

Switched M 691

Chapter 691: Rebellion

Zhuang Yang hesitated in his steps, then changed direction, "Just as well, I need to clear my head too."

Qin Han, watching the man who followed, was at a loss and looked to Qin Yang for help.

Even though they didn't know if they would get the chance, what they were planning wasn't exactly aboveboard, so why was this guy following?

He was a leader of a big company, the young master of the Zhuang Family.

Qin Yang didn't even spare them a glance.

Fine, let him follow.

After all, he was the younger brother-in-law; even Qin Yang didn't object.

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The winter night, with the north wind howling through the alleys, moonlight casting a cold glow on the land.

The old pagoda tree in the yard trembled in the cold wind, its branches hung with icicles, flickering as light from the window shone upon them.

From inside the house, the incessant voice of an old woman could be heard.

Mrs. Zhang, having lived in comfort for many years, couldn't bear this kind of grievance, much less this hardship.

During the day, she had fallen hard and then had her son land on her, feeling her bones all dislocated, with everything aching by now, yet no one at home to put her mind at ease.

Seeing the leftover steamed buns and pickled vegetables on the table, and hearing the child's crying nearby, her anger couldn't be contained.

"What's with you? Can't you keep her quiet for a while? Marrying a wife like you is bad luck for eight lifetimes. If not for going with you to find your brother today, would I have ended up like this? Can't even handle anything, just know how to eat, eat, eat..."

Li Dongmei, full of grievances, quickly put down her chopsticks to hold and comfort her daughter after encountering the old lady's gaze.

Mrs. Zhang wasn't planning to let her off.

Since she married into the Zhang Family, she hadn't earned a penny, couldn't do anything right, and even made the old lady step in.

Not to mention, she hadn't even given birth to a son, bringing another girl into the family, cutting off the Zhang Family lineage.

These words Li Dongmei had heard more than once, her ears almost calloused from listening.

She knew she couldn't talk back to the old lady now, better to say nothing and let the old lady vent; she'd finish when she was tired.

If she retorted, not only would the old lady go on and on, but the old master would also seize the opportunity to act up, and even her husband Zhang Wenbin would scold her on the side of his parents.

Looking at her daughter in her arms, Li Dongmei suddenly thought of the woman she saw today.

She had heard of that woman more than once from Mrs. Zhang and Zhang Wenbin.

The Zhang Family said that woman deserved her divorce from Zhang Wenbin.

How that woman wasn't worthy of Zhang Wenbin.

Li Dongmei believed she was excellent in every aspect, naturally not ending up like that woman by marrying Zhang Wenbin.

But now...

Just then, there was a loud bang from the courtyard gate as someone stumbled in from outside.

When the person entered and their appearance became clear, everyone in the house was shocked.

"Wenbin, what happened to you? Who beat you like this?"

Seeing her son with a bruised face, Mrs. Zhang, ignoring her pain, got up in surprise.

Li Dongmei was also taken aback, "Didn't you say you were going to see friends? How did you end up beaten like this?"

She suddenly thought of something and spoke angrily, "Your friends went too far. It's just borrowing money, if they won't lend it, there's no need to beat someone up, right?"

Mrs. Zhang, upon hearing that Zhang Wenbin was beaten over a loan, slapped Li Dongmei hard across the face.

"It's all your fault, you little cursed one. If you could've borrowed money during the day, would Wenbin be beaten like this? Marrying you into our Zhang Family really brought misfortune, causing me to fall during the day and Wenbin to be beaten at night. What more harm will you bring to this family?"

Covering her face, Li Dongmei, unable to suppress her grievances from the whole day, couldn't help but speak, "How can this be my fault? In the past six months, Wenbin hasn't worked, and we've been living off the money I bring from my family. Even if I'm not working to earn, I'm still supporting the whole family. If you all really look down on me so much, we might as well get a divorce."

She's really had enough of days like this.

Especially after seeing that woman today, who wasn't at all as miserable post-divorce as Mrs. Zhang said, but rather cherished by her new mother-in-law like a treasure. Li Dongmei felt she couldn't endure another day of this life.

Mrs. Zhang didn't expect Li Dongmei to mention divorce, momentarily shocked or angry, her eyes wide with speechlessness.

From the start when Li Dongmei hadn't even set foot into this family, she was always sucking up to Mrs. Zhang.

Even after marrying in, she always followed Mrs. Zhang's lead, accepting whatever the family dished out, whether beatings or scoldings.

A woman from the countryside marrying into the city was considered an immense blessing; how dare she flaunt defiance?

Never expected, today she not only talked back but dared to bring up divorce.

"Preposterous, truly preposterous," Mrs. Zhang exclaimed, slapping the bed edge continuously in anger, "Each and every one of you has turned against us. What did our Zhang Family ever do to you to dare mention divorce? Wenbin, hit her, hit her hard. I've always said, women are all ingrates, let them loose for three days, and they'll climb the walls. Divorce is out of the question; once you step into our Zhang Family, you live as our Zhang Family's person, and after death, you're the Zhang Family's ghost..."

Don't think Mrs. Zhang didn't know, Li Dongmei was inspired by that little vixen Qin Juan's good life post-divorce and wanted to leave Wenbin for someone else.

Dream on, Mrs. Zhang won't let Wenbin divorce again.

After the divorce, everything in this household would fall onto her again.

Li Dongmei, hearing so, watched Zhang Wenbin warily, her gaze resolute. She had resolved, should Zhang Wenbin dare to lay a hand on her, she would flee, never to return once she left this home.

Zhang Wenbin couldn't care less about these mother-daughter squabbles. His whole body was in pain everywhere now.

Especially in his chest, which throbbed painfully with every move, suddenly opening his mouth to vomit a mouthful of blood.

This scared everyone in the house, who forgot about arguing.

"Wenbin, son, what happened to you? Who exactly beat you like this? Old man, why are you still standing there? Hurry to the police station and report it to the authorities. Whoever did this, we won't let them off."

Li Dongmei was also panicked.

If Zhang Wenbin got seriously injured, knowing the Zhang Family's nature, there's no way they'd let him divorce her.

If Zhang Wenbin's condition turned grave and he died, she'd become a widow, and those two old fossil Zhangs would never let her leave.

Despite usually not meddling, Old Master Zhang reluctantly moved to get dressed upon seeing his son beaten like that.

Zhang Wenbin raised a hand to stop him, "No need, it's useless..."

Mrs. Zhang didn't understand, "What do you mean? Just let them off after they've hurt you? Since when were Zhang Family members so easy to bully?"

Chapter 692: Thrill

Zhang Wenbin was helped to sit on a chair and shook his head. "I mean, reporting to the police is useless. I was beaten after being covered with a sack, in the pitch dark I couldn't see who did it."

"Covered with a sack and beaten?" Mrs. Zhang's voice suddenly sharpened, "Who is this heartless person that covered you with a sack? Is there no King's Law in this world?"

Her repeated use of the word 'again' caused Zhang Wenbin's body to stiffen suddenly as the images sealed away rushed back.

"It must be them, it must be them."

When he first returned to An City after divorcing Qin Juan, he was also beaten this way.

At that time, he hadn't figured out who held a grudge against him. Later, Qin Han let it slip.

Today, he had just seen Qin Juan during the day and was beaten at night.

Who else could it be but those two brothers?

Upon hearing this, ignoring her pain, Mrs. Zhang leaned forward, "You know who it is? Then what are you waiting for, go to the police station and report them. This is a society governed by law; if they hit people, they must be jailed, and medical expenses should not be ignored."

Zhang Wenbin didn't want to suffer this loss either.

But going to the police station to file a grievance would require evidence.

Everything was his speculation. No matter how accurate, without witnesses or physical evidence, what could he do to them?

Moreover, those two brothers were not ordinary people, and there was also Lin Chuxia.

He feared that taking evidence to the police station would end up with those few people quietly suppressing the situation.

"Mom, don't worry about this matter. Focus on recovering; I have a plan."

Zhang Wenbin left this message and glanced at Li Dongmei.

Li Dongmei sensibly came forward to help him up and supported Zhang Wenbin, who limped back to the room.

Mrs. Zhang was still shouting from behind, "Wenbin, don't let them off easy, the medical expenses must be at least three hundred, I'm in so much pain that I need to recuperate well."

After finishing, she continued to moan in pain.

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Returning to his room, Zhang Wenbin shook off Li Dongmei with a frosty gaze.

"Are you thinking of divorcing me too?"

Li Dongmei was inherently afraid of Zhang Wenbin; being stared at by his grim eyes made her little courage disappear, causing her to slightly tremble and shake her head, "No... no..."

Zhang Wenbin snorted coldly, "Better not. I've already divorced once and can't divorce a second time. Even if there were to be a divorce, it would be me not wanting you."

The last divorce was Qin Juan's idea, which cost him his dignity as a man.

Zhang Wenbin absolutely would not allow a second woman to step on him.

Li Dongmei trembled again and nodded, "I understand."

Seeing her timid demeanor reminded Zhang Wenbin of Qin Juan during the day.

Qin Juan used to behave the same way, submissive, never daring to go east when he said west.

Now, not only was she divorced from him, but she had also latched on to another man and was pregnant.

Every time he thought of his former woman doing such things with another man, Zhang Wenbin felt his head turning green with jealousy.

He viciously kicked Li Dongmei, "Whore, all whores..."

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Upon entering Qin Family Village, Zhuang Yang looked at the two brothers walking in line ahead, still doubting what he had witnessed.

These two brothers claimed they were going for a stroll, so he assumed they were just taking a walk.

Having just had a drink, he wanted to let the alcohol evaporate from his body.

Unexpectedly, the two headed straight out of Qin Family Village towards the county as if they had urgent matters.

It was his idea to accompany the brothers for a walk, feeling embarrassed to back out now.

Moreover, Zhuang Yang keenly noticed the atmosphere between the brothers was growing tense, anticipating something was about to happen.

Curiosity drove him to follow them all the way to a residential area in the county.

There, he saw Qin Yang's older brother, Qin Han, magically pulling a sack from his coat.

Qin Yang scouted the surrounding area with vigilant eyes, like a hunting leopard.

By now, Zhuang Yang had guessed they were waiting for someone.

Qin Han even asked Qin Yang if they would succeed in waiting.

How did his steadfast brother-in-law answer?

"Let's wait and see, if not today then tomorrow, if they still don't show, we'll break down the door. I refuse to believe that bastard won't come out."

It was only then he remembered Zhuang Yang was there and politely asked if he wanted to head back first.

Zhuang Yang: "..."

Only remembering to ask now, wasn't it a bit too late?

Still, Zhuang Yang wasn't afraid; in fact, he found it thrilling.

The excitement was only just beginning.

The brothers roamed a section of the county and actually caught someone.

It's unclear if that person had offended the Qin brothers, or if they were merely unlucky.

Such a frigid night, instead of staying indoors, they were wandering outside late at night.

Zhuang Yang saw Qin Yang move first upon spotting a figure.

He snatched the sack from Qin Han's hand and briskly approached the person, ensnaring their head before they could react.

Qin Han followed suit, mercilessly delivering punches and kicks to the person.

No matter how that person shouted, the two showed no mercy.

Given the circumstances, merely standing by would have been impolite.

Zhuang Yang joined in, raining down his own punches and kicks until the person could only groan helplessly.

But really, it wasn't his fault.

If the Qin brothers were hitting, how could he not join, risking looking out of place?

Would they call on him next time they had something to do?

Qin Han was easygoing; he didn't know him well.

But Qin Yang was his brother-in-law; he couldn't allow him to think he was an outsider.

Having rationalized it, Zhuang Yang had no guilt.

Instead, he felt his relationship with his brother-in-law had grown deeper.

Afterwards, the trio headed back without speaking, and Zhuang Yang didn't ask questions.

He was just that understanding.

Upon returning to Qin Family Village, it was already past ten; the Qin Family's parents in the front yard had gone to bed.

After closing the gate, the three walked silently towards the backyard.

The lights in several rooms were still on, and Zhuang Yang was about to bid the two brothers goodnight when Zhuang Jingshu stepped out of a room.

Seeing them, she nodded slightly, her gaze finally landing on Zhuang Yang.

"Why are you back so late? Did you encounter any difficulties at work?"

It was a simple inquiry, yet Zhuang Yang felt like he had been caught.

The last time he felt this way was back in his school days.

Casually glancing at his brother-in-law beside him, he noted how composed he was despite his recent actions.

Facing his mother-in-law, he remained calm and collected.

Were it not for his hands behind his back concealing his injured hand, he seemed like he'd just come back from a casual stroll.

Chapter 693: His Wife Is Even More Ruthless Than Him

Zhuang Yang cleared his throat and pointed at Qin Yang beside him. "I've been back for a while. I just bumped into my brother-in-law and elder brother outside, so I went for a stroll with them."

Zhuang Jingshu nodded slightly without any doubt, "Then you should go back and rest early. The Spring Festival is approaching, so put aside work matters that can be put aside, and deal with them after the festival."

She was worried that Zhuang Yang, having lived abroad for so long, wouldn't understand the importance of the Spring Festival to people in China, so she added a reminder.

"Okay, I understand, Chairman."

Zhuang Yang let out a long sigh of relief and winked at his brother-in-law.

Qin Yang turned his face expressionlessly, said goodnight to Zhuang Jingshu, and returned to his room.

Lin Chuxia was still awake, playing on the bed with Qi Qi.

For some reason, Qi Qi's sleep schedule had been a bit irregular these past few days, maybe due to the change in environment.

She fell asleep early in the evening, but now her big bright eyes were wide open, full of energy.

Hearing the man enter the room, Lin Chuxia spoke without lifting her head, "You're back?"

Qin Yang responded and was about to go to the bathroom to wash his hands.

Lin Chuxia glanced sideways at him, her voice calm, "Injured again. Next time, should I bring you a bandage beforehand? Don't end up hurting yourself after teaching someone a lesson."

Qin Yang paused, "You knew?"

Lin Chuxia, while holding her daughter's small hand, retorted, "Knew what?"

"Then you..."

Lin Chuxia chuckled softly, "After all these years, you think I don't know the relationship between you and my brother? Would either of you have the leisure to accompany each other for a walk?"

Qin Yang aside, Qin Han is also one who adores his wife and kids. As long as they're home, there's no way you'd get him out unless it's serious.

Qin Yang uncomfortably scratched his nose, "I'll wash my hands first."

The injuries were not severe. The sack was coarse, and he had used too much force, so the skin on two of his joints was broken. After washing with cold water, it wasn't a big deal.

However, when he returned to the room, Lin Chuxia still found some antiseptic solution and carefully applied it to his large hands.

Qin Yang felt guilty and decided to be honest.

He recounted the events of the day and night to Lin Chuxia.

"I didn't want you to worry about all these trivial things, so I didn't tell you."

Lin Chuxia was displeased, "How can my elder sister's matters be trivial? The Zhang Family really is a bunch of scumbags. What's with Zhang Wenbin? Does he want to remarry my elder sister? Can't he see what he's like? I remember he remarried too, and he was quite proud of marrying a young maiden. How much time has passed, and now he thinks my elder sister is better? People like that never learn from their past mistakes. Next time you encounter such things, instead of secretly beating him, find a way to get him into the police station."

Qin Yang didn't expect his wife to be even harsher than him. But dealing with someone like Zhang Wenbin indeed required decisiveness.

"It's almost New Year's, let's collect some interest first."

In other words, they would take their time with the follow-up matters.

Seeing that Lin Chuxia was on the same page, she didn't say anything more, "I'll go see my elder sister tomorrow, you play with Qi Qi for a while, I'll go freshen up."

Qin Yang picked up their daughter directly.

Qi Qi, being lifted high by her dad, giggled happily, her small mouth opening and closing as she blew bubbles.

Qin Yang kissed her little face once, then her little hands, and finally gently nibbled on her tiny feet.

When her dad's nibble hurt, little Qi Qi pursed her lips in grievance, just about to wail, when Qin Yang quickly teased her, "Don't cry, don't cry, Daddy's here, look at this Qi Qi..."

The little one immediately grinned again, "Ah-woo ah-woo... baba baba..."

Qin Yang felt his heart melt like water.

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The next day, Lin Chuxia went to visit Qin Juan after breakfast.

She learned that Qin Juan encountered Zhang Wenbin at the night market while shopping for New Year's goods. On the way, she and Qin Yang bought many goods to take over to her.

Seeing that everything was fine with her, she finally felt relieved.

In the afternoon, Zhuang Jingshu brought Lin Chuxia out again.

Today was also Zhuang Yang's official day off. She thought her mother, after so many years without spending the Spring Festival in China, wanted to have a look around.

Unexpectedly, her mother took her directly to the market site.

Nowadays, this place could no longer be called a market stall.

The old market was long gone, razed to the ground. Now, it was a five-story building that had just topped out.

Lin Chuxia knew the building was her mother's project, but she didn't know why her mother brought her here.

Confused, she heard Zhuang Jingshu softly speak, "I had your brother build this to commercial building standards. It topped out not long ago. I'm eager to give it to you."

As Lin Chuxia remained in a daze, Zhuang Jingshu held her hand, "Don't tell me you want to refuse. It's a gesture from your mom, and I truly don't know..."

Zhuang Jingshu's voice choked up, unsure of what to say next, when Lin Chuxia let out a surprised cry.

"Mom, you're amazing! Are you really giving me an entire building?"

Her sparkling eyes looked at her, and Zhuang Jingshu broke into a smile amidst her tears, "Of course. If you don't believe me, ask your brother. It's a surprise I've been planning for a long time."

Lin Chuxia's smile widened, "I'm not going to ask my brother; he's probably jealous of me. Mom, thank you. This truly is a big surprise. Wow, five floors! This is now the tallest building in Ancheng County. What should I do with these five floors?"

She playfully tapped her head and then turned to glance at Zhuang Jingshu, "Mom, I've decided. The Xiyang Group's headquarters will be here. The first floor will be a shopping mall, the second and third floors will be a clothing store, and the top floor will be the Xiyang Group's office space. As for the fourth floor, I'll have to really think about it."

Zhuang Jingshu watched her, holding back tears until she couldn't, her eyes reddening.

She knew her daughter didn't want to hear words of guilt anymore.

"You could also consider opening an inn or hotel. According to Ancheng County's development trend, a mall and supermarket may not require such large space. You can leave it empty and slowly plan according to future needs."

"Alright, I'll listen to you, Mom," Lin Chuxia happily agreed.

Zhuang Jingshu quickly gathered her emotions and instructed Zhuang Yang ahead, "Didn't you say before that you didn't know how to decorate? From now on, listen to Xiaxia and carry out the overall decoration according to her plans."

Zhuang Yang playfully saluted with his fingers, "Got it, Chairman, Miss."

Despite Zhuang Yang letting Lin Chuxia call him brother, he always clearly understood his position.

The mother and daughter were amused by Zhuang Yang's playful actions.

As Lin Chuxia laughed, she looked at the large building ahead, filled with mixed emotions.

Previously, she really hadn't expected the building was her mother's gift to her.

But since her mother spoke, she wouldn't refuse her mother's goodwill.

Chapter 694: Little Fox

To the mother, this building was not just a material gift, but also a symbol of her 20 years of guilt and longing.

Lin Chuxia did not want her mother to carry those burdens anymore; accepting this building could actually provide her mother some relief.

Zhuang Jingshu was very happy, and even Zhuang Yang was affected by the atmosphere between the mother and daughter.

"Do you want to go inside and take a look?"

Lin Chuxia, "Can I?"

It seems like construction has stopped, and the gate appears to be locked.

Zhuang Yang parked the car to the side, "No problem, there's someone stationed here to guard the site, I'll call them to open the gate."

Sure enough, it wasn't long before the construction site gate was opened from the inside.

Zhuang Yang carried two safety helmets, wearing one on his head as well.

Even though construction had stopped, it's important to maintain safety awareness as this is an ongoing project.

Lin Chuxia worried that it would be difficult to navigate the site, and wanted Zhuang Jingshu to wait in the car, but she refused.

Lin Chuxia and Zhuang Yang supported her on either side as the three of them took a walk around the building.

From outside the construction site, they could only see the building's height, but when they got to the base, Lin Chuxia realized how large the commercial building's footprint was.

They were at a clothing market in Yan City. It had three floors, and each floor of the current building before them was going to be twice as large as the clothing market in Yan City.

No wonder Zhuang Jingshu reminded her that the bottom three floors would be too much for a supermarket and clothing market alone.

"Rushing the project, the overall construction should be completed by the end of the year, with plans to start both external and internal renovations in the spring. Since the chairman has already given you the building, you should decide on the design and layout for the interior and exterior. I'll contact the project designers, and you can share any ideas with them. You're also welcome to come on site to guide them."

Zhuang Yang said with a laugh.

Lin Chuxia pouted and complained to Zhuang Jingshu, "Mom, do you see this? Brother is trying to be lazy."

Zhuang Yang shrugged helplessly, "You caught that so quickly."

It elicited laughter from several people.

On the way back, the three continued discussing the building's design.

From the initial ideas that just popped into her head, Lin Chuxia already had a rough plan for the building in her mind.

Zhuang Jingshu suddenly changed the topic, "I heard from Qin Han that this building was designed with your help. Where did you get the inspiration? Or did you see this style somewhere else?"

"No, I just thought of what would be comfortable," Lin Chuxia replied easily.

She couldn't exactly say that this design would be common 30 years from now.

Zhuang Jingshu thought of the designs for both Qin's Restaurant in Yan City and Qin's Buns Shop in Ancheng County, both designed and decorated by Lin Chuxia. They all have a distinctive style and look comfortable.

It must truly be about comfort.

There's no denying her daughter's good eye and talent for design.

"I've mostly dealt with the shares overseas, and now I have some funds available. I want to develop a business domestically. I didn't have a concrete idea before, but seeing your brother's building sparked an interest."

She had been pondering this a lot lately. Whether looking at it from a domestic development perspective or her own viewpoint, she felt optimistic.

She was curious about her daughter's thoughts.

Zhuang Jingshu took Lin Chuxia's hand seriously, "Xiaxia, what do you think about the real estate business in the country? My thinking is that now that land and buildings are no longer completely controlled by the state, even the housing provided for workers can be freely traded. As you've mentioned, as people's living standards improve, they tend to prioritize food, clothing, shelter, and transportation. When people trade their homes, isn't it because they want to live more comfortably? I've heard that in some big cities, commercial housing is already being bought and sold, and I want to explore that sector."

Fearing that Lin Chuxia might not understand, she added, "I'm getting older, and even though I'd love to be part of this industry, I don't want to exert myself anymore. If you think it's feasible, I'd like to invest capital. Then, we could split the shares among you, your brother, and me—you taking 40%, while he and I each take 30%. However, you and your brother would need to handle the management."

Zhuang Jingshu leaned closer, her tone tempting, while casting a glance at Zhuang Yang in the distance, "But don't worry, your brother is quite capable, and can handle the management. You just need to oversee the design plans."

Lin Chuxia understood exactly what her mother meant.

Her mother wanted to give her the opportunity to earn money without any strings attached.

She didn't have to contribute money or effort, yet she'd be the major shareholder.

And from her lived experience, the coming decades were indeed a flourishing period for real estate.

Even though real estate truly boomed after 2000, the 1990s also saw notable growth; it's still the best time now to accumulate land.

She smiled, "I trust in mom's vision, and in brother's capability."

Driving in front, Zhuang Yang suddenly tensed up, casting a surreptitious glance at Lin Chuxia in the back seat through the rearview mirror.

This was quite the little fox.

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This year's Chinese New Year was made even livelier with the addition of Zhuang Jingshu, Zhuang Yang, and the new member, Qi Qi.

On the second day of the new year, Qin Juan's family also returned to their maternal home.

Mrs. Qin hadn't seen Qin Juan for some time, and saw her with her six-month-plus pregnant belly. She didn't look haggard at all, in fact, she had gained some weight.

Her complexion was healthy and glowing, and her eyes sparkled with vitality.

It was apparent she was living a comfortable and stable life.

That day, not only did Qin Juan's family bring Ningning back, but even Old Mrs. Jia came along.

This was something Mrs. Qin had specifically called to remind beforehand.

Since Qin Juan's family had come, leaving Old Mrs. Jia alone at home would be too lonely.

Towards Old Mrs. Jia, her son's mother-in-law, Mrs. Qin had no complaints. Judging by how affectionately little Ningning called her 'granny', it was clear Old Mrs. Jia treated both their daughter and granddaughter well.

Though now her daughter was Jia family's daughter-in-law and carried their grandchild, the granddaughter held no ties to Jia family.

Old Mrs. Jia was so kind to Ningning; no matter the reason, the Qin Family was not one to be ungrateful.

The Qin Family's enthusiasm made Old Mrs. Jia feel slightly uneasy.

Upon arriving at Qin's home and seeing Mrs. Qin, Old Mrs. Jia laughed, "You see, bringing the mother-in-law along while the daughter-in-law visits her family is really something, isn't it? I'm afraid to trouble you, old sister, today."

Mrs. Qin went forward and grasped Old Mrs. Jia's hand, "How's this troubling? We're all family. Saying things like that sounds unfamiliar. New Year's all about being lively, let's enjoy the bustle together today."

Old Mrs. Jia was also forthright, and although this situation might have been...awkward, she felt genuinely happy inside.

Chapter 695: Crashing the Party

Ever since Jia Liang's father passed away, they cut off ties with the Jia family, and even their maternal relatives were afraid they would become attached to the orphaned mother and son.

Old Mrs. Jia was strong-willed and noticed her brothers' attitudes, and they never took advantage of anyone.

Later, Jia Liang grew up and went astray, and those relatives completely severed ties with them.

For all these years, it's been just mother and son relying on each other, even during festive occasions; sometimes Jia Liang's little friends would come to their home for New Year's greetings.

But whenever she thought of what those people were up to with Jia Liang, how could the old lady be happy? They were just adding to her troubles.

She never imagined there would be such a day when Jia Liang not only got on the right track but also became successful.

He married such a beautiful and sensible wife, and the daughter-in-law's family genuinely treated the mother and son well.

Upon hearing Qin Juan say that her in-law asked her to bring the old lady over, Mrs. Jia was polite on the outside but immensely happy on the inside.

Lunch was prepared by Jia Liang, with Zhang Guilan and Lin Chuxia helping.

Mrs. Qin felt it was inappropriate; how could they let the son-in-law cook when visiting the wife's family?

But Old Mrs. Jia was happily stopping Mrs. Qin, insisting her son take charge of cooking.

This was an opportunity for him to show off in front of his mother-in-law, and she couldn't let her son miss it.

Otherwise, with her son's bear-like demeanor, what right did he have to marry such a good girl?

Don't mind that Qin Juan was in her second marriage; it's that Zhang family who lacked fortune.

Look at Qin Juan's looks, temper, and ability; and her family's prowess — for their Jia Liang to marry Qin Juan was like burning high incense on the Jia family's grave.

The meal was lively and bustling, thanks to the large living room.

As soon as lunch was finished, more people arrived outside.

These days, people visiting for New Year's greetings were endless, though most from the village had already come on the first day of the New Year.

A glance showed these were indeed not village folk, led by Sun Bingnan with Eldest Son Sun, Sun Bingwen, and Second Brother Sun, Sun Bingshan, following behind.

These three brothers, especially Sun Bingnan at the front, were full of swagger, wearing a black long coat and walking with great style.

Sun Bingwen and Sun Bingshan weren't bad either, following Sun Bingnan, albeit a bit reserved. Both were dressed in new clothes, walking confidently, faces beaming with smiles, looking entirely different from the honest and hardworking Elder and Second Brother of the Sun Family whom Lin Chuxia had previously known, who cultivated the fields in the village.

Confidence is never something given by others.

Economic foundations determine the superstructure.

Only when one has skills and sufficient capital can they confidently face any person and event.

The three brothers used New Year's greetings as an excuse to visit, first greeting elders like Mr. Qin, Mrs. Qin, Mrs. Zhuang, and Old Mrs. Jia.

When it came to peers, things were more casual.

Sun Bingnan, Qin Han, and Jia Liang were old acquaintances, making the atmosphere relaxed and lively.

Su Wensong and Sun Lanlan came over with their child in no time.

Fortunately, Qin Han's newly built house had a sufficiently large living room; even then, it seemed a bit overcrowded.

With so many people today, Little Qi Qi was very excited, although at this moment, she was getting a bit sleepy.

Zhuang Jingshu took the child to her room to coax her to sleep.

Mrs. Qin invited Old Mrs. Jia to the front yard to chat.

These young ones were chirping away; they couldn't understand nor contribute to the conversation, so staying here would just make the young ones uncomfortable.

Old Mrs. Jia was eager for it, and the two old ladies almost held hands on their way to the front yard.

Mr. Qin took the children to the yard to set off firecrackers.

Little Zhuangzhuang became the undisputed leader among the children.

Although Sister Ningning was the oldest among the kids, she was a girl, and he was a boy, so naturally, he should take care of the girls and younger siblings.

Perhaps it was prearranged, Wang Tianyu and Sister Wang Tianxue also came over, bringing Little Longlong along.

The arrival of the sisters subtly shifted the atmosphere.

If we talk about the major issue Xiyang faces recently, it would undoubtedly be the series of chain reactions brought about by the heavy snow at the start of winter.

Daqing Mountain Village's chicken farm suffered a loss of chicks, which subsequently affected Xiyang Food Factory's supply of meat chickens for the Spring Festival.

Fortunately, Xiyang Food Factory has several suppliers, so after timely coordination in various aspects, there was absolutely no impact on the factory's production during the Spring Festival.

Moreover, a hatchery center has been established in Daqing Mountain Village, so from now on, they won't have to worry about similar occurrences.

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"Speaking of which, my brother and I came today for something important to report to Mr. Lin," Sun Bingwen stood up as he spoke. Under everyone's gaze, he felt a bit nervous, yet he looked firmly at Lin Chuxia, "If it weren't for this matter, my brother and I wouldn't have dared to come and greet Mr. Lin for the New Year. As of yesterday, the first batch of eggs incubated at our hatchery center has all successfully hatched, with an incubation success rate of 85% and a survival rate close to 80%. I know these numbers are not high, but my brother and I will summarize our experiences, learn from our mistakes, and are confident in gradually improving the incubation success rate."

"Great," Sun Bingwen's words fell, and Sun Bingnan was the first to cheer and clap.

It startled Sun Bingwen, who had practiced his words at home for half a day before finally saying them, and now he went red in the face.

Without thinking, he immediately kicked at his third brother, "Shut up."

Sun Bingnan felt wronged, "Big brother, your speech was so high-level, if I didn't know you were my real big brother, I'd have thought I was listening to a leader's government report. As your younger brother, I naturally have to support you for speaking such high-level words."

"Go shut up," the more Sun Bingnan spoke, the redder Sun Bingwen's face became.

Was this him supporting him? This felt more like he was crashing the scene.

Can't he see how embarrassed he is right now?

But Sun Bingnan didn't care about that, considering there wasn't anyone unfamiliar present.

He even wanted Lin Chuxia to weigh in, "Mr. Lin, you tell us whether I'm right? You've known my big brother for years; you know how he is, right?"

Lin Chuxia couldn't stop laughing, but she managed to collect herself and solemnly affirmed Sun Bingwen.

"Third brother is right; big brother, you're truly gaining more skills. Not just in speaking, but I trust you and second brother handling the chicken farm in Daqing Mountain Village."

As she spoke, she gave Sun Bingwen a thumbs up.

Sun Bingwen chuckled foolishly, "This... this matter isn't something we did alone. I have to say, for the hatchery center to be built, Assistant Wang's contributions were the greatest. Second brother and I were just helping out on the side. How the building was constructed, where the equipment came from, where the technology was learned correctly, even several technicians at our hatchery center were recruited by Assistant Wang. We really didn't do much."

Wang Tianyu couldn't stay seated upon hearing this.

Chapter 696: Mutual Commercial Flattery

"Brother Sun, how could you say you did nothing? You built the house, managed the equipment, Eldest Sister-in-law Sun and Second Sister-in-law Sun were watching those chicks during the New Year. I just gave a few suggestions. Brother Sun and Second Brother Sun deserve the most credit, along with Eldest Sister-in-law Sun and Second Sister-in-law Sun."

Sun Bingwen and Sun Bingshan waved their hands repeatedly, "We just did what we could, it's really nothing..."

The two sides kept deferring credit, and Wang Tianxue nudged Lin Chuxia, "What do you call this?"

Lin Chuxia blinked, "Mutual admiration business?"

"I think so."

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Despite saying that, Wang Tianyu really did perform outstandingly in this matter.

From the initial setup of the incubation center, to examining equipment and technology, all the way to hatching the first batch of chicks, Wang Tianyu followed through.

Lin Chuxia could also see this teenager's enormous potential.

The room was bustling with excitement when suddenly a "beep beep beep beep beep beep" sound put a pause on the lively atmosphere.

Everyone simultaneously looked towards the source of the sound, which seemed to be coming from Sun Bingnan.

Under everyone's gaze, Sun Bingnan casually opened his coat.

There was a small rectangular device on his waist, emitting a "beep beep beep beep beep beep" sound.

Zhang Guilan, as if discovering a new land, circled around him.

"Oh my, Sun Bingnan, what do you have on your waist that makes this sound?"

Sun Bingnan grinned proudly, "Sister-in-law, this is called a pager."

"What kind of machine is a pager? What's it used for?"

Her question clearly voiced what everyone present was wondering.

The rest stopped talking and looked at Sun Bingnan.

Sun Bingnan took the pager off his waist and waved it in front of them, "This thing is used for finding people."

Zhang Guilan suddenly understood, "You carry it, and once it beeps, we know where you are."

Then she felt something was off, "This little thing's sound is too small, everyone can hear it in the room, but if you're farther away, who can hear it? If you're this close, you're right in front of us, why would I need the sound to find you? Is this thing for fools?"

Her remark made everyone laugh again.

Sun Bingnan wasn't annoyed and patiently explained to Zhang Huilan.

"It's not the sound that finds me, sister-in-law. Although this thing is small, it's quite useful. If you have something urgent and call, I get the message here. Wherever I am, I can quickly get in touch with you."

Zhang Guilan looked in disbelief, she took the pager from Sun Bingnan's hand and examined it.

"Wow, this little thing doesn't have a phone line, so how does it know we called you?"

Qin Han also didn't believe it, "Let me see, can this little thing really ring when I call?"

It's no surprise they didn't believe it, as pagers just started appearing. Lin Chuxia and the others seldom saw them even in Yan City, let alone in a small Ancheng County.

Sun Bingnan immediately went to find a phone, "Don't doubt, I'll call now and show you."

After building a new house, they pulled a phone line from the agricultural supplies store for convenience.

Now, there were phones at home and in the store, one main phone and one extension, both could ring for an incoming call, and both could make outgoing calls.

Sun Bingnan picked up the phone and dialed the pager station.

As he dialed, he grinned mischievously at everyone, covering the phone, "The girls at the pager station have the sweetest voices, I've never heard anything nicer in my life."

Qin Han couldn't sit still, "Let me listen, I want to hear it..."

He quickly stepped forward, but barely took two steps and almost stumbled at Sun Bingnan's feet.

He turned back to see Zhang Guilan calmly withdrawing her leg and glaring at him fiercely.

Qin Han: "..."

Too excited, he forgot his wife was there.

Sun Bingnan chuckled and switched the phone to speaker.

After two busy tones, a sweet voice of an operator came through, "Hello~, Guotong 37~"

Sun Bingnan winked, and the other men either raised their eyebrows or had subtle smiles.

Zhang Guilan rubbed her arms and shivered.

Sun Lanlan was right next to Lin Chuxia, whispering to her, "No wonder my mom wanted my third brother to go on a blind date during New Year, and he refused. Maybe he's fallen for one of those girls? Look at his gloating face, what if he likes her?"

Sun Bingnan didn't respond immediately, while the paging operator continued to ask.

"Hello sir, what can I help you with? This is Guotong Paging Station, could you tell me the number you want to call?"

Sun Bingnan then cleared his throat, "Please page 39581 for me."

"Okay~, 39581~, sir, please leave your message~, should they return your call?"

"Yes, ask him to call me back."

"Alright~, may I know your phone number?"

Sun Bingnan gave his home phone number.

"Okay, do you need any other assistance?"

"No, that's all."

"Thank you sir, goodbye!"

"Mhm, goodbye, goodbye."

Sun Bingnan hung up the phone. Shortly after, the pager in his hand began to beep beep beep beep beep.

Qin Han snatched the pager with wide eyes in disbelief, "It really rang, and the number on it is ours. What does 01 mean?"

Sun Bingnan puffed his chest, "01 means please call back. It's an internal code at the paging station, known only to those who bought a pager."

Qin Han looked admiring, "I see, this is like using codes in the old days to send messages to underground workers."

"It's more or less similar."

Sun Lanlan pouted and shook Lin Chuxia's arm, "Codes and all that, Xiaxia, later ask my brother who the woman on the phone was just now. Seeing his expression, you're the only one who can ask. If he really found a woman outside, our family wouldn't oppose it. He should bring her home and get married quickly. You know my mom is going crazy worrying about his marriage."

Sun Bingnan is already twenty-seven or eighty years old, still single, which is considered old in the village.

Lin Chuxia patted Sun Lanlan's arm comfortingly, "I'm afraid I can't help with that."

The paging operator is just a job, not connected to any particular user.

The relationship is just service-based, like a salesperson or ticket seller.

As for why the voice sounds like that,

Lin Chuxia was aware that since the first civilian paging station appeared in the capital in 1985, paging operators started using a tuned voice to sound sweet.

As a result, all paging stations later adopted this tone.

Below are early paging stations from the 1980s

Paging stations in the 1990s

Chapter 697: Something Fishy

The summer sunlight was burning hot, and Lin Chuxia hid under the dense shade of the trees, watching the comings and goings on the street.

From afar came the jingle of a bicycle bell, which finally stopped with a creak beside Lin Chuxia.

The man wore deep blue jeans and a flamboyant shirt, giving off a rogue aura, but his face bore a clean smile.

"Lin Chuxia, what are you doing here? Looking like a bullied little wife, did that Li guy bully you again, or was it that old lady? I always said your temperament is no good, like dough, isn't it embarrassing?"

Lin Chuxia slightly raised her head. The sunlight was glaringly bright, she wanted to see the man's face clearly, but the intense light was unavoidable, so she could only see a vague face in the halo.

"Gu Peng?"

She tried to speak.

The man grabbed her hand and pulled her up, "Why are you calling me? Here, take this. Next time something happens, call me. Don't hide away to sulk alone, at worst just fight back, I'll help you."

Lin Chuxia's gaze fell on the pager in her hand, and she chuckled softly, "Help me with what? How many times have I told you, don't always think about fighting, haven't you had enough of the suffering in the Northwest?"

Gu Peng fiddled with the pager in his hand, without even lifting his head, "What's that bit of hardship? It's not like I haven't experienced it, if not for sticking with you, the tough days would be longer. Let's just say I've lived the good life enough for these few years, now reminiscing about the past hardships."

"Nonsense," Lin Chuxia glared at him, but his interruption indeed brightened her mood a bit.

Fumbling with the pager in her hand, "Is it new?"

"Yeah, just bought it. One for you, one for me, I'll give you the number later, but just so you know, I bought these for work, so you'll have to reimburse me later."

Lin Chuxia couldn't help but roll her eyes again.

Suddenly her vision blurred, where was the shaded path? Lin Chuxia stood on a bustling street with high rises, surrounded by traffic.

She surveyed her surroundings quickly and locked onto a person.

It was Gu Peng.

He was walking forward while glancing at his smartphone, as if something awaited him ahead.

As he crossed the traffic lights, a piercing horn sounded, and a speeding truck was heading straight towards him.

Gu Peng turned and ran, yet the truck seemed to have eyes, veering in an arc to run him down.

Gu Peng was hit, flung into the air, and then brutally slammed down.

It all happened in an instant, Lin Chuxia stared wide-eyed.

Everything felt so familiar, yet the protagonist in the scene was another person.

Lin Chuxia just felt as if a giant hand was tightly gripping her chest, making it hard to breathe...

"Xiaxia, Xiaxia..."

A hurried yet gentle low call sounded by her ear, and Lin Chuxia suddenly opened her eyes.

Dim, gentle lamp light filled the familiar room, and upon looking up, she met Qin Yang's worried eyes.

"Xiaxia, had a nightmare?"

As he turned the lamp brighter, he wrapped her in his arms.

Lin Chuxia was still panting heavily, looked at the man, paused, and finally nodded.

The dream from earlier lingered in her mind.

It wasn't a nightmare, but something that had really happened in her past life.

It's just that the protagonist wasn't Gu Peng, it was herself.

It was an afternoon, on her way to work, the vehicle broke down midway, but since the company was not far away, she decided to walk there.

Unexpectedly, as she crossed the traffic light, a runaway truck crashed into her.

The scenes in the dream were exactly the same as what happened that day, only in the dream, the protagonist became Gu Peng.

She, she hadn't dreamed about her past life in a long time.

Even that person, she hadn't thought about for a long time.

Qin Yang saw her dazed look, squeezed her hand, "Dreams are always the opposite, don't think too much about it. I'm here."

Lin Chuxia gave him a reassuring smile.

Dreams are opposite, but this dream, maybe not.

Her mind was a mess, and things that she hadn't looked into deeply since being reborn surfaced again.

Her car had always been maintained on time, how could it have broken down for no reason, especially not far from the company.

Any further she would have definitely called a car again.

With the short distance, she disliked the hassle and had a habit of walking, surely she'd walk to the company.

That intersection usually didn't have many vehicles, how could a runaway car suddenly appear?

Before crossing the intersection, she had clearly observed the surroundings.

If the vehicle lost control early on, she would definitely have noticed.

With her quick reflexes, upon noticing the oncoming truck, she already reacted, yet the truck seemed like it precisely aimed for her.

It was clearly coming for her, wanting her dead.

Lin Chuxia suddenly clutched the blanket tightly.

She knew, she died in an accident, not a good end.

One could even say, her death was rather strange.

"What did you dream about? Want to tell me? It'll be less scary if you say it out loud."

Qin Yang's voice pulled back her thoughts.

He was holding a cup of water, looking at her worriedly.

Lin Chuxia gave a slight smile, "It's nothing."

"Have some water and get some more sleep, it's still a long way till dawn."

Lin Chuxia drank half of the cup, Qin Yang finished the rest, then they returned to bed, turning off the light.

In the darkness, Qin Yang tucked her in, "If you can't sleep, come over, I'll keep you company and chat."

Lin Chuxia shook her head, realizing he couldn't see in the dark, she added, "I'm much better, you sleep, I'll sleep too."

Even as she said the words, Lin Chuxia had no desire for sleep.

Gu Peng's name lingered in her mind.

In the past life, she had a tough start, just selling vegetables for over two years.

Then she ran a bun shop for over two years, and met Gu Peng by 1990.

At that time, she was just a small individual business owner, although she lived like a person should, the troubles of the Li Family and Lin Family besieged her.

In addition, she was physically hurt from saving someone, married for years yet unable to bear children.

Old Mrs. Li looked down on her, but since she could earn money, she didn't dare let Li Guangyuan divorce her.

She herself was filled with confusion.

Since young, Mother Lin taught her, her natal family was her sky, her support, her inseparable root.

To show filial piety to parents, to in-laws, to live harmoniously with her husband, to bear sons for her in-laws, and to make a good life, was a woman's purpose.

She tried her best to be a qualified daughter, a qualified wife, but having lost the ability to bear children, it seemed she'd never be a qualified woman.

It was then she met Gu Peng.

Initially, she only felt sorry for him.

In the dead of winter, he wore a worn thin shirt, using his strength to do labor work.

Their shop needed a load of white flour, back then white flour was exchanged with wheat.

About 100 pounds per bag of wheat, Gu Peng loaded them by himself, and in less than half a day, brought back a load of white flour and bran.

Chapter 698: Meaning

The flour and bran are lightweight, with a bag weighing fifty to sixty pounds, but it's more than enough to fill half a bag.

Gu Peng was unloading the cart by himself again.

Even in the dead of winter, wearing only a single layer, he was sweating profusely.

Before she saw him, Lin Chuxia had also seen poor people. She herself came from poverty, climbing up step by step.

But now that she's climbed to where she is, what does it matter that everyone in the village envies her?

When Gu Peng got tired and squatted down to rest, she suddenly asked him this question.

His days looked even tougher and poorer, and he worked even harder. What was the point?

Gu Peng didn't answer her question but instead told her a story.

The protagonist of the story was a labor reform convict sentenced to 7 years for making a mistake.

He was sent to the Northwest to reclaim land and farm, where the days were unimaginably hard, yet no one gave up, all for the sake of living.

After being released, because of his criminal record, no unit was willing to hire him.

To have something to eat, he scurried around like a rat crossing the street.

Yet he still didn't give up.

If everyone has to find the meaning of living, then what is the meaning of living so humbly for this labor reform convict?

"Yes, what is the point?" Lin Chuxia couldn't help but ask out loud.

Gu Peng stood up, patted the dust off his pants, and only said one sentence, "What's the point in needing a reason? Being yourself is the biggest meaning."

This statement seemed to answer the question, yet also not, but it awakened her like a dream.

Over the past 20-plus years, she had lived for her parents, for her siblings, for her mother-in-law and sister-in-law, for her husband, and to have children, but she never lived a day for herself.

Later, she hired Gu Peng to work in her store and gave him the highest salary.

The return Gu Peng gave her was encouraging her to do what she wanted, helping her expand her territory, and gradually growing the company.

Finding an opportunity, when Li Guangyuan got entangled with a mistress, Gu Peng brought in reporters to expose them, wanting to help her regain control of the company.

In the life of her previous incarnation, Gu Peng was her business partner, her confidant, and also her life mentor.

All her achievements, and her stable later life, were inseparable from Gu Peng.

At the time of her rebirth, she had also thought of Gu Peng.

But calculating the time, he was still being reformed in the Northwest then.

It was 1989.

In her previous life, she met Gu Peng in 1990, she remembered Gu Peng had said that he had been out for more than a year then.

Gu Peng should be getting out of prison soon.

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"Are you going to the Northwest?"

When Qin Yang heard Lin Chuxia say she was going to the Northwest, he was taken aback.

"What are you going to the Northwest for? Is it something work-related?"

When he was in the Northwest, Lin Chuxia had visited him there a few times, so she knew a few people.

But he had been transferred to Yan City for more than two years, and his wife hadn't mentioned anything about the Northwest.

Lin Chuxia didn't know how to tell him, so she just nodded, "I should be back in about three or four days."

She didn't know the exact time Gu Peng was released, but it should be this year.

She wanted to go check, to confirm the time.

Even though, in this life, she was still a stranger to Gu Peng, Lin Chuxia didn't intend to ignore him.

Just like Wang Tianxue, she believed that they would walk together again and become confidants and partners.

Qin Yang looked at her for a moment, then asked, "What about Qi Qi?"

Qi Qi was still breastfeeding, although the little one was no longer picky with food and could also drink formula.

If separated from her mother for several days, she might not adapt well.

Lin Chuxia had thought it through, "Recently, my milk supply hasn't been good. I thought I might as well take this opportunity to wean Qi Qi. The nutritional value of breast milk drops six months after childbirth. The formula milk that Mom bought is pretty good, and besides, after this Spring Festival, I'll have more work to do. Sooner or later, I must wean her."

Having said this much, Qin Yang knew she had already made up her mind.

He just said, "You don't need to rush too much on the journey, I and Mom are at home, so you can rest assured about the baby."

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Apart from the baby, there wasn't much to set in order at home.

On the eighth day of the lunar month, after saying goodbye to Zhuang Jingshu, Lin Chuxia set off on a train to the Northwest.

Qin Yang and Zhuang Yang went together to see Lin Chuxia off on the train.

As the train departed, Zhuang Yang watched his brother-in-law's solemn expression and asked, "What exactly is she going to the Northwest for? I haven't heard of Xiyang having any business out there?"

Except for a few peach trees in Daqing Mountain Village.

Even for the peach saplings, it shouldn't require Lin Chuxia herself to go, right?

After asking, he waited for a while but got no reply, and when he looked again, his brother-in-law's face seemed even more austere.

A bold guess made him exclaim, "No way... don't tell me you don't even know what she's doing in the Northwest?"

After looking for two more seconds, Zhuang Yang felt he was right.

He really was a clever one; just looking at his brother-in-law's poker face, he could guess so much.

"I say, brother-in-law, what's going on with you? If you're really not at ease, just go with her. After all, you're on holiday now, Qi Qi has the chairman to take care of her, so you have nothing to worry about."

"But speaking of which, my sister is a straightforward person. Although I haven't been with her as much as you, I know her temperament. She's not someone who would act recklessly. She's most likely going to the Northwest for some new business venture she wants to develop. You know, my sister loves to explore new things. She's probably gone to investigate some new project, and since she was worried it wouldn't pan out, she didn't tell us in advance. If you don't believe it, wait and see. Before long, she's bound to tell us some good news."

Qin Yang pursed his lips. The train was already out of sight, only then did he turn around and head back, "Let's go back."

Zhuang Yang touched his nose, feeling like his comforting words had been spoken to a deaf man.

Wait, why was he even comforting him?

Chuxia wasn't going to do anything shady, so why did he, as her brother, start feeling guilty first?

Zhuang Yang shook his head to get rid of these jumbled thoughts.

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Lin Chuxia had always been someone who acted decisively.

In her previous life, she had listened to Gu Peng's account of life in the Northwest prison and knew where he served his sentence.

Before her journey, she had already learned about the general circumstances over there.

When the train arrived, she rested locally for a night, and early the next morning, took a bus to the area.

It was a remote location. She transferred buses twice and finally hired a tractor to get to the place.

Generally, to visit a prison, one needs to be a close relative of the inmate and carry proof of relationship as well as one's own identification to visit within the stipulated time.

Lin Chuxia and Gu Peng clearly had no familial relationship.

As far as Lin Chuxia knew, Gu Peng was originally an orphan, with his parents having died early. He lived with his grandmother as a child.

Later, after both his grandparents died, he lived with his uncle's family for a few years.

During those years, his aunt and her children bullied him quite a bit.

After he got into trouble, his uncle's family simply severed all ties with him.

Chapter 699: Already Released from Prison

Gu Peng once said that because of this, he didn't even have a place to stay after getting out, and wandered for more than a year.

At the most difficult times, he lived under a bridge, went three days without a meal, and survived by drinking cold water from a garden hose outside a house.

Eventually, when the family discovered he often came to drink water, they put away the hose.

Only when he met her did he no longer have to go hungry.

Lin Chuxia rubbed her temples.

She hadn't rested well on the train over the past few days, her mind always in a jumble, occasionally recalling things from her past life.

She took out the certificate she had prepared before coming.

Since Gu Peng had no close relatives, she could claim to be a distant relative visiting.

This certificate was obtained through Sun Hao, it should get through.

She had checked the visitation time, when reaching the location, she would directly inform the staff of her identity and request to visit.

She even prepared what to say when meeting Gu Peng.

She would claim to be a descendant of his father's friend.

When you're out, you create your own identity.

After all, Gu Peng's father had long passed away, whatever she says is the truth.

Whether he believes it or not, what does it matter?

Gu Peng had no family outside, not even a place to stay after getting out. If he wanted to continue living like a vagabond, he shouldn't recognize her as a distant relative.

Based on Lin Chuxia's understanding of Gu Peng, even if he didn't believe the story, he would recognize her as a relative to secure a place to stay after coming out.

He's not one to suffer losses in front of him.

Lin Chuxia thought everything was perfect, but when she explained to the guards about who she wanted to visit, they didn't immediately agree and seemed slightly surprised.

They confirmed with her again, "The person you want to visit is Gu Peng? The inmate sent here in 1982?"

Lin Chuxia calculated the time and nodded, "That's him."

The person looked at her deeply again, asked her to wait for a moment, rechecked the information and then said, "The person you wish to visit has been released a year early due to good behavior in prison. Didn't you know?"

"Already released?"

The person nodded again and handed all the documents back to her.

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On the way back, Lin Chuxia was still pondering over this.

She wasn't mistaken, in her past life, she met Gu Peng at the beginning of 1990, and by that time, he had already been out for over a year, so he should have been released in '89.

But where did the problem lie?

Lin Chuxia didn't dwell too much on the issue, what she wanted to know most now was where Gu Peng was.

He had no family outside, no means of support, not even a place to stay. Would he resort to living under a bridge and doing hard labor again?

Lin Chuxia patted her head in annoyance.

When she first visited the Northwest to see Qin Yang, stepping onto that land, she thought of Gu Peng.

At that time, she didn't know when Gu Peng had been sent to serve a sentence there, only that he was last released from the Northwest, and she was eager to welcome him when the time came.

She never expected such a change to occur.

In her past life, Gu Peng had told her that after being released, he wandered outside since he had no family or support.

It took over a year of drifting before he finally reached Ancheng County.

So now, where is he wandering?

Lin Chuxia knew dwelling on it here wouldn't solve anything, so she returned to the guesthouse for a night's rest and took the train back to An City the next day.

Qin Yang was surprised to see Lin Chuxia return so quickly but felt relieved in his heart.

"Why did you come back so soon? Is everything sorted out? Didn't I tell you not to rush and take your time?"

Looking at her weary face, Qin Yang felt a pang of heartache.

Lin Chuxia gave him a reassuring smile, "There wasn't much going on over there, and I was worried about home and Qi Qi, so I hurried back, where's Qi Qi?"

"Upstairs in mom's room."

Just as Qin Yang was speaking, Zhuang Jingshu had already heard the noise and came out holding the child.

Standing at the top of the stairs, Little Qi Qi spotted her mother at once.

As if she couldn't believe her eyes, she first widened her eyes slightly, and once she recognized her, she waved her little arms and smiled with a new two-tooth grin.

But the smile lasted less than five seconds before her mouth turned down, and she burst into tears.

While crying, she waved her little hands wanting her mom, looking incredibly aggrieved.

As if to say: Mom, where have you been these days? Qi Qi missed mom so much when she couldn't see her.

At that moment when Lin Chuxia saw her child, she forgot everything, and seeing her daughter's aggrieved expression, her heart melted.

She hurried forward to take her daughter.

Qi Qi finally fell into her mother's embrace, rubbing her little head against her neck and breathing in the familiar scent of her mother, eventually nestling her head against her chest.

Lin Chuxia didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Come to think of it, her trip to the Northwest, even if without delays, took a week round trip.

The minimal breast milk she had had dried up long ago.

She thought that after a week of not having it, the little one would forget.

Unexpectedly, this little one remembered.

Looking at her daughter's little face, Lin Chuxia couldn't bring herself to refuse her, even with no milk left.

She took her into the room to let her suckle.

But after a few attempts, with no milk coming, the little one looked puzzled, confirmed it, and continued trying, still without success.

Her little mouth turned down with disappointment again.

Qin Yang quickly brought over the prepared milk formula, and Lin Chuxia personally fed Qi Qi, finally satisfying the little one.

Zhuang Jingshu laughed from the side, "This little one, seeming so obedient every day, actually knows everything in her heart; she searches around in bed every morning, and in the evening, she wanders the yard. When she hears a car entering the yard, she is the first to be anxious. Outwardly, she didn't cry or make a fuss during the days you were gone, but in fact, she was thinking about you every day."

Looking at the little one drinking from the bottle while keeping her big eyes on her, Lin Chuxia's heart felt as soft as ever.

In this world, apart from a mother, only a child gives us the purest and most selfless love.

.....

On her first night back home, Lin Chuxia slept profoundly.

The next day, when she opened her eyes, it was already past 10 AM. She had slept for 14 hours.

She finally caught up on sleep.

Waking up feeling rejuvenated and full of energy.

Today was the Lantern Festival, and the family was already preparing a lavish lunch.

Seeing the empty room, knowing it was just her, Lin Chuxia knew Qin Yang must have taken Qi Qi away to avoid disturbing her rest.

After getting up and washing, as soon as Lin Chuxia stepped out, she saw little Yaoyao and Qi Qi babbling baby talk in the living room.

Yaoyao, a year older than Qi Qi, could already say simple sentences and waddled when walking.

But when with Qi Qi, Yaoyao gave up speaking human language and started babbling again.

At these times, Qi Qi would respond, the two little ones engaging animatedly in their exchange.

Chapter 700: Achievements

When Lin Chuxia came out, the two little ones were talking, and upon hearing the noise, Qi Qi turned her head and saw it was her mom. She widened her eyes in amazement, her face showing delight.

She babbled as she crawled eagerly towards Lin Chuxia.

She couldn't crawl yet, only wave her limbs as she wriggled forward, anxious yet not impatient.

Lin Chuxia quickly went over and picked up her daughter.

Seeing Lin Chuxia get up, Qin Yang reheated the breakfast he had saved for her.

He kept her company as she ate breakfast and chatted.

After the Lantern Festival, Qin Yang's unit would resume work, but Lin Chuxia still had unfinished business.

She had initially planned to visit the chicken farm in Daqing Mountain Village.

After the hatchery center was established there, both Eldest Son and Second Son of the Sun Family, as well as Wang Tianyu, wanted her to go over and inspect the results.

Even Sun Bingnan wanted Lin Chuxia to visit the village to see the peach trees he managed.

Previously, due to the Lin Family's relationship, Lin Chuxia seldom returned to Daqing Mountain Village, even though the Sun Family's chicken farm was established under their name.

Only they knew that the real owner of the chicken farm was Lin Chuxia, and even the hills were rented by her.

Now, Lin Chuxia had no such concerns returning to Daqing Mountain Village.

Qin Yang couldn't accompany her, but both Qi Qi and Zhuang Jingshu stayed in the Qin Family.

On the 16th day of the first month of the lunar year, Qin Yang drove Lin Chuxia's Jeep back to Yan City.

Lin Chuxia drove Zhuang Jingshu's Santana and took Wang Tianyu to Daqing Mountain Village.

Before the first month of the lunar year was over, the fields hadn't thawed, and the farmers relying on the land were still enjoying a leisurely winter.

As the Santana entered the village, the grandmothers and aunts who were visiting each other saw it.

They knew this Santana well, as it had often come to their village. Back then, they all thought Lin Jiayi wasn't Lin Family's daughter and had acknowledged a wealthy mother.

After the truth came out, the Lin Family's reputation was tarnished, and the car no longer appeared in Daqing Mountain Village.

Today, the car had returned, and soon the whole street knew about it.

Lin Chuxia didn't mind and drove the Santana straight to Village Chief Sun's house.

Village Chief Sun and Aunt Sun were home, while Eldest Son, Second Son, and Sun Bingnan were on the mountain.

Lin Chuxia left the snacks and wine she brought for Village Chief Sun, making him so happy that he couldn't stop smiling.

It wasn't about the things themselves—having Mr. Lin personally bring him gifts, it was all about the honor!

Village Chief Sun understood Lin Chuxia's purpose for coming and promptly took her to the chicken farm.

Daqing Mountain Village got its name because it is not far behind from the rolling mountains.

The hills Lin Chuxia had leased were part of it.

From afar, those hills had already changed significantly.

The hills weren't very high, and because of lenient oversight in the village before, there was severe logging on the mountain.

Later, Lin Chuxia leased the hills for raising chickens and began planting trees and grass to improve the ecology.

Later on, Sun Bingnan brought Yellow Peach seedlings.

Even in winter, the mountain looked vibrant with overlapping trees.

Village Chief Sun laughed, "You came early. In two months, the mountains will be full of peach blossoms. It'll be beautiful."

Talking about the peach trees opened up Village Chief Sun's conversation.

"Many of those peach trees blossomed last year, and after people learned about our collaboration with Xiyang Food Factory, several families wanted to plant Yellow Peach trees too. Look over there, and there, those hills were leased out, all for growing Yellow Peach trees. Many places already have tree pits dug, just waiting for spring to plant them..."

Lin Chuxia had promised Village Chief Sun that anyone willing to plant Yellow Peach trees, regardless of how many families, could plant as much as they wanted, and Xiyang Food Factory would purchase all the produce.

This gave Village Chief Sun confidence.

Now, he's even more respected in the village than when he was the production team leader.

Lin Chuxia listened to Village Chief Sun while driving slowly.

The road leading to the back of the village was not easy, full of potholes.

Even in the Santana, which can be driven anywhere, it was a bumpy ride.

While the winter ground was frozen hard, making the ride bumpy, summer rain would make it even harder to travel.

Village Chief Sun also noticed the issue, "It's too cold to work on it now, but once it warms up, we'll have to organize villagers to repair the road."

As they spoke, they arrived at the chicken farm.

Since taking on the chicken farm task, the Eldest and Second Sons of the Sun Family had moved to live at the mountain's foot.

Both families have now built big tiled houses with blue bricks at the mountain's foot.

Seeing the Santana from afar, the Eldest and Second Sons of the Sun Family, as well as their wives, came out to greet them.

Even the Sun Family's children gathered around, chattering as they surrounded Lin Chuxia.

The children knew Lin Chuxia and called her Auntie, with no reservations at all.

But the Eldest and Second Sisters-in-law felt a bit awkward, since they hadn't seen Lin Chuxia for years and were mindful of her current status.

However, Lin Chuxia's warm greeting quickly eased their tension.

The Eldest and Second Sons of the Sun Family had been eagerly waiting for Lin Chuxia's arrival, excitedly showing her the stretch of chicken coops in the distance.

It was as if they were saying, "Mr. Lin, look, this is the empire we've built for you."

Lin Chuxia listened attentively and observed carefully, especially at the hatchery center, reviewing the equipment and egg hatching conditions.

During the Spring Festival at the Qin Family Village, the hatchery center produced its first batch of chicks.

Now, the second batch of chicks had hatched, all lively and healthy.

This batch had higher hatching and survival rates than the first.

This success made the Sun Brothers stand taller with pride in front of Lin Chuxia.

The chicken farm was no longer just managed by the Sun Brothers; they had hired many villagers and relatives and paid wages regularly.

From hatching, feeding, management to processing chicken manure, each had their own duties, forming a systemic production setup.

During the inspection, they occasionally encountered workers, some of whom Lin Chuxia recognized as villagers from Daqing Mountain Village, and some were new faces.

No matter who it was, when they saw the Eldest and Second Sons of the Sun Family, they respectfully addressed them as Director.

The Sun Brothers would always unconsciously puff out their chests, genuinely proud of their roles.

After leaving the hatchery center, Sun Bingnan joined them.

At this time, he was overseeing the workers pruning branches on the mountain, where the peach trees were being trimmed.

They had been planting peach trees for three years and had gained experience in management.

While the peach trees on the mountains don't show evident results like the chicken farm and hatchery, Sun Bingnan remained unfazed.

He was waiting for the autumn harvest to speak with the yield of yellow peaches.

He was confident that under his management, this year's yellow peaches would have a good harvest.