

Switched M 721

Chapter 721: I'll Help You

Yang Rui stretched his neck out and shouted, one leg already stepping onto the high platform.

The crowd gathered below let out a gasp, and even the police officers on the rooftop became tense.

Wang Tianxue gritted her teeth, and since Lin Chuxia was close, she heard a few words squeezed out through her teeth, "Motherfucker." It was clear she was truly furious.

Wang Tianxue wouldn't relent, and Yang Rui kept pressing, "You better think carefully, below is the entrance to your mall. If I jump from here, who would dare to visit your mall again? I am being forced to death by you, officers, you all see it, I am being driven to death by this woman. She is a leader at the Xiyang Clothing Mall. I used to work at the Department Store across the street, and she set me up to lose my job there. You must investigate her thoroughly. The Department Store is an old brand in Yan City, but now it's being suppressed by the Xiyang Clothing Mall. I suspect she used underhanded means, and today I'm using my life to seek justice for the Department Store, to seek justice for myself..."

As he spoke, he kept staring intently at Wang Tianxue, with madness and smugness flashing in his eyes.

Lin Chuxia frowned slightly, realizing that Yang Rui was counting on Wang Tianxue to prioritize the mall's interests.

If he really jumps from here, just with what he said, the Xiyang Clothing Mall would surely have to suspend operations for investigation.

After all, a life would have been lost.

By the time the investigation concludes and the mall reopens, business would be affected.

As he said, no one would want to shop where a body once lay.

By then, the mall might even have to change its entrance.

Even so, she didn't want Wang Tianxue to be blackmailed by this scum.

Seeing Wang Tianxue waver, Lin Chuxia quickly spoke up, "Don't let him affect you."

Wang Tianxue lowered her voice, "I'll agree with him first, we'll deal with it once he leaves."

"No, if he's daring enough to blackmail you like this, he must have a backup plan..."

"Wang Tianxue, I'm giving you one last chance. I'm really going to jump," Yang Rui spoke again, determination written all over his face. "I wanted to talk things over and have a decent life, but you're pushing me. Tianxue, if you agree with me, all previous terms are valid. I'll listen to you from now on. I'll count to 5, 1, 2, 3..."

He counted as he climbed higher, his entire body crawling onto the platform.

The police officer spoke in time, "Comrade, don't get agitated. Let's have a proper conversation, you come down first. We'll reason with this comrade..."

As they spoke, they gestured to Wang Tianxue, likely thinking the same—agree first, then discuss further once things stabilize.

In this short time, they understood that this person was utterly despicable, and his death elsewhere would be a blessing in disguise.

But in this location, in the city center, the impact is too significant.

Just as Wang Tianxue was about to agree, a figure emerged from behind with large strides.

Lin Chuxia recognized the person and couldn't help but exclaim, "Gu Peng, come back."

The police officer was even more alarmed, "Comrade, come back, don't provoke him."

Gu Peng seemed oblivious to their words, his steps not stopping.

Yang Rui was still staring hard at Wang Tianxue, and seeing the sudden appearance of another man, his face changed dramatically, "You... who are you... don't come over... if you take one more step, I'll jump... I'm really going to jump... if I jump down, it's you people driving me to it, the police won't let you off..."

He instinctively wanted to back away, but he was already lying on the platform, the back already suspended in the air.

Clinging tightly to the platform, he loudly threatened, "Did you hear me... I'm really going to jump, I'm jumping now..."

"Gu Peng..."

Lin Chuxia knew Gu Peng's temperament; when it came down to it, he was quite a formidable character.

When it got fierce, he was not just harsh to others, but harsher to himself.

"Come back. The police are here; there will be a way."

Truly forcing Yang Rui off would entangle Gu Peng as well.

As she spoke, Gu Peng had already reached Yang Rui and extended his arm, grabbing the back of his collar.

Everyone let out a sigh of relief, but before they could finish exhaling, there was a gasp of shock.

Gu Peng, after grabbing him, not only didn't pull him back but instead pushed him forwards.

Yang Rui, already on the platform, found his body more than half suspended, screaming in terror.

The onlookers below burst out in loud exclamations.

"Ah... help... don't... don't push me, officers... save me..."

Honestly, not just Lin Chuxia, even the police officers present felt a sense of relief at this turn of events.

Wasn't he speaking so fiercely just now? Wasn't his threat so resolute?

How come he's now calling for help?

None of the officers spoke up.

Gu Peng coldly spoke, "Weren't you going to jump? Seeing you climb up here was quite a struggle, wasting my time with your dithering, I'll help you jump..."

"No... please... I don't want to jump; I just want my son."

"Want your son?"

Seeing Gu Peng's expression softening, Yang Rui's mind raced.

"Yes, I... I just want my son, I won't remarry... I won't remarry Wang Tianxue. If you let Wang Tianxue give me Xiao Long, and give me some money, I'll take Xiao Long and leave here, go far away, I won't bother you anymore, really, I mean it..."

He clearly saw this man coming up with Wang Tianxue's group.

All the things he said earlier, just as Wang Tianxue was about to agree, this man suddenly appeared, and why else would it be?

He guessed that this man was Wang Tianxue's new fling.

He feared that by remarrying Wang Tianxue, he'd end up with nothing.

Given Wang Tianxue's current standing, finding such a woman, even as used goods, wouldn't be a loss.

So he came out desperately as Wang Tianxue was about to agree to his terms.

With the intent of pushing him to death to fulfill their wishes.

Yang Rui was resentful, hoping to drag this man to hell with him.

But he didn't truly want to die.

He could see that this man really might disregard everything and push him off.

The ruthless energy he had was too apparent.

He couldn't die; he still had a son.

If he could get his son, surely this man would be pleased as well.

How many people are willing to raise someone else's son?

In just a few seconds, Yang Rui's mind spun several times.

However, despite his calculations, things didn't go as planned.

Gu Peng sneered, "Scum like you deserves to have a son? You should look in the mirror and see what you're made of. If you had any self-awareness, you should get lost far away, pretend to be dead to your son, and now you're even asking women for money? Do you want joss paper? If you jump now, I'll burn some joss paper for you tonight..."

Chapter 722: Did He Get Scared Pissless?

With a forceful shove, he sent Yang Rui flying.

"Ah... Ahhh..."

The scream pierced through the eardrums and shot straight into the sky.

Yang Rui gripped the edge of the high platform with both hands desperately, kicking his legs frantically, shouting for help.

"I don't want to die... Please pull me up, I don't want to die... I won't remarry, I don't want my son, I don't want anything... Please don't let go..."

"It's useless telling me that, tell it to the police," Gu Peng said indifferently, eyes downcast, "Think it over and say it again, you get one chance."

Does Yang Rui still need to think?

His arms were losing strength.

"Officer, I don't want anything, I was wrong, I won't remarry Wang Tianxue, I don't want my son, please let me up, I won't seek death anymore..."

"That's not right, say it again."

"I won't threaten Wang Tianxue anymore, from now on I'll stay far away, I won't appear in front of her again..."

Gu Peng turned casually to inquire of the officers, "Can you testify?"

The officers were also startled by the scene. If this man actually fell, would the man standing here be guilty of intentional murder right in front of the police?

Though they felt it was quite satisfying to do so.

The officers nodded repeatedly, "We can, we'll testify."

Gu Peng then asked Wang Tianxue and Lin Chuxia, "Is this result okay?"

Yes, very okay.

Wang Tianxue nodded vigorously, her eyes shining at Gu Peng.

Only then did Gu Peng pull him up.

To say Yang Rui had slimmed somewhat over the years of friction, yet he was still a large man.

Gu Peng pulled him up like lifting a chick.

Yang Rui was already scared stiff, sitting on the ground helplessly.

The officers hurriedly stepped forward to take control of him and suddenly smelled something odd.

Yang Rui's pants were already soaking wet.

Did he get scared into wetting himself?

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There's no need for Lin Chuxia and the others to care about what happens next.

Yang Rui's commotion wasn't small, it disturbed not only the police but also city leaders.

With so many onlookers, the mall was shut down, causing extremely adverse effects.

The police department stated that Yang Rui's actions must be severely punished.

Otherwise everyone might follow suit, whenever a bit unhappy, they'll think of jumping off a building, what kind of city atmosphere would Yan City have?

Especially as the officers present are aware of the situation between Yang Rui and Wang Tianxue.

They felt even more disdain and contempt for Yang Rui.

The officers took Yang Rui away.

And Yang Rui looked half-dead, like a wilting eggplant, clearly terrified just now.

"Let's go, we should go down too," Lin Chuxia glanced around the balcony, "Seems we should keep the balcony door locked in the future."

Wang Tianxue agreed many times, "Definitely, what if we encounter this kind of lunatic again."

The main thing is, today's incident with Yang Rui caused quite a stir, who knows if someone will follow suit in the future, all coming to their rooftop?

Thinking of this, Wang Tianxue looked at the man behind her, lowering her voice a bit.

"Chuxia, where did you find this man? He's simply too handsome. I'm so impressed with your taste, sis."

When Lin Chuxia brought him to the garment factory, she didn't pay much mind, even shared the same thoughts as her own younger brother.

Lin Chuxia ignored her own brother, a college student, and chose a cement worker; besides running errands, what else could he do?

But reality soon proved her wrong.

Aside from other skill sets, this man certainly stepped up when it mattered.

As a woman, she sees clearly that while they can work with brains and skills, in many situations, they're discriminated against due to gender.

Having such a man as a protector, what's there to fear?

Lin Chuxia chuckled awkwardly, "I didn't know he would be so bold either."

Reflecting on the earlier situation, Lin Chuxia still felt anxious.

Just pushing Yang Rui like that, if he'd fallen, the charge of intentional murder couldn't be escaped.

He just returned from the Northwest after a year, and would be straight back in.

No, worse still, he might not even have a chance to go back, just face a firing squad.

Wang Tianxue was currently exhilarated, not thinking much.

"What's bold? That's what a real man is."

Lin Chuxia followed her gaze.

Gu Peng was not far behind them, keeping a close but not too close distance, head slightly down.

He hadn't cut his long hair yet, but it was clean.

His semi-long hair shaded his eyes, upon closer look, there was still some unyielding anger lingering in his gaze.

Lin Chuxia shook her head; in his youth, Gu Peng was indeed spirited.

He had just joined the company and met Wang Tianxue for the first time.

To him, they were still relatively strangers.

This matter had nothing to do with him at all.

Risking one's life for recently met people, if not bold, then call it righteous?

Apparently, he needs to be advised in the future.

As they reached downstairs, the officers were removing the surrounding barricades.

Lin Chuxia spotted a man with Qi Qi in his arms from afar, smiling.

"Why did you come?"

Qin Yang felt relieved upon seeing her, responding, "I heard something happened at the mall while at work, so I came over to see if I could help, just in time to see the officers bringing him down."

A few words cleared everything up.

Lin Chuxia casually remarked, "It's all dealt with, Jianjun can handle the rest."

Wang Tianxue greeted Qin Yang on the side.

Lin Chuxia remembered something and introduced Gu Peng to Qin Yang, "Oh right, Qin Yang, this is my new assistant, I mentioned a few days ago, Gu Peng."

Originally, Qin Yang's gaze was fixed on his wife, and even when she mentioned her new assistant, Qin Yang wasn't particularly interested, until hearing that name come out of Lin Chuxia's mouth, his pupils suddenly contracted.

His deep eyes looked over, and saw a man standing not far from Lin Chuxia.

In his twenties, skin slightly dark, the color of someone who'd been in the sun often, yet different from those who worked farms like his older brother.

Such a tone seemed just right for him, carrying a man's raw allure.

What heightened this feeling were his eyes; although the semi-long hair covered a part of his gaze, it was this half-hidden aspect that allowed Qin Yang to sense his sharp look.

As a man, Qin Yang rarely noticed another's appearance, but the man before him, despite casual exterior looks, had some decent features.

He could understand more clearly now why his mother expressed worries yesterday.

Qin Yang was appraising Gu Peng, while Gu Peng was sizing up Qin Yang.

So much so that Gu Peng seemed not to hear Lin Chuxia's introduction.

Chapter 723: A Real Man

Lin Chuxia said it again before he slightly stepped forward and said to Qin Yang, "Hello."

Qin Yang, holding the child in one hand, gentlemanly extended his other hand, "Hello."

This was an instinctive gesture driven by his status, but Gu Peng stared at the long and slender hand for a moment before hesitantly reaching out and shaking it.

Unlike Qin Yang's long and strong hand, Gu Peng's palm was also large, but full of calluses, clearly a pair of hands accustomed to hard labor.

The two exchanged a brief handshake, and Qin Yang turned his gaze away, gently looking at the woman beside him, "Where are we eating lunch? Out or back home?"

Originally, Lin Chuxia planned to have lunch outside with Wang Tianxue, but since Qin Yang came over, he naturally wouldn't let the man return home alone, prioritizing his love over friendship.

While taking Qi Qi, she turned to Wang Tianxue and said, "I'll head back first, contact me by phone if anything comes up."

Then she said to Gu Peng, "Keep an eye on things at the mall."

After speaking, she remembered something and added, "Take some time to get a haircut."

Wang Tianxue huffed at her unapologetically, "Got it, you lovebird, hurry up and leave, don't flaunt your affection in front of me."

Gu Peng just responded plainly.

After Lin Chuxia finished her explanations, she left together with Qin Yang.

Wang Tianxue checked the time; it was already noon.

Things were quite lively at the mall just now, but that was only due to the commotion on the rooftop.

Now that the people were taken away by the police, and with lunchtime approaching, most folks went their separate ways, doing their own things. Very few were actually shopping in the mall.

Wang Tianxue said to Gu Peng beside her, "There's probably not much going on at the mall now, let's eat first, my treat, as thanks for your help today."

After all, Gu Peng helped in subduing Yang Rui today, which indeed assisted Wang Tianxue.

Gu Peng withdrew his gaze from the distant Jeep and glanced at Wang Tianxue, chuckling once, "Alright."

His voice was flat and calm, the smile fleeting. Had Wang Tianxue not been watching him, she might have missed that hint of smile on his face.

From the moment she met him today, Gu Peng gave Wang Tianxue the impression of a reserved and honest man.

The rooftop incident at the mall further solidified Gu Peng's image as a true man.

Unexpectedly, he smiled at her, prompting her to ask directly, "What are you smiling at?"

Gu Peng lowered his gaze, "I'm not smiling."

Wang Tianxue snapped, "If you smiled, you smiled. Smiling isn't against the law, why not admit it?"

"I just feel that Mr. Lin's friends, like Mr. Lin himself, have a very good heart."

This statement piqued Wang Tianxue's interest, "You only think Lin Chuxia has a good heart? I heard you guys met at the construction site. Lin Chuxia saw you being hard-working and dependable, so she recruited you. Do you think Lin Chuxia just took pity on you, which is why she let you work with her?"

She needed to inquire for Chuxia's sake, as if this man only perceives Lin Chuxia as kind-hearted, portraying himself as pitiable for a meal, that wouldn't do.

Gu Peng glanced at her and remained silent on this question.

Whether he felt disdainful to answer her or unsure how to respond was unclear.

Wang Tianxue had no intention of letting silence pass, directly saying, "Even if you don't speak, it's okay. You've greatly helped me today, so as gratitude, I'll tell you about our company's situation. Really, it's not surprising that Chuxia can see your potential and keep you by her side. She's always nonchalant about using people, take me for instance. When my husband cheated, and the other woman confronted me, Lin Chuxia happened to encounter it. Just as you said, she felt sorry for me, betrayed by my husband and bullied by the other woman, so she helped me divorce and gain custody of my child. Since then, I've clung to her as my lifeline. Gu Peng, honestly, comparing my circumstances then to my life now, I wouldn't hesitate to sell my soul to her for the salary I get now."

She was hinting to Gu Peng not to forget his roots and not take Lin Chuxia's kindness for granted, without gratitude.

"Moreover, some company staff were recognized by Chuxia's discerning eyes, from the unemployed to laid-off workers, even two petty thieves. Why does one say Chuxia has a discerning eye? Regardless of what they did before, Lin Chuxia always manages to tap into their potential, helps them find suitable positions. For example, take Jia Liang from Qin's Restaurant; Lin Chuxia gave him the role of manager, and he developed a small Bun Shop into a major restaurant, even opening branches. Last year, Qin's Restaurant was the leading enterprise in Yan City's catering industry. The city government awarded them a commemorative banner."

She was telling Gu Peng not to think of himself as unique in Lin Chuxia's eyes.

There are many like him in the company, all highly capable.

Today, Lin Chuxia may value his hard work; tomorrow, she might value someone else's abilities.

Without genuine skills, establishing oneself in the company is impossible.

Even if one currently lacks skills, they must be willing to learn, work sincerely, and remain humble.

So despite Gu Peng helping Wang Tianxue handle Yang Rui today, in her heart, Lin Chuxia always holds the first place.

To validate her statements, Wang Tianxue specially took Gu Peng to Qin's Restaurant.

Gu Peng didn't say anything, merely followed Wang Tianxue quietly.

Jia Liang happened to be there, having heard about the incident at the mall, he inquired with Wang Tianxue.

Only when everything was settled and Yang Rui taken to the police station did Jia Liang feel at ease.

That's when he noticed Gu Peng beside Wang Tianxue.

Wang Tianxue dutifully introduced him.

Since Gu Peng was to work as Lin Chuxia's assistant, he'd inevitably interact with the management.

Jia Liang had heard his mother-in-law and wife talking about Gu Peng last night, and seeing him now, greeted him politely.

His eyes examined him for a long time, feeling there's something intangible about him.

Gu Peng remained aloof throughout, listening quietly regardless of Wang Tianxue's words.

In front of Jia Liang, he appeared respectfully.

During the meal, he behaved like a novice in a new environment.

Maintaining such behavior, Wang Tianxue couldn't say much more.

She also inquired about Qin Juan's situation, congratulating Jia Liang on having a son and ensuring he invites her to the child's one-month celebration.

Chapter 724: Remarkable Tolerance

After lunch, Wang Tianxue needed to return to the clothing store and asked Gu Peng where he was headed.

Gu Peng pointed at his head, "Mr. Lin asked me to get a haircut."

Wang Tianxue looked at his awkwardly long hair with disdain, and she also couldn't stand his attire.

Previously, when Wang Tianyu worked with Lin Chuxia, she dressed him up properly from head to toe.

She reminded Wang Tianyu that Lin Chuxia was no ordinary person, and as her assistant, he couldn't look too shabby.

He should pay attention to his appearance when going out and working outside, as these reflect on Lin Chuxia.

Gu Peng, from head to toe, seemed to not care about Lin Chuxia's reputation at all.

That Lin Chuxia could still take him around really showed her strong tolerance.

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On the other side, Qin Yang drove Lin Chuxia and little Qi Qi back to the residential compound.

Little Qi Qi, having played with Lin Chuxia for half the day, was exhausted and fell asleep after having some milk.

After dropping them off at home, Qin Yang went to the market and bought a fish.

When Lin Chuxia went to the kitchen after coaxing Qi Qi, she saw Qin Yang cleaning the fish.

"How did you know I wanted to eat fish?"

She wasn't exaggerating.

Lin Chuxia loved eating fish — steamed, braised, even the traditional village-style stew.

Fish helps supplement protein and is good for the brain.

Qin Yang chuckled as he glanced at her, "When don't you say that you want fish?"

"This time I really, really want it. I want it steamed," Lin Chuxia approached him, rubbing her chin against his arm.

Qin Yang looked at her with pampering eyes, "I bought bass, planning to steam it."

"See, we are so in tune with each other."

Qin Yang was cutting the fish, his eyes lowered as he said blandly, "Mom called me this morning. She wants to go back to Qin Family Village and asked if I have time to take her. It's conveniently the weekend tomorrow."

"Mom wants to go back so soon? I wanted her to stay at our sister's place long enough and then come to our place for a few days."

"Our sister is recovering well, and Jia Liang's mother is always busy around there, so mom can't help out much and is starting to miss home," Qin Yang smiled helplessly, "Should I ask mom to stay with us for a few more days?"

Since the mother-in-law isn't here lately, every time his wife goes out, she has to take Qi Qi, so it's good for his mother to stay a few days.

Lin Chuxia understood Qin Yang's meaning, "That's not necessary. I can manage Qi Qi."

Children around a week old are particularly receptive to new stimuli, whether visual, auditory, or even smell and taste, which can stimulate rapid brain development.

Little Qi Qi is at the critical stage of exploring the world. Although it's tiring for Lin Chuxia to take her out daily, it greatly benefits the child's development.

"Then I'll take mom back tomorrow."

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By now Qi Qi was really tired. Lin Chuxia and Qin Yang had finished their lunch, but the little one was still sleeping soundly.

Concerned that Qi Qi would wake up soon, Lin Chuxia returned to the bedroom as soon as she finished eating, sitting by the bed watching her daughter's content, peaceful sleeping face.

Soon there were footsteps at the door, and she knew who it was without looking up.

The footsteps came directly to her side, and just as Lin Chuxia was about to say something, a handsome face suddenly appeared before her.

Before she could speak, her words were blocked off.

Stunned for a moment, Lin Chuxia softly leaned into the man's embrace.

It wasn't until the kiss ended that Lin Chuxia, slightly panting, gently caressed the man's face.

"What's wrong?"

She was long accustomed to Qin Yang's passion, but ever since Qi Qi was born, this unexpected show of affection had become rarer.

Qin Yang hugged her from behind, kissing her soft neck, "You've been busy with work lately... and with our daughter."

There was a hint of grievance in his tone, prompting Lin Chuxia to look back at him.

Since their daughter's birth, part of their affection had shifted to her, even most of it, yet he had never complained.

Could it be that without his mother here recently, she's been ignoring him too much?

Lin Chuxia blinked. How should she comfort him?

Looking at her innocent big eyes, he sighed softly and kissed her again.

This time it was different; the long kiss carried certain emotions, which led him to pick her up.

"Hey, our daughter..."

Lin Chuxia reminded softly.

Besides, he had work later, this guy, could it be that his monthly calendar was here?

Why suddenly act so recklessly?

Meeting his daughter, Qin Yang paused for two seconds, and finally whispered, "I'll be gentle..."

The summer sun was warm but not harsh, like a gentle breeze caressing every corner with loving hands.

Sweat began to drop from the man's chin, trailing down the ivory skin to what lay beneath.

Lin Chuxia furrowed her brow, feeling uneasy; it's been a while since they were this intimate in broad daylight.

The sun cast a halo over the man, making him seem even sexier and dynamic.

That sense of strength hit right at one's core, enticing you to crave and cheer...

Just when her voice was about to burst from her throat, the man lowered his head to kiss and soothe her body and soul...

The rustling of leaves sounded outside the window, accompanied by a creaking noise.

Lin Chuxia snapped back, looking towards the distant crib, only to see that at some point little Qi Qi had woken up, standing up and clutching the crib rail, waving her little hand at them, "Papa... Papa... Mama... Mama..."

Startled, Lin Chuxia gave a quick glance at herself, relieved to find a blanket had covered her at some point.

The man's low laughter resonated in her ear, which made Lin Chuxia blush with rage as she kicked him hard, "It's all your fault."

Qin Yang wasn't fazed by the kick, simply patting her shoulder comfortingly, "She just woke up; we weren't seen."

Lin Chuxia: "..."

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The next day, Qin Yang took Mrs. Qin back to Qin Family Village, while Lin Chuxia brought little Qi Qi to the mall.

After yesterday's events, Lin Chuxia wanted to see if the mall was affected.

It was the weekend and a change of seasons, and as soon as she got near the mall, she felt a lively atmosphere.

Apparently, yesterday's incident not only left the mall unaffected but seemingly even increased its fame.

In contrast, the nearby Department Store looked deserted.

Relieved, Lin Chuxia noticed that although Gu Peng's hair was trimmed, he was still wearing the same clothes, so she confidently waved her hand, "Since we're here, let's go shopping in the mall."

Little Qi Qi was almost a year old now. As the weather got warmer, the little girl could start wearing cute little dresses.

The greatest joy of having a daughter is dressing her up, from pink little dresses to white princess gowns, and various adorable little outfits, providing immense satisfaction for a mother.

Chapter 725: Bought for My Husband

Lin Chuxia was shopping up front, while Gu Peng was helping carry things in the back, and soon both hands were filled with bags.

Among them were several pieces of men's clothing, which were bought for Gu Peng.

Of course, she picked out what she thought was decent, and then had Gu Peng pay for it.

No matter whether Gu Peng wanted to or not, he had to buy them.

The clothes make the man, as the saying goes.

Gu Peng was to work by her side, and in the future, his appearance would largely represent her.

He must not leave people with the impression of a slovenly uncle upon his first appearance.

Lin Chuxia hadn't been out shopping for a while, and now a large part of the clothing sold in the fashion mall was produced by their own factory.

Whether in style or fabric, they were very trendy and popular among the public.

Lin Chuxia also picked out several pieces for herself.

When she wandered to the men's section again, Lin Chuxia saw a mannequin wearing a black cotton-linen shirt.

This type of fabric was rare on the market, but it was very comfortable to wear, breathable, and cool.

Amid the popular synthetic materials of today, this fabric was more comfortable, yet few people were buying it.

"Salesperson, could you get me a size 185 of this shirt?"

Lin Chuxia directly asked.

Behind her, Gu Peng glanced at the tag on the clothing and resignedly reached into his pocket.

Before he could pull out the money, an invoice was handed to him first, with a few banknotes on top.

"Help me settle the bill for this clothing."

Gu Peng looked at the invoice and money for a while, and then expressionlessly said, "I still have money myself. I don't need Mr. Lin to pay for me. Even if I'm out of money, you could still advance my salary."

Lin Chuxia laughed, "What are you thinking? You haven't even worked for me yet and want your salary advanced for a month? Go on, then. This shirt isn't for you; it's for my husband."

Only then did Gu Peng remember that Lin Chuxia's husband seemed to be about the same height as him.

His tall figure looked at the things being handed over and pressed his lips together.

Just as he was about to take them, a voice came from afar, "Auntie Lin, when did you get here?"

Qin Jianjun saw Lin Chuxia and the others from afar and walked over with big strides.

Upon seeing her holding an invoice and money, he directly took them and handed them to the salesperson nearby, "Settle the bill and wrap up the items."

After the fashion mall was established, Lin Chuxia only managed it for a while.

At present, except for the veteran employees, almost no one knew that Lin Chuxia was the mall's owner behind the scenes.

Moreover, Lin Chuxia was usually very low-key, always shopping like an ordinary customer whenever she visited the mall.

This not only satisfied her shopping desire but also allowed her to spot any shortcomings in the mall during her shopping.

The young salesperson didn't recognize Lin Chuxia, but she did recognize Qin Jianjun.

Once she heard Manager Qin addressing her as Aunt Lin, she looked at Lin Chuxia with a different expression.

She had already heard that their Manager Qin was the nephew of the mall's owner, which meant that the woman before her was the real owner of the mall.

Holding the money, she jogged to the cashier while her mind kept replaying if there was anything she did wrong earlier.

Soon she would have to remind her colleagues that the boss had visited incognito again, and everyone had to be on their toes and pay attention to their service quality.

Lin Chuxia was still unaware that her appearance had once again elevated the service quality of the fashion mall, as she was listening to Qin Jianjun talk to her.

It turned out that the police station called him again this morning.

Yang Rui was taken away by the police station yesterday; the station intended to impose a severe penalty on him.

After all, causing a scene on the rooftop of the city center mall was too disruptive.

The main issue was that he wasn't genuinely seeking death but was using it to threaten his ex-wife.

Causing such a big commotion had already seriously disturbed public order.

However, before the police could punish him, Yang Rui broke down crying, tears mixed with snot, complaining.

He said there was a child under one year old at home, with no one to care for him and also having a congenital heart disease.

The child's mother had abandoned them due to the child's illness, and if he didn't take care of the child, the child would surely die.

After investigating, it was found that he did indeed have an ailing child.

Plus, he showed a good attitude in admitting his mistakes and appeared so remorseful, almost as if he were expressing his resolve at the police station.

Of course, the police couldn't let him die, nor could they detain him.

The issue wasn't big but wasn't small either, and they couldn't just watch the child go uncared for.

After criticizing and educating Yang Rui and having him write a letter of guarantee, the police station released him.

But this morning, someone reported to the police again, and it was Yang Rui's neighbor.

After entrusting his child to a neighbor yesterday, Yang Rui went to the clothing mall to make trouble.

He told the neighbor that he was going to handle some matters and would be back soon.

But the neighbor waited all day and a night without seeing him.

Once they inquired outside, they learned about the rooftop incident at the fashion mall.

The neighbor took the child to the police station, thinking Yang Rui was still there.

But the officers informed them that Yang Rui had been released the previous day.

Now, a living person had disappeared into thin air.

The police station called Qin Jianjun, wanting Wang Tianxue's contact information, worried that Yang Rui might go looking for Wang Tianxue again, and informed Qin Jianjun to be vigilant.

Who knew what else he might do?

Qin Jianjun now also looked grave, "I've already called Manager Wang to remind her to strengthen precautions. The security personnel at Xiyang Clothing Factory have also been notified, and I've personally checked the door to the rooftop. It's securely locked; I just don't know if this is enough."

Lin Chuxia frowned in thought and finally shook her head, "It's fine. We'll keep things as they are here; what we've done is already enough, though I think there's a nine in ten chance Yang Rui won't come back to cause trouble."

"Why?" Qin Jianjun instinctively asked.

Gu Peng coldly snorted nearby, "He won't come. Even if you opened the door to the rooftop and let him up, he wouldn't dare go up."

Lin Chuxia agreed, "He's someone who clings to life and fears death. Yesterday he probably hadn't expected the situation to escalate so much, and when he ran into Gu Peng, he almost lost his life. Now with a chance to live, how could he risk it again?"

If Lin Chuxia guessed correctly, that child was abandoned.

That child wasn't Yang Rui's blood, and Yang Rui lost what was once a happy family because of him.

Even if Tang Lili was the instigator of all this, now that Tang Lili was nowhere to be found, would Yang Rui place all the blame on that child?

Also, given Yang Rui's character, he probably wouldn't raise someone else's child.

Hearing Lin Chuxia and Gu Peng say this, Qin Jianjun finally felt relieved.

Chapter 726: Not Too Willing

Qin Jianjun saw Gu Peng holding several bags and asked Lin Chuxia if there was anything else she needed to buy.

He thought that Fourth Aunt must have been shopping for a while and was holding Qi Qi, so she must be tired.

If there was anything needed, he could handle it.

Lin Chuxia was almost done with shopping and noticed it was noon, so she planned to take Gu Peng to Qin's Restaurant for lunch.

She asked Qin Jianjun if he wanted to join, but Qin Jianjun was still worried about the mall, so he didn't go.

The clothes were already packed, and Qin Jianjun personally handed the bag to Lin Chuxia.

Lin Chuxia passed it on to Gu Peng after taking it.

Gu Peng stared at the clothes for a while, and finally, when Lin Chuxia was not paying attention, he wrapped it up and put it in Qi Qi's clothing bag.

.....

When they arrived at Qin's Restaurant, it was lunchtime, and there were quite a number of people.

Jia Liang heard they had arrived and found them a private room.

However, Qi Qi didn't want to stay in the room; she liked the excitement.

In the main hall, people were coming and going, and the little girl was thrilled watching everyone eat together.

With no other choice, Jia Liang found them a window seat and brought a baby chair.

This baby chair was unique to their restaurant, and you couldn't find a dedicated chair for children at other restaurants.

Because of this, many people who bring children out to eat choose Qin's Restaurant first, saying the service is the most considerate.

Of course, this was Lin Chuxia's suggestion and something she personally designed and created.

Qi Qi was in the baby chair, bouncing with happiness, trying to reach for things on the table.

The dishes hadn't been served yet, so Lin Chuxia handed her a small spoon to play with.

Qi Qi already knew this was a tool for eating. Normally, mom would use it to feed delicious food into her mouth.

So she kept putting the spoon into her mouth and sucking on it.

But after sucking for a long time, she still couldn't taste anything.

Lin Chuxia was amused by her cute little antics, while Jia Liang's gaze was fixed on Gu Peng across from him.

He had met this man yesterday, who had come with Wang Tianxue and been introduced as Lin Chuxia's new assistant.

At this moment, the man's gaze casually fell on Lin Chuxia and Qi Qi.

Although that gaze was calm and indifferent, for some reason, Jia Liang found it displeasing.

He recalled seeing the scene when the three of them entered the restaurant earlier.

Gu Peng opened the door, Lin Chuxia walked in holding the child, and Gu Peng followed behind them with things.

To Jia Liang, this scene was somehow jarring to witness.

He even wondered if he had a preconceived notion about Gu Peng, which caused him to feel this way.

Before, when Lin Chuxia and Wang Tianyu entered similarly, he never felt like this.

Jia Liang hadn't eaten yet, so he simply sat at the table with Lin Chuxia and them to eat together.

The dishes were ordered according to Lin Chuxia's taste. After ordering, Jia Liang handed the menu to Gu Peng, letting him order a couple of dishes too.

Gu Peng directly pushed it back, "I can eat anything, I'm not picky."

Seeing him like this, Jia Liang didn't insist and ordered two more dishes before giving the menu to the waiter, asking for the food to be expedited.

The meal was very satisfying. Jia Liang also noticed that at the beginning, Gu Peng ate very conservatively, only picking from the dish close to him, and from the side facing him.

Clearly, he was a grown man, yet he ate in small bites.

Only after Lin Chuxia was full and put down her chopsticks did he begin to eat more quickly.

Although he ate slowly, he didn't keep Lin Chuxia waiting long, only extending the meal by three to five minutes before he put down his chopsticks.

It was Lin Chuxia who noticed his restraint and told him to eat more and not waste food that he started eating again.

He almost finished all the leftover food on the plates.

Jia Liang suddenly remembered when he first met Lin Chuxia, feeling a bit of empathy for Gu Peng.

However, he didn't completely drop his guard. When Gu Peng went to the restroom, he asked Lin Chuxia, "Mr. Lin, does your second brother know about this new assistant you've hired?"

He was now Qin Juan's husband, so calling Qin Yang "second brother" wasn't inappropriate.

Though he rarely addressed him like that, now he was speaking as a family member asking Lin Chuxia.

Holding Qi Qi, Lin Chuxia replied casually, "He knows, we ran into each other yesterday and I introduced them. Besides, Qin Yang usually doesn't interfere with my work matters."

Jia Liang continued, "Mr. Lin, if you were just Mr. Lin to me, I definitely wouldn't say these things. But besides being Mr. Lin, I have to call you sister-in-law through Juanzi, so I speak boldly."

Seeing him so earnest, Lin Chuxia chuckled and nodded, "Go ahead."

"It's like this, you said your second brother doesn't meddle in your work affairs, and I observed that as well. From the moment I met him, I knew he was a principled man. He respects your career, but honestly, if Juanzi always had a male assistant by her side, I, as her husband, wouldn't be too thrilled."

Wang Tianyu is fine; he's young, looks innocent, and is also Wang Tianxue's younger brother, treated like a younger brother.

Today, when mother-in-law was heading back to Qin Family Village, she talked for a long time with my wife. Later, I found out that mother-in-law was worried about the second brother and his wife, asking Qin Juan to gently advise the second brother not to upset his sister-in-law.

Why?

Isn't it because mother-in-law has seen the man next to her sister-in-law?

Having been with the Qin Family for so long, Jia Liang knows what kind of people they are.

Whether it's the father-in-law, mother-in-law, or the two brothers-in-law, they are all excellent people.

Even though he's sure Mr. Lin wouldn't do such things, from a man's perspective, he wanted to remind Mr. Lin.

Lin Chuxia burst out laughing, "Brother-in-law, why wouldn't I like what you said? You just said we're family, yet I feel like in every word you're siding with Qin Yang."

Jia Liang blushed, "No...not really, it's your sister, she's worried."

Lin Chuxia guessed that it was likely her mother-in-law who had concerns.

The little elderly lady, upon coming, perhaps pretended not to see it, but her eyes were fixed on Gu Peng the entire time.

She had never shown any hostility towards other men by her side before, so why could she not accept Gu Peng?

However, thinking about Gu Peng's image at the time, with semi-long hair, he indeed didn't quite look like a good person either.

Just like when they first saw Jia Liang's bald head; initially, didn't everyone think he wasn't a good person?

Lin Chuxia wanted to tell Jia Liang that, among others, he should understand best.

But thinking it through, she decided not to point out his flaw, and directly added, "Rest assured, brother-in-law, I know my limits. As for why I've chosen Gu Peng, you all will understand in time. He's quite capable."

With that, Jia Liang couldn't say much more.

Still, seeing Gu Peng's behavior at the dining table, he indeed seemed cautious and measured.

Besides, even if he didn't trust Gu Peng, he had to trust Lin Chuxia.

Chapter 727: Sense of Crisis

At the same time, in Ancheng County, a hundred miles away, two people were also discussing the same individual.

Wang Tianyu looked at the man sitting opposite him, and suddenly the food in his mouth didn't taste good anymore.

He knew Qin Minister wouldn't invite him for a meal for no reason.

The matter Qin was seeking him out for was also the matter he had been most concerned about recently.

Wang Tianyu described in detail to Qin Yang the circumstances of his encounter with Gu Peng the other day.

This was no secret; Mr. Lin always hired people at his whim, and those who were close to him were aware of his style.

Moreover, aside from the newcomers, didn't each person who first got to know Mr. Lin have their own story?

They even considered these the basis for conversation.

Qin Yang nodded, "Do you have any information on him? Let me take a look."

"No," Wang Tianyu replied with a dazed look.

Qin Yang frowned slightly, "Your boss Mr. Lin has taken a liking to someone; as her assistant, shouldn't you get hold of the relevant information immediately?"

Wang Tianyu felt wrongly accused, "Gu Peng was taken away by Mr. Lin the next day. I wanted to inquire more about his situation, but Mr. Lin directly hired him. All I could find out were his basic details: male, 28 years old, Lin City person, no parents or siblings, healthy, no bad habits, unmarried, childless, unemployed, but now he's employed..."

Knowing that he wouldn't be able to get any more information from him, Qin Yang waved him off to finish his meal alone and rose to leave.

He couldn't quite describe the feeling.

When Lin Chuxia first brought Wang Tianyu along, he felt uncomfortable.

Wang Tianyu was just a kid, always hanging around his wife with an adoring and reverent gaze, making her happy.

But it was only discomfort, not a sense of crisis.

However, Gu Peng, who was around Lin Chuxia, gave him a sense of crisis from a man's perspective.

It wasn't that he didn't trust the relationship between him and Lin Chuxia, just the feeling of having something precious to him being looked at by others.

"Minister Qin, there's something I'm not sure if I should say."

Behind him, Wang Tianyu spoke out again.

"Speak."

"Just," Wang Tianyu pursed his lips, "Gu Peng, he was previously imprisoned and released last year."

Qin Yang's eyes narrowed slightly.

Previously imprisoned?

Qin Yang recalled that after the Spring Festival, Lin Chuxia took a trip to the Northwest.

What did she really go there for?

Besides the places he'd worked, there was also the largest correctional facility there.

Returning to the car, Qin Yang watched the sunlight outside the window; Gu Peng was the name running through his mind.

That night, Lin Chuxia woke up from a dream, but one thing he hadn't told her; she had called out a person's name in her sleep.

He thought he had heard wrong.

Until his mother mentioned that name the other day, he clearly remembered that the name Lin Chuxia shouted in her sleep was indeed Gu Peng.

In the five years he and Lin Chuxia had been married, he had known nearly everything about the people and events around her; this name had never appeared before.

Coincidentally, shortly after she shouted that name in her sleep, this person entered their lives.

Is it a coincidence?

.....

When Lin Chuxia returned home, Qin Yang was already back.

Seeing her carrying bags upon bags as she returned home, he immediately greeted her.

Lin Chuxia handed the child to him while asking, "Why did you come back so early? Is everything okay at home?"

She thought he would stay at home for a day.

Qin Yang noticed his daughter's tired demeanor; she seemed excited upon seeing her dad but quickly lost her energy, indicating she was sleepy.

Cuddling his daughter to sleep, he quietly responded, "Everything's good. Wang Cheng and Houzi even asked me to pass on a message to you; the fleet is already running, going to and from the capital these past few days, and the Qin Family Village Vegetable Market's produce is being shipped out by the fleet."

With their own fleet, the Qin Family Village Vegetable Market's reputation soared.

Not only did villagers from the neighboring ten villages come to sell their vegetables, but even those from adjacent counties came by tractor.

The daily management fees collected by the market were quite substantial.

Lin Chuxia had long been aware of these situations, yet hearing Qin Yang mention them made her happy.

Her every decision not only brought income but also enabled her to do practical things, which mattered more than anything else in her life.

Growing up in rural areas herself, Lin Chuxia understood the struggles of the farmers.

Farming isn't like working in a factory where workers receive a timely monthly salary regardless of the weather; farmers often work harder than those workers by several times, but their harvested crops might not yield well because of various issues.

Once the market opened, vegetable prices were determined by them, often leaving farmers busy with little reward.

Developing vegetable greenhouses in Qin Family Village and promoting off-season vegetable production were only part of the solution; farmers in other villages only had two seasons to rely upon.

It was evident how difficult it was for farmers to earn a bit of income.

By developing the Qin Family Village Vegetable Market and transporting their vegetables out, the equilibrium of the market was greatly enhanced.

Preventing farmers from taking unnecessary steps and doing wasted labor ensured their income to a certain extent.

The significance here was far more fulfilling to Lin Chuxia than establishing another factory.

Eventually, Qi Qi fell asleep in Qin Yang's arms.

Holding her, he looked at her cute little face; he couldn't bear to put her on the bed and let her sleep in his arms.

Lin Chuxia teased him, "You keep indulging her. In the future, if she doesn't sleep without being held, will you hold her at work?"

Qin Yang responded with an indifferent smile, "If the office permits, I'd love to take her there; our daughter will grow up cherished and adored."

This daughter enthusiast.

Ignoring him, Lin Chuxia flipped through the clothes she bought, "Hmm, where did they go?"

Qin Yang asked, "What is it?"

"The clothes I bought for you. I clearly handed them over to Gu Peng—how come they're missing?"

Numerous bags were spread out before Lin Chuxia, mostly filled with small clothes for her daughter.

"Found them," she finally located Qin Yang's shirt in one of the small bags, complaining discontentedly, "Why did Gu Peng put your shirt in here? This shirt is cotton-linen, making it prone to wrinkles, and I've got to iron it again."

Qin Yang looked at her eyes and brows, "You seem to be getting along well with Gu Peng these past few days."

"It's alright, overall not bad."

Lin Chuxia continued to take out clothes one by one, arranging and tidying them.

Qin Yang chatted casually, like regular family conversation, "I find Gu Peng quite wooden. Is he suitable for handling things alongside you? During my visit to Qin Family Village today, I ran into Wang Tianyu; I actually think Wang Tianyu is quite good. He's been by your side for a while, understands the company's business, and most importantly, his academic qualifications are high—he's a university graduate, offering a perspective and problem-solving approach that's different from the average person. You should have more such talented individuals close to you, rather than valuing hard work and diligence."

Chapter 728: Nobody Wants to Be a Rat in the Gutter

He was a bit talkative today.

Lin Chuxia tilted her head in confusion at him, suddenly recalling what Jia Liang said today.

It seemed she really neglected Qin Yang's feelings about hiring Gu Peng.

Thinking this, Lin Chuxia asked directly, "Do you have any thoughts about me hiring Gu Peng?"

She wasn't the type to beat around the bush, especially not with her family; she didn't want any misunderstandings.

Qin Yang felt a bit embarrassed, like his thoughts were seen through.

He even investigated her behind her back, something he had never done before.

"I just feel like this person isn't suitable as your assistant."

Just as Jia Liang said, Qin Yang could get jealous when another man appeared around her?

She didn't want to deceive Qin Yang, but this matter was hard to explain.

She simply said, "I don't think it's inappropriate. People said the same when I hired Jia Liang and Houzi, but look now, aren't they competent? And they're absolutely loyal to the company."

Lin Chuxia initially hired Jia Liang and Houzi because of their loyalty.

She knew that once people like them were employed, they'd do anything for her and never betray her.

Nobody wants to be a rat in the gutter.

Likewise, Gu Peng too.

In the past life, she trusted it would be the same in this life.

Seeing Qin Yang's furrowed brow, Lin Chuxia softened her voice, "We're just in a superior-subordinate relationship. Maybe we'll become friends in the future, but just ordinary friends. As for why I let him be my assistant, he just clicked with me. Qin Yang, you know I don't care about people's background or education as long as they have the capability to work."

She took Qin Yang's big hand and smiled slightly, "You seem so upset over just an assistant, is it that serious? Don't worry, you and Qi Qi always come first in my heart."

Those words didn't comfort him.

Qin Yang looked at her with his dark eyes, "Xiaxia, I heard he has a record. I'm not comfortable with someone like that around you. You're not a god, you can't foresee everything. How can you place such a dangerous person by your side just because he clicks with you?"

Lin Chuxia met his gaze, then looked away with a carefree smile, "What could happen? At worst, if he's not qualified, I'll just fire him. You're overthinking it."

She indeed wasn't a god, but she had lived a lifetime and foresaw everything.

Gu Peng had done her a favor in the past life. She couldn't repay him then, but there's no way she'd let him wander in this life.

Qin Yang knew continuing this won't yield any results.

His wife was independent and persistent.

Once she decides something, it's hard for others to change it.

.....

Several days had passed since their last conversation. Lin Chuxia was busy as usual with her work, and under her guidance, Gu Peng was gradually getting familiar with things.

Perhaps in her past life, when Lin Chuxia met Gu Peng, her business wasn't that significant. It was small-scale, so it wasn't easy to see Gu Peng's potential management ability.

In this life, when she met Gu Peng, Lin Chuxia's company had already grown. Although Gu Peng wasn't highly educated, his problem-solving style was the same as his past life, even quicker to adapt than Wang Tianyu.

Sometimes Lin Chuxia would secretly lament that the Gu Peng of her past life was really held back by her.

Occasionally when Gu Peng appeared in the family compound, he'd run into Qin Yang.

Although Qin Yang had his reservations about the man, his good manners prevented him from showing it.

And after some time, he noticed Gu Peng being very respectful and measured towards Lin Chuxia.

It seemed his previous concerns were indeed unfounded, and he realized he might have been a bit petty.

By the end of May, Zhuang Jingshu was delayed with some work and hadn't returned, but Old Sir He came back first.

Old Sir He had been away for quite a while. Lin Chuxia received the notice and personally went to the train station to pick him up.

Seeing the old man at that moment, she unexpectedly felt her eyes heat up.

"You remember to come back? I thought the dazzling world outside captivated you, making you forget about everything else."

Old Sir He looked a bit thinner and darker than before, who knew where he'd been these past six months.

But he seemed in good spirits.

When Old Sir He got off the train, his eyes were darting around Lin Chuxia, but he didn't see the little grandson he was longing for, nor did he see Qin Yang. But he did see a tall and strong man next to her, adeptly taking his luggage.

The old man immediately got unsettled.

As Gu Peng carried the luggage outside the station, Old Sir He tugged his apprentice's arm in a low voice.

"I say, young apprentice, though you are my direct disciple, we should be open with each other. This young man looks fine, but compared to Qin Yang, there's still something lacking. No matter what Qin Yang has done wrong, as long as it's not a matter of principle, we can always discuss it. Or are you saying you don't even want Qi Qi anymore? Let me tell you, the old man here treasures that little girl dearly, you can't just send off my little granddaughter and deprive me of seeing her for ages."

Lin Chuxia listened to the first half without realizing much, but rolled her eyes upon hearing the latter part.

"You're worried about not seeing Qi Qi for yonks? Do you even know how long you've been gone this time? You've been away for more than six months; Qi Qi might not even remember who you are. I'm telling you, worrying is pointless when you're like this."

"How's it pointless?" Old Sir He was anxious, "I've bought her lots of fun things and tasty food. You didn't really hand the child over to the Qin Family, did you? Oh my, you're making a mess, you've moved on so quickly, Qin Yang, being young and promising, couldn't stay single forever. With a stepmother, soon comes a stepfather. Oh my, it's over, it's over. My little sweetheart will suffer, neglected by the stepmother, ignored by the stepfather. Oh, dear, my sweet granddaughter..."

Lin Chuxia couldn't take it anymore, "Alright, alright, what stepfather or stepmother? There's no stepfather or stepmother. Qin Yang and I are fine. The station is crowded, so I told the dad and the kid to wait outside for us. The one who carried your luggage is a subordinate of mine. Why wouldn't you wish me well?"

The old man instantly lit up, "I knew it, you wouldn't be so oblivious. Alright, alright, lead the way, my little granddaughter must be almost one by now, right? I rushed back all the way just to celebrate her first birthday."

Outside the station, from a distance, Old Sir He saw Qin Yang and the little girl in his arms.

Chapter 729: Crestfallen

The little girl had changed a lot, wearing a pink dress, making her look even more adorable.

Her soft hair was tied into two little buns on top of her head, melting the old man's heart.

Qin Yang saw Old Master He disembark and approached with the child in his arms, respectfully calling, "Master."

Then he taught Qi Qi to call him grandpa.

Qi Qi could already say simple words, blinking her big eyes at Old Master He, and in a childish voice said, "Grandpa!"

"Aye!"

Old Master He replied heavily, then looked around for his luggage.

Knowing that Gu Peng had already loaded the luggage onto the jeep, he went to the car to look, and Lin Chuxia couldn't stop him.

Finally, Old Master He pulled out a doll from the bag, its eyes moving and blinking.

"Qi Qi, Grandpa bought you a doll, just as cute as our Qi Qi, come and take it."

Lin Chuxia looked at the doll, finding it hard to imagine how an old man in his seventies went to the mall to buy such a thing.

Qi Qi hugged the doll, curious about its moving eyes, reaching out to poke them with her little hand.

Finally, she smiled, revealing four tiny front teeth.

Lin Chuxia standing by: "..."

.....

Knowing Old Master He was returning, his room was already tidied up.

In fact, every so often Qin Jianjun would clean up Old Master's room.

Lin Chuxia and Qin Yang made a big table of dishes to welcome Old Master He.

Today Qin Jianjun came back early too, and a few people gathered around the table, Old Master He sighed, "It's good to be home."

Lin Chuxia served him some dishes, "Since you feel it's good at home, don't run around everywhere. At your age, we worry when you're always out. If you want to return to the old business, I can help you open a pharmacy."

Old Master He shook his head, took a gulp of his drink, "No need, I'm old, the future belongs to you young people."

From getting off the train, the old man seemed cheerful, but now Lin Chuxia felt he had something on his mind.

She gave Qin Jianjun a look.

Having lived with the old man all these years, Qin Jianjun was quite familiar with his temperament, smiled and said, "We young ones still need guidance from you elders, Grandpa He, you're still in your prime. Traditionally, the older a Chinese medicine doctor, the more valuable they are. To us, you're a treasure."

Old Master He was coaxed into laughter by Qin Jianjun, pointing at Lin Chuxia with a finger, "See, your nephew knows how to talk, much better than you."

With the topic changed, the meal was lively and cheerful.

After the meal, Lin Chuxia and her family returned home, with all the big and small gifts Old Master He bought for Qi Qi.

On the way back, Lin Chuxia mentioned to Qin Yang about Old Master He's unsettled mood, Qin Yang noticed it too.

However, where Old Master He had been or what he had done in the past six months, since he didn't say, they didn't pry.

Luckily, there was Qin Jianjun around him, that guy was sharp now. If he wanted to find out something, he'd uncover it sooner or later.

Sure enough, a few days later, Qin Jianjun came to Lin Chuxia to talk about Old Master He.

It turned out Old Master He had gone to an old friend's place in the South over the past six months.

His old friend had opened a pharmacy and taken in several apprentices. Old Master He, during this half-year, had helped train some apprentices for that friend.

This experience over the past six months left Old Master He seeing the current state of Chinese medicine and he had some difficulty accepting it.

He thought that after policy changes, Chinese medicine was entering a springtime, but didn't expect...

Hearing this, Lin Chuxia also fell silent.

Regarding the country's policy, since the Hengyang conference in 1982, it was clearly stated to emphasize the characteristics of Chinese medicine, leveraging its advantages to develop its industry.

In June 1985, the Central Committee Secretariat highlighted putting Chinese and Western medicine on equal footing.

Although the state had introduced policies to support the development of Chinese medicine, at the local level, some policies were inadequately implemented, resulting in funding and support challenges for Chinese medicine institutions.

Moreover, with the widespread spread and development of Western medicine in China, Western drugs' effective treatment of acute and infectious diseases impacted the proportion of Chinese medicine in clinical treatment.

People didn't care about so-called side effects, just wanted to heal quickly and cheaply.

Furthermore, Chinese medicine education faced issues of overemphasizing theory over practice, with inadequate development of students' clinical skills. The study time for traditional courses was reduced, lacking a solid understanding of classic theories.

It took longer for talent in Chinese medicine to develop compared to Western medicine.

Growing into a good Chinese medicine doctor indeed faced substantial pressure.

These were facts that neither the old man nor his fellow old friends could change.

No wonder the old man appeared so disheartened.

Not just the talent in Chinese medicine, but even herbal medicine faced developmental challenges.

Previously, gaps in Chinese medicine and overharvesting of wild herbs drastically reduced many species' resources, damaging ecological environments.

The technology for artificially planting herbs was immature, lacking scientific management, with low pest control skill, leading to instability in herb quality and yield. Additionally, farmers blindly followed planting trends, severely skewing market supply and demand.

To process these herbs required traditional experience, and traditional preparation methods were time-consuming and labor-intensive, with young people unwilling to learn and inherit them, making it hard to ensure herb quality.

After hearing all this, Lin Chuxia felt heavy-hearted too.

Having lived another lifetime, she knew well that good Chinese medicine would be harder to find in the future.

While our country's heritage might be fading, it's being celebrated in some other nations.

It's such a heartbreaking situation.

Lin Chuxia thought of the prescriptions Old Master He had given her.

Previously, when her family got sick, she used those prescriptions and found them very effective.

It's not that Chinese medicine isn't effective or slow, but it lacks high-quality herbs and formulas.

When she got those prescriptions, she secretly resolved not to let them be buried.

It seems some things could be put on the agenda.

.....

In early June, Zhuang Jingshu finally returned from abroad.

Lin Chuxia and Qin Yang personally went to the airport to pick them up.

Zhuang Jingshu wore a moon-white cheongsam, white leather high heels, each step graceful and dignified.

Beside her was another assistant, Luo Sen.

This was the first time Lin Chuxia met Luo Sen, a typical foreigner with white skin and blue eyes.

However, like Zhuang Yang, he had lived alongside Zhuang Jingshu for a long time, speaking Hua Country's language fluently.

Little Qi Qi hadn't seen Grandma for almost two months, stared wide-eyed at Zhuang Jingshu, and waved her little arms pouncing toward her.

Chapter 730: A New Car?

Zhuang Jingshu had inquired about Qi Qi countless times over the phone in the past two months. Now, seeing the little one rushing over, how could she resist? She gladly took her darling granddaughter into her arms.

Qi Qi finally landed in her grandmother's embrace, her tiny hand grabbing onto the pearl necklace around Zhuang Jingshu's neck, babbling excitedly.

Zhuang Jingshu was both amused and exasperated, "You little rascal, you're not really missing Grandma, are you? You've got your eyes on Grandma's pearl necklace, haven't you?"

She asked Lin Chuxia to help her take off the pearl necklace and gave it to her granddaughter to play with.

Luo Sen, standing nearby, twitched his lips. This pearl necklace of the chairwoman was worth a building in Hua Country, and yet she let the little miss play with it?

He reevaluated the places Lin Chuxia and Qi Qi held in Zhuang Jingshu's heart.

Outside the airport, Zhuang Jingshu raised her eyebrows seeing the car, "A new car?"

Lin Chuxia chuckled, "The jeep didn't have air conditioning, and with the weather getting hot soon, driving that car can be a bit of a pain."

This was something she would only say to Zhuang Jingshu, knowing Zhuang Jingshu had seen a lot in foreign countries.

If she told anyone around her, she would be ridiculed for being ungrateful.

With the current economic conditions, so many people were still struggling at the subsistence level, and even buying a bicycle was a struggle.

She had a car to drive and still complained about its lack of air conditioning.

How many people hadn't even heard of the word "air conditioning"?

Zhuang Jingshu indeed smiled slightly and spoke as a matter of course, "You should have replaced it long ago. Your jeep's performance is certainly not as good as the Santana. But you should have told me in advance, and I would have found a way to get you a good imported car."

"This is great enough. With a Santana, I fear nothing under the sun."

She chuckled, but in her heart, she thought, no matter how good an imported car Zhuang Jingshu could get her, she wouldn't dare drive it.

Speaking of which, when the Santana first entered our country in 1983, almost all parts were imported and assembled domestically.

By 1988, the policies allowed the localization rate of the Santana to continue to increase, with production scaling up.

As a result, many companies now liked buying the Santana.

If she drove a better imported car, she would outshine the leadership.

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Zhuang Jingshu came back at this time because she knew the building she gifted to Lin Chuxia was completed.

Soon after she returned to the family compound, Zhuang Yang came over.

He reported his work in the country to Zhuang Jingshu and also told Lin Chuxia about the situation with Xiyang Building.

"I heard from Wang Tianyu that you want to schedule the listing ceremony for June 18th. The timing is perfect; it's just that the arrangements for the mall and the personnel for the ceremony need your attention."

Lin Chuxia was prepared for this. She had already spoken with the Wang siblings and Qin Jianjun, waiting for Zhuang Yang to say this.

On the day Zhuang Jingshu returned, everyone wisely chose not to discuss work.

Lin Chuxia and Qin Yang cooked a table full of dishes themselves.

Holding Qi Qi, Zhuang Jingshu wouldn't let go; during her time abroad, it was her little granddaughter she missed the most.

After all, she had been taking care of her since the full moon.

The family was lively, and even Yuan Bao sensed the joy at home, darting from one place to another in excitement.

When the food was ready, the family gathered around the table, and Qin Yang even opened a bottle of red wine to pour for everyone.

Qi Qi could now eat simple dishes; the moment she sat at the table, her little fingers eagerly pointed at the food, babbling continuously.

This was the first time Zhuang Jingshu saw Qi Qi like this, laughing heartily, "Look at the little girl so anxious. What does our Qi Qi want to eat? Grandma will help you pick out the fish bones. We'll eat fish; it makes you smart."

Qi Qi moved her little mouth, opening it wide with a soft "ah ah ah."

Zhuang Jingshu laughed as she picked out a piece of fish, carefully removing the bones, and fed it to Qi Qi.

The little one ate with relish, her cheeks puffing adorably.

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All the procedures for the Xiyang Group were completed, and the building was also ready.

After setting the date for the listing ceremony, everything began to move forward.

Zhuang Jingshu even lent Luo Sen to Lin Chuxia, having no objections to Gu Peng being by Lin Chuxia's side.

In fact, she thought just having two competent assistants was too few for her.

With so much work, it was tiring enough for her to oversee everything; how could she have the energy to run around?

These tasks should be delegated to subordinates.

When Lin Chuxia met Wang Tianxue that day, she learned that Wang Tianxue had handled another issue these past days.

After Yang Rui was released from the police station that day, he never reappeared, and the child was taken to the police station by neighbors.

Since contact with Yang Rui couldn't be established for a long time, the police turned to Wang Tianxue for leads.

After divorcing Yang Rui, Wang Tianxue didn't care to even glance at him, let alone know where he had gone.

If it weren't for him threatening suicide at the clothing mall that day, Wang Tianxue wouldn't have spoken a word to him.

But when the police approached her, she naturally wouldn't vent these emotions on unrelated people.

It was then she saw Yang Rui's child.

Honestly, as a mother, seeing the child, Wang Tianxue felt a twinge of discomfort.

The child was thin and weak, noticeably smaller than peers.

His skin was pale, with a sickly pallor.

His hair was sparse, lying softly against his head.

Precisely because of this, Wang Tianxue couldn't bring herself to despise the child.

A child under one year old, obedient to an unusual degree, sat quietly without crying or fussing, observing everyone with big eyes.

As if being so well-behaved, his parents wouldn't abandon him.

Wang Tianxue knew where Yang Rui's hometown was, and that Yang Rui had a sister who married far away.

She shared what she knew with the police.

Unexpectedly, two days later, the police sought her out again.

It turned out Yang Rui's parents in his hometown had passed, his sister who married far away had long lost contact with him, and refused to take in the child.

The police contacted Wang Tianxue, hoping she might have other leads.

Or some solution.

Wang Tianxue was truly at her wit's end this time, prompting the police to proceed with official procedures to resolve the child's placement.

Wang Tianxue sympathized with the child, but raising Yang Rui and Tang Lili's child was out of the question.

In the end, she assisted the police in taking the child to the city's welfare home.

Lin Chuxia sighed when she heard the outcome.

Yang Rui and Tang Lili's moral degradation and misconduct not only cost them their jobs but left behind a pitiful child.