

Switched M 51

Chapter 51 Bah, Pretty Boy!

Sun Lanlan thinks this idea can work, smiling and nodding, "Then I'll do as you suggest. By the way, when should I start working?"

"The sooner the better. Also, what is your third brother doing now? Is he tight-lipped?"

To run the cooked food business, they need at least two people. Lanlan's third brother, who is familiar to them, is not good at farming. He is lively, and in the past life, he did not continue farming either, but dabbled in reselling some electronic equipment, living better than most.

Upon hearing this, Sun Lanlan knew what Lin Chuxia meant, "Don't worry, my third brother may seem unreliable, but he's actually the most dependable one at home. Let me put it this way, when we were children and got caught doing mischief, if my mom started questioning, my eldest brother and second brother would spill everything right away, but my third brother? He wouldn't say a word even if his life depended on it."

Lin Chuxia: "..."

That's quite a unique strength.

"Alright, go back and discuss it with your third brother first, see if he would like to work here. The salary is 35 yuan a month, and there's a bonus for good performance. If he agrees, you both can come together."

"No need to ask, I'm sure my third brother will agree. You know him, as long as it doesn't involve farming, he's willing to do anything," especially with a monthly salary of 35 yuan. Even the hardest work at the brick kiln in the north of the village doesn't pay that much.

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Let your third brother discuss it with Aunt Sun. Tell her he found work that includes you, and push back the marriage too. You talk to your third brother privately that you don't want to marry someone who farms, he should help speak for you."

Sun Lanlan thinks this is a reliable plan and suddenly can't sit still. She didn't even take a bite of her bun, and rushed home to discuss work with her third brother.

Lin Chuxia didn't hold her back and packed some buns for her to take home.

Standing at the door watching Sun Lanlan walk away, Lin Chuxia glanced in the direction of the train station, seeing that the spot under the big tree where Old Sir He was usually found was empty.

That old man, did she really scare him away?

Without dwelling on it, she called Su Wensong over to discuss adding cooked food to their menu.

She didn't plan to make cooked food in the Su Family's yard. Cleaning pig offal is quite dirty and attracts flies over time, which could affect both Granny Su's living environment and their Bun Shop.

And she wants to genuinely work on the cooked food business, preferably finding a separate yard for it.

Su Wensong, who is more familiar with the area, was entrusted with finding a place.

Su Wensong, without hesitation, nodded and asked Lin Chuxia if she had any specifications for the yard.

Lin Chuxia thought for a moment, "As close to the Bun Shop as possible, preferably a larger yard."

Around here, most courtyards belonged to family housing of various workplaces, some were privately owned, not very large, mostly with two or three rooms. There were a few with four or five rooms in one courtyard.

"Alright, I'll go check it out after the lunch rush."

Su Wensong took note and returned to his work, while Lin Chuxia also went to check on the cold dishes, just as she looked up to see Qin Han standing at the doorway.

"Brother, what brings you here?"

Qin Han stopped following Su Wensong with his eyes and nodded with a smile, "Just delivered some vegetables at the station, decided to drop by and check this place out, sister-in-law, you've done a great job setting this up."

It was just around mealtime, there weren't many people eating inside the shop, but there were quite a few buying takeout buns outside the window.

Granny Sun was joyfully selling buns at the window, very busy.

Lin Chuxia pointed to an empty table for him to sit, pouring him a glass of water, "It's alright, there's a good flow of customers here, and many residents live nearby. Hold on for a moment, brother, I'll get you something to eat."

"No rush, I'm just here to see."

It had been a while since the Bun Shop opened, he had always wanted to check it out, but he had been busy with

"You have to eat even if you're busy."

Lin Chuxia had just placed a plate of meat buns on the table when Su Wensong came over and asked her to taste some cold dishes.

Mixing cold dishes isn't a technical task, now both Granny Sun and Su Wensong can do it, but they let Lin Chuxia taste it to check the flavor.

Lin Chuxia took the chopsticks, picked a bite from the small dish Su Wensong held up, and nodded, "Not bad, bring over a plate of this. This is my big brother, add a few more varieties."

Su Wensong smiled and greeted Qin Han, calling him big brother.

Qin Han nodded slightly, didn't respond, or give a smile, his eyes followed the man getting the cold dishes.

Lin Chuxia saw him staring at Su Wensong and asked, "What's the matter, big brother?"

Qin Han pointed, "Is he a worker at your shop?"

"Yes, this shop is rented from the Su Family, and he is a returned educated youth. He had no job, so now he works in the shop."

"Educated youth? No wonder he looks so bookish. Since he's educated, why is he working as a helper in your shop? Didn't the returned educated youth get job placements?"

This was the first time Lin Chuxia saw Qin Han like this; what's with the bookish look?

She glanced at Su Wensong bringing the cold dishes over.

She remembered the first time she saw him, his face full of worldly weariness, but now after working in the shop, protected from wind and sun, his skin had become somewhat refined.

In their catering business, personal hygiene is important. After she mentioned it twice, both Su Wensong and Granny Sun paid great attention. Everyday clean clothes made them look more spirited.

If Su Wensong appeared as a thirty-something middle-aged man when they first met, now at least his age and appearance matched.

And being from a scholarly Su Family, some qualities are inherent.

Previously, she had not noticed, but as her big brother mentioned, Su Wensong indeed had a restrained and courteous gentlemanly aura.

"Please enjoy, big brother," Su Wensong placed the dishes on the table, nodded, and went off to handle other things.

Qin Han sneered, if it weren't for maintaining composure in front of his sister, he'd frankly roll his eyes.

Big brother? Calling whom big brother?

He is Qin Yang, Lin Chuxia's big brother, what relation does he have with him?

He aggressively bit into a meat bun, picked up the chopsticks to grab some cold dishes but paused.

He had been watching; that guy had asked his sister to taste the dish, and his eyes never left her face.

Pah, pretty boy!

Lin Chuxia saw Qin Han in such a petulant state, not understanding what his issue was. Maybe he couldn't relax sitting next to her. Looking for an excuse, she left, telling him to help himself to more buns and porridge if needed.

Qin Han, of course, had no objections to Lin Chuxia, his sister. He acknowledged her and let her be busy, while he ate and observed the surroundings.

The crowd was getting bigger; a long queue had formed at the window to buy buns, and the shop's tables were mostly occupied, with some people coming over to share a table with him.

Qin Han noticed that Old Sir He and Lin Chuxia were quite familiar. He also struck up a conversation with Old Sir He, "Do you often come here to eat?"

"Yes, quite often. Lin Family's buns are delicious. My old lady has never managed to make such tasty buns in her lifetime."

"That's true, their buns are delicious," Qin Han agreed proudly, "I see you're quite familiar with that Su... Su..."

"Are you talking about Wensong?"

Chapter 52: Her Boyfriend?

"Yes, that very familiar Wensong. Do you live nearby?"

"Sure, I've seen that kid grow up. Wensong is a good boy, sensible and polite. It's just that the Su Family children were born at an unfortunate time, but that's all in the past. Look at the bun shop business he's running with his partner, how good is it? The good days will always come."

"His... his partner?" Qin Han's neck went stiff, and he nearly choked on a bun.

"Ah? Isn't Lin his partner? I think they are quite a match, both talented and beautiful," the old man said with a smile, taking a bite of Qin Han's cold dish.

Qin Han pushed the cold dishes towards the old man, thought for a moment, then got a bottle of liquor and two cups from the counter, and poured the old man a cup.

The old man took a sip with a smile.

Qin Han also poured himself a cup and clinked glasses with the old man before continuing the conversation. "Old man, you seem like a wise person, but I must disagree with what you just said."

"Hmm?" The old man took a sip of liquor and a bite of the dish.

"You see, Lin... the Lin you mentioned, doesn't she look radiant? She looks to be in her twenties, but that Mr. Su, his face is all wrinkled, even more so than mine, how can they be a perfect match? Besides, look at the shop sign, it says 'Qin's Buns Shop,' not 'Su's Dumpling Shop.'"

The old man was taken aback, "Really? Is Lin's surname Qin?"

Qin Han filled the old man's cup, "Lin's surname is Lin, her man is surnamed Qin."

The old man blinked, thought for a while, then seriously asked, "Oh, when did Wensong change his surname to Qin?"

Qin Han: "..."

.....

Lin Chuxia saw Qin Han somehow started drinking with an old man and felt that their cold dishes were getting scarce, so she served two more plates and brought them over.

When Qin Han saw Lin Chuxia coming over, he stood up to greet her, "Sister-in-law, tell the old man, are we family?"

Lin Chuxia didn't understand what Qin Han was getting at but smiled and nodded, "Yes," seeing that the old man was a regular customer, she smiled and explained, "This is my brother."

"Not right, I'm your older uncle, your husband's older brother," Qin Han corrected.

Lin Chuxia didn't see any difference but followed his lead, "Yes, older uncle."

"Ah, that's more like it. Old man, you see, I didn't lie to you, did I? Chuxia, who you called Lin, she's my brother's wife. My brother is very capable, one of the first university students after the restoration of the college entrance exam. For how many years in Qin Family Village, there was only one university graduate, and he's a bridge designer..."

Watching Qin Han chatting away with the old man, Lin Chuxia shook her head with a smile.

The temperaments of the Qin brothers, Qin Han, and Qin Yang, sometimes really are...

Their appearances are so upright, but they both have a childlike aspect to them.

Qin Han and the old man drank from the time when there were few customers in the shop till there were many, then few again. The old man was a bit drunk, and his family members, seeing he hadn't returned for a long time, came to look for him in the shop.

Seeing that he was drinking with a stranger, they complained about his love for alcohol while helping him home.

Qin Han held his liquor well, his face slightly flushed but not drunk. After finishing his meal, he wanted to have a bowl of porridge. Carrying his empty bowl, he went to get some.

Su Wensong saw him and quickly came over to help, "Big brother, let me serve you."

Qin Han moved the bowl to one side, "No need, when I'm eating at my brother and sister-in-law's shop, I don't need help from others."

Su Wensong saw the wariness in his eyes and laughed, "All right, big brother, please feel free."

There was nothing much to do in the shop, and he still had to go house hunting.

.....

Qin Han got home and Zhang Gui Lan was about to go work in the fields. Seeing him, she asked, "Why are you back so late? Were there many people delivering vegetables at the station? And why do I smell alcohol on you? Have you been drinking?"

"After delivering the vegetables, I stopped by my sister-in-law's bun shop."

Qin Han started stripping off his clothes in the courtyard, got a towel, and began to wipe his body with water.

It was hot in summer, and working amongst the beans meant you'd be sweating through your clothes.

Zhang Gui Lan watched his casual manner and reminded with a frown, "Even when she's not at home, you should still be mindful. It wouldn't be good if your sister-in-law suddenly returned home and caught you like this, as you are the elder uncle."

There's a saying, 'Better to sit on the leg of a young uncle than to pass by in front of an elder uncle,' as there's supposed to be a proper distance between the elder uncle and the sister-in-law.

"Uh huh, I know, I'll be more careful next time," Qin Han replied nonchalantly.

Seeing his lack of enthusiasm, Zhang Gui Lan squatted down beside him and struck up a conversation, "How's the sister-in-law's bun shop doing? The business must be quite good, right?"

Qin Han sighed, "What else can I say, anything is better than farming. I spent lunchtime at my sister-in-law's bun shop, watching people coming and going, each spending a dollar or eighty cents, and the money came so easily. Then look at us, scraping food out of the soil with our sweat, planting beans and eggplants, nurturing them from tiny sprouts, hoping for blossoms, hoping for fruit, only to end up with them rotting in the fields unwanted. Everyone said the market economy is good, but for us old farmers, it's not necessarily the case."

Zhang Gui Lan knew Qin Han had always wanted to do business, and if it weren't for her holding him back, he would have joined his sister-in-law in the bun business a long time ago.

It was too late to say anything now, she could only comfort her husband, "You can't say that, 'No sparrow starves to death under heaven.' We are just unlucky this season with the eggplants and beans being worthless. Look at those who planted hot peppers, they made money, didn't they? Next year, we'll plan properly, there are still opportunities to make money."

"Uh-huh," Qin Han grunted in response and plunged his head into the cool water to wash his hair.

Suddenly, Zhang Gui Lan remembered something, "I heard from Mother that the sister-in-law hired two people to work in her shop."

At this Qin Han got angry, "Not just two, there's also a man, looking to be under thirty, quite cultured in appearance. I've heard he's a returned 'Educated Youth' from the city. Think about it, of all the places to go, why work for a private business? Who can't do odd jobs in a restaurant? For an educated young man to do this, isn't it just eating for the sake of eating?"

"Keep your voice down," Zhang Gui Lan slapped her husband's hand and glanced towards her mother-in-law's room, "If the sister-in-law wants to hire him, she must see him as a good fit. Why are you reacting so strongly?"

Qin Han realized something too and whispered to his wife, "How could I not react strongly? Just look at sister-in-law's face, then consider her capabilities."

As a man, he knew just how attractive a woman like Lin Chuxia was to men.

Not to mention others, even his younger brother who had always aspired to be a monk, completely changed when he met Lin Chuxia. The effect on other men was even less to say.

"Our brother finally married such a good wife, and since he's away from home all year round, shouldn't I, as his older brother, keep an eye out for him? You didn't see that guy, with his pretentious way of talking. I've heard women like that cultured type..."

"Isn't that a bit much? Our second brother is not bad either. He has the looks and the stature, not to mention education—a college graduate has to be more cultured than him, doesn't he?"

Zhang Gui Lan had confidence in her brother-in-law.

But Qin Han was not that optimistic, "Distant waters can't quench immediate thirst. No matter how good our second brother is, he's not around. That kid is always hovering around the sister-in-law. Even if she has no intentions, that kid might. As the saying goes, 'It's not the theft but the thief that worries us.' No, I have to remember to write to our second brother tonight to see if he can come back for the Mid-Autumn Festival. It can't go on like before, not coming home all year round. He also needs to write letters more often, can't just marry a wife and then forget about her. If someone else runs off with her, then there'll be plenty of crying."

Zhang Gui Lan also felt it made sense, "Then you go write now. Don't work in the fields this afternoon. Once the letter is written, send it off straight away."

Chapter 53: Lacking Money

Lin Chuxia really had no idea that Qin Han developed such animosity towards Su Wensong just from one visit to the store.

The next day, Sun Lanlan came over, and with her, her third brother Sun Bingnan.

As soon as she arrived at the store, Sun Lanlan started talking to Lin Chuxia about marriage prospects, "The moment my mom heard that my third brother and I were coming to the city to work, she didn't hesitate to call off the arranged marriage that wasn't set in stone. That's all in the past now. She also said that with a job in the city, I should work hard. Once you're employed here, any future matchmakers will have to think twice. If not a city-dweller, at least someone who works in the city."

This outcome was within Lin Chuxia's expectations. The villagers, generation after generation of farmers, dreamed of escaping the fields. There had been no opportunity before, but with relaxed policies now, and with Sun Lanlan securing a job in the city, why would Aunt Sun want her to marry a farmer and return to village life?

With the addition of Sun Lanlan and Sun Bingnan, work in the shop suddenly became much easier.

After acclimatizing the two newcomers to the job for a couple of days, Lin Chuxia felt comfortable leaving them to it and went with Su Wensong to look for houses.

Su Wensong had already checked out a few places in those two days, two of which were quite well-located: one was for rent only, the other could be either rented or sold.

Lin Chuxia first visited the closer one, a courtyard with three rooms but no side rooms, which made it appear quite spacious. The owner had moved to a new family building and only wanted to rent the courtyard, mentioning they still had elderly relatives in the countryside who might move into the city when they got older.

The yard looked quite suitable, spacious enough for any kind of arrangement.

However, Lin Chuxia didn't rush to make a decision and went to check out the slightly more distant one.

It was an ancestral home with four main rooms and two side rooms.

Previously, two elderly residents lived there, but their children were all out of town. Last year, one of the elders passed away, and the surviving one was taken by a son, leaving the house empty.

It just so happened that the son was back for the annual remembrance of the deceased elder and wanted to deal with the property. He preferred a long-term lease, but if the price was right, he was willing to sell.

Because it was an old house, the condition was somewhat dilapidated, and it had hosted a funeral not long before, which left it looking a bit desolate.

Worried that Lin Chuxia might be superstitious, Su Wensong didn't strongly recommend this courtyard.

Lin Chuxia looked around the courtyard inside and out, "What's the asking price for this place?"

"For rent, it's cheap. The owner is aware of the house's state and only asks for 80 yuan a year. He hopes for a minimum of a two-year lease. If you're buying, the bottom price is this number..." Su Wensong held up three fingers.

3000 yuan!

Lin Chuxia inspected the house's beams and windows. Though in disrepair, with some fixing up, it could still serve its purpose. Yet, in the long term, there could be hidden problems.

The price of 3000 yuan was indeed not expensive.

The housing market had just opened up. With few people selling and even fewer buying, that's why prices were pressed so low.

In a couple of years, when people become more aware of buying properties, especially when the family unit buildings transition from public to private ownership, the price of such small courtyards would generally hit 1000 yuan per room, not something just anyone could afford.

Seeing her careful consideration, Su Wensong ventured to ask, "Are you thinking of buying this place?"

Lin Chuxia stepped out of the house, closed the door behind her, and dusted off her hands, "I do have that in mind," but the problem is the lack of money.

"When is the owner leaving?"

"In addition to performing the annual remembrance for the elder, the owner is here to deal with the house and will stay at most three more days, as he has work elsewhere."

Lin Chuxia nodded, "Go talk to the owner and push down the price further. If we buy it, can we lower the price a bit more? And is there any flexibility to extend the time by a couple of days? I'll try to figure out how to raise some money."

"Going to borrow money?"

Although aware that the question was somewhat abrupt, Su Wensong also knew about Lin Chuxia's financial situation.

Born from a peasant family, her husband working away from home, even though he earns wages, how much can a worker earn nowadays?

3000 yuan is no small sum, a worker who doesn't eat or spend, it would take nearly 10 years to save up, which a typical family can't afford.

Let alone the fact that the investment made in starting their business was not small, he vaguely knew that Lin Chuxia had already put in all her family's savings at that time.

"Should be enough, let's go back."

Lin Chuxia returned to the shop and asked Sun Bingnan to go to the butcher's to buy some offal and a rack of ribs. After buying them, she started cleaning them in the courtyard.

Su Wensong went straight to the landlord to settle things and came back to the Bun Shop, only to see Lin Chuxia cleaning a pile of offal in the yard, ready to cook some prepared food.

He pulled Sun Bingnan aside and asked, "Has the boss been doing this all along?"

"Ah," Sun Bingnan replied with a sense of cluelessness, nodding, "Didn't we say that our Bun Shop is going to sell cooked food?"

Selling cooked food wasn't supposed to be right now, Su Wensong told him to get busy, and he went to find Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia had just finished cleaning the offal and washed the ground too.

Seeing Su Wensong return, she smiled and pointed at a basin of raw offal, "You're back just in time, help me bring this to the back kitchen."

They used a large pot for steaming buns in the back kitchen.

Su Wensong bent down and directly carried a large basin of offal to the back kitchen, while watching Lin Chuxia skillfully put meat into the pot, he said, "The landlord dropped another 200 yuan, 2800 is the lowest he can go, and he's giving us at most 5 more days."

Lin Chuxia threw the last handful of seasoning into the pot, "5 days is enough," she looked at Su Wensong, "If we can't get the money in 5 days, then we will just have to rent."

She had just calculated the accounts, and the Bun Shop had nearly made one thousand yuan since its opening more than twenty days ago.

The end of the month was approaching, and she needed to pay her employees' salaries, plus there was a certain investment involved in making prepared food, and the operation of the Bun Shop also required capital for turnover.

All this accounted for, there was a shortfall of at least two thousand or more.

Su Wensong pursed his lips, thinking about where he could help her borrow some money, but after thinking it through, he realized that having returned from the countryside after all these years, he was practically friendless.

Lin Chuxia stewed the meat and left Su Wensong to watch it while she went out.

She went straight to the bank.

Su Wensong was right; she was indeed planning to borrow money, planning to take out a loan from the bank to buy a property.

Loans for buying property were not mortgage loans at the time, but simply borrowing money from the bank.

Lin Chuxia had walked this road in her past life, so she had a certain understanding of the procedures for bank loans.

However, because the loans in her previous life occurred several years later, she came to confirm, in case there were any changes.

Nowadays, loans are all collateral-based, requiring not only collateral but also a guarantor, who needs to be a public servant.

When you can't repay the money, the options are either auctioning the collateral or directly deducting it from the guarantor's salary.

At that time, being a worker was a solid job with guaranteed succession; the bank's method was undoubtedly a double insurance, a deal that would surely make a profit without loss.

Coming out of the bank, Lin Chuxia felt much relieved; the Bun Shop met the collateral requirements. The next step was to find a guarantor.

Back at the Bun Shop, from afar, she could smell the aroma of pork—it was almost done, and since it was for personal consumption, she could use a little higher heat.

Sun Lanlan saw her return, promptly served the last customer, and hurried over, "Chuxia, are we selling meat in our store today? Just now, several customers asked if we have new products in our store, and I told them that we would sell cooked food in the future."

Chapter 54: He Doesn't Want Face, Huh?

Lin Chuxia nodded in appreciation, giving her a thumbs-up, "Truly worthy of being my sister, so smart. If anyone asks, just tell them that, but today we are not selling anything, let them await the good news."

Sun Lanlan was like a grade-schooler praised by her teacher, barely stopping herself from hopping on the spot, "Mm, okay."

These past few days working in the store, she had learned a lot.

She didn't aim to be as incredible as her sisters but wanted to do her job well and be a capable helper to them, just like Brother Su.

Of course, her immediate duty was to oversee the Bun Shop and take good care of every customer.

That was the spirit of the meeting conveyed by Lin Chuxia on their first day of work.

Sun Lanlan still remembered how she felt then, looking at the sister she had grown up with, who was saying those impressive things she had never heard of, feeling as if her sister was shining all over.

She thought it was because she was inexperienced in the world, but on the way home after her first workday, her third elder brother talked to her the entire time, saying that they should work hard with Lin Chuxia. Being on good terms with Lin Chuxia was a blessing for her and the Sun Family. In the future, they should learn more, observe more, and do more at the store, and no matter what happened, as Lin Chuxia's family, they should stand by her side.

Sun Lanlan knew that her sister's charm was not just effective on her; it was the same for her third brother and everyone at the store.

Lin Chuxia had no idea about the psychological changes in Sun Lanlan and her third brother. Seeing that the time was about right, she took out the meat to cool off for a moment, then packed them into several food bags, which she then placed into a handbag.

A black leather handbag, with the word "capital" stamped on the lower left corner—it was the standard travel gear of that era.

After finishing packing, she washed her face with tap water, combed her hair, and hung the bag on the handlebars of her bike, then headed straight for the vegetable station.

She arrived just on time. Li Jian was about to take his meal container to the canteen for food when he opened the door and saw Lin Chuxia coming towards him.

Looking at her today, in a white shirt with tiny flowers and black trousers, although not as formal as on the opening day of the Bun Shop, she had an added touch of capability about her. He joked, "Dressed like you're on a business trip, what brings you to my place?"

Lin Chuxia parked her bike in front of the office door, setting it up stably, and took a bag of cooked food from her handbag, "I plan to add some cooked food to my shop's offerings. I made a pot today, not sure how it tastes—give it a try and let me know if it has market potential."

"You've come all this way just to let me have a taste?" Li was a bit skeptical; from what he knew about this woman, she was not one to show up without a good reason.

Despite his thoughts, he let her into the office.

Everyone was out for lunch, so the office was empty.

Lin Chuxia clicked her tongue, "You, I can't believe you sometimes. What kind of relationship do we have? We've been doing business since I was selling vegetables. Back then, you saw it wasn't easy for a woman like me to sell veggies, and you looked out for me whenever you could. I know you're a good person, and others would do the same, but for me, that's a huge favor. Even though I'm not selling veggies now, I won't forget your kindness."

Li Jian dug at his ear, "I'm not sure I can handle such words."

"Hey, which is your desk?" Lin Chuxia didn't press the issue further.

"The one right next to you," Li walked over, took the meat directly from her, and placed it in the cabinet of his desk.

Talk aside, teasing aside, the meat needed to be eaten nonetheless.

Besides, facing this woman, even if he didn't eat the meat, she would still do whatever she needed to do.

Lin Chuxia acted as if she had just noticed the meal container in his hand, "Am I holding you up from getting your meal at the canteen? Never mind, let's go eat at the State-Owned Restaurant."

Li Jian couldn't help wanting to burst into laughter, tossing the lunch pail onto the table, "Fine then, I'll treat you today."

"But that won't do, it was me who delayed your meal, I should be the one treating."

The two left the office one after the other, with Lin Chuxia pushing her bicycle, and Li Jian noticed the bulging handbag on her handlebars, but he only glanced before turning his gaze away.

Sometimes even Lin Chuxia admires her own luck; they had hardly walked a few steps when a person came down the road—it was the station chief from the vegetable station.

Of course, Lin Chuxia recognized him, he didn't recognize Lin Chuxia, but isn't Li Jian right beside her?

When Li Jian saw Station Chief Yang, he naturally greeted him, and Station Chief Yang nodded back slightly, a relationship between colleagues and also supervisor and subordinate, that was enough.

Just as he was about to pass by them, he heard the girl beside Li Jian exclaim softly, "Bro, so this is Station Chief Yang you always talk about."

Li Jian felt a twitch in his forehead, but before he could react, Lin Chuxia already introduced herself to Station Chief Yang, "Station Chief Yang, hello, I am Li Jian's cousin. I often hear my brother mention you at home, saying that you have a landscape in your heart and a universe in your belly, being as gentle as water in your demeanor and as unyielding as a mountain in your deeds, that you are the person he admires the most."

Li Jian beside her, "..."

I didn't, I haven't, I never said anything.

Yang Shulin wasn't knocked down by Lin Chuxia's few words of sweet talk, his sharp eyes turned towards Li Jian.

He was in his fifties, and though just a vegetable station chief, he held a significant position during the planned economy era.

The aura of someone long in a position of power was not weak.

Li Jian was grumbling inside, if he knew earlier, he wouldn't have gone out with this troublesome person; he feigned a smile, "Station Chief Yang, my cousin is young, please don't take it to heart," turning his head, he admonished in a pretentious manner, "Why do you say these things in front of Station Chief Yang?" As if he didn't care about his face.

Lin Chuxia looked innocently and asked, "Why, can't I say that?"

Station Chief Yang was just confirming who this unfamiliar girl was and didn't intend to make it difficult for them, "It's alright."

Lin Chuxia's smile was very genuine, "I knew Station Chief Yang wouldn't take us to heart. Station Chief Yang, I am from Qin Family Village, my mom would be certainly proud to know that I've met you. Right, Bro, the cooked food that mom asked me to bring to my second aunt, let's also have Station Chief Yang try some," she said while digging out a package of cooked food from her handbag and shoved it into Li Jian's hands.

Li Jian felt the cooked food was like a hot potato, but at this point, he couldn't say anything else, "Station Chief Yang, it's homemade, please don't disdain it."

Lin Chuxia chimed in from the side, "Yes, it's homemade and clean, please try it, Station Chief Yang."

Everything Lin Chuxia packed was similar—pig heart, pig liver, pig head meat, and braised ribs.

Yang Shulin saw that the items indeed looked homemade, with steam on the bag as if they were still warm.

Moreover, nobody usually gives pig head meat as a gift to get things done, so he accepted it.

"Then thank you, Little Li, I didn't expect you to have such a cousin," the girl is quite sharp.

From Qin Family Village, is she a vegetable farmer?

Li Jian thought to himself: Yes, our genes are not on the same strand, not only you didn't expect this, I didn't either.

After bidding farewell to Station Chief Yang, Li Jian hurriedly pulled Lin Chuxia along to leave, he couldn't let this lady cause another stir in the vegetable station.

They arrived at the State-Owned Restaurant still feeling apprehensive, "Tell me, why did you provoke the station chief? Don't you know how strict our station chief is?" He was trembling when handing over the cooked food, for fear that Station Chief Yang wouldn't accept it.

Chapter 55: If He Believes, He's a Fool

Lin Chuxia certainly knew what kind of person Station Chief Yang was: serious, stiff, and diligent in his work, epitomizing the most respectable individuals of that era.

A red heart toward the sun, burning his own energy, making contributions to the revolutionary cause.

It's just that the times were changing, and the gradual decline of the produce station allowed all his ambitions to eventually go down the drain.

In her previous life, she and Li Guangyuan were vegetable vendors, and she had learned a lot about the conditions of the produce station, naturally grasping a clear picture of Station Chief Yang's deeds.

Lin Chuxia always believed that opportunities were there for those who were prepared, and moreover, connections were the ladder to success. For someone of humble origins like herself, she needed to exchange thick skin for connections.

It was precisely because of this that, under such harsh conditions in her past life, she had carved out a broad and successful path for herself.

Yet her face wore an innocent expression, "Just think of it as if I really do admire Station Chief Yang."

Li Jian rolled his eyes; he'd be a fool to believe that.

Today at the State-Owned Restaurant, braised fish and braised ribs were on offer, and Lin Chuxia ordered one of each, with a simple Yangchun noodles as the main dish.

During the meal, Li Jian still felt uneasy, "You didn't come to me today for nothing, did you?"

"Brother, look at what you're saying, isn't that rather distant? I just wanted you to try the prepared food, give me some feedback. If Station Chief Yang has any comments or suggestions as well, it would be great if you could collect them for me."

"Shut it," as if he'd go to Station Chief Yang for that.

Li Jian decided not to dwell on this topic and picked up a piece of fish, chatting idly while picking out the bones.

"Speaking of Station Chief Yang, he really is an excellent chief for our station. You don't know, this latter half of the year we've had an excess of vegetables. The ones collected at the station can't all be distributed, rotting by the hundreds of pounds in our warehouses. We, the lower ranks, are privately saying we shouldn't collect them anymore. After all the hard work, we can't make money and even have to contribute out of our own pockets. If this continues, the produce station will sooner or later shut down. But Station Chief Yang said, precisely because of the oversupply of vegetables, many farmers are counting on delivering their crops to the produce station. If the station stops accepting produce, the farmers would really have worked for a whole year in vain..."

Lin Chuxia saw that he spoke rather sadly and suggested, "Shall I get you a bottle of wine?"

With that one sentence, she utterly shattered Li Jian's defenses.

He snorted with laughter, looking at her with a mix of exasperation and grievance.

Lin Chuxia didn't like to see a grown man wallow in sorrow over minor troubles. If there were difficulties, just go solve them.

"Are you still just supplying vegetables to Ancheng County's supply points?"

"Pretty much, besides supply points there are a few units and factory canteens. But now that the market has opened up, the vegetables at the supply points can't be sold. Several points were already canceled."

If it weren't for the need of units' canteens to procure invoices for reimbursement, they probably wouldn't come to the produce station for vegetables.

"Have you not considered that, after the opening of the market, there might be regional specificities to vegetables?"

Li Jian was slightly startled.

He naturally knew that vegetables had regional characteristics. For instance, Chinese cabbage was only common in the north, but southern people didn't like to eat it.

During the market economy era, transporting Chinese cabbage from north to south would hardly be profitable. A single cabbage weighing more than ten pounds was too much for one person to buy, and in the end, it wouldn't even cover the transportation costs.

But he felt that Lin Chuxia wasn't referring to this.

"Let's hear your thoughts."

Lin Chuxia's view was straightforward. With land freshly assigned to the farmers, many lacked a systematic approach to farming.

Back in the production team days, they would farm wherever directed, not knowing how to think for themselves. When it came to farming, they simply followed suit with whatever others planted, and when they saw others making money, they would mindlessly jump on the bandwagon.

Just like how green beans sold for a good price in the first half of the year, and no one wants them in the second half.

This situation is caused by a small range, isn't the market balanced again when we break through these small ranges one by one?

Ancheng County's green beans were so cheap they couldn't sell, but what about the neighboring Dacheng County, and Yongqing County? If not, why not look a bit farther to the prefecture-level city, or even the bigger population of the provincial-level city?

For many years, the pattern at the produce stations has been for others to come and deliver or pick up the produce. What if we change from passive to active? Wouldn't we seize the market then?

Li Jian suddenly realized and couldn't even care about eating, "What you said is absolutely feasible. Why didn't I think of that?"

Lin Chuxia saw his excited look and knew in her heart that it was not difficult. It's just that people of their period hadn't thought of it.

Sometimes, when we feel it's hard to take a step, it's not the environment that restricts us, but the outdated way of thinking that becomes the shackles on our way forward, trapping us like prisoners, unable to extricate ourselves. This is prisoner's thinking.

When a person's thoughts become ossified, they become ignorant.

Of course, Lin Chuxia's suggestions are more based on what she saw in her previous life.

Back then, whether it was vegetables or fruits, the transportation between the north and south was convenient, truly achieving sufficient supply for each region.

Thinking of transportation inevitably reminds her of Qin Yang and others who contributed to the country's infrastructure.

"You really helped me a lot. You don't know how much the produce station has been focusing on this recently," Li Jian said a bit excitedly, as he could imagine the changing outcome if these ideas were organized into a proposal and presented.

Station Chief Yang is a man of action and will surely see the feasibility and prospects of this proposal.

"Let's eat first, or the noodles will clump up," Lin Chuxia reminded.

Li Jian shook his head with a smile, "Girl, listening to you is better than reading ten years of books. I don't even know how to thank you."

Lin Chuxia looked up, "Brother Li, do you really want to thank me?"

Li Jian's smile suddenly stiffened, and as he slowly looked up, he saw Lin Chuxia's radiant smile that made his heart thump wildly.

.....

On the road to the produce station, Li Jian glanced at the woman pushing the bicycle beside him and spoke grumpily, "I've agreed to your request, why are you still following me?"

He knew that Lin Chuxia was absolutely not someone to be trifled with. She seems innocent and harmless, but who knows how many traps she has laid out for you to fall into.

Once careless, you would fall right into her trap.

3000 yuan as a bank guarantee, without eating or drinking, would take him seven to eight years to earn that much money.

Lin Chuxia didn't care about his attitude at all, "I'm going to the produce station again and by the way, I'll drop off some prepared food for Brother Wang. It was Brother Li who helped me get acquainted with Brother Wang. You know I am a person who knows to reciprocate."

Li Jian curled his lips and snorted coldly, "I don't know about repaying kindness, but I do know you have a slick tongue. Do whatever you want, I need to go back and rest."

He needed to go back and think carefully about expanding sales channels and quickly put together a proposal, or else his role as the guarantor would be in vain.

"Alright, Brother Li, do as you please, don't mind me. Oh, and pass this prepared food to Director Hu for me. Like I said, I'm someone who is grateful."

"Would you just shut up?"

Li Jian took the bag of prepared food and didn't even want to give her a glance.

Lin Chuxia waved at his retreating figure, "I'll wait for the good news from Brother Li."

Li Jian waved his hand back at her without turning around, showing utter disdain.