

Switched M 531

Chapter 531: A Complete Family

Lately, Lin Chuxia has developed a new hobby: making all kinds of little clothes.

When Jiang Hong had a baby earlier, Lin Chuxia watched her making those little clothes and felt a bit envious.

Now that it's her turn, she finds making children's clothes so interesting.

Each piece of clothing carries her love and hope, and Lin Chuxia enjoys it immensely.

The fabric store has become her favorite place to visit.

After Qin Yang left, Lin Chuxia took out the fabric she bought last time, along with a new book on cutting clothes, and scaled down the designs by a few times.

Just as she was about to cut, someone called her name from outside, and Yuan Bao started barking too.

Lin Chuxia put down the scissors and went out; she recognized Sister-in-law Gong's voice.

"Sister-in-law, why are you here? Are you feeling better?"

Lin Chuxia greeted her with a smile, telling Yuan Bao to go back to its doghouse obediently.

"I'm much better now, thanks to you and Qin Yang for taking me to the hospital that day."

Sister-in-law Gong had been discharged for a few days. She always felt grateful to Qin Yang and Lin Chuxia and wanted to visit, but her husband, Old Wei, insisted she rest a bit longer. Today, seeing the nice weather, she finally got to come out.

Sister-in-law Gong handed a bag to Lin Chuxia, "This is cured meat and sausages sent from my hometown. I don't know if you like them, but I brought you some to try."

Lin Chuxia's eyes lit up immediately, "This is a treat, thank you, sister-in-law."

Since getting pregnant, she found herself craving food more, with a bigger appetite and a constant sense of not being full enough.

The other day, there were some green garlic shoots from the greenhouse, and she was thinking about sautéing them with cured meat.

Unfortunately, while they had garlic shoots, cured meat was hard to come by.

In their area, it was nearly impossible to find cured meat and sausages, even at the market.

Unlike areas with developed transportation and resources, where you can eat whatever you want year-round.

But just as she was thinking about it, cured meat showed up.

Sister-in-law Gong was happy to see her genuine joy.

She had been worried that, given Mr. Qin's family's good condition, they might not appreciate these simple things.

"As long as you like it."

The two chatted as they walked into the house.

Sister-in-law Gong immediately noticed the soft-colored fabric on the table and a small piece of clothing beside it.

Her gaze swept over Lin Chuxia's belly.

"Are you expecting?"

Lin Chuxia smiled with tenderness and nodded openly, "Yes, the pregnancy is still early, just two months. Qin Yang wants me to rest at home, so I thought I'd do some sewing while I'm idle."

"Oh, congratulations! It's about time you two had a child."

Sister-in-law Gong knew they had been married for years and thought they hadn't wanted a child because of Lin Chuxia's busy work schedule.

"Work is never-ending, and money is never enough, but children are the continuation of a couple's life, binding your and his bloodlines; that's what makes a family complete."

She seemed to recall something, smiling softly, "Having a child gives you new goals in life. It's a different life altogether, and although having a child may cause some chaos, it's a different kind of happiness. One plus one is greater than two."

Lin Chuxia touched her belly, "Absolutely, sister-in-law," she had long been looking forward to such a life.

Sister-in-law Gong looked interested in the soft fabric, "What do you plan to make for the baby?"

"I'm planning to make a small jacket but don't know where to start," Lin Chuxia replied with an embarrassed smile.

The clothes she'd been making were all based on patterns, but most were adult styles.

When she scaled them down to make children's clothing, something always seemed a bit off.

Next to her was a piece she had just completed, intending to improve it today based on her pattern and experience.

Sister-in-law Gong picked up the small garment, looking it over and then at the pattern, and smiled slightly.

"You've got a deft hand to make something just from looking at a pattern, but this isn't quite right. Baby clothes aren't the same as ours; baby's skin is delicate, so minimize seams when making clothes, especially in the front..."

As Sister-in-law Gong spoke, Lin Chuxia's eyes brightened.

She realized why her little clothes never seemed quite right. Hearing Sister-in-law Gong's advice, everything became clear.

"If you don't mind, I could cut you out a sample to try."

"Of course I don't mind," Lin Chuxia immediately handed the scissors to Sister-in-law Gong, "Had I known you're skilled, I would've come to you earlier with the fabric."

"It's not a big deal; it's not as complicated as you think. Kids' clothes are best kept simple."

Sister-in-law Gong took the scissors, cut the fabric quickly, and instructed Lin Chuxia on how to sew it together.

They had a sewing machine at home, so Lin Chuxia immediately sat down and stitched the cut fabric together. In less than half an hour, a small piece of clothing was finished.

Lin Chuxia looked at the newly made clothing, immensely satisfied.

There's a difference between having guidance and learning on your own; it saves a lot of detours.

"The design looks nice, perfect for little ones," Sister-in-law Gong praised beside her.

"Sister-in-law, if you have any other patterns, please cut me a couple more."

Lin Chuxia recognized Sister-in-law Gong as a master. Just a few quick cuts, she didn't even use a ruler, and it was done.

Sister-in-law Gong thought for a moment and then helped cut out two more pieces.

She also got interested herself and started working on a small outer jacket.

Since it was an outer jacket, she added small pockets, with little frills around them.

"Sister-in-law, your hands are truly skillful; your craftsmanship is way prettier than the ready-made clothes at the department store," Lin Chuxia said in awe.

Sister-in-law Gong was a bit embarrassed by the praise, "Skill comes with practice. When Wei Bing was young, I made all his clothes. Our family conditions weren't great back then, so I made not just children's clothes but adults' too from fabric we bought. You know, my health isn't the best, so I stuck with sewing."

"If there's anything I don't know, I'll come to you for advice."

"Sure, you're welcome anytime."

Sister-in-law Gong spent half a day making small clothes with Lin Chuxia, leaving eventually feeling satisfied.

Just after she left, Qin Yang returned with groceries.

Upon entering and seeing the fabric and little clothes not yet tidied up, he was startled, "You made so many in half a day? Aren't you tired?"

"Not at all, Sister-in-law Gong came over this morning and turns out she's a pro at sewing. She helped me make these," Lin Chuxia picked up a piece to show him excitedly, "Isn't it pretty? Look at these little frills. I didn't know you could even do frill decorations."

Qin Yang looked at the soft-pink little garment, with frill designs on the collar and pockets, feeling a warmth inside.

"Yes, it's beautiful," that's the kind of attire a little girl should wear.

Chapter 532: You Do

At the end of the month, Wang Tianxue came to the residential complex to find Lin Chuxia.

The main purpose was to report accounts.

Although the mall is now fully managed by Wang Tianxue, she knows very well that Lin Chuxia has made the greatest contribution to the mall. Even if they split the profits fifty-fifty, she considers herself just an employee of Lin Chuxia.

With the change of seasons, this month's cash flow was great, and the profits were also considerable.

For Lin Chuxia, Huamei Mall is now the second largest source of income besides Xiyang Food Factory, but the money earned sometimes can't be taken out.

"The New Year is coming soon, and I want to ask Aunt Jia to deliver another batch of goods. A few days ago, she called to say that malls everywhere are stocking up heavily, and their wholesale market is simply unable to keep up with demand. If we don't act soon, we might not get all the goods we need when the time comes."

In this way, the mall's previous profits would be rolled in again.

After all, winter clothing is more expensive than clothes from other seasons.

Lin Chuxia hardly needed to think, "Sure, go ahead and coordinate with Aunt Jia. Let me know if there's anything you need from me, and if the funds are short, tell me directly. I'll adjust from other sources for you, but let's not take goods on credit from Aunt Jia anymore."

Previously, they had no choice but to take goods on credit. Now that their mall is up and running, they can't continue doing things that way.

In business, Aunt Jia's familial relationship has already provided them with too many conveniences; financially, they cannot let her down.

Otherwise, even the best relationships cannot be maintained.

"By the way, our mall can also have some promotional activities, and we need to create a festive atmosphere for the New Year."

Nowadays, people are tight on money, and they save buying new clothes for the New Year.

Firstly, for good luck, and secondly, to look decent when visiting relatives.

In recent years, people's living conditions have improved somewhat, so they pay more attention to the New Year.

Wang Tianxue nodded, "That's exactly what I had in mind too."

After saying this, she leaned in a bit closer, "I've been hearing these past two days that the Department Store is also making new moves. They're probably thinking of making a successful turnover during the holiday. Manager Wang has sent people to stock up directly from various factories and the south. I sent Liu Na to check it out, and it's all new goods of the same quality as our mall, and the prices are also similar. The Department Store has a membership system, which might cost us some customers. I'm thinking, should our mall also have a membership system?"

Lin Chuxia touched her nose.

Speaking of the Department Store's membership system, it was her idea for Manager Wang.

"We can implement a membership system. Whatever discounts the Department Store offers, we must match at Huamei Mall. Members can not only get discounts, but the service must also be attentive."

Lin Chuxia glanced at the sewing machine nearby and continued, "We can set up a tailoring booth on the first floor of our mall. See if any of our employees have skills in this area. If not, we can hire from the public. Members can have their pants hemmed and simple clothes alterations done for free at our mall. Non-member customers will be charged below the market rate."

In this era, most ready-made pants sold in the market had open hems, which needed to be tailored to the desired length by the buyer.

Some wouldn't fuss and would just fold and sew the hem themselves, while others would spend a yuan or two to get a tailor to do it.

Typically, after cutting to length, the machine would finish the hem and then iron it out.

Wang Tianxue's eyes lit up, and she clapped her hands, "This is a good idea. Although hemming pants is not a big job, it's not a hassle-free task either. If the mall offers this service, I can guarantee it will definitely attract some customers. However, if we can do this, other malls might follow. Chuxia, you're smart, help me think of other ways to improve services so we can really make something of this membership system."

Lin Chuxia, seeing her like this, laughed, "Let's not talk about anything else. With a manager like you, who always prioritizes service, other malls can't compete."

Right now, people's mindsets haven't changed, especially those in state-owned enterprises like the Department Store. Salespeople still treat their jobs as highly enviable roles, carrying a sense of superiority.

As long as they work with that mindset, they can't compare to Huamei Mall.

However, Lin Chuxia still listed several ways to improve services, and then Wang Tianxue briefly talked about her planned promotion methods.

The two of them communicated for most of the day, and it wasn't until a call came from the mall that Wang Tianxue reluctantly left.

Before leaving, she reminded Lin Chuxia to call her if she thought of any good ideas, determined not to let the Department Store steal the holiday spotlight.

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Soon it was the engagement day of Hou Xiaobao and Liu Na.

Initially, Qin Yang had no objections to Lin Chuxia attending Hou Xiaobao and Liu Na's engagement ceremony, but suddenly he started to worry, looking uneasy.

However, he knew how important Hou Xiaobao and the others were to his wife.

Lin Chuxia realized that in Qin Yang's eyes, she was now a golden treasure,

he feared she might break if held too tightly, or get bumped if she went out. Even if she was in his sight all the time, he feared she might melt away.

"I'm not that fragile. Look at my condition, it's better than most people. Other than being sleepy, I have no other reactions. Rest assured, I'm just going to an engagement ceremony, not to fight..."

"In your current state, you're still thinking about fighting?" Qin Yang suddenly raised his voice.

"No, no, what are you thinking? Do I look like someone who would fight?" Lin Chuxia quickly denied it.

Qin Yang, however, wore a face of accusation: You do.

Although he had never seen his wife fight, he had heard plenty.

How did she meet Houzi? Wasn't it because she beat him until he didn't dare challenge her again?

When he first learned this, he could hardly believe it. His gentle and delicate wife could subdue Houzi and Jia Liang by beating them.

And then there was the time they went to Rong City for supplies. He only heard about it later, about how dangerous the journey back was, and his wife, to prevent him from worrying, had everyone keep it from him.

If she were forthright with him, he wouldn't have been so worried.

Yet this girl appeared well-behaved on the surface, but in reality, she was bolder than anyone else.

Lin Chuxia knew her credibility with him was low now, so she quickly promised to be honest in the future, and to think more about him and the baby.

It was only then that Qin Yang felt at ease.

"Just be safe, and don't drink."

With reassurance once more, Qin Yang finally watched her leave.

Houzi had rented a small courtyard with three rooms not far from the mall, and today's engagement ceremony was being held there.

It was said to be an engagement ceremony, but it was really just a meal with both families.

Houzi had no family left, so he invited Aunt Jia and Jia Liang to act as family, while Lin Chuxia was considered part of the close group.

Liu Na's entire family came, including her parents, two brothers, two sisters-in-law, and a sister.

It was said she also had an elder sister who was married off and as the saying goes, a married daughter is like water spilled, so she wouldn't attend this occasion.

Chapter 533: Useless Jia Liang

However, Lin Chuxia could also sense from Mr. Liu and Mrs. Liu that Liu Na's parents somewhat favored boys over girls.

In this era, prioritizing boys over girls is quite common, especially with Liu Na having an older brother and sister, as well as a younger sister, making it easy for her to be overlooked.

She could also understand why Feng Zhong could easily deceive Liu Na with just a few sweet words.

If she couldn't get attention at home, she would easily fall for someone who sweet-talked her, thinking the person was the best in the world to her, desperately wanting to give them her heart.

The engagement ceremony went smoothly. Initially, the Liu Family didn't think much of Hou Xiaobao, being an outsider without even a house in Yan City, and without a stable job.

But upon learning that he had an elder brother who was a restaurant manager, a friend who was a mall manager, and a small position at Huamei Mall, they reluctantly accepted him.

Once they saw Jia Liang and Lin Chuxia actually attend his engagement ceremony, any reluctance disappeared.

At the engagement ceremony, the two parties agreed on a wedding date for next month.

Initially, Hou Xiaobao considered how the mall would be busy before the New Year and thought of having the wedding after the New Year.

However, the Liu Family rejected this.

There's a local custom there of not getting engaged in the twelfth lunar month or marrying in the first month of the lunar year.

After the New Year would be the first month; although Liu Na wasn't the favored child at home, no parents want anything but the best for their children, and naturally, they wished for good fortune for their daughter's future.

Hou Xiaobao was still a bit hesitant, but Lin Chuxia made the decision for him.

Work is important, but life events are even more crucial.

Houzi is not young, and it's rare for Liu Na to find someone she likes and open her heart again.

So, they set the date.

Houzi talked about work being important, but when the day was set before his eyes, he was the happiest.

After sending off the Liu Family, Hou Xiaobao was so happy he couldn't even speak clearly.

"Thank you, Mr. Lin. I'll never forget your great kindness, Mr. Lin, in my lifetime."

Old Mrs. Jia always treated Houzi like her own son, and seeing him so excited, she gave him a playful slap, "Look how happy you are. Just work hard in the future, that's better than anything."

"Yes, yes, I'll definitely work hard."

Old Mrs. Jia was truly happy for him, "Since the date is set, we must discuss the wedding arrangements. There's less than a month. The decoration at home looks decent; we just need to add a bit more. But what about the wedding banquet?"

Being outsiders in Yan City without many friends or relatives, they couldn't neglect the Liu Family, and it was uncertain how many people would be coming from their side.

"My skills aren't too bad. How about I cook for you then?"

Old Mrs. Jia pondered for a while before gritting her teeth and saying this.

Qin Juan's cooking should be good, but Old Mrs. Jia couldn't bear to have her cook for others in the cold weather.

Tianxue and Chuxia are out of the question; they're managers. How could they cook for you?

Of course, if Old Mrs. Jia knew Lin Chuxia was pregnant, she wouldn't even consider it.

"Mom, give it a rest. With your cooking skills, I'm afraid Houzi's hard-earned bride might be scared away."

As soon as Old Mrs. Jia finished her words, Jia Liang spoke disdainfully.

Old Mrs. Jia glared angrily, giving him a slap, "What's wrong with my cooking? You grew up so tall and strong, right? Now that you're a manager, do you start looking down on your mom?"

Jia Liang retreated while pleading, "Mom, I'm not looking down on you. I'm just being honest. Don't you have any idea about your own cooking skills? I could grow this big because of my strong willpower. If we're entertaining guests, why don't you ask Houzi if he wants you to cook?"

Houzi, who was watching the excitement, immediately tensed up. Under Old Mrs. Jia's expectant gaze, he smiled awkwardly, "Auntie, with your age, you should just wait to enjoy the food. Let me find someone else for the cooking."

Finding a wife wasn't easy for him.

Old Mrs. Jia acknowledged her cooking isn't great and conceded.

"I'm not insisting, but someone has to do it. Even though we're few, we need the wedding to be grand. Marrying someone's daughter is not a small thing, and we can't be too shabby."

That's why Lin Chuxia likes Old Mrs. Jia's character.

With such words, her elder sister wouldn't have much conflict with her mother-in-law if she married Jia Liang in the future.

At least Old Mrs. Zhang wouldn't do such things as Old Mrs. Jia.

"Auntie, don't worry. We must organize Houzi's wedding well. Let's have Jia Liang get a chef from the restaurant; I assure you the outcome will be satisfactory."

Old Mrs. Jia immediately brightened up, "Oh right, with us running a restaurant, why worry about this?"

"Exactly, not just for Houzi. In the future, when Jia Liang marries, we can do the same."

Upon hearing this, Old Mrs. Jia cast a disdainful glance at Jia Liang again, "I'd love to organize a grand wedding for him. It's just this useless person is not even as good as Houzi. He's over thirty and doesn't know when he'll bring me a daughter-in-law."

Useless Jia Liang: ...

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Lin Chuxia stayed at home for a while, and eventually, the news of her pregnancy spread in the community.

Sister-in-law Fu knew she was resting at home for pregnancy, so she often came around to visit her.

Sister-in-law Fu is quite skillful; whenever she came, she'd either have a half-finished sole or be knitting a sweater.

Lin Chuxia wasn't interested in shoemaking but was quite keen on knitting sweaters.

After some back-and-forth, she learned some simple knitting techniques.

She thought about knitting a scarf for Qin Yang while being idle.

It was getting cold, and Qin Yang could wear it to and from work every day.

There was yarn available in the mall, so Lin Chuxia got some gray and bright red yarn.

The gray one was for Qin Yang, and the bright red one for herself.

To let Qin Yang wear a scarf as soon as possible, Lin Chuxia decided to knit the gray one first.

Sister-in-law Fu saw her determination and commented with a smile, "Our Old Hu always says Mr. Qin is lucky. See, see, what's so special? You, as his wife, always think of him first. When Mr. Qin wears that scarf, I bet Old Hu might even envy me. Even though I can knit, I've never made a scarf for Old Hu."

As Lin Chuxia started to knit, she replied, "Sister-in-law, you didn't make a scarf for Engineer Hu, but you've knitted plenty of sweaters. I only go for something simple because I can't handle the complicated stuff."

The scarf is just a purl stitch, back and forth with the simple technique.

Sister-in-law Fu could do many sweater patterns.

The two were busy with their handiwork while chatting, and Hu Xingwei ran in from outside.

As he entered the yard, he couldn't even bother with his favorite Yuan Bao, and shouted, "Mom, mom, my sister's results are out, and she's made it to the finals..."

Sister-in-law Fu was going to scold this noisy kid, but hearing the latter part of his words, she jumped up with excitement.

Chapter 534: Better Safe Than Sorry

Hu Xingwei had already entered the house, and now felt that he was in someone else's home and needed to be more reserved.

He called Lin Chuxia "Aunt Lin" properly.

Sister-in-law Fu grabbed Hu Xingwei's arm, "What did you just say?"

Hu Xingwei repeated, "My sister's provincial competition results are out, she got third place in the province. The top five in the province will go to the capital for the finals of the national competition. Mom, my sister can go to the capital."

Sister-in-law Fu slapped her thigh, "Oh my, this is really a blessing from our ancestors, where is your sister? When is she going to the capital, has your dad come back? No, I need to go back and see."

Sister-in-law Fu quickly gathered her things, "Lin, today sister-in-law can't spend time with you, I have to go back and see. You know, this girl usually doesn't seem all that smart, but she really is impressive."

Lin Chuxia was also happy for Sister-in-law Fu, "Intelligence is hereditary, Engineer Hu is so smart, how could Yaping not be smart?"

Hu Xingwei looked at Lin Chuxia with a shocked face, "Aunt Lin, is what you said true? Is intelligence really hereditary?"

"Indeed, there is a genetic basis for heredity."

Hu Xingwei suddenly became excited, "Mom, Mom, did you hear what Aunt Lin said? Intelligence can be inherited, my dad is so smart, my sister is so smart, I must be smart too. Next time if I don't do well in the test, you can't blame me, it's just that I didn't perform well, if I did, I could definitely be in the top three of the class."

Sister-in-law Fu was already walking out, hearing this she didn't even turn her head, "You didn't perform well once but can you perform poorly every time? Your sister is in the top three of the class every time, I don't expect you to be in the top three, just get into the top ten."

"Mom, why do you underestimate me so much, with my intelligence, there's definitely no problem, Aunt Lin said, my dad is so smart, we must be smart too..."

The two of them talked as they walked out of the courtyard, and you could still hear the mother and son's voices from far away.

Lin Chuxia lowered her head and touched her abdomen.

Qin Yang is also smart, their baby should be very smart too.

She thought of the competition again.

Lin Jiadong and Hu Yaping participated in the same math competition, so in that case, her brother's results should also be out.

She didn't have to think of a way to contact Lin Jiadong, as she received a call from An City.

He used his break time to run to a small shop outside the school to make the call.

As soon as she answered, she heard Lin Jiadong's cheerful voice.

"Second sister, my math competition results are out, I'm first in our county, the teacher said I'm second in the province."

Lin Chuxia immediately sat up straight, "Well done, Jiadong, your second sister is proud of you."

She had heard from Hu Xingwei earlier that the top ten in the province could go to the capital for the national competition.

Lin Jiadong ranked second in the province, he must have this opportunity too.

Lin Jiadong also mentioned going to the capital for the national math competition, confirming Lin Chuxia's thoughts.

"Second sister, the teacher said we need to go to the province for a week-long training camp, I can visit you in Yan City again."

"Yes, you can stay at your second sister's place, the room is still available for you."

Lin Chuxia said happily.

"By the way, were there any others from our county who made it into the top ten in the province?"

"Yes, it's Li Youmin, who you saw last time, he participated in the competition with me, he's eighth, second sister, I won't stay at your place, the teacher said they'll book a guesthouse for us, it's a week-long, I'm afraid..."

"Afraid your brother-in-law will eat you?"

Lin Chuxia knew her brother's personality too well.

He's not someone to bother her with such things.

He's carefree, and due to family reasons from childhood, he's never been formal with her as his sister, except he's afraid of Qin Yang.

As expected, Lin Jiadong chuckled awkwardly, "Brother-in-law is nice."

"It's okay, when you stay at my place, you'll have peace and quiet if you want to read at night."

It's not that Lin Chuxia thought too much.

In her past life, she never heard of Lin Jiadong participating in any nationwide competition, and more importantly, Lin Jiadong was framed and lost his chance for a guaranteed spot.

Now that he has a chance to make a name for himself, she can't help being cautious.

On the other side, Lin Jiadong had no such thoughts, he wanted to go to his second sister's place.

Firstly, because his sister cooked delicious food, and secondly, a child's vanity.

He had a capable sister and wanted to enjoy others' admiring glances.

Listening to Lin Chuxia, he gladly agreed.

Concerned about the cost of the phone call, the siblings didn't say much more and hung up after setting a time.

Qin Yang was coming in from outside and asked, seeing Lin Chuxia's happy expression, "Whose call was it?"

"Jiadong, he came second in the provincial competition last time, he'll come to the city for training in a few days, then go to the capital for the national competition."

"This kid is quite promising," Qin Yang, having gone to college, naturally knew the weight of such a national math competition, "You have a good eye."

If it hadn't been for his wife's insistence on supporting his studies, his young brother-in-law might have been put to work in the food factory to make money long ago by the Lin Family.

"Jiadong's emotional intelligence isn't high, but his IQ has always been online. When he was little, he wouldn't study seriously in class, causing trouble, even getting his palm hit and having parents called, but every exam he scored low especially in math, almost always a hundred percent, at first the teacher

thought he was cheating, then gave him a separate test, and he still scored a hundred percent, after which the teacher didn't bother him anymore, as long as he didn't disrupt the class."

Talking about this, Lin Chuxia reminisced for a while.

She couldn't believe she still remembered such a long-ago event.

She remembered when the teacher called for parents, the Lin Family, afraid of being blamed by the teacher, asked her to handle the teacher. \n)ovel(.)co(m)

The teacher was already angry, but when she saw Lin Chuxia instead of her parents, the anger subsided.

She was five years older than Lin Jiadong and was already attending junior high school in the town, but the primary school teacher still remembered her as top in the class every year.

It was precisely because of this that the teacher was willing to give Lin Jiadong another chance to take the test under the teacher's watch.

After grading the test, the teacher only said, "It seems intelligence is indeed hereditary, if the sister is good at studying, the brother naturally is too."

The teacher didn't criticize her and let her go home, from then on, Lin Jiadong also received the teacher's favor.

Since then, Lin Jiadong would protect his second sister and would proudly tell her that he benefits because his sister is capable.

In her third year of junior high, Lin Jiayi really couldn't continue studying, she wanted to drop out and was not content with her pursuing high school. Somehow she talked to their parents, and their mother wanted both of them to drop out. At that time, only this younger brother stood up for her, opposing their mother.

Of course, the opposition didn't lead to any result, but she always remembered this matter in her heart.

This is also why, when the Lin Family wanted Lin Jiadong to drop out to work, she supported him to study.

In the past life, you protected your sister, in this life, your sister protects you.

Chapter 535: Every Thoroughbred Needs a Talent Scout

Lin Jiadong came to Yan City with the school team.

Though it's called a team, it's just a math teacher with two students.

Lin Chuxia had nothing to do, and she knew roughly when the bus from An City to Yan City would arrive, so she drove to the station to pick them up.

This time they were in Yan City for a seven-day training, and then they would head directly to the capital with other team members.

The round trip would take about ten days, and aside from books, everyone had to carry a change of clothes and basic living supplies.

The guesthouses didn't provide disposable toiletries at that time.

Lin Jiadong stayed at his sister's house, so apart from books and clothes, he didn't need to bring anything else, just a backpack and a small bag.

As soon as he got off the bus, he saw the Jeep not far away and waved enthusiastically, "Second Sister."

Lin Chuxia approached as well.

She nodded to Lin Jiadong and then looked at the middle-aged man among the three people.

The man seemed to be in his early forties, wearing a Zhongshan suit with parted hair and thick glasses.

He should be Lin Jiadong's math teacher.

This time, both students were from Lin Jiadong's class, so naturally the supervising teacher was their math teacher.

Seeing the man evaluating her, Lin Chuxia spoke first, "Hello, Teacher Tian, I'm Lin Jiadong's sister."

Lin Jiadong had already reported to Teacher Tian that he would be staying at his sister's house during these days.

Tian had no objection, just asked him to attend the training at First High School on time.

Lin Chuxia took the opportunity to thank Teacher Tian, recognizing that although Lin Jiadong was indeed smart, he would be nothing without a good teacher.

Every good horse needs a boswell to recognize it.

To teach two students who rank in the top five provincially shows his teaching standard.

Tian had heard about Lin Jiadong having a sister who drove a car when he attended the city for a provincial competition previously.

He overheard this from a student who kept talking.

Seeing her now, he was surprised that Lin Jiadong's sister was so young and recalled his student's remark: "Your sister is so pretty, she must have married a high-ranking official to drive a car."

Teacher Tian wasn't interested in such gossip, but upon first meeting Lin Chuxia, he liked her attitude.

His ten years of shadows made him instinctively avoid such people, only to realize she held him in high regard and respect.

When Lin Chuxia offered to drive them to the guesthouse, Teacher Tian was genuinely surprised.

"No need, it's not far. We can walk, and it gives the kids a chance to see the provincial city's development."

Since Teacher Tian said so, Lin Chuxia didn't insist but let Lin Jiadong say goodbye to the teacher and classmates.

After the Jeep left, Li Youmin sighed.

"Lin Jiadong's second sister is quite imposing. It's the first time I've seen a woman driving a car. Teacher Tian, why did you refuse her? I thought Lin Jiadong's second sister was easy to talk to, and since she's from our hometown, it wouldn't hurt to let her drive us."

Teacher Tian retracted his gaze, picked up his luggage, and said directly, "Let's go. It's just a few steps; there's no need for a car."

Li Youmin had no choice but to follow, "I think Lin Jiadong should have stayed with us at the guesthouse, studying and living together. It would show the unity of Ancheng First High School. Instead, he went to stay with his sister, making other school students think we're divided internally."

"Don't think too much about it; we're here to study, not to worry about others' opinions. Besides, Lin Jiadong staying with a relative saves the school travel expenses, and one room is enough for the two of us."

The school wasn't well-off financially, and the expenses for this trip were planned.

Teacher Tian thought it was just right, as the expenses in the capital would be larger later.

Li Youmin's eyes lit up and he moved closer to Teacher Tian, "Teacher Tian, I still have two questions I'm unsure about. Could you explain them to me?"

"I'll explain them to you in the evening."

.....

Lin Chuxia had just reached the door with Lin Jiadong when they heard Hu Xingwei's voice behind them.

"Aunt Lin just came back?"

Lin Chuxia smiled and nodded, "Yes, did you just finish school too?"

"Yes," Hu Xingwei saw Lin Jiadong getting out of the Jeep and became interested, "Aunt Lin, is your brother visiting you again?" Surely it wasn't what he thought?

Lin Chuxia glanced at Hu Xingwei and then at Hu Yaping behind him, seeing her also staring at Lin Jiadong, she said directly, "My brother did well in the last math competition and is here for provincial training."

"So he's going to the capital finals too?" Hu Xingwei happily pulled Hu Yaping, "Sister, your rival is here."

Hu Yaping coldly glanced at Hu Xingwei, "What rival? Don't talk nonsense if you don't understand. We're from the same province; the teacher said when we compete nationally, we're allies."

"What allies? In the end, doesn't it rank first and second? There's only one first place, even if from the same province, they're rivals," Hu Xingwei insisted.

Hu Yaping couldn't be bothered to explain further and greeted Lin Chuxia before going home.

Hu Xingwei quickly followed her.

Lin Jiadong pointed to the two who had already entered their home, "I remember that girl student. We were in the same exam venue last time. Did she enter the finals too?"

"Yes, ranked third, just one place behind you," Lin Chuxia said.

Lin Jiadong took another look over there, but they had already gone inside.

"She's really strong then. Our teacher said that by high school, boys' physiological advantages would give them stronger logical thinking in math and physics. I noticed that more boys participated in the provincial competition."

"Is it possible that fewer girls reach high school in the first place?"

Lin Chuxia didn't agree with this notion. Intelligence isn't determined by gender. There are plenty of highly intelligent women, just limited in certain fields due to various reasons.

Lin Jiadong originally wanted to argue, but when he thought of his second sister, who had to drop out despite her excellent grades because of the eldest sister, he stayed silent.

"Second sister, do you hate older sister? If it weren't for her, you might have gone to university."

Lin Jiadong had long noticed that the relationship between the eldest sister and second sister wasn't good.

The eldest sister's mischief was one thing, but the second sister also didn't seem to regard her as she did in childhood.

Lin Chuxia opened the door and took Lin Jiadong to the guest room.

"Even if the eldest sister hadn't forced me to drop out in junior high, I wouldn't have gotten into university," Lin Chuxia said lightly, patting Lin Jiadong on the shoulder, "Alright, it's all in the past, don't overthink it. Train well these days and aim for a good rank in the national competition. Second sister believes in you."

Chapter 536: I'll Listen to Second Sister

Lin Jiadong was still thinking about the first half of Lin Chuxia's words. Yes, even without the eldest sister, mom and dad wouldn't let the second sister go to college either. As for why, he couldn't say, it was just a gut feeling.

Just about to feel dejected, he suddenly perked up upon hearing the words afterwards, "Got it, second sister, I will work hard."

"Hmm, stay at my place for the next period, eat and drink at home, and try not to eat randomly outside. Even when you arrive in the capital, before the competition you need to watch your diet. The opportunity for the national competition isn't easy to come by, and missing it due to some health issue would be regrettable for life."

Originally not taking this competition seriously, Lin Jiadong suddenly looked solemn upon hearing this, "I'll listen to you, second sister."

Second sister has high hopes for him, so he must make her proud.

It's worth second sister supporting him through his studies.

After packing his things, Lin Jiadong followed Lin Chuxia around like a little follower.

Though it had only been a short time since he last saw her, Lin Jiadong always felt particularly relaxed when he was with his second sister.

Unlike at home, where either the eldest sister was looking for trouble or mom and dad were nagging.

Even if he studied well and placed in competitions, his mom would always say: "What's the point of scoring well? Can it get you into college? You might as well study hard and get into a good university to make us proud."

Actually, his teacher mentioned that if he got a national competition rank, he might truly be recommended to university.

But he chose not to mention it to his mom because she would just pressure him to win a rank, and failing to do so would invite more criticism.

It's as if the national competition was as simple as eating or drinking.

In all, whether in study or life, second sister understands him best.

"By the way, second sister, you should be more cautious when going out recently. Go out less at night, and even during the day avoid places with few people."

Suddenly thinking of something, Lin Jiadong reminded her.

Seeing that it was almost time to cook, Lin Chuxia glanced at him.

"What's wrong, did something happen?"

"I heard rumors that there might actually be human traffickers in our area," Lin Jiadong said seriously, "actually, eldest sister's cousin Li Hongmei from Xiaoqingshan Village, you should know her, is said to have been abducted by traffickers."

Li Hongmei again?

Lin Chuxia took out some green beans, sorting them while asking, "Wasn't it said she quarreled with her in-laws and ran away? I heard her husband even wants a divorce, yet she hasn't returned after so long? How do they conclude she was abducted by traffickers?"

Given what she knows about Li Hongmei, the chances of her being kidnapped by traffickers seem slim.
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But speaking of her seeking a livelihood outside, she might not be that bold either.

Lin Jiadong also picked beans alongside Lin Chuxia, pondering aloud, "I heard from eldest sister, you don't know, eldest sister quarreled with her husband and returned to her parent's home. Mom persuaded her to go back for a while, but she came back after a few days. Elder Mrs. Li had previously asked eldest sister's husband to buy Li Dongmei a 'three rings and a watch' dowry, spending all the family's savings. Eldest sister was resentful, she originally planned to live well with her husband, but when Li Hongmei went missing, Elder Mrs. Li asked her husband to search for her. Where could you search in a world this big? Not only that, but she also asked the eldest sister to join the search. In anger, eldest sister took the child back to her parents'. I heard from eldest sister that Li Hongmei is likely gone for good, probably trafficked, and even the police have advised the family to prepare themselves mentally."

Hearing Lin Jiayi had returned to her parents', Lin Chuxia advised, "Just listen to these matters, don't get involved blindly with the family. I don't think the Li Family is an easy group. Stay away from eldest sister, there's mom and dad for that. You should focus on your studies now."

These days, education can truly change one's destiny.

As long as one gets into university, it's a leap in social class.

Having a city household registration holds advantages now, and graduating from university ensures job and housing assignments, with even university tuition and living expenses subsidized by the state.

So when people say it's worth sacrificing to support someone's education, it's truly not an exaggeration.

Supporting one can alter the fate of several generations.

Lin Jiadong nodded earnestly, "I understand, second sister."

As the siblings were talking, Qin Yang returned.

Lin Chuxia glanced outside, noting the time, "Why are you back so early today?"

Qin Yang walked up and pulled Lin Chuxia, who was sorting beans sitting on a stool, after glancing at his brother-in-law who had stood properly aside, said, "I knew my brother-in-law was coming, so I came back early."

If he didn't come back, wouldn't his wife have to cook dinner?

His wife is pregnant now; cooking for this big eater is out of the question.

"Wash your hands and rest a while, I'll cook dinner. What do you want to eat?"

He directed the last question at Lin Jiadong.

Whether it was his own misunderstanding or not, Lin Jiadong felt his brother-in-law's gaze seemed a bit sharp.

Stammering, he replied, "I'm not picky, I'll eat anything."

Maybe he shouldn't have come to stay at his second sister's house? Wondering if it was too late to return to the guesthouse now?

Seeing clearly, Lin Chuxia tugged on his sleeve with a smile.

"He doesn't know I'm pregnant, besides, even being pregnant, cooking won't tire me out. You are being overly cautious, I haven't given it much thought."

Lin Jiadong widened his eyes suddenly, staring at Lin Chuxia's belly, "Second sister, you're pregnant? Since when?"

"Only just found out recently, just two months now."

Lin Jiadong now understood why his brother-in-law was displeased with him.

Hurriedly pulling out a higher stool, "Second sister you sit on this one, sitting too low will compress little nephew, no, you better not stay in the kitchen, cooking may suffocate you, let me help you inside, brother-in-law and I will cook, you tell us what you want to eat. I can't cook but brother-in-law can."

Qin Yang: "..."

Though those words were somewhat flawed, seeing his care for Lin Chuxia, let it pass.

Lin Chuxia was already amused and exasperated by Lin Jiadong's fussiness.

Qin Yang was careful enough with her, but who knew Lin Jiadong would be even more so.

Dinner was rice and stewed dishes, pork belly stewed with green beans, potatoes, and vermicelli.

Though it seemed simple, these ingredients were fresh for that era and time.

If not for the Qin Family Village's vegetable greenhouse, beans wouldn't be available in the northern regions at this season.

Outside the cold wind howled, but inside the warm house eating hot stew made one feel quite content.

Lin Jiadong, the big eater, was the last to finish eating, and he dutifully cleaned up the dishes afterwards.

Then, after greeting Lin Chuxia and Qin Yang, he returned to his room.

"Your brother is quite straightforward," Qin Yang brought a kettle of hot water into the room for Lin Chuxia to freshen up.

Lin Chuxia sighed, "It's because he's so straightforward that I'm worried."

Qin Yang looked at her, "What's wrong, is there something?"

Chapter 537: What Kind of Immortal Man Is This?

Lin Chuxia shook her head, "It's nothing serious, I just feel he's too straightforward and I'm worried he'll suffer losses outside. Although people say one should experience hardships early, some are worth it, and some are just not necessary."

When it comes to major life decisions, it's better to be cautious if possible.

Qin Yang nodded, knowing his wife always knew how to handle things appropriately.

"Check the temperature of the water, the milk is ready for you. Drink it when it cools down a bit."

Lin Chuxia glanced at him and pouted, "I really don't feel like drinking milk anymore; recently, the smell kind of makes me nauseous."

This one sentence made Qin Yang alarmed.

"Then don't drink it; I'll have it later. Is there anything else that's making you uncomfortable?"

Lately, he had often asked Li Wei about things expecting mothers need to be cautious about.

Understanding that morning sickness is a common symptom, when Li Wei mentioned how Jiang Hong was pregnant and ate less because of vomiting, Qin Yang became more attentive to Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia smiled at his worried appearance, "No other reactions for now, don't worry, I'm fine."

She reached out to smooth the crease between his brows, "No need to worry so much, even the master said I'm in good health."

Qin Yang held her hand, kissed it gently by his lips, "Alright, is there anything you feel like eating? Just tell me, I'll get it tomorrow."

Lin Chuxia smacked her lips, "I'm tired of the apples and oranges at home, so check if there are other fruits in the market."

"Okay."

At this time in the North, apples and pears are the most common, followed by oranges and persimmons, and even bananas are rare.

But since his wife wanted to eat them, he'd search more and try to buy her as many different kinds as possible.

.....

Before dawn, Lin Jiadong got up from bed.

Normally in school, they had to be in class by 7 a.m. for morning reading.

Here, the training begins at 8 a.m., and today being the first day, he couldn't be late.

His second sister was pregnant, and he didn't want to keep bothering her to pick him up for school, so he planned to wake up early and run there.

The place for their training wasn't too far from here.

Quickly getting himself ready and intending to fix something to eat in the kitchen, he saw the kitchen light was on.

Lin Jiadong quickly walked over, about to call his second sister, when he saw a tall figure.

His second sister turned out to be his brother-in-law.

Qin Yang responded without turning his head, "There's millet porridge in the pot, get it yourself, are two steamed buns enough?"

He had already finished with the dishes on his side.

He reheated yesterday's stew and had half a bowl of pickles.

"They're enough, brother-in-law."

Lin Jiadong consciously served two bowls of porridge, one for himself and one for his brother-in-law.

As for his second sister, the room was still dark, she was definitely still sleeping.

Thinking of this, Qin Yang spoke up, "You eat first, don't worry about me, I'll wait for your second sister. Eat the egg," and handed him a boiled egg.

Lin Jiadong watched Qin Yang's departing figure, almost moved to tears.

Boohoo, what kind of an immortal man is his brother-in-law?

He initially thought his brother-in-law resented how he always came around to find his second sister; he was worried staying at his second sister's was causing trouble for her and making his brother-in-law unhappy.

But it turns out his brother-in-law specifically got up early today to make him breakfast, and wasn't bothered by him being a burden at all.

Lin Jiadong quickly finished his breakfast, and as he was about to leave with his backpack, he saw Qin Yang going to the kitchen to boil water and ran over to greet quietly, "Brother-in-law, I'm off to school. When my second sister wakes up, please let her know."

His voice was small, and Lin Jiadong was no longer as jittery as before.

His brother-in-law might appear cold on the outside, but he's really gentle on the inside.

Watching how he is with his second sister, of course, he also felt it this morning.

Qin Yang nodded, "You can ride the men's bicycle in the courtyard."

See that, his brother-in-law is cold outside but warm inside.

"Alright, thank you, brother-in-law."

Lin Jiadong's voice grew louder but soon remembered something and lowered it again, chuckling at Qin Yang with a big toothy grin.

Qin Yang gave a soft response, observing Lin Jiadong's demeanor made him understand why his wife was worried.

Just by looking at him, he didn't seem smart.

With the bicycle, Lin Jiadong moved much faster.

He bent down like a ninja and quickly reached the training location.

He wasn't very late, but most of the attendees were from other cities and staying in guesthouses arrived even earlier.

Apart from the students, the accompanying teachers were also present.

Li Youmin, seated at the back, spotted Lin Jiadong and waved, "Jiadong, over here."

Seeing a few people gathered around him, Lin Jiadong walked over.

As he got closer, Li Youmin introduced them, "This is Lin Zhi from Qinghe First Middle School, and this is Xu Cheng from Baocheng First Middle School."

After introducing those two, Li Youmin then introduced Lin Jiadong, "This is Lin Jiadong from my school, a top contender, second in the province ranking this time."

Upon hearing this introduction, Lin Jiadong instinctively furrowed his eyebrows yet smiled, "It's not that exaggerated, I'm no master, just a bit lucky this time."

"Oh, come on, stop being modest, you're always first in school, what does luck have to do with talent? I've told Lin Zhi and Xu Cheng that if there's anything they don't know, they can come to you for advice. Although we're competitors for the exam, we're also comrades from the same province. As our teacher said, it doesn't matter who takes the first place, it brings glory to our province either way."

After Li Youmin finished his speech, seeing Lin Jiadong was about to say something, he hurriedly pulled him down to sit.

"Hurry, I reserved a seat for you."

Lin Jiadong glanced at Li Youmin, who appeared all excited, probably just overly thrilled.

"By the way, Jiadong, how did you get here? Was it your sister who drove you in her car again?"

As soon as Li Youmin said this, the other two looked over together.

Though simple-minded, Lin Jiadong knew what Li Youmin was doing wasn't right.

During this era, common people rarely drove cars.

The cars on the road either belonged to influential people or wealthy ones.

His second sister would count as having money, but that's her business, not his.

"I rode a bicycle here," Lin Jiadong replied calmly.

Li Youmin seemed oblivious to Lin Jiadong's aloofness and leaned over, "Jiadong, you haven't told me what your brother-in-law does for a living? We're close enough, aren't we? It wasn't enough time to hang out in Yan City last time with just a day. We're staying a week this time, why don't you show me the sights and take me to your second sister's place to broaden my horizons? Don't worry, I'm just curious, I won't touch or say anything out of line."

When he finished, the others looked at Lin Jiadong, waiting for his reaction.

This time, Lin Jiadong didn't even make a sound in response.

Feeling awkward in front of new acquaintances, Li Youmin tried to brush it off with a forced smile, "It's alright if you don't want to, I get it, those in positions of power can be quite aloof."

Chapter 538: Unimaginable

Lin Jiadong recalled how his second brother-in-law got up early to make breakfast for him and couldn't help replying, "My brother-in-law is great. We're here for training and learning, not to play around. Li Youmin, you should focus on your studies and aim for a good ranking in the exam."

After speaking, Lin Jiadong no longer paid attention to Li Youmin and directly opened his book.

Even if the teacher hadn't officially started the class, they could read on their own.

Li Youmin pouted, knowing that Lin Jiadong was second in the province and indeed had a chance to get a good rank.

He himself ranked tenth in the province, which was pretty low. Participating in a national elite competition, he didn't even dare to dream of getting a rank; he was here just for the experience.

It would be even better if he could meet a few more people.

These were all elite students from various schools; in the future, they might all achieve great things.

Lin Jiadong had just turned two pages of his book when he heard another whispering sound, causing him to frown.

He heard Li Youmin whispering with two other newly acquainted classmates, "Look at that, the girl who just came in. I heard that among the ten of us this time, there are only three girls. The one with the best grades is from City No.1 Middle School, the very one who just came in. She reportedly made it into the top three. People from the city do seem different and she is beautiful, truly a combination of beauty and wisdom. Hey, do you think if we talk to her later, she'll respond to us?"

Lin Zhi hesitantly said, "Probably, after all, we're all here for the national competition, aren't we? We're comrades from the same province."

"I don't think so," Xu Cheng added, "From what I know about girls, girls like her don't often talk to people, especially guys. They tend to be aloof, and judging from her clothing, she's definitely not from an ordinary family and might look down on us who come from the countryside."

"You don't say, her outfit is quite nice. It's a style never seen in our county. Why isn't she wearing the City No.1 Middle School uniform? Don't they have uniforms?" Li Youmin asked.

Uniforms, huh? Ancheng First High School didn't even have them, couldn't even imagine.

Rumor had it that a set costs dozens, even if they did have them, students probably couldn't afford them.

"Who knows what she's thinking," Lin Zhi said and urged, "Let's get back to reading, the teacher will be here soon."

With silence around him, Lin Jiadong looked up and saw Hu Yaping finding a seat.

Yesterday she wore City No.1 Middle School's uniform, but today she wore her own clothes.

There were only ten of them for this training session: three girls and seven boys.

Most of the people had arrived by now, and two of the earlier girls had already sat together.

The taller boys chose to sit at the back by themselves.

Lin Jiadong, nearly 1.8 meters tall, was considered tall among them.

Li Youmin sat in the same row as him, with Lin Zhi and Xu Cheng behind them.

However, there were still many empty seats in the classroom.

If Li Youmin hadn't waved him over, Lin Jiadong might have sat by himself.

As for Li Youmin, he usually enjoyed studying at school.

But now he seemed to have changed completely, being so boisterous, unlike someone here to study.

While thinking, a figure flashed across his front, and someone sat in front of him.

It was Hu Yaping.

His sleeve was tugged, and he saw Li Youmin next to him winking and making faces.

Lin Jiadong frowned, withdrew his arm, and continued reading with his head down.

.....

At noon, when Qin Yang returned from work, he brought back various fruits. ***freewebnovel.com***

He bought three kinds of pears: white pear, Chinese pear, and red pear.

Also, tangerines, persimmons, sugar cane, and bananas.

Seeing him carrying several bags of fruits, Lin Chuxia couldn't help but laugh, "Did you buy all the fruits you could find in the market?"

Qin Yang, looking as if to show off, said, "I'll wash them for you, see what you'd like to eat."

After saying so, he peeled a banana first and then took the fruits to the kitchen to wash.

Lin Chuxia reminded, "No need to wash them all, I think the red pear looks good; I want to eat that one, roasted on the heater."

Qin Yang acknowledged and soon returned with various fruits, "Take your time eating, I'll go cook. Don't eat too much, too cold isn't good for the stomach."

Lin Chuxia placed half the eaten banana next to his mouth, "Got it, thank you dear."

Qin Yang bit off a piece from her hand, then pinched her increasingly chubby cheeks, "Jiadong hasn't returned yet?"

"He's not coming back for lunch, there's a canteen there for meals."

These examinees have a unified accommodation and meal arrangement, but they can choose otherwise.

Lin Jiadong had told her yesterday that he wouldn't come back for lunch, so he could spend more time reading at school after eating.

One must say, this spirit in her little brother is worthy of praise. freewebmovel.com

After eating quite a bit of fruit, indeed she had no appetite for a meal.

Lin Chuxia only had some soup, watching Qin Yang eat.

Qin Yang knew well that in her current state, she couldn't be forced to eat. The best state was to let her do whatever she wanted.

Just as he hadn't finished his meal, someone called him from outside, a voice so familiar that the call of "Yangyang" almost made Qin Yang fling his bowl.

From there, he saw his elder brother, Qin Han, standing at the courtyard gate.

"Elder brother is here," Lin Chuxia got up, suppressing her laughter as she saw Qin Yang's visibly sour face.

Seeing his wife get up, Qin Yang put down his bowl and went out to greet them.

Only then did he notice that not only Qin Han, but Mrs. Qin also came along.

"Mom, how come you're here?"

Mrs. Qin, balancing on her small feet, was unloading things from the car.

Seeing this, Qin Yang hurried over to help, and Mrs. Qin smiled at Lin Chuxia, "Your elder brother came to deliver goods, so I thought I'd come along to check on you. Since you are pregnant without an elder by your side, I'm really uneasy."

Usually, big brother doesn't handle city deliveries, so clearly, Mrs. Qin had come specifically due to her concern.

Lin Chuxia stepped forward, took Mrs. Qin's arm, and guided her into the courtyard.

"See how well I am doing, you don't have to worry. Come inside, it's cold outside."

"It's no problem, see what I brought for you?"

Mrs. Qin took a basket from Qin Yang's hands, lifted the cloth covering it, revealing a half-basket of red strawberries.

"Wow, strawberries!"

Lin Chuxia's eyes lit up, and looking at the bright red strawberries, she couldn't help but start drooling, eating one straight away.

"Hey, it's not washed yet..."

Qin Yang tried to remind her but it was too late.

"No worries, things from the greenhouse haven't been sprayed, they aren't dirty," said Qin Han from behind.

Lin Chuxia, savoring with satisfaction, exclaimed, "This tastes so good, Mom, you truly are my lucky star."

These days, her mouth often felt bland, and truthfully speaking, none of the fruits bought by Qin Yang compared to this.

Her favorite was strawberries.

"Your elder brother planted these. This is the first batch, and considering you're newly pregnant, at a time when your taste buds get picky, I thought to bring you some."

"Still, you know me best," she said and didn't forget to praise Qin Han, "Elder brother, you're amazing, actually managing to grow these off-season fruits."

Chapter 539: Sudden Enlightenment

Qin Han chuckled, "It's just that they're not big, and they're a bit sour."

"Well, I think it's just right, sweet and sour. As for the size, maybe it's a variety issue. You should ask Technician He for some high-quality varieties."

"Technician He said this is the latest variety. Maybe I didn't manage the temperature well, or the greenhouse environment affected their size. He also said he'd come to the village in a few days to take a look."

Lin Chuxia gave Qin Han a thumbs up, "Big brother, you should really work on this. I feel if you get it right, these strawberries could definitely make big money."

Qin Han scratched his head, "I just wanted to experiment to see if it works. I really didn't dare to think about making big money. The yield is low, and it's troublesome. If it's really too expensive, no one will buy it."

Mrs. Qin also laughed on the side, "This is just something to snack on for fun. If you really sell it for a few bucks a pound, people would rather buy meat, who would buy it?"

At this moment, Qin Yang had already washed a plate and brought it over.

Lin Chuxia picked one up and lifted it, "Since these are cultivated out of season, you can't sell them with conventional thinking. As the saying goes, rarity is valuable. Ours is unique in the market, so it has the capital to be sold at a high price. As for who would buy it, of course, it's not aimed at the mass public."

"If it's not aimed at the mass public, then who would I sell it to?" Qin Han was even more confused.

Lin Chuxia put the strawberry in her mouth, not letting it interfere with her speech.

"You need to know, since we can grow strawberries at this time, they're not ordinary strawberries. In other words, they're not for ordinary people. The value of a product is not determined by how many people accept it. Many people accept cabbages, and they're good items. Even if most people can't afford strawberries, we can't deny that they're good. What we need to do is to tap into the group that can consume them, directly avoiding those who can't. Don't just think within our small plot of land. Those who can't pay but have time and energy to pick and choose clients will only make you doubt your product, wasting energy without bringing in returns."

Qin Han felt enlightened by these words.

It's true, when his strawberries were ready, many villagers came to check them out, and some even asked how he planned to sell them.

He conservatively mentioned a price, only to be criticized by others, making him really question life.

But if he didn't sell at that price, this greenhouse wouldn't even cover the cost, let alone make any reward for his efforts.

"Alright then, sister-in-law, give brother a strategic tip, and I'll just follow your lead."

"For this, you should go talk with Wang Cheng, see if he has any sales channels, and also ask Jia Liang."

The customers coming and going at Qin's Restaurant aren't ordinary people.

Mrs. Qin saw the two of them still engrossed in their conversation and stopped Qin Han, "Alright, your sister-in-law has already outlined the path for you. You handle it yourself. She's pregnant now, how could she have the energy to run around for you."

Qin Han smiled again, "No need for sister-in-law to run, just need her guidance."

He already had a rough direction in mind.

Seeing Qin Yang, half-finished with his meal on the side, Lin Chuxia suddenly remembered and asked Mrs. Qin and Qin Han if they had lunch yet.

Upon learning that they had already eaten at Qin's, she urged Qin Yang to have his lunch.

Under Qin Yang's glare, Qin Han had no choice but to give up discussing work with his sister-in-law and went to the kitchen with Qin Yang.

Mrs. Qin watched the two brothers with a smile in her eyes.

As a mother, there's nothing more comforting than seeing her children doing well.

"Your big brother is now someone everyone in the village envies—having both a son and a daughter, owning an agricultural supply store, and being more respected outside than the village chief. He's blessed, always cheerful, simple-minded, doesn't have much foresight. Don't take him too seriously."

"Big brother's personality is quite good, just need to be wary of those with ill intentions, make sure he's not taken advantage of."

Lin Chuxia quite liked Qin Han's character, honest and sincere.

Mrs. Qin knew very well that the good days her eldest son was enjoying were all helped by the younger daughter-in-law.

Fortunately, the eldest and his wife knew how to be grateful, always keeping the little son's family in mind.

"No one can take advantage of him. Even if your big brother is simple, your sister-in-law is there to keep things in check. Oh, when I came over, your sister-in-law insisted on coming along to see you, but I was worried it was too cold for the child, so I didn't let her. When we left, she was pouting alone in the room."

Mrs. Qin laughed a little at the end.

Both her daughters-in-law get along well with her, never putting up walls.

Lin Chuxia laughed at the thought of the scene, "Mom, you should keep an eye on big sister-in-law, she's too carefree. Yaoyao is only a few months old, and she's already thinking of bringing her out to visit? By the way, mom, how's Yaoyao? It's been months since I last saw her, I miss the little one."

Speaking of her granddaughter, Mrs. Qin remembered something and quickly searched her pockets.

"Oh, my memory! Your sister-in-law took a hundred-day photo of Yaoyao and asked me to bring it over for you to see."

Saying this, she took out two photos from her inner pocket.

Lin Chuxia hurried to take them, "Sister-in-law knows me well. Look at this little face, getting prettier and prettier. Zhuangzhuang is always photo-bombing, that naughty boy..."

Both photos were taken by Qin Han using Qin Yang's camera.

One was a solo photo of Little Yaoyao.

The little girl, a little over three months, was still not sitting steadily. Her little chubby face was incredibly cute.

Seeing how much Lin Chuxia loved her child, Mrs. Qin smiled gently, "This room is too plain. New Year is almost here, so buy some big baby calendars to decorate. Look at enough beautiful children, and the child you give birth to will be beautiful too."

Lin Chuxia laughed and replied, "I don't need to look at other beautiful children. Just looking at our own kids is enough. Besides, facing Qin Yang every day, how could I have an ugly baby?"

This remark made Mrs. Qin laugh heartily.

Indeed, all their children were good-looking. Back then, the village folks praised her three kids, especially Qin Yang, the handsomest among the three brothers.

"Now that you're pregnant, I'm relieved. Whether it's a boy or a girl, having your own children gives new hope to life."

Lin Chuxia murmured in agreement, gently rubbing her belly, also looking forward to the child.

"Oh, by the way, your big brother installed radiators in the house. He knows you have radiators here too, worried that during the New Year, you'd be uncomfortable staying at home, so he even installed them in that row of rooms, just right since Yaoyao is still little."

"Mom, you just said big brother wasn't sharp. This shows he's thoughtful."

"He has a bit of calculation in this aspect, just that..."

Seeing Mrs. Qin's hesitance to speak, Lin Chuxia couldn't help but ask, "Is there something going on at home?"

Mrs. Qin glanced at her, finally sighed, "It's nothing major, just Da Wen and Ma Suyun, she's expecting too, probably a month or so after you. Just confirmed it recently."

Chapter 540: Ma Suyun Is Pregnant

Ma Suyun is pregnant?

This was something Lin Chuxia did not expect.

She remembered that couple running around taking medicine and seeing doctors for the past two years to have a child.

Now that she's pregnant, it seems like they're stirring up trouble again.

Sure enough, Mrs. Qin continued, "She's having quite a big reaction to this pregnancy. She's just gotten pregnant, and she's been vomiting all day. Somehow, she found out that your brother's strawberry harvest came in, and she wanted strawberries. She asked Da Wen to get some from your brother. You know, when your sister-in-law was pregnant, those two didn't do anything good. Your brother isn't willing to give them strawberries, and it's already good that he didn't kick them out. Da Wen couldn't get strawberries, and I don't know what Ma Suyun did after that, but your aunt personally came to your brother to speak nicely, just for a few strawberries..."

Lin Chuxia was speechless, "And then?"

Mrs. Qin was also helpless, "Of course your brother wasn't willing to give them. It's not about the strawberries. No matter how valuable they are, your brother isn't that petty. Your aunt didn't know the truth and thought it was because of what Da Wen did back then, so she said they could even have Da Wen apologize to us. They just shouldn't take it out on the child. It was hard enough for Da Wen's wife to get pregnant, and if anything happened..."

Are they trying to blame our family?

Lin Chuxia was almost amused in anger.

What do Qin Wen and Ma Suyun have in their heads?

Back then, they reported someone else's family, almost costing them their daughter. That was a life-long feud.

Even if something happened to their child, it couldn't be blamed on their brother.

Could they really blame losing a child on a strawberry craving?

Taking a step back, even if they did lose a child due to strawberries, the misdeeds as parents affect their child, and it's their responsibility, not anyone else's fault.

Mrs. Qin realized something and said, "Look, I shouldn't have told you this. Your brother reminded me when he came, and yet I accidentally spilled the beans again."

"It's alright, Mom. It's good to talk about it; it helps us see what kind of people are in our family. There's nothing wrong with that."

Lin Chuxia comforted Mrs. Qin and then asked, "So what happened? Did they give them the strawberries?"

"No, your brother Qin Liang's wife came and called your aunt back. She hasn't come since then, probably because your sister-in-law told your aunt about what Da Wen's couple did. We generally didn't want to tell your uncle and aunt because of their age, but now there's no way to hide it with Da Wen acting like this."

Lin Chuxia nodded. Among the members of the Qin Family, it's only Qin Wen and his spouse who misbehave. The others know right from wrong.

Mrs. Qin looked at Lin Chuxia's expression, once again feeling glad that she married such a good young daughter-in-law.

Despite her young age, she's not arrogant or impetuous, she's steady in dealing with matters and has her own ideas.

Look at Qin Wen and his wife. Just because they have been married for a few years without children, even if they are happy now, they shouldn't be so arrogant.

People say that you shouldn't flaunt a newly conceived child, fearing that it could lead to losing the child.

And then, the moment they found out, they couldn't wait for the whole world to know.

Despite the rumors in the village about the childless couple over the years, now that they are pregnant, what's the rush? Once the child is born, those rumors will be naturally dispelled.

You don't even have to wait for the child to be born. Once Ma Suyun's belly grows, who wouldn't be able to see it?

After Qin Yang and Qin Han finished eating and came back inside, Lin Chuxia and Mrs. Qin had already changed the topic.

Mrs. Qin was admiring the little clothes that Lin Chuxia had made, unable to set them down.

"Xi Xia is really skilled. I could never make such nice little clothes."

"Oh, right, Mom, I also made two for Yaoyao. Please take them to Sister-in-law for me."

Lin Chuxia was fond of making clothes, and she had made quite a few for Little Yaoyao.

Qin Han thought of his little daughter and smiled foolishly.

"My daughter is lucky to have an aunt like you. When the younger sibling's child is born, the two will be just a year apart, perfect companions."

Mrs. Qin, too, had a hopeful expression at the thought of those future days.

Lin Chuxia remembered something else. Now that Mrs. Qin and her older brother were both present, should she reveal something about her elder sister and Jia Liang?

Previously, when her sister wasn't interested, she could pretend to know nothing.

Now that her sister had taken a small step, the rest they could help her with.

Lin Chuxia mentioned it, and Qin Han suddenly realized, "I was wondering why Jia Liang was so attentive at the restaurant today. Turns out the boy has his eyes on our family."

Hearing this, Mrs. Qin recalled that bald young man.

He looked tall and tough with a bit of a fierce look, and her brows furrowed slightly.

"Xiaxia, are you sure your elder sister also likes this Jia fellow? Could you have misunderstood? You know how polite Juanzi is to everyone."

Mrs. Qin knew her own daughter's temperament well. As a mother, she understood that Juanzi was gentle and always polite to others.

Before Lin Chuxia could say anything, Qin Han interjected.

"Mom, I think the sister-in-law has it right. I'm basically sure Juanzi has taken a liking to Jia Liang. I know that boy quite well. If Juanzi wasn't interested, that boy wouldn't dare to be so attentive in front of us."

When Zhang Guilan was in Yan City for her bedrest, Qin Han frequently went to the city.

He would often deliver goods to the restaurant, and also take the opportunity to see his wife.

He had long seen Jia Liang's interest in Qin Juan, and he also could see a bit of Qin Juan's attitude toward Jia Liang.

Although Jia Liang had made mistakes in the past, during their interactions, Qin Han found no issues with his character.

On the contrary, from a man's perspective, Jia Liang seemed rather loyal.

He had his own set of principles both in life and in work.

The store in Yan City, from finding premises to opening, and then from Qin's Buns Shop to Qin's Restaurant.

Qin Han, having been a store manager, understood what it meant for Jia Liang to manage the store to its current scale.

Frankly speaking, that boy was better than him.

Overall, if Jia Liang truly had the ability to win over his sister, he'd be glad to see it happen.

So, when he noticed Jia Liang's intentions back then, he just turned a blind eye.

Now hearing his sister-in-law say this, he was quite pleased.

Mrs. Qin was even more confused now, looking at this one and then at that one, "Are you saying Juanzi is also interested? She's always been the most obedient. Would she dare?"

"Mom, elder sister is already thirty. I think after everything she's been through, she's grown. She has her own life and also the right to pursue happiness."

Lin Chuxia held Mrs. Qin's hand, thinking about how to persuade Mrs. Qin.

She always felt the Qin Family was pretty open-minded. Mrs. Qin couldn't possibly be the sole one with old-fashioned ideas, unwilling for her daughter to remarry or unable to accept her daughter's free choice in love?

Seeing his mother like this, Qin Han also started to feel anxious. Yet, despite the anxiety, there was a slight hint of dissatisfaction in his tone...