alone won't be able to spend a hundred bucks a month. At his age, it's also inconvenient for him to carry so much money. Wouldn't it be better if I give the tuition directly to you, and with you around to allocate it for master?"

Chapter 505: I'll Take Care of My Own Master

He Caiyun's pupils flashed with joy; she thought exactly the same way. At such an old age, how could her dad possibly spend 100 yuan?

But her daughter would be going to college soon, wasn't there a cost for food, drink, clothing, and necessities?

She had initially planned to have him give the money to her dad, and then find an opportunity to demand it back from Old Sir He, but this woman seemed to understand the situation well.

"Since you've said that, I'll endure the trouble then. Let's not talk about other things, just give me this month's tuition fee first."

She even stretched out a hand after saying that.

Lin Chuxia looked at that hand, and the smile on her face gradually faded.

"People have faces, and trees have bark, but I see that some people not only have thick skins but shameless faces too. The moment there was a hint of trouble, you eagerly cut off ties with my master, wishing you had never had such a father. Now that you see my master is still of value, you cling onto him again. Your calculations are so glaring they're practically smacking me in the face. Are you planning to abandon my master once you've gotten the secret recipe and the tuition fee, leaving him out in the cold, uncared for? Do you think everyone else is a fool? Or do you think my master is so senile that you can deceive him with just a few words? Examine your conscience – if you even have one. What you're doing, is it even human? No, I take that back, because you lack any conscience at all. Let me tell you, there's neither secret recipe nor tuition fee for you. Get lost quickly. My master doesn't wish to see you and doesn't need your hypocritical promises to care for him in his old age. I'll take care of my own master."

He Caiyun's eyes showed a trace of guilt; indeed, she had thought exactly that.

Her dad was able-bodied and hadn't needed anyone to look after him for many years.

Moreover, after securing his pension, she hadn't shown any concern for him. Now she was desperately trying to ingratiate herself, what would others think of her?

Even her in-laws would be displeased by this.

But thinking this in her heart was one thing; being bluntly called out by Lin Chuxia was another.

"This is our family's business, what's it to you?"

Lin Chuxia directly asked Old Master He, "Master, who do you wish to provide care for you in your old age?"

Old Master He had long been annoyed by this so-called daughter of his and now, hearing Lin Chuxia asking him this, he glared, "You little brat, have you forgotten what you've told this old man? Or are you deceiving this old man with your promises of care?"

Lin Chuxia smiled slightly, "Of course not. Look what I brought for you today? Your favorite mutton vertebrae and lamb ribs, assorted pastries from Daoxiang, and the sorghum liquor you love."

After speaking, she provocatively glanced at He Caiyun, "I just don't know what your so-called daughter has brought for you? She probably didn't bring anything, did she? Claiming she would provide for you in old age but can't even bear to bring a single package of pastries? Wants to reap benefits from you but wouldn't shell out for even a pastry?"

Old Master He snorted without agreement or objection.

He took the pastry box and began untying the paper string, opening the box to see an assortment of pastries. His face creased with a smile as he picked up a flaky pastry and popped it into his mouth.

He Caiyun, standing beside him, had an incredibly sour expression.

She really hadn't brought anything. When she went back to her own home, to ask her own dad for things, did she need to bring gifts?

Besides, how expensive were the pastries from Daoxiang?

Ever since market liberalization, Daoxiang's pastries had become more expensive by the day. Even ordinary pastries cost several yuan per jin, not to mention an entire pastry box.

A single box of these pastries almost cost her half a month's salary; she herself had never tasted such expensive pastries.

Lin Chuxia waved her hands at He Caiyun, "Sis, if you have nothing else to do, better hurry on back. Showing filial respect isn't just about mouthing off, if you really want to show filial piety, you need to take some actual action. Old Sir He here, to put it bluntly, is a bit materialistic. See this? Every time I come, I bring something nice for him to eat and drink. If you want to be filial, you'd have to do better than me. Only then would he favor you, otherwise, there's no point in competing with me for the duty of support."

He Caiyun glared at Lin Chuxia resentfully and then reluctantly called out to Old Master He, "Dad..."

Old Master He waved his hand and then eagerly took out a pastry with filling from the snack box, munching on it while he asked Lin Chuxia, "When are you going to cook me that lamb spine stew? The spicy one from last time was delicious. You also have to buy some bok choy and tofu, and then we can have that... what's it called..."

"Lamb spine hotpot," Lin Chuxia finished for him.

"That's right, lamb spine hotpot, delicious."

"Got it, master. I'll start stewing the lamb spine in a bit and then head to the market for groceries. Do you want some duck blood and tripe? I remember you really enjoyed the tripe last time."

Old Master He immediately nodded, "Yeah, that stuff. Get more of it."

"Alright."

Lin Chuxia readily agreed and then turned to He Caiyun, still lingering, and asked with a smile, "Sis, you're not leaving? If you don't go, I can't offer you to stay for the meal. The lamb spine I bought is just enough for my master and me. How about I give you a chance to show off, why don't you go buy the groceries? Let me warn you, we need the good quality tripe for the master, at least two pounds..."

Lin Chuxia's words were cut short as He Caiyun, pulling the girl beside her, hurried out.

Not allowed to eat yet sent to buy groceries? She didn't have that kind of spare money.

Let alone trying to outperform Chuxia's standard of filial piety.

The presents she had brought today were worth more than a month's salary for her and her husband combined.

Having chased the guests away, Lin Chuxia happily helped Old Master He with the lamb spine stew.

Meanwhile, He Caiyun was seething with grievances.

Yanyan, pouting next to her, spoke up, "Mom, does that old man really have the formula? Could it be that you remembered wrong? Weren't all the books at home burned? Maybe the formula was burned too."

He Caiyun couldn't be certain either, but seeing Lin Chuxia's behavior today, she was convinced that Old Master He must have the formula. Otherwise, why would someone unrelated spend so much money to take care of an old man like him?

"Mom, what should we do now? Can't you pretend to be filial and coax the formula out of him?"

He Caiyun looked even more upset, "Pretend to be filial? With the stuff she brought today, your dad and I don't earn enough to afford it. Once or twice is doable, but not for the long term. Do we not want to live our own lives?"

The truth was, she couldn't bear to do it even once or twice.

"Besides, that formula may be somewhat useful for your studies, but it's not necessarily worth much."

Yanyan was even more confused, "What does that woman really want?"

She pursed her lips, uncertainly spoken, "Mom, I think I recognize that woman."

He Caiyun turned her head sharply, "How would you know her?"

"It's not certain, but I think I saw her when Qin's Buns Shop opened. She seems to be the owner of Qin's Buns Shop. You know about the recent uproar with Ancheng Food Factory, right? I heard that Ancheng Food Factory is going to be acquired by Xiyang Food Factory, whose owner is also the owner of Qin's Buns Shop, isn't it?"

Chapter 506: Is Qin Yang Sick?

After listening to her daughter, He Caiyun's eyes lit up.

In Ancheng County, there had been quite a few individual business owners in the past two years, but the most outstanding one had to be the owner of Qin's Buns Shop.

He was both the owner of the Bun Shop and the factory director of Xiyang Food Factory.

Almost nobody in An City didn't know about the Xiyang Food Factory when it was mentioned.

Every time Xiyang Food Factory had a showdown with Ancheng Food Factory, wasn't it a big stir in the city?

After all, when these two factories clashed, it was the common folks like them who benefited.

If that woman really is the owner of Qin's Buns Shop...

Indeed, only a nouveau riche with more money than they know what to do with would be willing to support a lonely old man.

"So it seems, Old Sir He might really have lost the formula."

Before, she suspected that woman was cozying up to Old Sir He for the formula, but if that woman had this status, that formula would be just a piece of scrap paper in her hands, completely unnecessary to go through all this trouble for a couple pieces of scrap paper.

"I never imagined Old Sir He could still attract such a wealthy disciple even at his age."

"Mom, it's not that I must learn traditional Chinese medicine. You said you didn't like studying medicine yourself. I think being a worker is quite good. If I can't get into university, I'll just take over your job."

"You say that so lightly. Your sister-in-law doesn't even have a job yet. If I give the job to you, wouldn't that make your brother and sister-in-law argue with me? Besides, I might not be able to work for much longer. Look at your second aunt; once Ancheng Food Factory was acquired, her husband is about to be laid off... wait, if that woman is the owner of Xiyang Food Factory, then perhaps your second aunt and her family won't have to be laid off and won't even need to attend the assessment..."

.....

Lin Chuxia and Old Master He had a delicious meal with lamb spine hot pot, and she also stewed some lamb chops for him.

At the same time, she brought up the idea of having Old Master He move to the city to enjoy his old age again.

By now, Lin Chuxia knew that the person who came looking for Old Master He today was his eldest daughter, He Caiyun.

She wanted her daughter to learn traditional Chinese medicine, but since her daughter's academic performance made university seem unlikely, she thought of taking a shortcut, using Old Master He's formula as a stepping stone to wedge her daughter into a school.

It's undeniable that, no matter how heartless He Caiyun could be, she still had insight, knowing the value of Old Master He's formula.

Today was not her first visit. Lin Chuxia worried that if He Caiyun couldn't find the formula at once, she might pester Old Master He relentlessly.

"Master, if you really can't let them go, just give them the formula. It's of no use to me anyway..."

Before Lin Chuxia could finish speaking, Old Master He glared at her fiercely, "Are you trying to get expelled from my tutelage? The formula is something I've passed on to you; you'd better take good care of it."

"Look at you, getting angry again. Since you don't miss them anyway, just come with me to the city. It'll save you from their bothersome visits. Plus, in the city, you can always be with your cute and filial young disciple," Lin Chuxia made a playful gesture at the right moment.

Old Master He gave her a sideways glance and turned his head away with a snort, "What sentiment can there be with those ungrateful people? I might as well have never had children in this life. I can do anything now, I don't need you to support me. If you really want me to enjoy my twilight years, then you'd better hurry up and give me a grandchild. Maybe then, I'll consider visiting the city."

When it came to children, Lin Chuxia extended her arm out directly.

"Speaking of which, your disciple is ashamed, Master. Could you please check if there's something wrong with my body, why I can't have children. Our married life is quite normal, but why haven't I been pregnant for so long?"

If Old Master He hadn't brought up the topic of children, Lin Chuxia would have forgotten that she still had such a veteran doctor of traditional Chinese medicine.

Old Master He slightly frowned, "Is it that you can't have them, or because you were too busy with work to consider it?"

"At first, we really didn't want to because of the busy work, but seeing people around us having babies one after another, I began wanting to have a baby too. But after trying for over half a year, I'm still not pregnant."

Old Sir He didn't ask further and stretched out his hand to feel her pulse.

He alternated between looking at her face and hands, making Lin Chuxia feel uncomfortable.

"Master, what's with that expression? Don't tell me I've got some terminal illness?"

Old Sir He irritably let go of her hand, "You're as robust as an ox, no issues with your health. Next time, send that man of yours over, I'll take a look at him."

"Ah, are you saying Qin Yang is sick?"

Lin Chuxia recalled her past life, where indeed, Qin Yang and Lin Jiayi didn't have children.

In her previous life, Lin Jiayi had claimed that she and Qin Yang never even shared a bed.

Initially during the swap, she wondered if Qin Yang had impotence or something similar.

Now that the two are married, Lin Chuxia couldn't be clearer; not only is Qin Yang functional but also enduring.

Could it be an issue with sperm quality?

But she had been giving him spiritual spring water for years, which shouldn't pose any problems.

"Master, what if there is really something wrong with Qin Yang?"

She wanted to have children, and she could tell that Qin Yang also adored kids.

Old Sir He glanced at her, "What can you do about it? If it doesn't work out, find someone else. Three-legged toads are hard to come by, but men with two legs aren't."

Lin Chuxia: "..."

Master, are you serious?

...

Worried that He Caiyun would be persistent and bother Old Master He again, Lin Chuxia finished her tasks the next day and went back to Old Sir He's house.

And sure enough, her guess was right, and this time it wasn't just He Caiyun, but also a woman a few years younger, resembling her in appearance.

Seeing Lin Chuxia enter the courtyard, they didn't give the cold treatment like yesterday, especially the slightly younger woman who greeted her with a smile.

"So you're dad's disciple, right? I just heard from my sister yesterday that dad took on a young and beautiful female disciple, and seeing you today proves it. Just look at this girl, so pretty indeed."

Having struggled in the business world these past two years, Lin Chuxia also understood that being young was a disadvantage.

In business, appearances matter, and women are generally taken lightly, even more so when young, which made their words carry less weight.

Because of this, Lin Chuxia paid extra attention to her attire.

Not only did she perm her hair into big waves, but her clothing also tended to be mature and business-oriented.

Thus, in the past two years, not many have spoken to her in such a tone.

The woman appeared to be only in her thirties, that tone...

Lin Chuxia chuckled inside, knowing who the woman was.

She ignored her words and looked directly at Old Master He, "What am I to say? You like this kind of thing? Missing some excitement in life?"

Old Master He had a stern face and unceremoniously issued an eviction, "Since we've cut ties, let's keep it clean. There's no 'dad' here for you, I can't bear the term 'dad' from you, and I can't and won't fulfill your requests. You can give up on that. Don't come back here in the future."

Chapter 507: Irreparable

"Dad," the young woman called out, "No matter what, we are your flesh and blood. Bones may break but they're still connected by tendons. My sister and I know we were wrong. We were also forced into the situation back then. Please forgive us."

"Yeah, Dad," He Caiyun also persuaded, "If you like to take in disciples, we have no objections, but you can't just favor a disciple over your own daughters. After all, we are family. Isn't it good to have two more people caring for you?"

"Elder sister is right, Dad, we truly want to honor you. From now on, we will be one family," she looked at Lin Chuxia, "Sister, since I'm a few years older than you, I'll shamelessly call you sister. Your master is getting on in years and is quite stubborn. You should also help us persuade him. What if he falls ill or encounters a disaster when he's old? Can he take care of himself alone? The three of us sisters could take turns helping out. Don't you think so? From now on, we will be one family."

Lin Chuxia crossed her arms, leisurely watching the two, then raised an eyebrow towards Old Master He.

"Master, what is it that they want from you now? Or do you really have a treasure?"

Old Master He's expression grew even darker. He originally intended to ask Lin Chuxia to kick the two of them out, but seeing her thriving in their misery, he suddenly changed his mind.

With a sneer, he said, "I do have a treasure indeed. Isn't the precious disciple I've taken right before my eyes? Some people, knowing my disciple's capabilities, have become restless. My place is so lively today, thanks to your involvement."

This left Lin Chuxia stunned. What did it have to do with her?

On the side, He Caixia's eyes lit up. She had thought her dad wouldn't intervene in her business and was considering how to approach Lin Chuxia.

Now that the conversation had taken this turn, she didn't want to miss the chance and immediately smiled at Lin Chuxia, "Ah, it's nothing serious. Sister, we actually have quite the connection. I heard you are the owner of Xiyang Food Factory, and my man works at Ancheng Food Factory. Ancheng Food Factory and Xiyang Food Factory are about to become one, isn't that a sign of fate? The factories are becoming one family; we too are becoming one family."

Lin Chuxia then understood. How come yesterday after He Caiyun had hit a wall here, she not only didn't learn her lesson, but today she actually brought He Caixia over?

He Caixia continued, maintaining a smile, "If I had known we had this connection, there would have been no need for my brother-in-law to worry. You don't know, he hasn't eaten at home for several meals. He has been working at Ancheng Food Factory for over a decade, always so diligent and never making mistakes. Yet now Xiyang Food Factory has some assessment conducted by a youngster who simply disqualified your brother-in-law. What does such a youngster know? It's just because my brother-in-law is upright and spoken unwelcome truths which offended him. Now listen sister, I know it's not easy for you, a woman to manage such a big factory. We mustn't blindly trust rumors, leaving everything to outsiders. If they deceive you, you'd be none the wiser. Now that we are family, we should speak our

minds. Let your brother-in-law oversee things for you. I won't say much, but in the food industry, your brother-in-law truly stands out..."

He Caixia didn't finish her sentence when a sound of snickering came from the side.

Old Master He sneered at Lin Chuxia, "Girl, do you see? What family? They're interested because they see some use in us, the old man and child. I don't know what sins I have committed to raise such a pack of ingrates. It's my fault, too. Their mother died early, and I was always busy treating patients without knowing how to properly raise my daughter. It's my own doing and I've tasted the bitter fruit. I have nothing to say, except..."

His tone shifted as he looked at He Caiyun and He Caixia, "I don't care how you scheme against others, but stop pretending to be filial children in front of me, scheming against me and my disciple. I will say it again, I, this old man, have no daughters. You can get lost, and don't think Miss Lin is a fool. Even if you manage to deceive her, I will stop her, preventing her from dealing with the likes of you, you ingrates..."

"Dad, what are you talking about?" He Caixia said in urgency.

Old Master He didn't listen to their explanations any longer, and picked up a broom from the bed, throwing it at them.

"Get out! I don't want to see you even for a moment. If you enter this door again, don't blame me for being rude."

"Girl, drive them out. The bigger the fuss, the better. Even if it alarms the whole neighborhood, it doesn't matter. They're not embarrassed, and I, the old man, am even less afraid."

As it turned out, He Caiyun and He Caixia did care about their reputation. Seeing that Old Master He was truly enraged, and that making a scene could draw the attention of the neighbors, they quickly ran outside.

He Caixia was not ready to give up, holding onto Lin Chuxia, "Sister, Dad is just confused. We, the younger generation, mustn't be..."

Lin Chuxia withdrew her hand decisively, speaking coldly, "Wrong, my master is never confused. Some damages, once inflicted, cannot be mended in a lifetime. You are his closest kin. When he was at his most vulnerable, you stabbed him in the heart. Now, you expect it to be as if it never happened? The wound may heal, but the scar remains. Don't come here again, or I will not be polite either."

He Caiyun frowned in dissatisfaction, "Who are you to be impolite to us? After all, this is my house."

"Then let's give it a try."

Lin Chuxia left these words behind and turned to go back into the courtyard.

He Caiyun, with a furious face, swore under her breath while He Caixia consoled her, "Sister, what are you doing? Are you trying to find a job for your daughter? Yanyan's grades won't get her into college."

He Caiyun's face stiffened, yet she was unwilling to back down, snorting coldly, "I'm not even sure if that woman is truly the owner of Xiyang Food Factory. I've inquired; the head of Xiyang Food Factory is a man. It's likely she's just playing the big fish in a small pond, trying to fool us. Let's go. We don't need to bother with them. If she's willing to take care of the old man, she can. Who cares?"

He Caiyun stomped off irritably while He Caixia had no choice but to follow. As they reached the entrance of the alley, they saw a jeep parked under the big tree there.

He Caiyun opened her mouth with confusion, "Whose relative in our alley owns a car?"

He Caixia's eyes darted around, but she kept silent.

.....

It was a sunny day on Little Yaoyao's full month celebration, a pity it wasn't the weekend and Qin Yang couldn't return.

However, Qin Juan had taken leave and brought Little Ningning back with her.

Lin Chuxia heard the news and specifically drove to the station to pick up the mother and daughter.

Seeing Lin Chuxia, Little Ningning excitedly jumped up, "Auntie, I missed you so much."

Lin Chuxia hugged her as well, "Auntie missed you too. Is school starting soon? How was your summer?"

Chapter 508: I Understand, I Really Do

Little Ningning happily counted on her little fingers, "I finished all my homework. These days I've been playing at Grandma Jia's house. Grandma Jia is so nice, every day she takes me and little brother Xiao Long, sometimes telling us stories, sometimes playing with sand with us, and Aunt Xue even bought us toys. I like playing with Grandma Jia and also like playing with little brother Xiao Long."

Lin Chuxia raised her eyebrows slightly, giving Qin Juan an imperceptible glance.

She knew of Jia Liang's affection for her elder sister, and the elder sister had also made it clear that she did not want to delay Jia Liang, maintaining a distance from Jia Family's mother and son. Even if Aunt Jia proactively offered to help during the weekends, the elder sister seldom left Ningning with Aunt Jia.

Qin Juan explained somewhat helplessly, "It poured that day, and Ningning had a high fever in the middle of the night. Jia Liang helped me take her to the hospital. After that, Aunt Jia looked after her for a couple of days. Since then, the child refuses to go to the shop with me and keeps clamoring to visit Aunt Jia," she said, finding herself in a bind with such a little traitor.

Besides, she couldn't just force her not to go; that would make her seem too heartless and unforgiving.

Lin Chuxia quickly nodded, "I understand, I get it all."

Qin Juan: "..."

Somehow, she felt that 'I get it all' from her sister-in-law was less comforting than 'I don't understand'.

Forget it, let the sister-in-law think whatever she wants.

"Let's first go to the department store; I need to buy some things."

She had gone to the Bun Shop early in the morning. The shop had been quite busy these days; only after it calmed down a bit did she take the child with her on the bus back home, still empty-handed.

Naturally, Lin Chuxia wouldn't refuse. She opened the car door and let Little Ningning get in.

As she opened the driver's door, she saw Qin Juan still standing there, squinting into the distance.

Lin Chuxia followed her gaze and indeed saw a familiar figure.

Mrs. Zhang, Zhang Wenbin's mother, was at a long-distance bus station ahead, pulling on a young woman's arm and talking about something.

The woman looked impatient, repeatedly trying to shake off Mrs. Zhang's hand.

And Mrs. Zhang was even more persistent. Although on her tiny bound feet, she wobbled after the woman, gripping on her arm to prevent her from leaving.

From the occasional sound that reached over, it was possible to hear Mrs. Zhang scolding non-stop.

Both of them watched that way, and Little Ningning also turned her little head curiously.

But before she could get a clear look at the people in the distance, Lin Chuxia was one step ahead in turning her little head back.

"Sit tight, we are going to Grandma's house soon."

Sure enough, a single sentence diverted her attention and she called out happily to Qin Juan, "Mommy, Mommy, get in the car quickly! We are going to Grandma's house. I miss Grandma and Grandpa so much, also brother Zhuangzhuang. Mommy, can little sister play with me now? I want to take little sister to play with Niuniu."

Qin Juan also withdrew her gaze and said to her daughter with a smile as she got in the car, "Little sister is very young right now; she can't go out and play with you. You have to wait until she grows up a bit more, but little sister, when she's very small like this, is super super cute."

"Is she as cute as Ningning when I was little? Mommy always says Ningning was extremely cute when she was little."

"Ningning is just as adorable now that she's grown up, and the little sister is just as adorable as Ningning. Once you see her, you'll understand and you'll love her too."

Mother and daughter were talking as Lin Chuxia had already driven out of the bus station.

Seeing Qin Juan glance back, Lin Chuxia also thought of the recent events at Zhang Wenbin's home and casually brought it up.

"I heard that Li Wenhong didn't marry him. After living in An City for a while without getting a marriage certificate, she left with the Zhang Family's money during the Spring Festival. They say he looked for her for over a month without finding her."

In Ningning's presence, she didn't mention names explicitly, but Qin Juan understood it all and couldn't help but scoff with a look full of mockery.

"They deserve their plight today. The young woman I saw at the bus station just now was my former sister-in-law. She stole my job back then. The Zhang Family all have the same nature. When the Zhang Family had issues in the past, Mrs. Zhang hurried to distance herself from her daughter to prevent her from being implicated. Her daughter is an ingrate, never caring to inquire about the family after all these years. Once things calmed down, she did not even pay them a visit. Mrs. Zhang kept thinking about them, and to ingratiate herself with her daughter, she gave away my job. Only then did they slowly start to interact, and that was merely interaction. It was fine to take things from the family, but when it came to filial duty from her daughter, it was only lip service."

Now Qin Juan didn't need to ask to know the Zhang Family must be in a bad state, based on what her sister-in-law had said.

Mrs. Zhang was deceitful, lazy, and covetous, and had never taken care of the household chores over the years. Now, with only the elderly couple and Zhang Wenbin left at home, the housework naturally fell on her, the only woman left.

Although it was from a distance, Qin Juan could see that Mrs. Zhang had gotten a lot more white hair over the year since they last met.

And with Mrs. Zhang's penchant for meat, even if Zhang Wenbin found a new job, it might not be enough to cover the family's expenses.

Without her as their easy target, Mrs. Zhang would naturally set her sights on her daughter.

It's just a question of who is more formidable, Mrs. Zhang or her sister-in-law.

If it wasn't for Ningning's presence and the rush to get home, Qin Juan would have really liked to stay and watch the excitement.

Just thinking about it felt satisfying.

Today, although she missed out on the spectacle, others didn't.

By now, a crowd had gathered at the bus station.

Mrs. Zhang was clinging onto her daughter and refusing to let go, "Do you have no conscience at all? I am your mother; you ungrateful wretch! You go off to live your life without concern for your mother's wellbeing? Today, if you don't explain yourself clearly, you won't be going anywhere."

"Have you forgotten how you got your job? It was arranged by the family. Now your brother has lost his job, and instead of giving it to him, you sold it to someone else? How did I give birth to such an ungrateful wretch? Today, you have to clarify everything to me. If the job is gone, at least bring out the money from selling the job."

"Everyone, come and see, this is my own daughter. Look how she treats her mother. I raised her with hardship and even found her a job. Now that her days are good and she's capable, she no longer wants a mother. Judge for yourselves, is there such a thing in this world?"

As Mrs. Zhang cried with a mix of snot and tears, the onlookers began to point and make comments about her daughter.

After all, in most people's eyes, parents are never in the wrong.

Parents who raise their children and even find jobs for them deserve to be treated well by their children.

Mrs. Zhang's daughter felt extremely humiliated, especially since her bus was about to leave, and she impatiently pushed Mrs. Zhang away.

"You're the one who told me to cut ties with the family, you disowned me as your daughter. Because of having parents like you, how many years have I suffered disdain from my in-laws? That job was a compensation to me; I can deal with it as I please. How dare you still have the audacity to ask me for it? All this is what I am entitled to."

Chapter 509: She'll Beg You to Marry Her

Mrs. Zhang spat out a few mouthfuls of saliva in anger, no longer showing the previous look of being wronged. She made her way home, looking like she wanted to kill someone, fuming with rage.

As soon as she got to the front door, she ran into Li Dongmei coming out of the yard.

That radiant look on her face said it all about what she had just been doing.

Li Dongmei did not expect to run into Mrs. Zhang again and hurriedly walked past her with her head down after a quick greeting of "Auntie".

"Ptui, shameless hussy."

Mrs. Zhang spat another mouthful of saliva and upon entering the yard, she saw her son buckling his belt as he came out from the house.

Seeing his mother return, Zhang Wenbin immediately asked, "Mom, how did it go, how much money did you bring back?"

The mention of it fueled Mrs. Zhang's anger, "Money, money, money, you only know to ask me for money. If you're capable, why don't you go find that damned girl? All you know is to bully your old mother, all of you are thankless wretches, what sins have I committed?"

"She didn't give you any money?" Zhang Wenbin paused, "I'll go ask for it myself."

And with that, he started to move outside.

"What's there to ask for, she's already gone. They've sold their house. I rushed and hustled just to intercept her at the bus station today, but still couldn't stop her. I didn't get a single penny, that dead girl, I knew she couldn't be relied upon..."

The more Mrs. Zhang thought about it, the more aggrieved she felt and she started to sob.

It's not like she'd ever been unfair to her children.

Back when the family was in trouble, she quickly cut ties with her daughter to avoid burdening her.

Worried about her daughter's life in her in-laws' house, she pushed Qin Juan's job onto her.

Yet when their days were good, they would only occasionally come to visit her, their mother.

They've been back in An City for such a long time, but she hasn't come to see her once.

Now she's even cut ties so cleanly.

She truly doesn't want to acknowledge her own mother anymore.

Mrs. Zhang had thought that since the family isn't doing well, her daughter ought to help out.

The cold days are approaching, and she didn't want to spend all day at home washing clothes and cooking for the two men, washing clothes in the winter is so cold.

She thought about going to stay with her daughter; that way, no one could gossip about her.

Now all of her plans had fallen through, she didn't get the money, and there was nowhere for her to find peace.

Zhang Wenbin's frown deepened, "She just left without a word? What about the job? That's Qin Juan's job. When she came back, I asked her for it and she was reluctant to give it up. Now that she's gone, the job must still be there, right?"

"She sold the job," Mrs. Zhang cried even harder.

"Sold it?" Zhang Wenbin's face also turned ugly, "What about the money from the sale? Didn't you get it back?"

No need to ask, one look at Mrs. Zhang's state and it was clear she hadn't gotten it back.

"How did you tell me about this originally? When she came back, I said I'd talk to her and you stopped me. I already promised Dongmei that I would get her family a 'three rings and a shot' dowry, what am I

supposed to use to buy that 'three rings and a shot' now? Her mother said no 'three rings and a shot', no wedding."

He thought his mom could have easily got the money, so he had already boasted about it to Li Dongmei, and that's also why Dongmei was especially passionate today, serving him very comfortably.

Thinking of being able to embrace his wife in bed every day, Zhang Wenbin was not as aloof as before and began to even look forward to it.

Now it's good, he's well aware of Old Mrs. Li's character, and the matter of marrying a daughter-in-law is bound to be delayed.

Mrs. Zhang also wanted her son to marry Li Dongmei sooner, so she wouldn't have to work anymore.

Her eyes spinning, she lowered her voice and said, "Can't you knock her up first? If Old Mrs. Li sees her daughter with a belly, would she still stop it? By then, she'd be begging you to marry her."

Zhang Wenbin frowned deeply.

He had thought of this as well, but marrying a woman already pregnant would reflect poorly on his reputation.

Even if he knew the child in Li Dongmei's belly was his, if premarital pregnancy got out, someone with a wagging tongue might suspect he'd stepped into an already arranged deal, raising someone else's son.

Otherwise, why would Li Dongmei, a virgin, be involved with him, who is not stable in his job and has been divorced once?

He knew too well how those people gossiped.

Seeing him like this, Mrs. Zhang persuaded further, "Not only can we save the three carousels and a salute, but we should also ask them for an extra two hundred yuan for the bride price. Isn't Li Dongmei's

brother a vegetable seller? I've heard selling vegetables can be quite profitable. If they don't give us the money, we won't marry her. I refuse to believe Old Mrs. Li could just watch her daughter's belly grow day by day."

Zhang Wenbin's eyes flickered, and he turned back into the house, "I'll think about it some more."

.....

The Qin Family was well-liked in the village, and even though this was their second child, they hadn't planned to make a fuss, but there were no shortage of neighbors who came uninvited.

Nowadays, the Qin Family lived comfortably, so they didn't mind the expenses for the wine and dishes.

Right next to the village was a food station, and the family also sold cooked food. They had added a lot of chicken, fish, and meat at the last minute, making both the front and back yards lively.

Mr. Qin did some calculations and realized that nearly everyone in the village had come to his granddaughter's full month celebration.

This was a huge show of face.

Even though they had been popular in the village before, they had never had such prestige.

Of course, this was all thanks to the younger daughter-in-law.

Mr. Qin couldn't stop grinning, with several old pals calling him over for drinks. Even though Mrs. Qin tried to stop him, he ended up getting drunk.

Mrs. Qin, Qin Juan, and Lin Chuxia also kept greeting guests, and the banquet went on for most of the day.

Nowadays, the villagers helped with cooking and serving at family banquets, and the ones helping with serving and cleaning up were close neighbors and friends.

Despite the banquet covering many tables, the Qin Family hardly had to lift a finger, thanks to the multitude of helping hands.

In the afternoon when the feast was almost over, and things were almost cleaned up, Lin Chuxia suddenly realized that she hadn't seen Qin Han for a good while.

"Big sister, have you seen big brother?"

Other things aside, he had to be present at the accounting table.

The accountant had been collecting money for the family all day, and it had to be handed over to the head of the family.

Today's event was for Qin Han's daughter's full moon, so naturally, Qin Han was in charge.

Qin Juan glanced around, "It seems like he's been gone for a while. Where could he go on such a joyous day? He couldn't have gotten drunk and fallen asleep somewhere, could he?"

Lin Chuxia thought that made sense and went straight to find Zhang Guilan to have her take over the accounting table.

Just then, Qin Jianye came running from outside, shouting as he entered the yard, "Second grandma, my second uncle and my sixth uncle got into a fight."

Those villagers who were helping out also turned to look at Mrs. Qin.

Mrs. Qin was stunned, "Why are they fighting on such a joyous day? Da Wen didn't even come to our house today."

Chapter 510: The Cowardly Villain Who Dares Act But Not Admit

Since when do you not come home and end up fighting with your eldest son?

Moreover, Mr. Qin knew that ever since Qin Wen spread gossip about the daughter-in-law in the village, his youngest son beat him up, and the daughter-in-law took his job away, the two families stopped talking completely.

The eldest son is protective of his own, and since then, he has also pretended that Qin Wen is not his brother.

Regardless, a fight has occurred; it still needs to be checked out.

At this moment, Mr. Qin had drunk too much and was still sleeping in the house.

Although the eldest daughter-in-law has just finished her confinement today, it is not suitable to trouble her with these upsetting matters so soon after confinement.

After much thought, he still decided to call the youngest daughter-in-law.

Upon hearing this, Lin Chuxia suspected what it might be about and didn't say a word before she and Mrs. Qin went out.

Just as they reached the entrance of the courtyard, they saw Qin Han coming from a distance.

He also had quite a lot to drink today. His face was flushed red, grinning with his white teeth showing, seemingly in a good mood.

Mrs. Qin hurriedly approached, "What's going on? I heard from Jianye that you fought with Da Wen? Did you really fight?"

From the look of it, it didn't seem like he had just fought.

Qin Han wiped the sweat from his forehead, not intending to hide anything, "Yes, I just beat that idiot. He's such a loser. How could our Qin family produce such a coward, a sneaky rat, I spit on that!"

Mrs. Qin was even more confused, "What... what happened?"

Now that there were no outsiders around, Qin Han straightforwardly said, "The matter of Gui Lan's second pregnancy was reported by that idiot. He can't have children himself and is jealous of others. I bet he will never have children in his life because he's too immoral."

Hearing this, Mrs. Qin's face also turned cold.

Thinking of her chubby, cute, and soft granddaughter who was nearly lost, she wished she could run to Qin Wen's home and scratch his face.

In a village, such matters are usually kept secret by the locals; Qin Wen, being a close brother in the next house, actually reported it, how dark could his heart be?

"Good job beating him, later I have to go to your aunt's house and have a good talk about this," to let them see what kind of son they have raised.

.....

The Qin Family held a full-month celebration, and the matters with Xiyang Food Factory and Ancheng Food Factory were almost settled.

Now, Ancheng Food Factory is fully managed by Xiyang Food Company, known as Xiyang Food Company's Factory No.2.

The production line has been completely improved, and the products are now aligned with those from Xiyang Food.

For easier management, the managerial roles were filled by staff from Xiyang Food Company.

Because Lin Chuxia had previously stated that as long as the work was well done, there would be opportunities for promotion, the workers from Ancheng Food Factory who came over had no objections to such arrangements. Instead, they worked earnestly, trying to stand out.

During this time, everyone, whether in Xiangyang Food Company's main factory or Factory No. 2, was highly motivated.

An interesting incident occurred when an Ancheng Food Factory worker, who originally failed the assessment, wanted to find the factory head of Xiyang Food Factory, claiming to be a relative of the boss.

When asked how he was related to the boss, he said he was the boss's brother-in-law.

Su Wensong knew that Lin Chuxia has an elder aunt and also knew that Lin Chuxia's elder aunt had divorced last year, and had heard he was a scumbag.

Receiving such news, Su Wensong didn't bother to respond and instructed them to handle it by the book.

Later, when Lin Chuxia brought up the matter, she didn't think of Zhang Wenbin.

First of all, Zhang Wenbin probably didn't know the Xiyang Food Factory belonged to her, and even if he did, considering what he did to Qin Juan, he wouldn't have the guts to come.

She thought of someone else, Old Sir He's second daughter, He Yunxia.

The man who claimed to be her brother-in-law was probably He Yunxia's husband.

Su Wensong, although accidentally, got it right; even if this matter was laid before her, she wouldn't care.

Lin Chuxia didn't plan on staying in Qin Family Village, so the next day she returned to the city with Qin Juan.

First, she dropped off Qin Juan and Little Ningning at their home.

Once out of the car, Little Ningning dashed not toward her own house, but the neighboring one, running while shouting, "Grandma Jia, Grandma Jia, I'm back, I saw a little sister, as cute as little brother Xiao Long, next time come back home with me, I want you to see my little sister, and brother Zhuangzhuang, and my grandparents, Grandma Jia, you're just like my grandma, Ningning likes you..."

Listening to the little chatterbox, Qin Juan helplessly smiled at Lin Chuxia, "This summer break, Ningning has become much more talkative after staying with Aunt Jia."

Old Mrs. Jia is one of those rare lively and sprightly old ladies, who turns into an old playful child when with kids, never running out of things to say, thus making the kids talkative too.

Xiao Long has always been taken care of by Old Mrs. Jia, and started babbling at 8 months, speaking earlier than other children.

"That's good," Lin Chuxia smiled, "Little girls should have a bright personality, being playful and talkative is a child's nature."

Qin Juan couldn't help but think back to Ningning a year ago before her divorce.

Though understanding, Ningning was very timid, not to speak of strangers; even at home, she spoke in a timid voice, too scared to even raise her tone.

Previously she lied to herself, thinking Ningning was just too introverted, but now she realized, children aren't introverted. It was external factors from the family environment, making them cautious.

The Zhang Family didn't like girls, even her father, Wenbin, disdained her, how could she dare to rejoice at home?

Let alone having a weak and powerless mother.

Qin Juan felt thankful again for her divorce, which also gave her daughter a different living environment, allowing her true nature to flourish.

At this moment, Old Mrs. Jia came out from next door carrying a child, smiling and warmly inviting Qin Juan and Lin Chuxia to come inside.

It was getting late, and Lin Chuxia politely declined Old Mrs. Jia's invitation.

Then, Old Mrs. Jia cheerfully turned to Qin Juan, who hesitated only a moment before entering the yard with Old Mrs. Jia.

Lin Chuxia saw this scene and smiled even more deeply.

Qin Yang had anticipated she would return home today, so he had ended work early, bought groceries, and was making dinner. Lin Chuxia had a warm meal waiting when she got home.

While eating, she exclaimed, "It really is good at home, having such a thoughtful and capable husband, I will never leave home again."

Qin Yang served her some food with his chopsticks, only glancing at her faintly.

He knew his wife best; despite her words, when it truly came time for her to handle matters, she wouldn't hesitate to leave him.

Feeling resentful yet unable to complain, he expressed his feelings in another way.

All the longing and love from the past month were poured out onto her.

Lin Chuxia felt that the entire night was both sweet and lengthy, like floating in air and swimming in water, soothingly drifting, with only one thing on her mind.

The old doctor's medical skills must be questionable; Qin Yang's vigor, his stamina...

If she couldn't conceive, it must certainly be her own issue.