

Switched M 81

Chapter 81: Have Fewer Children and Plant More Trees

Lin Chuxia had fought and vented her frustration, knowing full well that if these people were sent to the police station, they would likely be let go after a simple lecture, as there was no substantive criminal act.

She glanced coldly at them, "Get lost. If I see you doing harm again, don't blame me for not being polite."

"Yes, yes, yes."

The man quickly went to help Bald, who was the most battered among them; his face was swollen.

Seeing the man, Bald mumbled through the corner of his mouth, "Why didn't you tell me she could fight like that?"

"I did tell you, I told you, but you didn't believe it," the man said in a small, aggrieved voice.

One of the hoodlums stole a glance at Lin Chuxia, "You only said she wasn't someone to mess with, you didn't say how. I mean look at her, so frail and weak, I'd never have believed it."

It's all his fault for not explaining properly.

"Let's go quickly, stop talking..."

Once the group had left the alley, Lin Chuxia looked around. It really was a remote area; despite the scuffle, not a single passerby had come by.

She picked up the items from the ground and put them straight into her space.

After leaving the alley, she went on a shopping spree in the grocery store.

All sorts of snacks and fruits, tobacco, alcohol, tea, sugar, various groceries and seasonings, anything usable and of decent quality, she bought some.

With plenty of money on hand, Lin Chuxia had enough to splurge.

She was a bit of a shopaholic by nature; now that she had extra money, she certainly wasn't going to deprive herself.

She also took the opportunity to stroll along several main streets in the city. Even the urban areas weren't very large, and the bustling streets were few.

Lunch was at the State-Owned Restaurant. The food was quite tasty, though the service was as indifferent as ever.

She thought that leaders with the brains and vision like Manager Zhao at the Department Store were rather rare.

Finally, she went to the Xinhua Bookstore and bought a dictionary. When she planned to go to the bus station, she saw the City Hospital nearby, thought of something, and turned in its direction.

She didn't know where to buy that particular item, so she headed straight for the gynecology department.

To her surprise, they actually had it there.

The clerk was a woman in her thirties. Upon hearing Lin Chuxia ask for family planning supplies, she suggested several options.

The nation was actively advocating family planning, but public awareness was generally low. Eager to find someone who proactively sought to buy family planning products, the clerk was afraid she wouldn't explain thoroughly enough, failing to implement the national policy fully.

Lin Chuxia felt embarrassed and couldn't help but interrupt, "Doctor, we don't have kids yet, and we will firmly comply with the national policy in the future. 'To become rich, have fewer children and plant more trees; for a secure old age, let the nation support you; late marriage and late childbirth lead to fewer but healthier offspring'; I'll remember all of it."

The doctor looked relieved, "Good that you'll remember. I missed the timing of the national policy and had three kids. I just hope you young people will take it seriously."

Lin Chuxia: "..."

After finally getting what she needed, Lin Chuxia left the hospital and let out a long sigh of relief.

Since she was going to see Qin Yang, she would inevitably do certain things that promote intimacy between men and women.

Although she felt that she was not very maternal, it was still essential to be cautious.

Her career was just taking off; an unplanned pregnancy now would mean she wouldn't have the time or energy to invest in such a matter.

The more she cared, the more cautious she became; Lin Chuxia did not want her child to grow up barely seeing their mother or to only be able to watch their parents bustling about, to end up labeled as 'having a good life because of their sacrifice.'

Her child would have to be born into a life of prosperity, with the companionship and love of both parents and a complete childhood.

Now was not the time to have children.

Seeing it was about time, she headed to the bus station.

The public bus that ran between the county and the city only made one trip a day. On the return trip, many of the faces she had seen earlier were there.

Just after getting on the bus, the old lady who sat in the same row as her on the way there waved at her, "Girl, I knew you'd be heading back today. Granny saved a seat for you. Come and sit on the inside, by the window."

Lin Chuxia walked over with a smile, "Granny, aren't you scared that I'll open the window anymore?"

"Not afraid. You were right, the smell inside the bus is too strong; we need to open the windows to air it out. Granny put on a couple more layers of clothing. Look, you can open all the windows and I won't even feel cold."

Saying this, she even opened up her coat to show her the clothes underneath.

"Are you visiting relatives, Granny?"

"Went to my sister's. She just had a new grandson, and today is his one-month celebration. These clothes were given to me by my sister."

Lin Chuxia just smiled and didn't say anything more.

The bus left on time. Lin Chuxia didn't see the three people Qin Yang had fought with, nor the boy with the chicken. They probably stayed in the city.

Meanwhile, at a family residential building somewhere.

Yang Rui returned home, and as soon as he walked up the stairs, he saw his wife cooking at the entrance of their tube-shaped apartment building.

Her belly, at 6 months pregnant, made bending over inconvenient. She sat on a small stool, holding a pair of chicken feet and plucking feathers.

Perhaps hearing his footsteps, she turned her head and spoke with a smile, "You're back. My mom had Tianyu bring over two chickens. We're having chicken stew with mushrooms tonight."

At that moment, Wang Tianyu came out holding a basin and called out courteously to Yang Rui, "Brother-in-law."

Yang Rui nodded, "Tianyu's here. It must have been inconvenient to bring two chickens such a long way, wasn't it? When you go back, tell your mother not to worry, we have everything we need at home."

Wang Tianyu, with a shy smile, thought about the troubles he encountered on the way and how inconvenient it really was, but...

"Mom said the chickens sold in the city are all old hens that don't lay eggs anymore. These two are raised this year, their meat is tender. She wanted me to deliver them to my sister for some nourishment."

Yang Rui took off his jacket, rolled up his sleeves, and said to his wife, "It's still your mother who cares most about you. Let me handle this, take the jacket inside."

Wang Tianxue washed her hands in clean water and took the offered jacket, "It's about done, I'll give it one more wash and chop it before putting it in the pot."

"Alright," Yang Rui got to work skillfully cleaning up.

Wang Tianxue watched for a while before finally taking the clothing back to the room.

She shook out the clothes and hung them on a rack, at the same time, a faint fragrance wafted out.

Different from the scent on her husband, it smelled more like... a woman's fragrance.

Wang Tianxue furrowed her brows and leaned in for another sniff, the scent becoming more distinct.

She gently flipped through the collar and found a long strand of hair near the neck buttons.

"Sis, what are you doing? Brother-in-law is asking how to cook the chicken," Wang Tianyu's voice came from behind her.

Wang Tianxue snapped back to reality, uttered an "oh," and went back to the hallway.

"How should we cook the chicken, braised in soy sauce or stew it? I think we should stew it. Chicken soup is nourishing, you can drink a couple more bowls later."

Staring at the familiar man, Wang Tianxue remained silent for a long time.

Confused, Yang Rui looked back, "What's wrong?"

"Where have you been today?" Her voice was casual, no different from usual.

Yang Rui continued working on what he was doing, casually replying, "Where could I go? Just bustling around the Department Store. The goods shipped from the south last time are selling well. Manager Zhao is very pleased with my work recently. I had a long chat with him today. You know Manager Zhao always has good ideas, I think there's a future in working with him."

Something came to him and he turned around, "That's right, you always said you liked the clothing styles from the south. It's not convenient for you now with the pregnancy. Once the baby is born, I'll take you out for a good shopping spree. We'll buy a few nice pieces of clothing. Just today, a lady at the Department Store bought seven or eight pieces in one go, Manager Zhao almost served her personally. It's all about having the money."

He lamented as he busied himself, and only after he finished did he realize Wang Tianxue hadn't said how to cook the chicken.

"How about stewed chicken soup?"

Wang Tianxue had been watching him the entire time, as if trying to read something on his face, but she didn't see anything.

Hearing his suggestion, she nodded, "Alright, as you say."

Chapter 82: Family Affection

Lin Chuxia arrived home to find Mrs. Qin and her sister-in-law busy sorting vegetables in the yard.

They were some tender green beans picked during the bean-pulling season, along with some small cucumbers planted by Mr. Qin in their private plot, also pulled up at the same time, amounting to two large piles.

There were also some hot peppers and other vegetables picked from their own garden.

Seeing Lin Chuxia return, Mrs. Qin pointed to the yard's vegetables and said, "Last time, didn't you mention you wanted to prepare some pickles for the customer at your shop? See if these are enough. Your sister-in-law is skilled at pickling; let her pickle more, enough for the whole winter."

In this era, every household in the village pickled vegetables to eat during winter when fresh vegetables were scarce, something Lin Chuxia was aware of. She didn't expect that Mrs. Qin and her sister-in-law were preparing these for her shop.

She had only casually mentioned it last time, but they took it to heart.

"That's wonderful, I also find the pickles made by my sister-in-law delicious and was thinking of learning her techniques soon." Zhang Guilan's pickles had no strange taste, precisely capturing the flavor of whatever was pickled, a rarity in pickling.

When it's time to eat, just refine the pickles a couple of days in advance, whether they are soy sauce pickles or spicy pickles, they are all great.

Zhang Guilan waved her hand, "What's there to learn? There's not much work in the field these days, I can help you with the pickling, it's not at all troublesome."

Little Zhuangzhuang, playing with the green beans nearby, also lifted his little head and said, "Auntie, I can help too. I can lift that big stone."

"You are really amazing," Lin Chuxia touched his smooth little cheeks and couldn't resist pinching them.

Little Zhuangzhuang frowned slightly, somewhat troubled, "Auntie, I'm grown up, you can't pinch my face anymore, but if you like, I'll let you pinch it secretly, not in front of others though. Last time Aunt Yun pinched my face, Jiange and Niuniu made fun of me."

Lin Chuxia found his conflicted little expression utterly adorable, prompting Mrs. Qin and her sister-in-law to laugh as well.

Unable to resist, she pinched his cheek again, "Alright, auntie remembers. Since Zhuangzhuang treats auntie so well, auntie will give Zhuangzhuang a gift."

She took out a little military uniform from her bag, and at the sight of the army green cap, his eyes lit up bright, though he didn't dare to reach out.

His eyes filled with excitement as he looked at the uniform and then at Zhang Guilan, his voice brimming with joy, "Mom, it's a military uniform, look!"

Zhang Guilan truly hadn't expected Lin Chuxia to buy clothes for her child, especially this little military uniform, which was not like ordinary clothes and certainly not cheap.

"Sister-in-law, you see, you shouldn't have gone to such expense."

"Sister-in-law, I bought it for the kid, Zhuangzhuang is so adorable, I love buying him things."

Lin Chuxia didn't explain much. During her time running the business, her elder brother and his wife had helped take care of things at home, especially the work in the fields, really saving her from any worries.

She didn't say much, not wanting to feel too distant, but she was clear in her heart.

She then took out the clothes and shook them open, waving at Zhuangzhuang, "Come and try it on. Let's see if it fits."

Zhuangzhuang looked at his mom, and Zhang Guilan nodded her head, "Go on," then he ran over like a little firecracker.

Lin Chuxia helped him into the clothes. Without experience in buying children's clothes, they were slightly big, but it's better for children's clothes to be bigger; they grow fast and can wear them for a couple more years.

Mrs. Qin was very satisfied, "The size is just right, he can wear a sweater underneath in winter, and can still wear it next year."

Zhuangzhuang, in his little military uniform and cap, joyfully ran across the yard.

Seeing Mr. Qin come out from the house, he skipped and shouted, "Grandpa, Grandpa, look at me, I am in the liberation army now."

Mr. Qin laughed in response, "Hmm, our Zhuangzhuang is capable, being so little and he can already play as a liberation army, but he just lacks a gun. Grandpa will make you a wooden gun in a bit."

"Yay, yay, Grandpa, I want a gun, I want a big gun."

Once he had the gun, he would take a round in the village, his buddies would definitely be envious.

Last time, Brother Jianye from Second Uncle's house brought a wooden gun, and when they all played cops and robbers, he played as the cop. This time, dressed in his little military uniform, he surely wanted to play the cop again.

Several adults watched Zhuangzhuang running joyfully around the yard, Mrs. Qin asked about something Lin Chuxia had mentioned earlier.

"When are you going to Yangyang's place? I heard it takes three to four days by train, Yangyang's birthday is at the end of the month, on the 28th. Didn't you say you were going to join him for his birthday?"

It really wasn't that Mrs. Qin was meddling in Lin Chuxia's personal matters, watching the grandchild of her eldest son running around, how could she not think about her younger son?

Her younger son and his wife lived apart, and his wife was so capable, having started the Bun Shop on a whim, and they even hired many staff to help.

Her eldest son was talking to his wife in the yard that day, though in a quiet voice, she heard quite a bit.

Compared to her eldest son, she had had these concerns for a while, it wasn't that she doubted her daughter-in-law's character, but she was indeed outstanding, and with the children living separately, there wasn't much of an emotional foundation.

If she stayed there for a few days this time and got pregnant, having a child would tie them down, and their relationship might become a bit more solid.

Lin Chuxia hadn't realized Mrs. Qin thought so much, "Planning to leave the day after tomorrow, I'll arrive just in time for his birthday. But this means the fieldwork will fall on my elder brother and sister-in-law again."

Right now, it was time to plant wheat, a busy time in farming.

Zhang Guilan didn't mind at all, "You go without worries, your bit of land, your brother and I will take care of it easily."

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Lin Chuxia mentioned learning how to pickle vegetables from Zhang Guilan, and it wasn't just talk; their snack shop used a lot of pickled vegetables, and it was the pickling season too.

The next day, she had Sun Bingnan buy two large jars, and also had him load up a truck with tender cucumbers, tender green beans, and tender chili peppers.

She invited Zhang Guilan to the courtyard to personally guide her in pickling the vegetables.

Seeing the large jars and vegetables in the courtyard made Zhang Guilan dizzy, not to mention a bag of salt.

"I was just saying that we almost finished pickling at home, it looks like I was too naive."

"Sister-in-law, what you said, thankfully you remembered this, otherwise I would have completely forgotten about it."

Zhang Guilan, knowing her sister-in-law was easy to get along with, the sisters-in-law didn't say much and got started pickling the vegetables.

Cucumbers and green beans could be put in the same jar, but chili peppers needed to be pickled separately -- not to mention they could make the other vegetables too spicy.

This was Zhang Guilan's first time pickling so many vegetables, although it was for eating through the winter, the fact that a Bun Shop could use so much pickled vegetables also indicated how good the business was, which further solidified her thoughts.

In less than half a day, the vegetables were pickled, placed in the jars on the shaded side of the wall. As long as they were sealed off from dirt, they would be ready in a month.

When the weather got colder, she planned on pickling another jar of mustard greens and radishes, which should be enough.

Lin Chuxia also arranged for the Bun Shop and cooked food, especially the cooked food used her secret spice packs. During the time she was away, she left all the spice packs that would be needed with Su Wensong.

Chapter 83: Departure

The basic situation in the shop now is that the bun shop is managed by Sun Lanlan, with Sun Bingnan and Granny Sun assisting, while the cooked food section is managed by Su Wensong, with Ma Yingzi and Pang Yongli assisting.

The two booths that are already on track mean that Lin Chuxia can leave for a few days without any issues.

Sun Lanlan and Su Wensong, in particular, are all fired up, determined to make the bun shop even better while the boss is away, to show their worth.

Lin Chuxia bought quite a few daily necessities and food items for Old Sir He, and in the end, she also left behind fifty yuan.

Old Sir He refused to take the money, so she secretly placed it under his pillow.

After settling everything, Lin Chuxia boarded the train to the Northwest.

Her luggage was very simple, just a carry-on bag to throw people off, with most of her belongings stashed in her space.

She planned to find a place in the Northwest to transfer her things into her suitcase.

In the last letter from Qin Yang, in addition to the return address on the envelope, the address of his current workplace was also clearly written within. If it weren't for her knowing his personality from the days they spent together, Lin Chuxia might have doubted if the letter was written on behalf of someone else.

She also wondered what his reaction would be when he sees her suddenly appearing.

Just thinking about that scenario made the corners of Lin Chuxia's mouth curve up into a smile.

She needed to transfer trains midway to the Northwest and the journey would take three days, so Lin Chuxia bought a sleeper ticket.

She still needed a travel pass from the team to leave, but at least now buying sleeper tickets was not dependent on job titles anymore.

Otherwise, no matter how much money you had, you might not be able to get a sleeper berth.

After finding her place on the train, Lin Chuxia didn't move much. In this era, the trains were full of pickpockets, though she wasn't worried about being stolen from, she just found it a hassle.

She only went out for eating and using the toilet.

She had stocked up a lot of food in her space, meat buns, vegetable buns, and other cooked foods..., and the fact that they were still hot when taken out would arouse suspicion if done frequently.

She didn't want to eat them cold beforehand, so she made do with the train's boxed lunches.

Fortunately, the thermos was filled with spiritual spring water, so she didn't feel tired along the journey.

When she reached the transfer station and changed trains, Lin Chuxia took the opportunity to take out her steaming hot meal—the first thing she did upon boarding the new train was to dive into her food.

It was mealtime, and many on the train were eating.

Across from her sat a mother and daughter. The mother, in her fifties, had gray hair and wore rather worn-out clothes, patched up in a few places.

The daughter looked to be in her twenties, dressed in a faded jacket, with her hair tied into two braids.

Each of them held a pancake, eating them with plain boiled water.

Next to Lin Chuxia was a man in his thirties, who appeared to be eating a boxed lunch from the train, with white rice, stir-fried pork with green beans, and spicy and sour shredded potatoes.

As soon as Lin Chuxia opened her lunch box, an enticing aroma wafted out.

This meal box was also prepared in advance and kept in her space, with white rice, braised pork, and a dish called "di san xian".

The man next to her glanced over and asked, "Young lady, where did you buy this food? I just went to buy a meal, but I didn't see any braised pork."

"I got on at this stop, brought my meal from the state-owned restaurant outside."

Lin Chuxia explained casually.

She put a piece of braised pork into her mouth, and the taste buds tormented by the last three days on the train were instantly satisfied. She looked up and saw the girl opposite staring straight at her.

She knew it wasn't exactly polite to eat braised pork in front of others who were chewing on pancakes, but what could she do? Surely she couldn't just chew on pancakes too, just to accommodate others?

She silently sped up her eating; this was the utmost kindness she was willing to show.

Before she could finish, the girl opposite spoke up, "Mom, I want some braised pork."

It was clear the old lady opposite didn't favor boys over girls, she comforted her daughter gently, "Be patient, my dear, once we arrive I'll buy you some braised pork."

"But I want it now, I've had pancakes for so many meals, look, I've even lost weight," she said, lifting her sleeve to show her mother.

The old lady's face immediately showed distress, "My poor girl, you've been wronged. Don't worry, once we get some money, we'll buy a couple pounds of meat. I'll make you a big pot of braised pork so you can eat your fill and nourish yourself."

"But I just can't wait anymore," as she watched the woman opposite eat faster and faster, the braised pork in the lunchbox dwindling, Liu Xiaohua felt her heart bleed.

Couldn't she just give her two pieces? It's not like she would burst from eating all that braised pork herself.

'Mother knows best,' upon seeing the look in her daughter's eyes, the old lady understood something and began to bargain with Lin Chuxia, "Comrade, could you spare us two pieces of your pork? Look at us, a widow and an orphan, we've been chewing on pancakes for two days."

Lin Chuxia, who was engrossed in her meal, looked up in confusion, "..."

What did their days of eating pancakes have to do with her?

She had overheard the conversation between the two, but no matter what, she hadn't expected things to develop in this direction.

Looking at the girl opposite, whose eyes were filled with resentment, Lin Chuxia flatly refused, "I'm sorry, Granny, but even after two days of pancakes, it's been two days since I've had a meal."

"Even if you hadn't eaten in 8 days, you've had enough already after all that, what harm is there in sharing two pieces? My daughter hasn't eaten meat in half a year, looking at how pretty and pale your daughter is, shouldn't you have a bit of compassion?" After being kindly refused, the old lady instantly felt she couldn't save face and spoke with displeasure.

Lin Chuxia: "..."

A sound came from beside her, the sound of someone eating their rice frantically, as if afraid that the mother and daughter opposite would shift their target.

Lin Chuxia was speechless too, "You don't need to flatter me. You heard that I bought this meal from the state-owned restaurant. I'll give you these few pieces of meat if you give me one yuan..."

"One yuan?" Before Lin Chuxia could finish, the old lady interrupted loudly, "You've already eaten from it, and you still want one yuan from us, do you have no shame?"

"If you have no qualms about asking for my leftovers, why should I feel ashamed asking for money? If it's too expensive, then don't eat. I haven't finished myself," Lin Chuxia picked up a piece of marbled braised pork, chewed it with relish.

The old lady looked at the lunch box, then at Lin Chuxia's expression, a face of an old person stretched taut with anger.

Liu Xiaohua beside her was almost crying out of urgency, if they continued eating, there would be none left, "Mom..."

The old lady patted her daughter, speaking indignantly, "Don't mind her, my girl. Let her eat until she gets diarrhea."

Lin Chuxia picked up another piece of braised pork, tut-tutting, "They say there's no beating the master chefs of state-owned restaurants, tender and flavorful, fat but not greasy, delicious. I would willingly make more trips to the toilet for such savory meat."

"Pfft..."

A suppressed laughter came from beside her, Lin Chuxia glanced at the big brother next to her, who had his head almost buried in his rice bowl, his shoulders shaking uncontrollably.

Chapter 84: This is Too Bullying

Liu Xiaohua watched as Lin Chuxia ate the last piece of braised pork and even burped contentedly, then suddenly broke down crying and ran away.

Aunt Liu's face turned dark with anger, but she was helpless and worried about her daughter, so she hurriedly chased after her.

The guy beside them shook his shoulders even more violently.

"If you want to laugh, just laugh openly. Your head is buried in the food bowl, aren't you uncomfortable?" Lin Chuxia tidied up the lunch box and put it back into the bag.

As soon as the mother and daughter left, the brother raised his head, his smile deepening the wrinkles at the corner of his eyes.

Seeing Lin Chuxia seemed embarrassed, "Big sister, I'm really not laughing at you."

"It's okay to laugh. After all, I'm also helpless facing people like that," Lin Chuxia shrugged.

The brother saw that Lin Chuxia was a straightforward person and became less restrained, "It's just that I've never encountered such people. Only you, big sister, if it were me, I really wouldn't know what to do."

"When you're away from home and can help, of course, you should lend a hand, but you also have to choose people. Like those two just now, they act as if everyone owes them something. Even if I gave them all the meat in my lunch box, they might not be grateful. Rather than making myself uncomfortable, I'd rather let them be miserable."

Lin Chuxia is not the type who burns herself to light up others; she's not that noble.

They say merchants value profit, but what she values more is the exchange of benefits. She absolutely won't do things that are thankless.

The brother chuckles again, "That's really true. I see that girl and you, big sister, are not much different in age..."

Clearly being of similar age, yet the aunt calls her a child. She herself plays the child, but she expects everyone to accommodate her?

The two then shifted the conversation. The brother's accent was from the Northwest, and hearing that Lin Chuxia was heading there to visit relatives, he warmly introduced the local customs of the Northwest.

After a while, the mother and daughter pairs came back. Seeing Lin Chuxia and the brother laughing and chatting, the old lady glared at Lin Chuxia.

This train arrives at the station around 8 p.m., and some people would eat some dry food towards the evening.

Lin Chuxia initially planned to have a good meal after getting off the train, but seeing the mother and daughter opposite taking out pancakes to nibble on, she took out a bag of meat buns from her space using the cover of her luggage.

The plump and white buns exuded a meaty aroma as soon as the bag was opened.

The brother, who got along with Lin Chuxia in the afternoon said with a smile, "You are really well prepared, and these were bought from the State-Owned Restaurant too."

Lin Chuxia handed two meat buns to the brother without answering his question, "I bought a lot, if you don't mind, brother, I can share them with you."

The brother did not prepare dinner, planning to eat after getting off the train, and was able to bear it until then. But now, smelling the meat buns, he felt hungry.

"Then I'll give you money," and he started to reach for his money.

"No need," Lin Chuxia insisted, stuffing the buns into the brother's hands.

Not for anything else, but to make the mother and daughter opposite envious. She dislikes seeing disdainful looks.

Sure enough, Liu Xiaohua saw the plump white meat buns given just like that by Lin Chuxia, but not to her. After all the sweet talk her mom said at noon, she didn't get even a piece of meat, and her eyes turned red with anger.

Aunt Liu also stared at the meat buns, grinding her teeth in anger.

Holding the two meat buns, the brother seemed to understand Lin Chuxia's intent and helplessly shook his head with a smile.

This girl, as forthright as she is stingy, but this temperament really suits his taste.

He bit into a meat bun, his eyes widening, "Hmm? Where did you buy these meat buns? They are really delicious. I've lived for more than thirty years, and this is the first time I'm eating such delicious meat buns."

Originally, he wanted to complement Lin Chuxia with two meat buns, but this bite, all his sentiments were heartfelt.

"Oh, I bought this bun while transferring buses at a bun shop. I heard that the owner specially went to Qin's Buns Shop in Ancheng County to learn the craft. Initially, I hadn't heard of Qin's Buns Shop. Only after the owner introduced it did I learn that an ancestor of Qin's used to be a chef at Prince Mansion. With this skill in making buns, even the Emperor wanted to take him to become the Imperial Chef," Lin Chuxia earnestly spun her tale.

Nowadays, people are poor, not to mention TVs, even semiconductors can't afford one per household. The most widespread form of advertising is still word of mouth.

Her advertising principle is not to disdain small acts of kindness.

Although separated by thousands of miles, what if these words had some small effect? Without TV or radio, people love to gossip.

Her brother nodded in agreement upon hearing this, "No wonder they're so delicious. I have my sister to thank for this, otherwise, I might never have tasted a bun made by the Imperial Chef of the Prince Mansion in my lifetime."

"Brother, I love hearing that, here, have two more."

"Two is enough to fill the gap. Keep the rest for yourself, sister," her brother said, somewhat embarrassed to accept more.

"No worries, I bought plenty..."

As the two were politely declining, an old woman across from them spoke, "If you bought so many, give us two as well. We didn't even ask for your braised pork at noon. Giving us two buns isn't too much to ask, right?"

The two who were hesitating, stopped and looked at the old woman.

The next moment, her brother took the buns from Lin Chuxia's hands, "Actually, two delicious meat buns like these are not quite satisfying. Four would just hit the spot."

Lin Chuxia smiled quite contentedly, "Perfect, I have four left, let's enjoy them slowly."

With a yell, Xiao Hua ran away again.

The old woman looked furious, glancing at Lin Chuxia, then at the man next to her.

Were these two ganging up just to infuriate others? This was really bullying too much.

Lin Chuxia alone was hard to argue with, and now with a man added to the mix, it was even harder to outtalk or outfight them. She could only stare helplessly, also worried about her daughter, she couldn't even dare to stare too long and hurriedly went to look for her daughter.

Watching the old woman's aggrieved back, Lin Chuxia let out a laugh, and the man beside her also started to laugh.

This blatant infuriating feeling wasn't too bad at all.

Until the train arrived at the station, the mother and daughter did not return, presumably really scared of Lin Chuxia.

Big brother was packing up his things, asking Lin Chuxia where she was heading. It was dark outside, and it wasn't safe for a girl alone. On account of the four meat buns, he felt obliged to offer help if possible.

Lin Chuxia declined big brother's kind offer. With her skills, she wasn't worried unless it was an extremely vicious fugitive. If such a criminal were encountered, having big brother with her would only be a burden.

She directly found a guesthouse near the train station to stay at.

After settling in her luggage, Lin Chuxia planned to ask the attendant about the public bus to Qin Yang's workplace the next day.

Just as she reached the lobby, she saw the mother and daughter talking to the attendant, evidently about something that made the attendant visibly impatient, who eventually shooed them away.

The mother and daughter didn't go far and just sat at the entrance of the guesthouse.

Lin Chuxia diverted her gaze and inquired from the attendant about the public buses tomorrow, the schedule and the time of the earliest bus.

The attendant was quite friendly to Lin Chuxia, sharing everything she knew.

Lin Chuxia thanked her and was about to head back to her room when she heard the old woman's voice behind her, "Hey, comrade lady..."

Chapter 85: Disrespect to One's Own IQ

Without being named directly, Lin Chuxia knew Old Lady Liu was calling her.

But so what? Did she have to pay attention just because she was called?

She went upstairs without turning her head.

Old Lady Liu hadn't expected to encounter Lin Chuxia here. After calling out twice and seeing the other party didn't hear her, she hurriedly took a few steps to catch up, only to be stopped by the receptionist at the front desk.

"You old woman, if you have no money to stay at the hotel, why are you forcing your way in? Let me tell you, this is not a place for you to throw a fit. Be careful, or I'll call the police and have you taken away to the station."

Old Lady Liu pointed urgently at Lin Chuxia going upstairs, "We know that girl, is she staying at your hotel? Let me go and talk to her. She can't occupy such a big room all by herself. It should be fine for us to squeeze in with her, right?"

The receptionist had already figured out Old Lady Liu's character. She had been arguing with her for a long time about staying without money, playing the pity card and being shameless.

Just now, Old Lady Liu had called that female comrade; at such a close distance, it was impossible not to hear her. When she was being ignored, how could she possibly let this old woman in?

"Whether you can share a room with her is not something I can decide, and I can't let you in. Who knows if you really know each other or not. If you did, why didn't you come together earlier? I have to be responsible for the personal safety of every guest staying here."

This delay caused Old Lady Liu to lose sight of Lin Chuxia, and in her anxiety, she tried to barge in, but the receptionist immediately called someone to drive Old Lady Liu out.

Old Lady Liu was undeterred, standing at the entrance of the guest house and yelling.

"Girl, for the sake of sharing a ride together, please be kind and let us mother and daughter stay with you for one night."

"Look how cold and dark it is outside. I, an old woman, won't be in the way. Xiao Hua is just a kid; she can't endure this hardship. You seem to be kind-hearted. If necessary, I can stand guard outside, and you can let Xiao Hua stay with you?"

"The incident on the train is not entirely our fault. People of poor status have short ambitions. Xiao Hua and I are both unfortunate souls. Seeing you, you seem to have good fortune and a kind heart, so please consider it a good deed."

When Liu Xiaohua saw Lin Chuxia appear, she also felt a moment of surprise, but now seeing her mother shouting for so long without anyone coming out, she opened her mouth anxiously, "Mother, stop shouting. She doesn't want to live with us, looks down on us, just like those people in the village who disdain us. If my brother were still alive, they wouldn't dare to treat us like this."

Mentioning her son, Old Lady Liu sighed deeply, "Your brother was also unfortunate. Your father traded his life for an opportunity, thinking it would bring us better days. Who knew that just after a couple of good years, he left us here. Had I known this would happen, I would have asked for more money when your father died."

Liu Xiaohua looked disgusted, "We should have given the opportunity to me in the first place. My brother was just a doomed soul; giving him the chance was a waste. Now, the opportunity is gone, and so is he. Are you satisfied now?"

Old Lady Liu felt bitter in her heart. She had one son and one daughter, and it was natural to favor the son who was given such a good opportunity since a daughter is like water poured out.

But who could have known...

Seeing her daughter discontented, she quickly comforted, "What's the use of talking about this now? You're the only kin I have left now. Once we get there, you must stand up for yourself. Money is secondary; if you have someone to rely on, won't you live a life of luxury without needing to look at others' faces?"

Liu Xiaohua was full of determination, "Mother, we must get an explanation this time. If my brother died here, they have to take responsibility for us, mother and daughter, for a lifetime. It's what they owe us."

Old Lady Liu's eyes also became firm, "You're right, that's what they owe us. As long as they continue to send us money on time and arrange a good match for you, we can let this go. Otherwise, it's not over. Even if we have to cling on here stubbornly, let's see what they can do."

"Mother, where did you put my new clothes? I need to wear them tomorrow."

"Yes, yes, you must wear the new clothes. Let them see how well our Xiao Hua has grown," Old Lady Liu looked around at the environment, stood up, and cursed loudly.

"You little cheap wench, with a black heart, is it just because you disdain my daughter and me? Let me tell you, don't look down on others, one day you'll regret it and won't be able to escape the consequences."

"If you let us in now, everything can still be amicably resolved; otherwise, even if you beg us, we wouldn't care..."

"Splash..."

Old Lady Liu didn't manage to finish her words when a basin of water was dumped on her head, drenching the yelling woman to the bone.

Xiao Hua, who was sitting beside her, couldn't escape either; the water poured onto Old Lady Liu and splashed all over her.

Xiao Hua jumped up with a shriek, "So cold..."

The already thin clothes were soaked through and clung to their bodies.

Old Lady Liu's clothes were dripping wet, and her hair stuck to her face.

A gust of north wind blew, and she shivered uncontrollably.

The people who were drenched stiffened for a moment but then quickly came to their senses, seeing their own and their daughter's appearances, their eyes almost shooting fire, cursing as they attempted to storm into the guesthouse.

The front desk staff had long wanted to teach Old Lady Liu a lesson; their establishment wasn't a state-owned guesthouse but a privately-operated, individually-run business.

Their shop was small and could only make a bit of money by providing better service than the state-run ones. Old Lady Liu's rabble outside had caused a drop in their guests, directly affecting their income.

Now that someone had taken it upon themselves to teach the two a lesson, how could they possibly allow Old Lady Liu to come in and make trouble?

Lin Chuxia, holding an empty basin, stood by the second-floor window and watched the commotion below for quite a while. In the end, Old Lady Liu and Xiao Hua still didn't manage to enter and reluctantly walked away shrunken with their luggage. Only then did Lin Chuxia withdraw her gaze.

She was not a cold-hearted person; in her previous life, when her business grew, she did a lot of charity work.

Having no children of her own, her heart was even softer.

But helping others should be conditional; for those who do not know gratitude, it is disrespectful to one's own intelligence to offer them more help.

With peace returning to her ears, she went to space to take a shower and then sorted out the things she was going to give to Qin Yang tomorrow.

She hadn't noticed when she bought them, but upon taking them out, she realized that there were quite a few items.

However, Lin Chuxia didn't mind.

For the first time in two lifetimes, someone had treated her with such importance, nearly cherishing her in the palm of his hand. This unfamiliar feeling was quite nice.

She was no young girl, not someone who would be moved by a bit of kindness to the point of giving everything, but she could repay his kindness in her own way.

After several days of unrest on the train, Lin Chuxia had a very solid night's sleep and didn't wake up until the sky was bright.

After washing up, she changed into a new set of clothes. It was a bit colder here in the Northwest than in Ancheng County, so she wore a black high-necked wool sweater she'd bought in a mall last time, paired with a red overcoat, black pants, and small leather shoes.

Chapter 86: Mr. Qin, Someone is Looking for You at the Door

In this era, her outfit was quite eye-catching, all trendy goods from the south.

But Lin Chuxia didn't care, earning money was of course for her own enjoyment, she couldn't always consider others' opinions and wrong herself.

She was here to give Qin Yang a surprise, and also hoped to leave a good impression on him.

Having packed up and finished breakfast, Lin Chuxia carried her suitcase, checked out of the room, and arrived at the bus station just in time to catch the bus heading towards Qin Yang's workplace.

There weren't many people on the bus, she found a window seat but didn't open the window, instead looking through the glass at the scenery along the way.

In her previous life, she had visited the Northwest, probably about 20 years later, to enjoy the tourist attractions there.

By then, the Northwest had already changed, becoming a travel destination for tourists eager to escape the hustle and bustle of the city.

Watching the sandy sunset, feeling the beauty of nature.

But now, the pervasive sand and the future were entirely different, with no smooth highways, no man-made forests to block the sand, the villages in ruins, and poverty and depression everywhere.

It was precisely because of this that the country was investing heavily in construction here.

To get rich, build roads first, this slogan was not just talk.

Meanwhile, Qin Yang had just finished a meeting, and as he returned to the office, he heard the distant sound of the postman's bell ringing.

Li Wei saw the postman and clapped him on the shoulder, "Let's go, see if there's any mail for us."

Qin Yang tightened his lips, but didn't move.

Ever since the last time he sent a letter to his wife, it had been a long time since he'd received a reply from her.

At first, when he saw the postman, he would excitedly run over, thinking that his wife must have replied to his letter. But after coming up empty-handed twice, he didn't really want to go anymore.

According to the timing, if his wife wanted to reply to the letter, she would have done so by now. Didn't she reply because she got angry when she saw his letter? Or was it because there were many men in the store, she had actually forgotten him?

Li Wei didn't know what this kid was fretting about, and with more force in his hands, he insisted, "Come on, let's go and check it out. I think I heard the postman call my name."

Last time he received a letter, this kid did not, and adding the time before that they were even.

If he received a letter again this time, and this kid still didn't, then he would have won this round.

Zhang Dawei watched the two bickering and asked with a chuckle, "Mr. Qin, Mr. Li, are you guys practicing wrestling?"

"Do you want to join in the wrestling?" Li Wei asked him.

Zhang Dawei shook his head and seeing the postman in the distance pointing to the canteen, he asked, "Do you want me to go ahead and save you some seats?"

Li Wei cursed him playfully, "I see you're getting cheekier and cheekier, you're asking for a beating," he dared to tease them and said, "Let's go, let's go and see."

Zhang Dawei was free anyway, so he simply went with them.

Li Wei received a letter and a package, grinning from ear to ear.

Qin Yang waited for a while, and after all the mail was distributed, he didn't receive any. With pursed lips, he remained silent, not saying a word.

Li Wei consoled him with a smile, "Hey, it's okay, your sister-in-law must be busy recently and hasn't had time to write to you. My wife does this often too. Wait until she has some free time, she might write you a letter a day. Then you'll be so annoyed you won't know what to do."

Qin Yang lazily rolled his eyes at him; he would never get annoyed at letters from his wife.

But thinking about it, this time of year was indeed busy with harvesting and planting wheat, plus the business, his wife might indeed be too busy to write.

The group of men walked back leisurely when suddenly someone from behind called out, "Mr. Qin, someone is looking for you at the gate."

Qin Yang turned his head, and the man was waving at him.

Li Wei patted him on the shoulder with a grin, "Who could be looking for you here? It's not your wife coming to visit, is it?"

Thinking of that possibility, Qin Yang's eyes lit up, but he still nodded at the two and restrained himself, "I'll go over and check first."

Li Wei signaled Zhang Dawei with a glint in his eye, "Let's go together."

The woman who could warm up a stone like Qin couldn't be missed.

Qin Yang took big strides, walking faster and faster, and by the time he approached the gate, he almost broke into a run.

"Mr. Qin, there's a woman outside looking for you," the man pointed outside and added.

Qin Yang expressed his thanks and, hearing the word "woman," joy that he could no longer suppress broke onto his normally stoic face, and he rushed out.

"Lin Chu..." Before he could finish saying "Chuxia," he saw a mother and daughter standing outside the door.

Both looked somewhat disheveled, especially the older woman, whose wrinkled clothes hung off her body, her graying hair blown into disarray by the wind, her complexion ghastly pale, looking as if she would collapse if not for the wooden stick in her hand. Without it, she would nearly fall to the ground.

The younger beside her wasn't much better off, but despite the creases, her clothes were eighty percent new. She was just finishing tidying her messy hair and tugging at her collar again.

Hearing Qin Yang's voice, she turned her head sharply, her face beaming with joy, "Brother Qin Yang."

Old Lady Liu also saw Qin Yang, her eyes reddened, and she stepped forward shakily, "Qin Family's boy, we finally found you. It's been so hard for us on this journey. You have to stand up for us orphans and widows," she said, tears beginning to flow.

Last night they were doused in water, in the biting cold of October in the Northwest, wearing wet clothes for a long time. They managed to find a place sheltered from the wind, hoping to change into clean clothes, only to find their luggage was also soaked, and the already few articles of clothing were drenched.

Having no choice, they took off their clothes, hugging each other for warmth. Before the dawn, they helped each other walk here. Along the way, they fell over countless times and swallowed much dust, finally reaching the place.

Qin Yang looked at the two in surprise, "Why have you come?"

"Why can't we come? This is where my son used to work, we can't come and see?" Old Lady Liu retorted.

Qin Yang frowned slightly, but still said, "Liu Tao is no longer here, unauthorized people are not allowed in the unit, but since you've come all this way, I will ask the leaders to see if they can make an exception for you."

Hearing about going to the leaders, Old Lady Liu stopped him, "No need to trouble the leaders, we just came to visit. Aren't you friends with Liu Tao? Just host us for a couple of days."

Liu Xiaohua looked at Qin Yang with sparkling eyes, "Yes, Brother Qin, mom and I will just stay with you."

Qin Yang's brows furrowed even deeper, "That's not very convenient, I'd better go find the leaders for you."

He turned to leave, but someone grabbed his arm.

Old Lady Liu's tears stopped, and with muddy eyes, she stared at Qin Yang, "What do you mean by this? You want to push us off onto the leaders and wash your hands of us? Have you forgotten how you promised us back then?"

"I've done what I promised you," said Qin Yang.

"You've done it? You haven't sent us any money for four months. Is this what you call done?"

Chapter 87: How did you find her?

Qin Yang glanced at Liu Xiaohua, "I originally agreed to take care of you until Liu Xiaohua came of age, and now that she has, I am no longer obligated to send you money."

Upon hearing Qin Yang genuinely refusing to send money, not just misunderstanding, Old Lady Liu immediately became anxious.

"You're talking nonsense; Xiao Hua hasn't found a husband yet, so she's not considered an adult. Until she's an adult, you have to send us money. If you don't want to give us money, then marry Xiao Hua, and once she's married, she'll be considered a grown-up."

Liu Xiaohua didn't expect her mother to bring this up so quickly, her face blushed red as she looked at Qin Yang, hoping he would agree.

But the man coldly uttered three merciless words, "Impossible."

Not to mention he already had a wife, even if he weren't married, he would never marry Liu Xiaohua.

Li Wei and Zhang Dawei, who had followed behind, found themselves bewildered by the discussion.

Li Wei nudged Zhang Dawei, "Go find someone from the union, Liu Tao's matter wasn't Mr. Qin's concern in the first place. Old Lady Liu is being unreasonable; it's better to let the union deal with it."

Zhang Dawei complied and ran off.

Meanwhile, the standoff continued here, and soon Zhang Dawei returned with Manager Xu from the union.

Both were out of breath, Xu Sijin approached the group with a smile.

"This old lady, I'm from the union. If you have any problems, talk to me, don't make things difficult for Mr. Qin."

Qin Yang saw Xu Sijin appearing by his side, his brow furrowed tightly, his lips pursed.

Li Wei glared at Zhang Dawei and asked in a low voice, "Why did you bring her here?"

Zhang Dawei looked confused, "I went to the union, and there were only a few people in the office. As soon as I mentioned it, Manager Xu came with me. What's wrong, isn't Manager Xu okay?"

Li Wei looked helplessly towards the sky, thinking why out of everyone in the office, it had to be Xu.

Seeing Qin Yang's embarrassment, Xu Sijin reassured him with a smile, "Mr. Qin, let me handle this, don't worry."

She knew this man was indifferent by nature and not good at dealing with such things, so when she heard Qin Yang was in trouble, she stopped others and came herself.

Qin Yang nodded, not rejecting it since this indeed should be handled by the union.

Old Lady Liu watched Xu Sijin warily, "Who are you? This is a matter between me and the Qin Family lad; it's none of your business."

Xu Sijin, having already discerned the essence of the two in front of her, especially the way Liu Xiaohua looked at Qin Yang, flashed a hint of scorn in her eyes but patiently explained again, "I am from the department union. We coordinate and resolve workers' issues; I heard you are also a worker's family member. If you have any problems or difficulties, you can talk to me."

"And you think just talking to you can solve them?" Old Lady Liu then scrutinized Xu Sijin.

Seeing her nod with a smile, apparently approachable, Old Lady Liu said, "That Qin lad originally agreed to send us 20 yuan each month for household expenses, but for the past few months, he hasn't sent anything. How can you just break your promises? He said he would provide until my Xiao Hua came of age, but without a husband, how is she of age? Daughter, isn't it true? Today we're here to get an explanation and the money owed to us."

Recalling the scene of her daughter being molested on the train made Old Lady Liu grind her teeth with anger.

If it weren't for Qin Yang cutting off their money, her daughter wouldn't have suffered that humiliation.

Liu Xiaohua wasn't as simple as her mother thought, seeing how tough this woman was, she spoke up, "We're not here just for Brother Qin's money; my mother and I also wanted to see Brother Qin."

She added to Old Lady Liu, "Mother, didn't you say you wanted to properly see the place where Brother used to work? I caught a cold last night and have a headache; I think we should settle down first. You can take a good look at Brother's company, and I can also recover for a few days."

While speaking, she desperately made signals with her eyes at Old Lady Liu, her intentions transparent, which even Xu Sijin could see through from her toes.

Then looking at Qin Yang's indifferent and indifferent face, Xu Sijin chuckled softly, "That would be inconvenient; this place is a work site, and there are many potential hazards. This is also why Liu Tao had his accident. Moreover, since Liu Tao is gone, even if you want to stay, there's no reason to."

"We can stay at Brother Qin's place," blurted Liu Xiaohua.

Xu Sijin shook her head, "His place is a men's dormitory, even less convenient."

"You say this and that are not convenient; there must be a way to solve it, right? My son died in your department, are you going to ignore us, a widow and an orphan?" seeing that softness wasn't working, Old Lady Liu simply started throwing a tantrum.

Xu Sijin thought for a moment, then turned to Qin Yang to discuss, "Mr. Qin, didn't we just issue salaries yesterday? Why don't you give them a little? Regardless of other matters, you had a good relationship with Liu Tao before, it's quite tough for the old lady and the sister to come all this way, surely you can't bear to let them go back empty-handed?"

Then she turned to Old Lady Liu and her daughter, "Old Lady, whether a person is an adult or not isn't determined by whether they are married; legally, anyone who reaches the age of eighteen is an adult. Even the marriage law allows anyone aged eighteen to get married. Today I'll make the decision; let Mr. Qin give you some traveling money, and you go back."

Qin Yang gave Xu Sijin a cold look, was this how a union worker was supposed to resolve issues?

Xu Sijin was doing it on purpose; she had heard that since Qin Yang got married, he had been very good to his wife, almost all his salary was sent back to his hometown for his wife to spend.

Whether a man is good to his wife or not, isn't it seen by whether he can provide her with a good life?

These days, there weren't a few men who spent money on their wives, but those who handed over their entire salary were indeed rare.

Regardless of why the old lady needed money, it was better to drain Qin Yang's salary for her and her daughter than for his wife.

"Impossible!"

"I disagree!"

Two voices spoke at once, Liu Xiaohua was not here just for the money, and what did it mean that they would still not give after this time?

"Since you can get a marriage certificate at eighteen, then Brother Qin can just go and get a marriage certificate with me. You promised to take care of us before; you can't just stop halfway. If I marry you, it will also fulfill my brother's wish."

Xu Sijin raised an eyebrow and smiled, "I'm afraid that's not possible, Mr. Qin is a married man; he can't get a marriage certificate with you."

"Brother Qin is married?" Liu Xiaohua's eyes widened in disbelief.

"Yes, he got married three or four months ago," Xu Sijin casually mentioned.

Old Lady Liu understood, "No wonder you stopped sending us money four months ago, it was because you got married."

"Brother Qin, now that you have a family, do you ignore the life and death of others?" Liu Xiaohua's eyes filled with resentment, "Is it your wife who looks down on us?"

Chapter 88: Even the Mute Could Curse in the Streets

Xu Sijin spread her hands, "I don't know about that, I believe Qin Yang has his reasons, he's not the kind who would break faith and abandon righteousness. Big Sister, please try to understand, everyone has a hard time getting by these days."

"It has nothing to do with my wife," Qin Yang assertively interrupted, "Manager Xu, I have no hidden troubles, I've fulfilled my promise and haven't wronged anyone. Please watch your language, and as for your solution, I don't agree with it."

Li Wei watched as things became more and more chaotic, stomping his feet in anxiety.

He caught a glimpse of Zhang Dawei who was still watching the commotion and with one raise of his leg gave him a kick, "Good for nothing and always spoiling things, look at the person you brought here."

Zhang Dawei blinked innocently, what did this have to do with him now?

At this moment, a languid voice came through, "Wow, quite lively here, I'm not interrupting, am I?"

The woman in the red coat, as fervent as the blazing sun.

Qin Yang saw the newcomer, his calm eyes suddenly lit up, "Lin Chuxia?!"

Lin Chuxia didn't expect to see Qin Yang right at the entrance to the workplace, and it looked like he was in some trouble.

Then she looked at the mother and daughter opposite, cheering on, it seemed like a fair bit of trouble.

She scanned each person present one by one, walking over to Qin Yang with small, determined steps, lifting her chin, "Have the creditors come to collect a debt?"

Hearing this, the joy Qin Yang felt at seeing his wife vanished in an instant, and he didn't know what to say out of embarrassment.

Old Lady Liu and Liu Xiaohua's eyes nearly popped out when they saw Lin Chuxia.

Especially Liu Xiaohua, who had been drenched the day before, even her luggage got wet, intending to meet Qin Yang with dignity and dazzle him; instead, she ended up looking like a beggar.

Otherwise, maybe Brother Qin wouldn't have rejected her.

Now looking at Lin Chuxia, in her attire, jealousy turned her eyes red.

Why can she afford to eat braised pork, pork buns, and wear such beautiful new clothes?

Xu Sijin narrowed her eyes at the newcomer, Qin Yang's reaction to the woman didn't escape her sight.

He had never called her by her name with that tone, and yet to say that this was his new bride, Xu Sijin was reluctant to believe it.

The girl in front of her was wearing a red coat, a delicate cashmere sweater beneath it, and the pants and leather shoes on her body...

Even she would have to spend several months' salary for such attire.

And look at the girl's fair skin, her delicate and pretty features, even her glance was filled with confidence and boldness.

Qin Yang's wife was supposed to be a rural woman.

"It's you," finally, Old Lady Liu broke the brief silence, "No wonder the Qin Family kid stopped sending us money, turns out he married such a wasteful woman like you, squandering all the money. It's good that you're here, give us the money, or we'll take your clothes as repayment for the debt."

Liu Xiaohua's eyes lit up, "Right, repay the debt with your clothes."

The words of the two made Qin Yang's expression turn cold immediately.

He pulled Lin Chuxia behind him, his handsome face grew chilling, his voice turning harsh, "I've said, this has nothing to do with my wife. Moreover, Liu Tao's death has already been compensated by the work unit, and if you think the compensation is too little, you can go directly to the leaders, or to court. Liu Tao modified the drawings privately, causing significant loss to the project, the fact that the work unit didn't ask for compensation and provided humanitarian aid is the extent of our benevolence. As for me, had you not held onto Liu Tao's ashes and prevented me from leaving, why would I have agreed to your unreasonable demands? Even so, I kept my promise, and now that the promise is fulfilled, I don't owe any of you anything."

He then addressed Xu Sijin, "Manager Xu, these two people should be dealt with by the union, and I truly cannot agree with your method of resolution, I also doubt your competency in handling this matter. I will report today's event to the union."

No one expected Qin Yang to say so much all at once, this was more than they had heard from Mr. Qin in a year besides work matters.

Li Wei couldn't help but click his tongue, "It must be the power of love," even a mute can scold on the streets when his wife is slandered?

Zhang Dawei was still staring at Lin Chuxia, "Mrs. Qin sure is pretty."

Li Wei turned his head and saw Zhang Dawei's gaze, raising his hand to flick him on the forehead, "Is Mrs. Qin someone you can look at like that? Be careful with your eyes."

Xu Sijin felt like she was tottering, whether it was the appearance of Lin Chuxia or the attitude of Qin Yang, it really hit her hard.

With a hint of grievance, she lowered her gaze, "I'm sorry, Mr. Qin, I just wanted to help you, I didn't expect..."

She gave a bitter smile, then turned to Old Lady Liu and said, "Since Mr. Qin has said it's got nothing to do with his wife, then it has nothing to do with her. Old Lady, what do you think about this, I'll give you 20 yuan first to help out with the emergency."

Old Lady Liu had also realized by now that Qin Yang was not so easy to manipulate, initially counting on the fact they were in their village and he was an outsider with no other choice.

Now that they were on their turf, there was no way they could get the better of them.

She was also clear about her son's situation, otherwise, she wouldn't have refused to find a leader.

As for her daughter's marriage...

That woman was not easy to provoke; they couldn't afford to mess with her.

Hearing Xu Sijin say this, Old Lady Liu asked, "Will you give us 20 yuan every month?" Originally, Qin Yang gave them 20 yuan monthly, which was enough for the mother and daughter to spend.

Xu Sijin's face stiffened: "...Old Lady, my salary is only a bit over thirty."

"Miss, I know you're not like them, you're clearly a kind-hearted person..."

Lin Chuxia was already being pulled by Qin Yang towards the residential area of the unit, with the conversation between Old Lady Liu and Xu Sijin happening behind her.

She turned to glance back at Xu Sijin, a hint of mockery flashing through her eyes.

Trying to be a good person without seeing what kind of character the other person is, tangled up by Old Lady Liu and her daughter, it would probably be hard to get free.

But that woman wanted to step over Qin Yang to be a good person; she didn't sympathize with her one bit.

Her suitcase was taken over by the man. Looking up, she saw him looking at her with a smile in his eyes, completely different from the cold and grim reaper-like demeanor he had earlier.

She was about to say something when a voice came, "Mr. Qin, sister-in-law..."

Zhang Dawei greeted them with a silly grin on his face.

Li Wei also nodded towards the two.

"Is this your colleague?"

Qin Yang nodded and introduced the two men to her, "This is Li Wei, and this is Zhang Dawei. Li Wei is older than me."

Lin Chuxia greeted them graciously, "Brother Li, Da Wei, hello. I'm Lin Chuxia, Qin Yang's wife."

"Long heard that Qin Yang married a beautiful and capable wife," Li Wei said as soon as he saw Lin Chuxia, understanding why the ice could melt.

After all, as men, who could hold up against such a woman?

"Sister-in-law, welcome to our unit."

Hearing their familiar tone, she knew these were colleagues Qin Yang was close with.

Lin Chuxia exchanged a few pleasantries with them, and Li Wei tactfully took Zhang Dawei away.

Qin Yang then looked at her with a smile and asked, "Why didn't you let me know in advance that you were coming, so I could go to the train station to pick you up?"

Chapter 89: Qin Yang Doesn't Want Her to Feel Wronged

"I was hoping to surprise you," but who knew I would run into this kind of situation here, and it almost turned into a scare.

Qin Yang also thought of the mother and daughter, "Do you know them?"

"I met them on the train before, they asked me for braised pork but I didn't give it to them, so they held a grudge against me. Last night, they wanted to share a room with me, and when I refused, they cursed that I was looking down on them and told me I'd regret it. I was really puzzled, it was our first meeting and somehow it felt like I owed them something. Turns out it's not just me, seems like everyone owes them."

Lin Chuxia said it casually, but a hint of coldness flashed through Qin Yang's eyes.

No wonder Liu Xiaohua showed such hostility toward her daughter-in-law when she saw her.

The two walked side by side, and Lin Chuxia asked him, "How did you manage to get entangled with these two people?"

Earlier, when she saw the two confronting Qin Yang, she planned to step up and scold them herself, Qin Yang's temperament isn't a match for those two scoundrels.

But she hadn't expected that he would protect her behind him the very first moment.

Even though she didn't need others to stand up for her, the feeling of being protected was genuinely heartwarming.

In her previous life, whether at home or outside, she was always the one pushed forward whenever there was a problem; no one cared if she could handle it or if she would be wronged.

It was clear that Qin Yang didn't want her to feel wronged.

Seeing Qin Yang blush as she looked at him with bright eyes, he wasn't sure if it was out of embarrassment or something else.

He repeated the incident involving Liu Tao to her again.

"Their village is remote, Old Lady Liu called many villagers over, and there were also other villagers who came to watch the excitement. If I didn't agree to give them 20 RMB a month, I would have been stuck in that village."

So to speak, poverty brings out the worst in people.

It was truly a situation where no reason could prevail.

"It's also fortunate that Liu Xiaohua was still young back then, if it were now, they might have forced you to become their son-in-law," it's clear what Liu Xiaohua is thinking.

Listening to her, Qin Yang stumbled and nearly fell.

Almost gritting his teeth, "Lin Chuxia, if I became their son-in-law, you would be without a man."

This woman, how could she say such things so indifferently?

Lin Chuxia looked up at the sky, the ground, and around, but did not look at Qin Yang, "Is your workplace large, do you stay in the dormitory? Would it be inconvenient if I came over? Maybe I should stay in a guesthouse tonight..."

"No need."

At this moment, Qin Yang was half a step behind Lin Chuxia, looking at the delicate and charming little woman with tender affection.

She looked even prettier than before, the clothes suited her well, like a little sun.

How could he possibly let his cherished wife-to-be stay in a guesthouse?

"Hmm?" Lin Chuxia turned to look at him.

Qin Yang pointed to a row of buildings ahead, "That way is the dormitory, I live alone."

Their dormitory was not in the same area as that of the workers, but it wasn't far from the family quarters.

It was working hours now, and the entire dormitory block was very quiet, occasionally with the sound of children playing from the other side.

Qin Yang took out his keys and opened a room further inside, "Come in, the conditions here are a bit poor."

Lin Chuxia walked in while looking around the room, about twenty square meters in size, there was a desk by the window, a bed, and a wardrobe inside.

The room was very clean, the bedding on the bed neatly arranged, and there was a faint scent of mint in the entire room, the same as the smell on Qin Yang.

"I've put your suitcase over here," Qin Yang's voice came.

Lin Chuxia waved her hand, "Bring it here."

Qin Yang thought she was going to take out daily necessities, but then he watched her open the suitcase and hand him a small box.

"Open it and see if you like it."

Qin Yang took the box with a puzzled look and opened it. Inside was a men's watch with a black dial and a silver metal strap, emitting a low-key, restrained luster.

"Is this..." for him?

Lin Chuxia smiled, stood up, took the watch out of the box, removed his old watch, and personally put on the new one.

Her taste really suited him.

"Qin Yang, happy birthday!"

She looked at him with a smile, her eyes shining.

Only then did Qin Yang realize that today was his twenty-sixth birthday.

"Did you come here just to celebrate my birthday?"

"Yeah, I said I wanted to give you a surprise. Do you like it?"

Qin Yang looked at the watch on his wrist, then at the same model on Lin Chuxia's wrist, and then back at her smiling face. He nodded firmly, "I like it, thank you Lin Chuxia, I forgot my birthday, this is my favorite birthday gift."

"Glad you like it, oh, and I bought you clothes."

Lin Chuxia took out the items from the suitcase, "This is a sweater, I see it's even colder here than in An City, you need to keep warm. This is a shirt, and this coat, try them to see if they fit..."

As she continued to take items out, suddenly a hand with distinct joints grasped her wrist, and Qin Yang looked at her with a moved expression.

This silly boy, really easy to satisfy.

"Moved, huh?" she asked with a smile.

Qin Yang watched her throat move, of course moved, and he wanted even more... to kiss her.

Lin Chuxia saw his eyes deepening, knowing what he wanted, a smile on her lips, waiting for him to make a move.

His throat moved again, looking at those smiling eyes and slightly parted red lips, Qin Yang's breathing grew heavier, and he slowly lowered his head...

"Knock knock knock... Knock knock knock..."

There was a knock at the door, along with Zhang Dawei's voice, "Mr. Qin, Mr. Qin are you there? Minister Wang asked you to come over, Mr. Qin? Mr. Qin..."

Qin Yang paused, wanting to muster the courage to kiss her, but ultimately defeated by the repeated shouting.

Irritated, he raked his fingers through his hair and turned his head annoyed, replying, "I know."

Turning back, his gaze still slightly awkward, "You, wait here for me for a bit, it's probably about what just happened, I'll be right back."

Lin Chuxia nodded with a smile, seeing his frustrated look, like a child who almost had candy but couldn't taste it.

Before he turned around, she reached out first, clutching the back of his head, pulled him down, and tiptoed to kiss him.

His lips were slightly cool, with a hint of mint, feeling nice.

"I know, don't worry, I'm waiting for you."

The words, almost whispered lip to lip, finished with another kiss before letting him go.

Qin Yang stood there dumbfounded, staring at her, and after a moment, he regained his composure, lightly touched his lips with his hand, his eyes tinged with a smile, "Okay."

Lin Chuxia watched him awkwardly move out of the dorm, her lips curving up again.

Such a silly boy.

After Qin Yang left, Lin Chuxia opened the only cabinet in the room, which was empty except for a few work clothes and several worn undergarments.

Just as she was about to tidy the newly bought clothes inside, there was a knock at the door again...

Chapter 90: Incomparable

At the door, a woman in her thirties was leading a six or seven-year-old little girl, holding a handful of green beans in her hand.

Seeing Lin Chuxia, she smiled and greeted her, "You must be Mr. Qin's family, right?"

"Hello, you are...?"

"I'm Sister-in-law Feng, Feng Dajun, from the Second Engineering Division's family. We live just over there. I saw Mr. Qin coming with a female comrade earlier, so I knew it must be his family arriving. You two really make a handsome couple. I figured you just got here and probably haven't prepared any vegetables, so I brought you some green beans. They're homegrown in our yard, just take them if you don't mind."

The woman was quite enthusiastic, and Lin Chuxia glanced at the beans she held, but they didn't look like they were freshly picked.

They've gone to seed, must have been sitting for at least two days.

Lin Chuxia, being new to the area, didn't know anyone aside from Li Wei and Zhang Da Wei whom Qin Yang had introduced, let alone the relationship between Qin Yang and Feng Dajun, so she smiled and tactfully declined.

"Thank you, Sister-in-law, but you see, we don't have anything in our dormitory and can't cook, so giving me the vegetables would really be a waste."

She subtly stepped aside, merely to illustrate her point, but to her surprise, Sister-in-law Feng's child broke free and ran straight into the house.

"Mom, Uncle Qin's house is so clean. Look at these clothes, they're so pretty. Uncle Qin's family has a lot of beautiful clothes."

She pointed to the new clothes lying on the bed and the red windbreaker Lin Chuxia had taken off and placed beside it.

Sister-in-law Feng, looking a bit embarrassed, smiled at Lin Chuxia apologetically and quickly went to pull her child away.

"How can you be so ill-mannered? Mr. Qin is a proper university graduate and very capable at work. What's so surprising about having a few nice articles of clothing? Your Aunt Qin clearly works an office job; of course, it's different from our house. Our family has to toil in the soil to survive. Your father managing to work and bring us out here is thanks to our ancestors' blessings. Don't touch anything recklessly; if you dirty something, we can't even afford to compensate."

If it weren't for Sister-in-law Feng's stern expression, truly scolding the child, Lin Chuxia would have thought she was being sarcastic.

"Sister-in-law, it's not that serious," Lin Chuxia, for the first time in two lifetimes, didn't know what to say to such an encounter, embarrassed.

Sister-in-law Feng waved her hand dismissively, "No, the child needs to be taught from a young age. If she's not taught well now, what will become of her when she grows up?"

"Maybe you should take her back with you and teach her?" Lin Chuxia suggested directly.

She might not have raised children herself, but she knew that it wasn't nice to berate a child like that in front of others.

Sister-in-law Feng paused, then awkwardly chuckled, "That works too. I won't bother you anymore. We live right over there, second row, third house. When you're free, come over and visit."

"Okay," Lin Chuxia agreed and then saw her to the door.

Watching Sister-in-law Feng come with a handful of beans and leave with the same, Chuxia really couldn't fathom what she was thinking.

From a distance, she could still hear Sister-in-law Feng lecturing her daughter.

"How many times have I told you to behave outside? What kind of people are they, and what kind of people are we? Living under the same roof as them is already a blessing for us. How could you be fit to touch their things? Remember this, you're from a rural area, not comparable to those city folks..."

Lin Chuxia: "..."

She didn't want to meddle in other family's affairs and went back inside to continue unpacking.

Meanwhile, in Minister Wang's office.

"Minister, did you want to see me?"

Qin Yang glanced around the office; besides Minister Wang, there was also the Party Branch Secretary, Xu Qiang.

Minister Wang pointed to a seat, "Sit down, let's talk."

He poured a glass of water for Qin Yang, "I heard Liu Tao's family came looking for you. It's been two years since that incident; why are they coming to you again? I also heard something about twenty dollars. What's that all about?"

Qin Yang nodded, "It was an oversight on my part. When I was bringing Liu Tao's ashes back to their hometown, his mother couldn't accept his death. She called the town's elders to demand justice, or else they wouldn't let me leave. Ultimately, I had no choice but to agree to send her twenty dollars a month

until her youngest daughter came of age. Recently, I stopped sending money when her daughter's age came up, but they came looking for me again."

"Nonsense, how could such an important matter not be reported to the department?" Minister Wang slammed down his glass, "Liu Tao's death was his own fault. He caused a major accident, and although it brought direct economic losses to the state, we didn't pursue his responsibility, and the deceased are like extinguished lamps. Moreover, the unit even provided some humanitarian compensation. They're being unreasonable."

He certainly wasn't blaming Qin Yang; Qin Yang was someone he had mentored, and he knew his character well.

Rough mountainous terrain can often breed stubborn people, and Qin Yang, going to Liu Tao's hometown alone, would really not have been able to leave if the villagers had insisted on keeping him.

"This was an oversight on the part of our department too. We should have had the union assist you at the time."

Qin Yang hummed in agreement, "I was just about to bring this up to you. Today, when Liu's mother and daughter came to the unit, Manager Xu from the union was sent to handle it, yet he asked me to be understanding of Liu's family's difficulties and to give them more money. The union is supposed to be the backbone for us workers, but resolving the issue this way is quite disheartening. I don't know if this was Manager Xu's individual thought, or the union's stance. I had planned to ask the union about this, but then you called for me first."

Secretary Xu coughed lightly upon hearing Qin Yang's words, "Mr. Qin misunderstood. Manager Xu is just young and inexperienced in handling emergent situations. I found out about the issue too, and that's why I came to see Minister Wang right away. I hope Mr. Qin can understand the young comrades and give them more opportunities to grow."

Qin Yang glanced at Secretary Xu, suspecting that Manager Xu's brazen conduct was probably because she knew her father would handle any fallout.

"I can provide them with opportunities to learn, but has Secretary Xu considered the consequences of handling the issue this way? Our unit was in no way at fault, but now that Liu's family has come to us

and the union has capitulated, what does that signify? How will it look to the other staff? Is Secretary Xu intending to use the department's reputation and credibility as a training ground for your daughter?"

At that last accusation, even Xu Qiang's expression shifted slightly.

A heavy accusation like that wouldn't just affect his daughter; he too would face disciplinary action.

"Mr. Qin, that's a serious accusation."

Qin Yang's expression darkened slightly, not even sparing Xu Qiang a glance, indicating he wasn't just speaking offhand.

Xu Qiang looked helplessly at Minister Wang, who had no choice but to intervene.

"I'll take note of this. I'll discuss it with the union, and about the money you've sent to the Liu family these past two years, we'll sort that out for you too. But let me repeat, any future issues should be communicated with the department."

Qin Yang's expression relaxed slightly, "I understand."

"I hear your wife has come to see you; do you need a few days off? Though there's nothing but sand here and no scenic spots, it's rare for newlyweds like you to be together; it's important to spend time with your wife."