

The Billion-Value Lands Are Just For Farming #Chapter 461 - Read The Billion-Value Lands Are Just For Farming Chapter 461

Chapter 461 - The Village Chief Is Sick

The two fools had counterfeit driver's licenses, their cars were illegally modified, they were speeding, and they crashed into Su Ming's vehicle. It was clear that they would have to compensate and face administrative detention.

Once the insurance company assessed the damage and estimated the repair costs for Su Ming's car, he provided his contact information and headed home. Arriving at his house, Su Ming discovered the door was locked, and his parents were nowhere to be found. While he pondered their absence, an elderly man approached, leaning on a cane but looking quite spry. He greeted Su with a warm smile: "Su, you've returned."

Recognizing the man, Su Ming quickly exited his car and greeted him, "Third Grandpa, you're still the picture of health."

"I'm old," Third Grandpa replied, shaking his head with a chuckle. "Your parents probably went to the hospital. The village chief has fallen ill and has been admitted."

"The village chief is ill?" Su Ming was taken aback and immediately inquired, "What's wrong with him? Is it serious?"

The village chief was well-regarded in the community for his numerous contributions, including helping many impoverished families prosper. When Su Ming's family faced financial difficulties, the village chief had helped Su Tao secure several jobs, greatly aiding their situation. Su Ming remembered the village chief appearing quite robust during his last visit; it was surprising to hear of his sudden illness.

"I'm not sure what's wrong with him. He was helping Third Brother sell piglets this morning, and after lunch at home, he couldn't move," Third Grandpa explained. "The ambulance has just left, and your parents, along with many from the village, have gone to the hospital."

Third Grandpa sighed deeply. Su Ming, concerned, quickly said, "Third Grandpa, please take care of yourself. I need to go check on the village chief at the hospital."

"Alright, but drive safely and take it slow," Third Grandpa advised.

"I will, Third Grandpa," Su Ming assured him before getting back into his car and heading straight for the hospital.

Upon reaching the No.1 People's Hospital, Su Ming found the parking lot overflowing with vehicles, ranging from cars and tractors to even horse-drawn carriages. But at that moment, his mind was solely focused on the well-being of the village chief.

He quickly scanned the parking lot, found a spot across from the hospital, and made a beeline for the entrance.

On his way there, Su Ming had already called his parents to get the ward's location. Upon arrival, he confirmed the directions with a nurse and hurried off.

Reaching the third floor, he found the corridor bustling with villagers, all wearing looks of concern. It was clear that the village chief's condition was serious.

Outside the ward, a few people stood vigil. Among them were the village chief's wife, Lee Xiuhua, and his son and daughter-in-law, peers of Su Ming's parents. Their deeply furrowed brows spoke volumes of their distress.

Also present was a young woman in her twenties, strikingly familiar to Su Ming. After a moment's reflection, he recognized her as the village chief's granddaughter.

In his younger days, Su Ming was often shadowed by two companions, Su Qiu and this girl. They would play together incessantly until high school, when their paths diverged.

He was taken aback by how much she had blossomed over the years. Standing at 1.72 meters with a slender waist and long, straight legs, she was a stark contrast to the sun-kissed tomboy he remembered. Her skin was now fair and delicate.

Yet, amidst her beauty, she was quietly weeping. Her eyes, swollen and red, betrayed her anguish. Her grandfather had been fine in the morning, but after an afternoon nap, he was suddenly immobile.

The family had rushed him to the hospital, and while they awaited test results, the doctor had cautioned them to brace for the worst.

Standing slightly apart from the grieving family was an out-of-place figure—a man in his twenties, exuding affluence. In stark contrast to the somber faces around him, he wore a faint smile and seemed out of place among the villagers. Who was he?

His gaze lingered on Zhang Qianqian, never straying from her, his intentions as clear as his unabashed stare.

Just then, a door in the adjacent department swung open, and an elderly doctor in a white coat and glasses emerged, a furrowed brow accompanying the lab report in his hand.

As the doctor emerged, everyone in the corridor fixed their gaze on him. Lee Xiuhua quickly approached and inquired, "Dr. Liu, what's wrong with Zhang? Can you treat him?"

The tension among the villagers was palpable; they scarcely dared to breathe too loudly.

Dr. Liu let out a sigh, shaking his head. "Zhang's condition is not easily treatable."

"Dr. Liu, please, you have to save him!" Lee Xiuhua pleaded, nearly falling to her knees.

"There's still hope for his recovery," Dr. Liu reassured her, "but it won't be cheap."

He explained, "Zhang has a brain tumor. Thankfully, it's benign and can be removed surgically. However, the tumor is located near his cerebellum, surrounded by numerous blood vessels and nerves. A single misstep in surgery could leave Zhang paralyzed or worse. Unfortunately, our hospital isn't equipped to perform such an operation."

"Then we'll transfer my father to a hospital in the capital. I'll pay whatever it takes to get him the treatment he needs," Zhang Tao interjected anxiously, revealing his identity as the son of Village Chief Zhang.

"Zhang, I get where you're coming from, but I don't want to dampen your spirits," Dr. Liu cautioned. "There are few surgeons in the country qualified for this procedure. A craniotomy is expensive, costing at least four to five hundred thousand yuan, and with postoperative care, you're looking at a total of one million yuan."

Zhang Tao realized the gravity of the situation. Despite his father's role as village chief, the family hadn't amassed much wealth, often giving money to help others. Gathering one million yuan seemed daunting; two to three hundred thousand was already pushing his limits.

"Don't lose hope, Zhang. The villagers will help raise the funds," someone assured him.

"Absolutely. Village Chief Zhang has done so much for us; it's time we returned the favor," another added.

"Chen, you're familiar with everyone here. Go count how many can contribute. We'll organize a fundraiser," the villagers suggested, rallying together.

"Thank you all so much," Zhang Tao expressed his gratitude, though he was acutely aware of the villagers' financial struggles, with their own burdens like funding their children's education or weddings.

Dr. Liu gestured for silence, indicating that everyone should hold their comments. "Let's all settle down," he said. "We can certainly figure out a solution to the fundraising issue,

but the real challenge is the scarcity of surgeons in the country qualified to perform this procedure. The few who can are already booked solid. Zhang's condition is critical, and he needs surgery immediately.”

Chapter 462 - This Is a Robbery!!

Everyone was stunned.

Many sighed and shook their heads in resignation.

Raising the funds for the surgery seemed possible, given the hundreds of households in the village. With enough people contributing, they could surely pool together sufficient funds to lend a hand. However, they were at a loss when it came to finding a doctor.

They were simple villagers, accustomed to seeking medical care at the county hospital. A city hospital was already a challenge for them to navigate, much less a prestigious institution in the capital.

“Ouch!”

In the midst of their worry, a jarring voice cut through the silence.

The young man who had been watching Zhang Qianqian closely spoke up, “Coincidentally, I have some friends in the capital who could get in touch with a surgeon.”

“Really?”

Upon hearing this, Lee Xiuhua's spirits lifted. “Mr. Ning, please, we need your assistance. We're prepared to offer generous gifts to both you and the doctor.”

“Aunt Lee, there's no need for such formalities! We're old acquaintances, after all. Why talk of money? Besides, to be frank, they might not even be interested in the amount you're offering.”

He offered a slight smile.

“How can you speak like that? Show some respect!”

Zhang Tao bristled at the comment. What did he mean by that? Was he belittling the common folk?

“Quiet!”

Lee Xiuhua shot her son a stern look, then quickly turned back to Ning Zhiyuan with a placating smile. "Mr. Ning, my son is just concerned for his father's life. Please, don't take offense."

"Aunt Lee, rest assured, I'm not upset. But you understand that seeking someone's help comes with a cost, right?"

Ning Zhiyuan hinted at an underlying condition.

"Yes, of course! Mr. Ning, you're absolutely right. I understand. What is it that you require?" Lee Xiuhua asked anxiously.

To her, any price was worth paying if it meant saving her husband's life.

"Aunt Lee, since you're so forthcoming, I'll be straightforward. I'm interested in the plot of land at the village entrance."

Ning Zhiyuan stated calmly.

Upon hearing this, Lee Xiuhua's face fell, and she was visibly distressed. The land at the village entrance was a sizable vacant lot owned by Village Chief Zhang.

Village Chief Zhang had purchased the land when he was younger, intending to build greenhouses and grow crops. But after becoming the village chief, he found no time to realize his plans, and the land remained undeveloped and unused.

Certainly, he hadn't let that plot of land go to waste.

Village Chief Zhang had leased out those several dozen acres. Come autumn, when the harvest was gathered, that land transformed into the village's granary, with villagers spreading their crops to dry in the sun.

A year prior, Ning Zhiyuan arrived in the village expressing his desire to purchase the land to construct a fertilizer factory.

Initially, Village Chief Zhang was quite pleased with the idea. He figured that building a factory would create jobs, and the villagers could certainly find employment there. This would allow the villagers to both tend to their farms and hold down a part-time job, surely boosting their income. Additionally, the establishment of a factory would undoubtedly stimulate local economic growth. It seemed like a win-win situation.

But upon closer investigation, Village Chief Zhang discovered that Ning Zhiyuan had bought land for fertilizer factories in other villages as well.

Far from benefiting those communities, he had actually caused them considerable distress. This was because Ning Zhiyuan hired his workers from the city, leaving the

villagers out of the equation. The most significant issue was the severe water pollution he brought to the villages. He hadn't invested in any pollution control equipment, allowing untreated wastewater to flow directly into the nearby rivers.

The contract was nearly finalized when Village Chief Zhang promptly refused to sign.

Ning Zhiyuan, incensed, quarreled with him and stormed off.

Over the past two or three years, he periodically returned, employing various tactics to persuade Village Chief Zhang. Yet, the village chief remained steadfast in his refusal to sign.

Now, Village Chief Zhang lay bedridden, his life hanging by a thread.

Seizing the moment, Ning Zhiyuan brought up the contract once more, leaving Lee Xiuhua torn and uncertain about the right course of action.

"Aunt Lee, Village Chief Zhang's condition is quite serious. Even if he were to go to the capital and the surgery were successful, he would need several years to recuperate and regain his strength. If he can't undergo the operation, I fear he won't survive much longer," Ning Zhiyuan pressed.

"Once he passes, the land will revert to the state. I can simply purchase it from the town government. If I build my factory there, none of you can stop me. But by then, Village Chief Zhang will have passed away. You'll end up with nothing, and you won't have saved Village Chief Zhang's life either."

"Why not sell the land to me now? I'll offer you more money, which will cover your surgery costs. Plus, I can reach out to the doctors in the capital, and we could save Village Chief Zhang's life. It's a win-win situation," Ning Zhiyuan said with a confident smile.

Lee Xiuhua was torn.

She had spent a lifetime with Village Chief Zhang and knew her husband's temperament well.

If she sold the land, once Village Chief Zhang recovered from surgery and learned of the sale, the shock might be too much for him.

Zhang Tao stood by, teeth clenched, facing a dire choice. He could lose everything—his father, the money, and the land—or he could sell the land, scrape together some funds, and get a doctor from the capital. Maybe that would save his father's life, but at the risk of his father's wrath once he awoke.

What was the right move?

"Sell!" After much hesitation, Lee Xiuhua finally mustered the resolve and forced out the word.

"Haha! Aunt Lee, you certainly know how to make things happen. I've got the contract right here. Just sign it, and I'll transfer the money immediately and get you in touch with the doctor," Ning Zhiyuan said, pulling out the contract. Lee Xiuhua and her son exchanged a look, and with no other options, prepared to sign.

"Hold on!"

Just then, Su Ming stepped forward.

Lee Sumei was taken aback upon seeing him, thinking, "When did this kid show up? I didn't even notice him."

"Do you have a solution?" Su Tao asked, hope in his voice.

They all knew their son had come into money and had shown himself to be resourceful. Su Ming had demonstrated his capabilities when his uncle was in the hospital, an event the couple remembered vividly.

"Don't worry, Mom and Dad. I've got this," Su Ming reassured them. Approaching Lee Xiuhua, he continued, "Grandma Lee, rest assured, I have a way to treat Village Chief Zhang's illness. Here's what we'll do: I'll cover the medical expenses and arrange for the surgery with the top doctors in the capital."

Lee Xiuhua paused for a moment, lifting her tear-filled eyes to look at Su Ming. "Are you the son of the Su family?"

"Yes, it's me, Grandma Lee," Su Ming replied with a smile.

"Oh my! How you've grown!"

In a display of affection typical between elders and the younger generation, Zhang Tao playfully punched Su Ming on the arm, careful not to use too much force.

"Brother Ming!"

Zhang Qianqian, momentarily taken aback, suddenly brightened and impulsively hugged Su Ming.

Despite the years apart, their childhood bond remained as innocent and strong as ever.

Their friendship hadn't faded in the slightest over the years. "Qianqian!"

Zhang Tao, feeling a bit awkward, fidgeted and rubbed his nose.

His daughter was no longer a child, and there she was, embracing Su Ming in front of everyone. It seemed somewhat inappropriate.

Chapter 463 - Humiliation

Lee Xiuhua asked in a rush, "Su, do you really have a way to cure my husband's illness?"

Su Ming quickly reassured her, "Grandma Lee, please don't worry. Our family used to struggle, and Grandpa Zhang helped us immensely. Now, I've established a business in the city and have earned some money. You shouldn't stress about the surgery costs; I'll cover them. Moreover, through my business dealings, I've made a few connections in Beijing. I'm confident we can handle this."

Overwhelmed with gratitude, Lee Xiuhua struggled to find the right words to thank Su Ming.

Su Ming added, "Grandma Lee, we're all from the same village. It's our duty to support each other."

While they were enjoying their conversation, Ning Zhiyuan was visibly upset.

Contract in his left hand and pen in his right, he watched as the deal he was about to close was thwarted by an unexpected intervention.

Curiosity piqued, Ning Zhiyuan wondered about Su Ming's identity.

Judging from their conversation, Su Ming seemed to be a fellow villager, yet Ning Zhiyuan had never encountered him before.

He didn't consider Su Ming to be a particularly influential figure.

His own family business was substantial, and he was acquainted with many influential people, but Su Ming's name had never come up.

To Ning Zhiyuan, Su Ming might just be a minor player who had made a few million yuan. In his eyes, such individuals were insignificant.

He had invested two to three years in pursuing this land deal, and he couldn't afford to let this rare opportunity slip away.

The land in question was crucial.

Other villages had limited available land, typically plots of just over a dozen acres.

But Village Chief Zhang had a sizable parcel of dozens of acres, and Ning Zhiyuan planned to build a large-scale factory there.

With a furrowed brow, Ning Zhiyuan coldly addressed Su Ming, "Brother, what you're doing isn't right. It's one thing to boast casually, but this involves Village Chief Zhang's life. Why are you exaggerating your influence? Doctors in the capital aren't so easily accessible. Don't jeopardize Village Chief Zhang's health."

Zhang Tao, with a stern face, demanded, "What exactly are you implying?"

Ning Zhiyuan feigned omniscience, confidently asserting, "What? You still don't get it? He simply doesn't want you selling the land to me, then finding some random doctors from the capital to perform surgery on Village Chief Zhang. The surgery comes with risks, and failure wouldn't be unusual. Once he's covered the surgery costs, you'll owe him, and if he decides he wants to buy the land later, how could you refuse? Don't kid yourself into thinking you can deceive others just because you've made a little money. You might fool some, but not me. Grandma Lee, rest assured, with me here, this youngster won't pull the wool over your eyes."

Zhang Qianqian was quick to counter Ning Zhiyuan's accusations, "That's absurd! Brother Ming would never stoop to such levels!"

Lee Xiuhua and Zhang Tao were skeptical of Ning Zhiyuan's claims. Having watched Su Ming grow up, they knew him to be honest from a young age. Could he really harbor such malevolent intentions?

It was clear to everyone that Ning Zhiyuan was maligning Su Ming just to get his hands on that land.

"I know you're doubtful of me, but Village Chief Zhang's condition is critical, and we can't postpone his surgery any longer," Ning Zhiyuan continued with assurance. "Grandma Lee, let me propose something. I'll cover the surgery costs, and I'll call the doctor right now to schedule Uncle Zhang's operation. If I manage to arrange it, then you agree to sell the land to me, deal?"

Lee Xiuhua wavered upon hearing this. Given Village Chief Zhang's grave health, prompt surgery could mean a quicker recovery.

Su Ming noticed Lee Xiuhua's indecision and offered a reassuring smile. "Grandma Lee, don't worry. Regardless, our priority should be to arrange for Grandpa Zhang's surgery as soon as possible."

"Okay," Lee Xiuhua agreed with a nod.

Ning Zhiyuan smirked inwardly, thinking, "I'm far more capable than Su Ming. I can assure Lee Xiuhua right now that I can get a doctor on the line, something Su Ming can't

do. I'll show them what a true big shot looks like. Once I've made the call to my contacts, the land will be mine. The Zhang family will be indebted to me, boosting my chances with Qianqian. Then, I'll be able to start my factory and be with Zhang Qianqian. What a perfect plan!"

Ning Zhiyuan immediately began calling a friend in J City. To demonstrate his capabilities, he activated the speakerphone on his mobile device.

The voice of a middle-aged man emerged from the other end, "Boss Ning, what brings you to call me today?"

Ning Zhiyuan succinctly relayed the situation. "Dr. Zhang, here's the deal: I have a patient urgently needing surgery. They have a brain tumor, and our local medical facilities can't handle the operation. Could you reach out to your mentor and see if he's able to perform the surgery? Rest assured, I'll be sure to express my gratitude afterward."

Dr. Zhang paused briefly before responding, "Okay! Boss Ning, since you've asked, I'll do my best."

With that, Dr. Zhang ended the call.

Ning Zhiyuan, phone in hand, boasted confidently, "Grandma Lee, rest easy. Dr. Zhang isn't just any doctor; he's an attending physician at J City Medical University, and his mentor is among the few in the imperial court capable of conducting this surgery. His mentor is Dr. Hwa, a name synonymous with excellence in medicine. You must have heard of him. With Dr. Zhang's assistance, I'm certain Dr. Hwa will accept."

Those around Ning Zhiyuan internally marveled at his words. "Dr. Hwa is a distinguished figure, a celebrated surgeon nationwide. While this surgery poses a challenge for most, it's well within Dr. Hwa's expertise. If Ning Zhiyuan can indeed secure Dr. Hwa's help, the surgery is sure to be a success."

Less than two minutes later, Ning Zhiyuan's phone rang again. He looked at the caller ID with a smile.

"See? It's been just two minutes, and Dr. Zhang has already returned my call. This is a sure sign of success. Grandma Lee, once the hospital is set, I'll personally drive Village Chief Zhang there and get everything ready for the operation."

Ning Zhiyuan didn't pick up the call immediately; instead, he turned his triumphant gaze to Su Ming. Seeing that Su Ming remained silent, his pride swelled even more.

Ning Zhiyuan thought to himself, "Su Ming ought to recognize our disparity after this."

Remaining calm, Ning Zhiyuan answered the phone. Dr. Zhang's voice came through, succinct and to the point, "Boss Ning, I've spoken with my mentor. He says he's unable to perform the surgery."

Ning Zhiyuan gasped, "What?"

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He had just been basking in his own glory, but the words from the other end of the line left him completely bewildered. "This... Dr. Zhang..."

Moments before, Ning Zhiyuan had been quite pleased with himself, but now he found himself in an awkward predicament.

Chapter 464 - The Matter Has Succeeded

"Mr. Ning, I've done all I can," Dr. Zhang cut off Ning Zhiyuan mid-sentence. "My mentor has nine surgeries lined up this month; his schedule is completely booked. I'm at a loss here. You'll have to seek assistance elsewhere."

With that, Dr. Zhang ended the call.

Ning Zhiyuan couldn't help feeling awkward.

He had just boasted about how easily he could secure a surgeon for Village Chief Zhang, yet he had come up short.

Ning Zhiyuan scratched his head and looked around. "Dr. Hwa is rather tied up at the moment."

Upon hearing this, Lee Xiuhua became frantic. "Does that mean there's no hope for my husband?"

Ning Zhiyuan sighed and shook his head. "Grandma Lee, Dr. Zhang is Dr. Hwa's protégé, and it's rare for anyone to get through to him. Now that even Dr. Zhang can't assist, I fear there's no one in the imperial court capable of handling this."

Even in his reassurance, he was still singing his own praises.

Lee Xiuhua's hands fell to her sides, her heart sinking. It seemed her husband's fate was sealed.

Zhang Qianqian's face was etched with sorrow. "Grandpa!"

It was then that Su Ming spoke up, "Let me give it a try."

Ning Zhiyuan raised an eyebrow at this, sizing up Su Ming with a scoff. "Don't make empty promises. If Dr. Zhang can't manage it, what can you possibly do? Village Chief Zhang's situation is critical; this is no time for baseless boasts!"

Su Ming merely gave him a brief look and remained silent. Now was not the moment for debate.

Without another word, Su Ming pulled out his phone and dialed a number.

"Mr. Su, what brings you to call me today?"

The voice on the other end was aged and familiar—it was Old Master Qin.

"Mr. Qin, I need a favor," Su Ming requested.

Old Master Qin responded cheerfully, "Mr. Su, we're friends. Just say the word, and if it's within my power, I'll make it happen."

"There's someone I know with a benign tumor in their brain, located in the cerebellum. They need surgery. Mr. Qin, could you help me get in touch with a few doctors?" Su Ming explained.

Upon hearing the request, Old Master Qin responded, "It does present some difficulty. I might hesitate if someone else asked for my help, but for you, I'll definitely assist. Rest assured, I'll make arrangements right away."

"Great, I appreciate your help," Su Ming said before ending the call.

Those nearby found the conversation curious, as they had never heard of Mr. Qin and wondered who he might be.

Ning Zhiyuan was particularly puzzled. frēewebnovel.com

Who was this Mr. Qin?

He pondered deeply, then suddenly a name came to mind.

Could it be that Mr. Qin?

No, that seemed impossible!

He suspected that Su Ming was merely boasting and that eventually, his lies would catch up to him.

After a moment of contemplation, Dr. Liu inquired, "Comrade, the Mr. Qin you just mentioned, is he the renowned doctor from the capital?"

With a smile, Su Ming confirmed, "Yes, that's him."

Dr. Liu paused, visibly excited, then asked, "I've never sought help for anything in my life, but may I ask a favor of you?"

"What is it?" Su Ming asked, blinking in anticipation.

"I'd like to request a signed photograph of Mr. Qin. He's an inspiration to all of us in the medical field."

Dr. Liu, who appeared to be in his fifties, spoke of Old Master Qin with a face full of reverence. Mr. Qin was indeed a leading figure in their profession.

Su Ming responded cheerfully, "No problem at all."

"Fantastic! Thank you. With that autographed photo, I promise to go above and beyond for any of your friends, family, or fellow villagers who come to my hospital. I'll ensure they receive the best care without unnecessary expense."

The villagers listening in were overjoyed at the news.

In these times, securing quality medical care was a significant challenge.

Thanks to Su Ming's assistance, they looked forward to saving both time and money in the future.

Lee Xiuhua clutched Su Ming's hand, expressing her gratitude, "Su, I can't thank you enough for this."

Zhang Tao was equally elated, "You little rascal, I owe you one. Next time you're at my place, expect the red-carpet treatment."

Zhang Qianqian wrapped her arms around Su Ming's, exclaiming, "Brother Ming, you're simply the best!"

Su Tao and Lee Sumei watched the unfolding scene, nodding in agreement. They thought Zhang Qianqian and Su Ming made an excellent couple.

Ning Zhiyuan, however, was not pleased as he observed Su Ming receiving everyone's gratitude.

"Don't celebrate too soon. Anyone can talk big, right? Dr. Zhang already said that Dr. Hwa's surgical schedule is fully booked for the month. Old Master Qin is a nationally renowned doctor. What makes you think he knows Old Master Qin?" Ning Zhiyuan was skeptical that Su Ming could pull this off.

But just as he finished speaking, Su Ming's phone rang.

On the other end of the line, Old Master Qin's voice came through: "Young man, I've taken care of everything. There's no need for the patient to come to us. I will fly out with the doctors, and we will perform the surgery tomorrow afternoon. However, we need to prepare beforehand, so please get a phone number from the hospital. I'll have them call to check what's needed. That way, we can bring any missing items with us. Also, have the hospital send over the patient's records for us to review."

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"Don't worry, Old Master Qin. I'll send you the hospital's number right away."

After ending the call, Su Ming got the number from Dr. Liu and sent it to Old Master Qin.

Everyone around was astounded.

Su Ming had indeed made it happen, with the doctor coming in person to perform surgery on Village Chief Zhang.

The Su family's son was truly impressive.

While everyone else was overjoyed, Ning Zhiyuan was far from happy.

He raised his voice in disbelief, "Impossible! I'm sure that call was a sham. There's no way he could convince the capital's top doctors to come here just for Village Chief Zhang's surgery. Can you really believe such an obvious lie?"

Chapter 465 - Your Progress Is a Bit too Fast

Ning Zhiyuan had barely finished speaking when a man came running over from the stairwell, drenched in sweat and in a hurry. As he ran, he bellowed, "Who is Zhang Defu's relative?"

Startled by the commotion, Lee Xiuhua quickly responded, unsure of what was unfolding. "Dr. Liu, are you responsible for Zhang Defu's care?" The man halted, leaning against the wall to catch his breath.

"Yes, it's me, Dean Shen. What's happened?" Dr. Liu asked urgently. The revelation that the man was the hospital's dean sent a ripple of surprise through the onlookers.

Dean Shen, still catching his breath, managed to convey his message, "The Capital Hospital just called me. They're sending several doctors tomorrow to perform surgery on Zhang Defu."

"You've received the lab results, haven't you? You need to go upstairs immediately; the doctors from the capital are waiting for your video call." His excitement was palpable, and he was practically shaking with the intensity of his emotions.

Dean Shen felt dwarfed by the eminent doctors from the capital, having rarely had the chance to meet them. Now, they were coming to his hospital to operate on his patient, which filled him with a mix of joy, excitement, and apprehension.

"What!" Dr. Liu was momentarily dumbfounded, his words tripping over themselves. "Wait... they're waiting for my video call? I-I-I'm... I'm quite nervous..."

"Idiot! If you don't take the call, I will!" Dean Shen shot him a stern look.

"I'm on it! I'm going right now!" Dr. Liu's excitement surged; he would not let this opportunity slip through his fingers.

To him, it was like being an ordinary basketball player suddenly graced with the presence of the legendary Kobe and Jordan in their prime. How could he contain his exhilaration?

Turning to Lee Xiuhua, Dean Shen reassured her, "Are you the patient's wife? Rest assured, your husband's condition is under control. The surgeons coming to treat him are among the best in the country. Any one of them would be more than capable of performing the surgery on their own, let alone seven. Please, continue your conversation. I must be off."

With that, Dean Shen hurried off, following Dr. Liu's eager pace toward the conference room. The villagers, upon hearing the news, were filled with happiness.

Su Tao and Lee Sumei were beaming with pride, but there was one person who couldn't share in the joy. That person was Ning Zhiyuan, who felt utterly humiliated.

It was as though he had been metaphorically slapped in the face by Su Ming multiple times. He had initially boasted about how easy it would be to find a doctor, only to come up short. He had even doubted Su Ming's honesty, only to find out that Su Ming had been telling the truth all along. Later, he questioned whether Su Ming was just boasting, but Su Ming proved him wrong again by actually helping Zhang Defu find a doctor.

Each time, just as he finished speaking, it was as if Su Ming slapped him in front of everyone. He couldn't stand it any longer.

Now, Ning Zhiyuan found himself in a quandary. He couldn't bear the thought of returning empty-handed, yet he couldn't bear to stay and face the scornful looks from those around him.

"Su, I owe you a great deal for this. How can I ever thank you?" Lee Xiuhua grasped Su Ming's hand, her eyes brimming with tears.

Zhang Tao stood by, surreptitiously dabbing at his eyes.

"Brother Ming, you're incredible," Zhang Qianqian said, gazing at Su Ming with admiration. "Brother Ming, I've made up my mind. I'm going to apply for graduate studies at Eastsea University and then settle down in Eastsea."

Su Ming was at a loss for words upon hearing this. He thought to himself, "What are you up to? Are you and Su Qiu planning to never let me off the hook? Su Qiu is manageable; she's my cousin, and although she's a bit of a prankster, she surely doesn't harbor romantic feelings for me. But you, Zhang Qianqian, your intentions are written all over your face."

With no other recourse, Su Ming sought assistance from Zhang Tao, who was, after all, Zhang Qianqian's father. There's a well-known adage that a daughter is a father's precious gem. In Su Ming's view, it seemed as though Zhang Tao was about to let his daughter be whisked away by Su Ming without a word.

But upon closer inspection, Su Ming noticed something amiss.

"Uncle Zhang, what's with that satisfied expression? Shouldn't you be upset and eager to pull your daughter away from my side? Something's not adding up here," Su Ming mused.

Finding himself in a bind, Su Ming had no choice but to turn to his own parents for support.

However, he noticed his parents were also wearing expressions of relief.

"Mom, Dad, I'm still young; there's no rush. Are you really that eager for me to tie the knot?" Su Ming couldn't help but inwardly groan.

Feeling the need to escape, Su Ming coughed and excused himself, "Uh, I need to use the restroom."

With that, he promptly left without another word.

But Su Ming didn't head for the bathroom; instead, he made his way upstairs to seek out Dr. Liu.

At that moment, Dr. Liu had just finished a video call and was conversing with Dean Shen. Spotting Su Ming, he quickly stood up, recognizing the importance of the man before him.

Without Su Ming, he wouldn't have had the fortune of meeting such esteemed doctors.

"Dr. Liu, Dean Shen, how much will the surgery cost?" Su Ming inquired.

The two exchanged glances. Dean Shen stroked his chin thoughtfully before responding, "It's difficult to give an exact figure. I've inquired, and the doctors are offering their services for free, but we'll still need to cover the cost of their medications and equipment. I'd estimate you'll need to contribute at least a million."

Su Ming nodded; the surgery wasn't outrageously expensive.

Even though the doctors weren't charging him, the cost of shipping their supplies would certainly incur expenses.

Old Master Qin would never expect Su Ming to foot the bill, but Su Ming was not one to shirk his responsibilities. He was prepared to contribute financially to the surgery.

Moreover, to someone like Su Ming, such an amount was merely a drop in the bucket.

"Dean Shen, I'll deposit two million later. I'll leave you my contact information. If the funds fall short, give me a call and let me know what's needed," Su Ming offered after a moment's thought.

"Of course, rest assured," Dean Shen quickly agreed, nodding. "Mr. Su, I understand your concerns. Rest assured, our hospital will spare no effort in ensuring Village Chief Zhang receives the best post-operative care."

"That's reassuring to hear," Su Ming said with a nod, then took his leave from Dean Shen and Dr. Liu and headed downstairs.

Descending the stairs, he noticed that most of the villagers had already dispersed.

Village Chief Zhang had essentially been declared out of danger. Once he underwent the surgery, everything was expected to improve. The doctors in charge were some of the best from the capital, and they were sure to handle the operation with ease.

Ning Zhiyuan had left as well, overwhelmed by the judgmental stares from the villagers. Their glances seemed to accuse him, "All you do is boast all day. Why are you still here?"

Despite his thick skin, he couldn't bear to stay any longer.

Lee Sumei, Su Tao, and Village Chief Zhang's family were still around, engaging in conversation.

"Brother, you're Su Ming's dad, right? Su Ming and my daughter, Qianqian, are about to tie the knot. How about we celebrate with a drink after my dad gets out of the hospital?" Zhang Tao suggested, draping an arm around Su Tao's neck.

"Absolutely, count me in!" Su Tao responded, slapping his chest in agreement.

"Sister, that's a gorgeous dress. Where did you find it?" Wang Faang, Zhang Tao's wife and Zhang Qianqian's mother, complimented Lee Sumei with a smile.

Su Ming, overhearing the conversation, was taken aback. He was puzzled about the marriage talk involving him and Qianqian.

When had this been decided?

And how was it that he had no clue about it?

Chapter 466 - They Encouraged Zhang Qianqian to Pursue Su Ming

Wang Faang said with a warm smile, "Mother-in-law, we need to pick an auspicious day for their wedding."

Lee Sumei nodded in agreement. "The village chief always chose the auspicious days around here. But there's no hurry. Once the village chief is feeling better, we'll consult with him. Then, we'll truly be one big family."

Zhang Tao nodded along.

Su Ming's head was spinning with all this talk.

Why were they already discussing his marriage to Zhang Qianqian?

Feeling the urgency, Su Ming coughed and approached the group. If he didn't intervene soon, who knows? The elders might even start picking out names for his future children.

Upon seeing Su Ming, Zhang Tao burst into laughter and clapped him on the shoulder, exclaiming, "Here comes my son-in-law!"

Su Ming quickly interjected, "Uncle Zhang, please, you're kidding, right? I graduated two years ago, and Qianqian is just a freshman. She's much younger than I am; we're not a good match."

Zhang Tao chuckled and replied, "You're mistaken. It's perfectly normal for a man to be older than a woman. Being a few years older than Qianqian is no big deal."

"But I already have a girlfriend," Su Ming insisted, hoping to quell their matchmaking.

"You have a girlfriend?" Su Tao and Lee Sumei were taken aback. "How come we didn't know about this? Is it true, or are you just making it up?"

A look of disappointment crossed Zhang Qianqian's face.

"You're not just making up excuses to deceive us, are you?" Zhang Tao's mood soured.

His daughter was attractive and sweet, with good grades and a kind heart. She was more than qualified to be Su Ming's girlfriend.

"It's true, I'm not lying," Su Ming affirmed.

He pulled out his phone and showed them a photo of himself with Xiao Ke'er, taken during a particularly affectionate moment.

"She's quite the beauty," Lee Sumei remarked, her eyes lighting up along with Su Tao's. They were clearly impressed with the potential daughter-in-law.

Zhang Tao's displeasure returned. They had been complimenting his daughter, and now they were admiring another girl.

Upon seeing his parents and Zhang Tao's reactions, Su Ming breathed a sigh of relief. Thankfully, they had dropped the idea of Zhang Qianqian becoming his wife.

However, in that instant, Zhang Tao slapped his thigh and exclaimed, "No worries, Qianqian can be your lover."

Su Ming was dumbfounded.

"What I mean is, you could have two girlfriends. This girl is gorgeous and talented, but my daughter is no slouch either. She's got looks and a great figure."

"Listen, daughter, never get discouraged, no matter what. We must have the courage to conquer any challenge. You'll definitely win Su Ming's heart," Zhang Tao encouraged Zhang Qianqian right then and there.

Zhang Qianqian clenched her fists and nodded vigorously.

Su Ming was flabbergasted.

He couldn't fathom why Zhang Tao was pushing for Zhang Qianqian to be his lover.

Zhang Tao had his reasons. The pool of exceptional young men suitable for his daughter was disappointingly small.

He considered Su Ming to be a fine young man.

His daughter and Su Ming had gotten along well in the past, but they had lost touch for several years. Now that they had reconnected, he was determined to support her bold pursuit of Su Ming.

Xiao Ke'er was indeed beautiful and talented, but his daughter shared over a decade of friendship with Su Ming, having grown up together as childhood sweethearts.

Thus, his daughter stood a chance at winning Su Ming's affections.

Besides, it wouldn't be the end of the world if Su Ming had two or three girlfriends.

Su Ming glanced at Zhang Tao, then at the reinvigorated and eager Zhang Qianqian, and involuntarily massaged his temples.

He couldn't bear it any longer. Turning to his parents, he said, "Mom, Dad, let's head home. Pack up and come with me to the city. If we wait too long, driving at night will be a hassle."

Su Tao and Lee Sumei had been observing with amused smiles. They nodded in agreement with Su Ming's suggestion. As the family was about to depart, Zhang Tao suddenly interjected, "Hold on a second!"

Su Ming tensed up, wondering what Uncle Zhang was up to.

With a warm smile, Zhang Tao offered, "My daughter's school is closed for a few days due to renovations. Su Ming, it's been ages since you two caught up. Why not take her with you to the city for a visit? Su Qiu's at university in Eastsea, right? Qianqian and Su Qiu haven't seen each other in a long time. If she joins you on your trip to Eastsea, they can have a reunion."

Upon seeing Zhang Tao's expression, Su Ming was suddenly filled with regret. Had he known about this situation beforehand, he wouldn't have rushed to summon doctors from the capital to attend to Village Chief Zhang.

While Su Ming was fretting, Lee Sumei cheerfully said, "No problem, Qianqian will join us."

Su Ming was taken aback.

Before he could even speak, his mother had agreed to the arrangement without consulting him.

Then, Zhang Qianqian came bounding over, wrapping her arms around Su Ming's arm just as she did when she was little. "Let's go, Brother Ming."

Su Ming felt a headache brewing.

He let out a resigned sigh.

Amidst the pleased looks from Wang Faang and Zhang Tao, Su Ming, with rigid movements, escorted Zhang Qianqian and his parents downstairs.

Zhang Tao stroked his stubble with great satisfaction, remarking, “They make quite the matched pair.”

Wang Faang was absolutely delighted.

Chapter 467 - It Was Normal for a Young Man to be Impulsive

Su Ming drove Zhang Qianqian, Su Tao, and Lee Sumei back to their village.

Upon exiting the vehicle, Zhang Qianqian headed straight for her house. Su Ming understood she was off to pack her luggage and refrained from commenting. Su Tao and Lee Sumei had already packed, bringing only a couple of changes of clothes and some toiletries.

Half an hour later, Zhang Qianqian emerged, struggling with two exceptionally heavy suitcases, a large backpack, and an additional bag in hand.

Seeing her burdened, Su Ming hurried over to assist.

He lifted one suitcase and was instantly taken aback by its weight.

“What in the world is in here?” Su Ming asked, his brow furrowed.

“The first suitcase has my sunny day clothes. The other has my cloudy day clothes on the left side, and on the right side, my toiletries, face masks, a few pairs of shoes, skincare products, and more. The backpack is particularly important—it has a doll inside that I need to cuddle every night to sleep.”

Su Ming was perplexed. As a guy, he couldn't fathom the need for separate sunny and cloudy day wardrobes. The only notable difference was the chill on overcast days, which a single jacket could easily remedy.

Not wanting to listen to Zhang Qianqian's explanations any longer, Su Ming gently covered her mouth and ushered her into the car, where she blinked with an air of innocence.

Efficiently, Su Ming opened the car's trunk, stowed all her luggage, then climbed into the driver's seat, hit the accelerator, and sped off.

Zhang Qianqian settled into the front passenger seat, her eyes wide with curiosity as she took in the luxury of the high-end business vehicle—her first experience of its kind.

Su Tao and Lee Sumei, not wishing to intrude on Su Ming and Zhang Qianqian's space, raised the partition between the business-class seats.

The partition was thick, providing excellent soundproofing.

"They're young; a bit of impulsiveness is to be expected. We'll leave them be," Su Tao and Lee Sumei mused to themselves.

Zhang Qianqian pointed to a nearby button and inquired, "Brother Ming, what does this button do?"

"That's the button for the music player," he explained.

"What's this one?"

"That's for Rain Mode."

"And this?"

"The seat heater button."

"What about this?"

Su Ming felt a surge of blood rushing to his head, as if it were about to burst any second.

Then, an idea struck him, and he said with a grin, "This is the ejector seat for the front passenger. Just press it, and whoever's sitting there will be catapulted into the air. And if that person won't stop talking, they'll be launched as well."

He was sure Zhang Qianqian would be scared enough by his words to quit her incessant chatter.

It seemed to work; Zhang Qianqian pulled back her hand and quietly studied the button. Su Ming breathed a sigh of relief.

But then, Zhang Qianqian cautiously asked, "Brother Ming, will I really be ejected if I talk too much?"

"Yes! And even if it doesn't work, I'll find a way to send you flying myself!"

Su Ming was at his wit's end.

Zhang Qianqian shrank back and nodded.

After that, she kept sneaking peeks at Su Ming every few seconds, her face betraying her desire to speak. Eventually, she cautiously opened her mouth.

"Zip it! Go to sleep!" Su Ming cut her off.

Zhang Qianqian nodded again.

Once the car fell silent, Su Ming let out another sigh of relief.

He was thankful Xiao Ke'er was the quiet type. If she were as talkative as Zhang Qianqian, he'd lose his mind.

Luckily, they weren't far from his home. They were on the expressway, just three hours away. The drive was smooth sailing. Three hours later, he could see the highway exit.

Su Ming breezed through the ETC lane and eased onto the adjacent road. Soon, he merged onto the city center's main artery.

Zhang Qianqian fidgeted uncomfortably, biting her lip as if she had something to say but was holding back.

"What is it?" Su Ming inquired, turning to her.

"I can't hold it anymore. I need to use the restroom," Zhang Qianqian confessed in a hushed, embarrassed tone.

"Why didn't you mention it when we passed the service area?"

"You told me not to talk!"

Zhang Qianqian felt aggrieved.

Su Ming was at a loss for words. Glancing at the time, he realized it was already the afternoon.

That morning, Su Ming had dealt with numerous matters at the hospital. In the afternoon, he had driven for three to four hours. Having barely eaten all day, he was starting to feel hungry and suspected his parents must be hungry as well.

Looking around, Su Ming chose a restaurant. After parking, he lowered the partition in the business-class seating of the car and found his parents, Lee Sumei and Su Tao, fast asleep.

"Mom, Dad," he called out gently.

"Hmm?"

Startled, Lee Sumei and Su Tao looked around in bewilderment. "What's the matter? Are we there yet?"

"Not quite. Let's grab a bite to eat."

"Okay."

The elderly couple nodded and stepped out of the car, followed by Zhang Qianqian, who hurried toward the restaurant.

In keeping with Chinese tradition, one eats dumplings before a journey and noodles upon arrival, as a way to bring good fortune.

With this in mind, Su Ming took Zhang Qianqian and his parents to this particular noodle shop. It was no ordinary establishment; their flour was milled from top-quality wheat. Moreover, their noodles underwent multiple rounds of pressing and kneading before being shaped, ensuring an exceptional texture.

Yet, the true highlight of this noodle shop was the additional ingredients in the noodle soup.

Their crab roe noodles, priced at over 300 RMB, were rich yet not overly heavy.

The shark fin broth noodles, costing over 500 yuan, were tender and offered a lingering, satisfying taste.

The noodles could be paired with a variety of premium ingredients. Su Ming ordered a bowl for each of them, along with some appetizers. Even though they were just noodles, when prepared to perfection, they became an exquisite culinary experience.

All four of them enjoyed their meal immensely.

Once they had finished, Su Ming settled the bill and drove Zhang Qianqian to Eastsea University. It was more appropriate, considering the inconvenience of her staying with his parents.

It wasn't that Lee Sumei and Su Tao disliked Zhang Qianqian; it was simply a matter of practicality.

While Lee Sumei and Su Tao might consider Zhang Qianqian as their own child, she couldn't help feeling somewhat uneasy about it.

Moreover, as a young woman, Zhang Qianqian's lifestyle was vastly different from that of the older generation, like Lee Sumei and Su Tao, who followed the traditional schedule of rising with the sun and winding down at dusk.

Chapter 468 - Tangram Horse

Zhang Qianqian and Su Qiu shared a close bond.

Since he started high school, he hadn't seen or been in touch with Zhang Qianqian much, but Su Qiu was a different story. They frequently got together.

They even went out for fun recently.

Having been apart for nearly a month or two, Su Qiu was likely thrilled at the prospect of reuniting with Zhang Qianqian.

Plus, Su Qiu lived in a studio apartment, making it easy for Zhang Qianqian to move in.

The two young women were of a similar age and shared comparable lifestyles, so living together would be more practical for them.

Indeed, Su Qiu was overjoyed upon hearing the news, nearly leaping with excitement.

It had been a while since their last meeting. Once Su Ming had brought their bags up to the apartment, the two girls were so engrossed in catching up that they paid him no mind. Su Ming just smiled and kept to himself. He discreetly sent Su Qiu some money, encouraging her to treat Zhang Qianqian to a good time.

After bidding farewell, he departed.

Shortly thereafter, Su Ming arrived at the complex with his parents.

Boss Fong was already there, waiting eagerly.

He quickly stepped up to welcome them, about to address Mr. Su, but catching Su Ming's gaze, he instantly grasped the situation. After a moment's hesitation and a grit of his teeth, he cautiously inquired, "Su Ming, have your parents arrived?"

"Yes," Su Ming confirmed with a nod. At that moment, Su Tao and Lee Sumei also stepped out of the car. Su Ming popped the trunk and retrieved two suitcases.

"I've got this," Boss Fong offered, stepping up briskly.

Su Tao, upon seeing Boss Fong, looked puzzled. He furrowed his brow and asked, "Who's this?"

With a cheerful grin, Su Ming introduced Boss Fong to his parents: "Dad, Mom, this is my boss. You can call him Boss Fong. He's a great guy."

"Absolutely," Boss Fong chimed in quickly, though inside he was in a panic. He stealthily wiped the sweat from his brow, thinking to himself, "How could I possibly be Mr. Su's boss?"

From the side, Lee Sumei chimed in, "Is my son doing well at the company?"

Boss Fong said cheerfully, "He's done an excellent job. Let me tell you, your son managed a project that was a resounding success, bringing in hundreds of millions for our company. The bonus alone was in the tens of millions. The house you'll be staying in is a reward from the company to Su Ming."

Upon hearing this, Su Ming gave a slight nod. Boss Fong's statement certainly spared him a lot of explanations about his wealth and home ownership.

Su Tao chuckled, "Ah, I see. Boss Fong, I appreciate how you've mentored my son."

Boss Fong responded with flattery, "You're too kind. Your son is incredibly talented. Within just a few months at our company, he's made significant contributions. I'm planning to invest in him, to have him start his own company, with us as partners. It's simply a waste to have someone of your son's caliber working under me."

Su Tao and Lee Sumei were, of course, delighted to hear this. They couldn't help but feel proud of their son's exceptional achievements.

They soon went upstairs with their luggage.

The house was already beautifully furnished with the finest decor. The couple had never experienced such luxury before.

Even though they lived in a villa back home, their lifestyle remained modest.

Their diet and attire had not changed from before. They were astonished by the opulence before them.

"Please rest assured, both of you. Everything here has been provided by the company, including the utilities," Boss Fong assured them.

"It's getting late, and I don't want to keep you from resting. I'll take my leave now."

As Boss Fong turned to leave, Su Ming interjected, "Wait a moment. Isn't there still some unfinished business at the company? I should head over and put in some overtime."

Boss Fong paused, then quickly understood, "Su Ming, your parents have just arrived..."

Su Tao and Lee Sumei quickly gestured, "No worries, the company's business takes precedence."

"Very well," Boss Fong agreed with a reluctant nod.

Su Ming reassured them with a smile, "Mom and Dad, don't worry about me. I have a place right next to the company. Boss Fong has even set me up with a bachelor apartment, which makes it more convenient for me to get to work."

"That's a relief," the elderly couple said, nodding in agreement. It was comforting to know that Su Ming had a place to rest. It's a common thing for young people these days to burn the midnight oil and work overtime.

Descending the stairs with Boss Fong trailing behind, the man's posture shrank as he followed Su Ming with great deference. "Mr. Su, I hope I didn't make any errors today?" he inquired.

"You've done quite well," Su Ming responded, nodding with a smile.

"Would you like me to arrange a personal driver for your parents?" Boss Fong offered.

After a moment's consideration, Su Ming shook his head. "No, let's not. They enjoy their independence. Having a driver would just make them uncomfortable. If they need to travel far, I can take them myself."

"Understood!" Boss Fong agreed with a nod.

As Su Ming approached the door to leave, he bid farewell to Boss Fong and drove straight back to his property. Night had fallen, and darkness enveloped everything.

Glancing at the clock, he noted it was past seven. Parking in the garage, Su Ming strolled to his yard's gate and opened it, immediately greeted by the fragrance of the soil.

Back in the villa, he shed his clothes and donned a set of work attire. After a quick face wash at the tap, he grabbed his hoe and headed to his garden. Despite the low density of the crops, he knew he couldn't afford to slack off.

Confronting some particularly robust weeds, Su Ming wasted no time in pulling them out by the roots. As he toiled away, something caught his eye. He looked down and jumped at the sight of the Dangerous Sweet Potato.

It appeared rather menacing, having grown into the shape of a bomb. Round and black, half-buried in the earth with a skull painted on the exposed side. Most strikingly, a fuse sprouted from the top, crackling with sparks. Though the fuse wasn't short, the sight was still unnerving.

Checking the time again, Su Ming estimated that it wouldn't be long before he could harvest the Dangerous Sweet Potato. Then it struck him—if his calculations were right, the Tangram Horse should be ripe by now!

Su Ming tossed his hoe to the ground and hurried off toward the herding area. Upon arrival, he was taken aback and couldn't help but let out a long, heartfelt sigh.

Chapter 469 - Invincible Brick

Previously, there were two majestic horses in the herding area.

Despite being painted in seven different colors, they were quite a sight to behold.

Su Ming stood gaping at the scene before him, rooted to the spot in shock.

It took him a full five minutes to finally close his mouth.

Since the horses were a creation of the System, he figured he might as well go ahead and harvest them.

Now, there were still two horses in the herding area, but they were assembled entirely from a certain material.

This material was quite common and served as an effective weapon in brawls.

It was none other than the humble brick.

Both of the large horses were composed of bricks.

After several days of diligent care, Su Ming ended up with nothing but bricks.

What good were these things?

The number of bricks was insufficient to build a house.

Moreover, bricks were dirt cheap.

He had spent hundreds of thousands of yuan on a horse at the marketplace.

With that kind of money, he could have bought a mountain of bricks.

Feeling utterly helpless, Su Ming resigned himself to the task and went to harvest.

Approaching the two tall horses, he scratched his head, puzzled about how to proceed.

After a moment's thought, Su Ming placed his hand on one of the horses.

Instantly, the horse began to disassemble like a set of blocks, transforming into individual bricks.

But something was off.

Why were the bricks floating down?

Ordinarily, a brick would plummet straight down, succumbing to gravity, yet these bricks were drifting down gently, like feathers, particularly the ones that had formed the horse's head.

Su Ming's eyes bulged as he stood there, dumbfounded.

He picked up a brick from the ground, only to discover it was soft.

With a simple squeeze, he easily deformed it.

Su Ming's mouth twitched involuntarily.

Could this brick be a fake?

It wasn't a red brick at all, but a sponge brick.

What use could this possibly have?

It might work for scrubbing in the bath, but it was far too large for dishwashing. After all, it's not every day you find a dish larger than a brick.

While Su Ming was lost in thought, a notification chimed in his mind.

"Host, congratulations on acquiring the Mini Brick. Made of sponge, it's lightweight and easy to handle, suitable for both toddlers and nonagenarians. This Mini Brick is the ultimate weapon for slapping. Whether your adversary is a martial arts master or a boxing champion, a single brick can knock them out cold. It's so powerful, even an elephant couldn't withstand it!"

"Note: To avoid any hassle and enhance your user experience, you have the ability to control its size. When not in use, it can transform into a sleek pendant for easy portability. Plus, it's reusable!"

Upon hearing the notification in his mind, Su Ming paused for a moment.

He realized he had misunderstood the System.

With that in mind, the item actually seemed quite useful.

Even when facing martial arts masters, he could use this brick to knock them out cold.

Su Ming chuckled to himself.

He had initially thought his latest find wasn't great, but it turned out to be another pleasant surprise.

Considering the item's ability to shrink, Su Ming blinked and held it in his hand.

In his mind, he commanded, "Shrink."

And the brick did shrink.

It became incredibly small, roughly the size of a key.

Moreover, a new hole appeared on the brick. A small chain threaded through this hole and attached to a ring.

Su Ming glanced at the two majestic horses and made a quick estimate.

Each horse seemed to be composed of about 50 bricks.

Keeping all of them seemed pointless, so he decided to retain just ten bricks for now.

Since he was the only one who could use these bricks, there was no point in holding onto too many.

He then promptly exchanged the remaining 90 bricks for points.

"Host, you have successfully exchanged for points. You have earned 900 points!"

Su Ming's eyes sparkled at the sound in his mind.

He now had a substantial amount of points!

Eagerly, Su Ming checked the points panel on his phone.

At present, the herding area had 1,140 area points. The fence had reached Level Two and required 300 points to upgrade to Level Three. The pasture was at Level Three, needing 1,000 points to advance to Level Four.

After careful consideration, Su Ming opted to upgrade the fence to Level Three first. This would allow him to keep Level Three animals.

He spent 300 points and upgraded the fence to Level Three.

“The fence is currently upgrading. The upgrade will take 18 hours!”

Hearing the notification, Su Ming nodded in approval.

This was indeed a fruitful outcome.

He resized the remaining ten bricks to match a key's dimensions and hung them on his keychain. From now on, these bricks would serve as his personal defensive weapons.

Reusable multiple times, these bricks were nothing short of perfect weapons!

Su Ming was itching to hit the streets with his sponge bricks to give a few hooligans a taste of their own medicine and test their effectiveness. But after a moment's consideration, he decided against it, opting instead for an early night's rest. His mother's birthday was the day after next, and he needed to take his parents out shopping for clothes first thing in the morning.

With that in mind, Su Ming quickly tidied up the fields and returned to the villa to sleep.

The next morning, he awoke early, checking the time to find it was five o'clock. His parents were likely up by this time. After a quick wash, he drove over to pick them up. Sure enough, the lights in his parents' place were on as he reached downstairs.

Taking the elevator up, Su Ming tapped gently on the door. It swung open shortly after to reveal Su Tao, his face showing signs of fatigue and dark circles under his eyes. He managed a smile upon seeing his son. “Son, you're up early.”

Su Ming's brow creased in concern.

He turned his attention to Lee Sumei, who was also showing signs of weariness, yawning continuously on the sofa.

This was unusual for his parents, who were known for their sound sleep, even in unfamiliar environments. And considering he had left them at just past seven the previous evening, they should not have been this exhausted if they had slept well.

“Dad, Mom, why do you both look so tired? Has something happened?” Su Ming inquired.

“We're fine,” Su Tao replied, avoiding Su Ming's gaze while giving his shoulder a reassuring pat. “Why don't you show me how to use this blender? I still haven't figured it out.”

Su Ming's suspicion deepened. Clearly, something was amiss, but his parents were keeping it from him to prevent him from worrying.

Just as he was about to probe further, a loud banging noise erupted from upstairs. The sound, irritating and persistent, made Su Ming's irritation palpable.

His expression turned grim as realization dawned on him; the noise, unmistakably that of a basketball thumping against the floor, was likely the culprit behind his parents' restless night.

Chapter 470 - A Noisy Neighbor

Living in an apartment building certainly has its conveniences, but a significant downside is the poor sound insulation. Many have experienced the frustration of hearing every argument or scolding session from their neighbors. In extreme cases, the constant noise has even led to some suffering from neurasthenia and heart conditions.

Su Ming once encountered a particularly loud family while renting in the suburbs. He was baffled by their ability to create such a racket all day long, to the point where he wondered if they ever slept.

Back then, the noise was incessant. There was even a night when he was jolted awake by the grating sound of the upstairs neighbors dragging a table. Thankfully, he could just put on headphones and listen to music to drift back to sleep.

Su Ming had hoped that in his own building, his parents would be able to enjoy peaceful nights, but they too had run into noisy neighbors.

Playing basketball upstairs is incredibly inconsiderate, especially at five or six in the morning when most people are still asleep. The bouncing ball sounded like drumbeats, rattling nerves. If the family only made noise in the morning, it might be tolerable, but they seemed to be restless all day.

Seeing Su Ming's annoyed look, Su Tao chuckled, "Don't get upset. It's normal for kids to enjoy being active."

With a furrowed brow, Su Ming asked, "Dad, how do you know they have kids?"

Su Tao paused, realizing his slip-up.

It all clicked for Su Ming. The previous night, Su Tao must have confronted the noisy neighbors to plead for quiet, only to be met with hostility and sent away.

Perhaps their early morning basketball was even deliberate.

"Dad, Mom, you rest for a bit. I'll go have a word with them," Su Ming said, heading for the door.

Su Tao quickly grabbed his son, insisting, "There's no need!"

He explained that during his encounter with the family upstairs, he found them to be quite aggressive, particularly the middle-aged woman.

Aware that he and his wife wouldn't be staying there long, and not wanting Su Ming to be mistreated, Su Tao resolved to tolerate the disturbance.

If Su Ming got into a fight with the neighbor upstairs, he might end up getting fired by his boss.

"Dad, Mom, don't worry. I know what I'm doing," Su Ming reassured, giving Su Tao's shoulder a comforting pat and a smile.

Su Tao and Lee Sumei exchanged a glance, biting their lips in concern before nodding in agreement. Still, they couldn't help but caution Su Ming: "Son, please don't get into a fight. It's illegal to brawl."

Nowadays, those who engage in fights face hefty fines.

"Relax, I'm not going to fight with them," Su Ming assured them before heading upstairs. At that moment, the upstairs neighbor was still bouncing a basketball.

Upon reaching the top floor, Su Ming noticed an open door. A man with bleary eyes and a furrowed brow stood there, his face etched with worry. He sighed, shook his head, and then closed the door behind him as he went inside.

Su Ming understood the situation immediately.

This family was notoriously aggressive, causing so much noise that the neighbors couldn't sleep. Yet, the neighbors didn't dare to ask them to quiet down; they just suffered in silence.

A slight smile crossed Su Ming's face; the situation had suddenly become intriguing.

He found himself regretting having given away that radio: it would have been useful right now!

Still, there were plenty of ways to deal with such people, and Su Ming had already begun to formulate a plan.

It would be best if the family changed their attitude and corrected their behavior voluntarily. Otherwise, Su Ming was prepared to take matters into his own hands.

Approaching the family's door, Su Ming knocked gently.

No sooner had he knocked than a very irritable and loud voice bellowed from inside, "Who's there?"

Frowning, Su Ming stood at the door and said, "You're being too loud. You shouldn't be playing basketball inside your apartment."

Before he could finish, the door swung open.

A middle-aged woman in her forties or fifties stood before him. She was quite overweight, her face round and marked with pimples. Despite her short stature, her demeanor was intimidating. She scrutinized Su Ming and scoffed, "This is my home, and we'll do as we please. It's none of your business!"

Undeterred, Su Ming persisted, "You can play basketball, but you should do it outside. It's very early, and you need to be considerate of your neighbors."

The middle-aged woman placed her hands on her hips and stepped forward, raising her voice, "Mind your own business! My son is playing basketball indoors to lose weight! And if he doesn't slim down, are you going to take responsibility?"

Su Ming replied, "He could go to the park downstairs to exercise."

Undeterred, the woman yelled, "Outside? It's too dangerous, and there are kidnappers. What if something happens to my son? He's just a kid. Why are you picking on a child?"

Su Ming couldn't help but chuckle. It was a common excuse among parents to justify coddling their children. If her son had been under five, Su Ming wouldn't have made an issue of it, but the boy was fifteen—hardly a child!

As Su Ming was about to respond, he caught sight of a sturdy silhouette through the crack in the door.

He took a closer look and his brow furrowed. There stood a teenager, roughly the same height as the woman but much heavier. After a couple of bounces of the basketball, he was already gasping for air as he made his way to the table, devoured several bites of cake, and washed it down with a gulp of soda.

Great!

Su Ming's smile was tinged with irony. He was astonished by the boy's approach to weight loss. If the teen continued like this, he'd be overweight for life.

With conviction, Su Ming stated, "While you have the freedom to do as you please in your home, creating noise that disturbs the neighbors is against the law."