

Weak B 1681

Chapter 1681: Kang Li's Uncontrollable Rage (Part 3)

"Oh."

She replied casually, then Ming Wei turned and left.

At night before bed, the beautiful girl waited until Xiao Guoguo fell asleep, then quietly came to the master bedroom. She recounted to Kang Li the matter of asking her older brother Min Rui for advice that afternoon, and told her the solution Min Rui gave. She saw her dearest mother smiling, gently rubbed her head and spoke softly: "You've all grown up, and Mom feels so relieved..."

Kang Li praised Ming Wei for what she did and praised Min Rui for his suggestion, not at all stingy with her compliments.

"Mom, if you keep praising like that, I'm really going to get embarrassed!"

Ming Wei snuggled in Kang Li's arms, speaking coquettishly: "I didn't expect my big brother to know so much, even though he's a guy. Mom, you definitely won't have to worry about him finding a wife in the future."

"Of course."

Kang Li casually smoothed the hair at the back of Ming Wei's head, with a smile in her voice: "Your big brother, your second brother, and you—all of you are excellent. When it comes time for you to find someone, Mom won't worry about any of you. But you have to remember, at every age, do what you're supposed to do for that age. Don't go off track just because you're curious. Do you understand what Mom means?"

"I understand. Mom hopes I won't date too early."

Ming Wei lifted her head, looking at Kang Li, her clear eyes full of smiles and purity: "Mom, don't worry. Right now my mind is all on studying. When I graduate college, I want to focus on my career. As for relationships, I'm really not in a hurry."

"Focusing on your career doesn't mean you can't date."

If her kids all put off marrying for their careers, she'd surely worry herself old by then.

Kang Li looked totally serious. Seeing this, Ming Wei laughed: "Mom, whatever you say goes, I'll listen to you!"

"Such a good girl!"

Pinching the girl's nose, Kang Li said, "Want to sleep with Mom tonight?"

"Nope."

Ming Wei stood up: "I have to sleep with my little sister. Good night, Mom!"

She waved her hand and quickly slipped out.

Actually, she really wanted to sleep in the same bed as Mom, just like when she was little, listening to bedtime stories and Mom singing pretty songs. But Mom worked hard all day and needed a good night's sleep. If she lay beside her, even if her sleeping posture was fine, she might still affect Mom's sleep quality.

Kang Li didn't know what Ming Wei was thinking. Smiling softly, she watched Ming Wei's figure fade outside the door, watched her beautiful girl gently close the bedroom door.

Settling herself in bed, Kang Li turned off the bedside lamp. She didn't fall asleep right away, but instead thought over what Ming Wei had said. Unconsciously, the corners of her mouth turned up.

Youth really is wonderful!

All her kids are good-looking and smart. At this age, getting confession letters from classmates of the opposite sex—honestly, Kang Li isn't at all surprised.

After all, she was young once herself... Even though she was brought up in a family elite education, she went through elementary, middle, high school, and even college. She just skipped grades a lot. Still, every time school ended, her desk cubby would be stuffed with colorful envelopes and all kinds of gifts.

She never threw those things away, but also never took advantage of classmates. She always handled it properly.

Without hurting anyone's dignity—if she knew who sent it, she'd hand it back in person. If not, she'd keep it for now and return it when the person came for it.

In short, adolescence is also a sensitive time. She's never done anything to hurt anyone's self-esteem.

It should be mentioned, the youthful years Kang Li was recalling now were definitely from before she came to this world, belonging to her own memories of youth.

Turning on her side, Kang Li faced the window. She gazed at the hazy moonlight streaming in and wondered quietly: Luo Yanqing must have received quite a few confession letters when he was young?

Monday afternoon during big recess, today it was Ming Wei's turn on duty.

After cleaning the classroom, two other girls—one went to take out the trash, one went to fetch water to wipe the window glass later. Meanwhile, Ming Wei stood at the podium, wiping the blackboard.

The big classroom was empty except for Ming Wei. Just as she finished wiping the board, a figure walked in from the back door.

"Luo Mingwei!"

"..."

Someone called her? Ming Wei had her back to the rear door and was stunned for a moment. Hearing the voice again, she turned around, saw a boy walking toward her, and asked, "Du Xu, you called me for something?"

"...Yeah."

The boy named Du Xu was Ming Wei's classmate. His grades were average, but he was super athletic—the class sports rep. Tall, strong, and cheerful, he was a sunny, handsome guy.

Chapter 1682: Kang Li's Uncontrollable Rage (Part 4)

Ming Wei smiled, "Go ahead, I'm listening."

"...Did—did you get my letter? I just wanted to ask what you thought of it."

Du Xu's cheeks were burning, but he still mustered up the courage to ask what was on his mind.

"Your letter?"

Ming Wei paused, then asked, "Did you put it in my desk pocket on Saturday?"

Du Xu scratched the back of his head, nodding, "I put it under your backpack."

"..."

Ming Wei didn't know what to say. She hadn't expected that out of all the letters she got on Saturday, one would be from their class's PE monitor, Du Xu. Pressing her lips together, Ming Wei went quiet for a moment. She didn't choose to avoid it, instead replied directly:

"I didn't open it, but I can pretty much guess what you wrote. But I just want to tell you, Du Xu, what we should focus on now is studying, aiming to get into our dream colleges during the entrance exams. Anything else, I'm not going to consider while I'm still in school."

When Du Xu heard this, he was visibly disappointed, but not really surprised. He stared for a moment, then forced a smile, showing his big white teeth: "Okay, I get what you're saying."

Seeing Du Xu turn to leave through the back door, Ming Wei called out to him, "Du Xu, if you have questions about your studies, you can ask me or my second brother. I believe as long as you put in the effort, you'll get through the college entrance exams just fine and get into a university you like four years from now."

His steps halted, Du Xu turned around: "A university I like?"

"Yeah, didn't you say you liked athletics? You can apply to a sports college when the time comes."

Ming Wei said, smiling.

"You think I can get in?" Du Xu looked a bit lost, "I'm not that good at studying..."

"If you work hard, it's no problem. You just have to trust yourself!"

Ming Wei encouraged him.

"Are you willing to help me with my studies?"

Du Xu asked.

"Yeah. If you have questions, ask me between classes or after school. If I can't answer, I'll get my second brother to help you out. You can also ask our teachers."

After hearing Ming Wei's words, Du Xu pressed his lips together, saying, "I'll think about it seriously."

Getting into college was tough—he'd heard plenty of stories. Just look at his brother: two years straight and still hasn't passed. If he can't make it this year, his parents are going to tell him to get a job and give up trying for the exams.

"Du Xu, are you afraid to suffer for the sake of studying?"

Ming Wei asked.

"I...I can handle it!"

Du Xu replied.

"Then what are you still thinking about? My mom always said: only if you endure the hardships of studying now will you avoid the hardships of life later. We're just in eighth grade right now—still four whole years until the entrance exam. Even if you start working hard now, it's not too late."

Ming Wei looked at Du Xu, her expression serious, "If you want to be a coward when it comes to studying, that's up to you!"

With that, Ming Wei ignored Du Xu. She put down her blackboard brush and picked up a rag to wipe the lectern.

"I'm not going to be a coward."

After saying this, Du Xu saw Ming Wei wasn't reacting, so he repeated, "Me, Du Xu, I'm not afraid of hardship! I will never be a coward when it comes to studying!"

"Then you'd better stick to what you say. If not, I'll look down on you."

Finally, Ming Wei looked up and answered him. When their eyes met, she gave him a slight smile.

"What are you guys talking about?"

The girl who went to fetch water came into the classroom carrying a basin, grinning at Ming Wei and Du Xu.

"It's nothing."

Ming Wei shook her head.

"I'm going to the field to play ball. You guys keep busy!"

Du Xu withdrew his gaze from Ming Wei, waved his hand with mock nonchalance, and soon left the classroom.

"Ming Wei, why does it look like something's going on between you and Du Xu? Spill it, what were you talking about before I came in?"

"You're so nosy, but I hate to disappoint you. I didn't say anything to Du Xu. He just came back to the classroom to grab something, asked me why he couldn't find you and Wang Chan. I told him one of you went to take out the trash, the other went to fetch water. That's all."

Ming Wei looked totally calm—no sign she was lying.

"Are you sure you didn't say anything else?"

The girl talking to Ming Wei was named Helan. She didn't quite believe what Ming Wei said.

"Classmate, you're so bored. Why would I need to lie to you?"

After wiping the lectern, Ming Wei grabbed an empty basin and walked toward Helan, "I'm going to wash my rag at the sink and get some more water."

Helan: "But there's water in my basin. I'll pour half for you."

Ming Wei: "No need. My rag's covered in chalk dust—I need to really wash it." With that, she carried the basin out of the classroom.

...

Days passed. Du Xu's change wasn't just noticed by teachers and classmates, even his family saw it too. No need for words, Du Xu's dad and mom were proud and personally went to school once to thank the homeroom teacher. The homeroom teacher kept saying it wasn't his credit—that it was Du Xu himself who wanted to study.

Ming Wei happened to hear Du Xu mention his parents' praise and said they'd gone to school and thanked the teacher. Her response to this was, "Young man, keep it up."

The end-of-term exams approached. Ming Rui, Ming Han, and Ming Wei all studied hard after school, hoping to score well, then head home for a carefree vacation.

But Ming Rui was thinking more about how, come September, he'd be starting twelfth grade and facing next year's college entrance exam. He knew he couldn't slack at all in the coming year, so even while playing back home, he couldn't neglect his books—not like Ming Han, who just played and forgot everything else.

One day, Kang Li drove Bun and the other two back to the compound, but just as her car reached the gate, a figure suddenly darted out, blocking her path.

Luckily, she was driving slow, and Kang Li hit the brakes in time—managing to stop just before hitting the person.

When she saw who was in front of her car, Kang Li's temper instantly flared. She got out, marched over, and slapped the other person right across the face.

"Are you out of your mind?"

Kang Li's eyes were icy cold as she stared straight at Xu Chunxia. Yep, the one blocking her car was Xu Chunxia. For the past three days, Xu Chunxia had been showing up at the institute gate at random times hoping to see Kang Li again, only to be disappointed every time—until today,

Until just now, when she spotted Kang Li's car. It was burned into her mind from the train station that day—not just the model but also the license plate. So when she saw Kang Li driving up, she rushed out to block the car without thinking.

Before Xu Chunxia could come to her senses from the pain, Kang Li slapped her again. Coldly, she said, "If you want to die, do it somewhere else. Why come looking for trouble with me?"

After two slaps in a row, Xu Chunxia felt like a few of her teeth were loose. Glaring at Kang Li, she said through the pain, "If I hadn't hit rock bottom, do you think I'd come to you?"

Chapter 1683

Back when Xu Chunxia was "invited" to leave the Feng family's big courtyard, she dragged two large suitcases along the roadside aimlessly, not knowing how long she'd been walking when suddenly two street youths blocked her way.

Without saying anything, they snatched the suitcases from Xu Chunxia's hands and ran towards an alley beside the road.

Faced with this situation, Xu Chunxia was so scared she stood frozen on the spot; when she finally reacted, she shouted "Someone's robbing" while chasing after the two youths.

Wearing high heels and a hip-hugging short skirt, she couldn't run fast at all.

Xu Chunxia was so desperate she was on the verge of tears, but at that moment on the stretch of road she was on, there wasn't a single person in sight; so despite shouting about a robbery, no one stepped forward to help.

As she chased into the alley, Xu Chunxia watched the two youths who had stolen her suitcases get further and further away, when suddenly a silhouette ran out from a cross alley.

That person barely took an instant to knock the two youths down.

"Put it down, get lost!"

The two youths, lying on the ground, glanced at each other and then at the man who knocked them down before climbing up and bolting towards the alley's other end.

Breathless, Xu Chunxia caught up only to see a man dragging her two large suitcases, ready to walk towards her while the two youths who had stolen her suitcases limped away.

Without a doubt, Xu Chunxia thanked the man. Learning Xu Chunxia needed to go to a hotel, the man kindly offered to accompany her there, just in case she encountered another robbery attempt.

Xu Chunxia didn't refuse; she even felt her charm was so great that it compelled him to become her Flower Guardian.

Gradually, the two grew familiar with each other. Xu Chunxia, perhaps too proud of her allure, unwittingly let her guard down with an outsider.

And so it was easy for him to learn from her that she had just returned to North City from the South and wanted to buy a house in North City, prompting him to offer to take her house-hunting.

One thing led to another and their relationship grew ambiguous; Xu Chunxia felt she was falling for this man named Zhang Hui, and shortly thereafter heard Zhang Hui's confession.

Quite naturally, they became a couple.

But Xu Chunxia never anticipated five days ago, when they went to the bank to withdraw money intending to make a loan payment, she went to the restroom partway through and never saw Zhang Hui again.

Coming back to the rental they shared, everything belonging to Zhang Hui was gone, including her own valuable belongings, like two gold necklaces, a gold bracelet, and a high-end ladies' watch—vanished without a trace.

The police were notified, who followed procedure, filed a case, and launched an investigation, but there's been no good news as of today.

Xu Chunxia had figured out by now that the so-called act of valor back then was likely fake; it was Zhang Hui secretly targeting her, staging a deliberate act with his accomplices to get close to her, ultimately swindling her of everything she owned.

Because on the day they went to withdraw money, Zhang Hui had repeatedly advised Xu Chunxia to dress down, lest criminals see her as easy prey and rob them after they left the bank.

Xu Chunxia found reason in his words, removed all her jewelry and watch, stashed them in the suitcase, and shoved the suitcase under the rental's bed.

The result was all her belongings got cleaned out.

About two hundred thousand in cash, plus the gold jewelry and other items; police calculated, approximately two hundred sixty thousand were scammed.

Xu Chunxia was so devastated she almost lost her mind.

She could only hope the police would quickly capture Zhang Hui.

But Zhang Hui clearly targeted her; how could he not have planned his escape thoroughly?

Based on this, even if the police categorized Xu Chunxia's fraud case as major, it was unlikely to be resolved swiftly. After all, the eighties—unlike modern times—lacked a national surveillance system to assist police investigations.

This would prevent Xu Chunxia from recovering her scammed money anytime soon, yet she still needed to survive in North City, naturally leading her thoughts to the Feng family and Kang Li.

But the Feng family had Old Master Feng and watch-post officers ensuring she couldn't pass through the courtyard's gates; even approaches to the post were met with warnings from the officers.

She had no choice but to come to the family compound to block Kang Li.

As for her ex-husband and the Hu family, it wasn't that she didn't seek them out; the Hu family lived in the same courtyard as the Feng family, reality dictated she could only fantasize about reaching them.

Besides, when Xu Chunxia took the Hu family's money and left after the divorce, Mrs. Hu had declared: if Xu Chunxia dared to return in the future, the result would be the same, she'd make living in North City impossible.

Mrs. Hu was actually a rather tolerant woman, but Xu Chunxia exerted all means to divorce, obliterating any fondness Mrs. Hu had for her.

Yes, Mrs. Hu originally had a good impression of Xu Chunxia because, despite her shortcomings, she agreed to give the Hu family a child; in Mrs. Hu's eyes, Xu Chunxia was at least good.

But Xu Chunxia was incorrigible, acting up incessantly during pregnancy and after childbirth, utterly wearing Mrs. Hu out.

"Why should it matter to me that you're at the end of your rope?"

Kang Li casually lifted Xu Chunxia from in front of the car: "Stand here and don't move, or I won't mind slapping you twice more!"

After letting go of her hand, Kang Li turned, walked towards the car but was grabbed by Xu Chunxia at the arm: "Kang Libao, I've been scammed, all my savings and valuable possessions were taken! Boo-hoo..."

Tears fell down, and Xu Chunxia cried out loud: "I don't even have money for food now, Kang Libao, considering we're from the same village, can you help me out?"

Kang Li pried Xu Chunxia's hand off, finally taking a serious look at her this time.

Truth be told, she was startled by Xu Chunxia's current miserable state.

Not only in bad shape, but her curly hair was also tangled, the dress she wore was wrinkled, lips cracked; although she didn't look like someone fleeing from calamity, she certainly wasn't much better off.

Adjusting her thoughts, Kang Li said coolly: "If you want to return to your hometown, I can help you buy a train ticket, otherwise, I'm sorry I can't help."

"I can't go back now, I need to wait for the case to be solved." Once the case is solved, her money and jewelry should be recovered, at that time... then she'd return home, at least triumphantly enter the village.

If she went back to the village looking like this now, wouldn't she be the laughingstock of the villagers?

Going out for years without making anything of herself, returning like a stray dog, the mere thought of being drowned in gossip spit was unbearable.

Kang Li said without much feeling: "Then find a job to sustain your life."

"I have no degree and can't do anything, who'd be willing to let me work?"

Xu Chunxia cried feeling aggrieved and pitiful.

Kang Li seemed to see her as a pretentious white lotus, rolling her eyes slightly, offering advice: "Can wash dishes and clean right? Otherwise, find work as a nanny, surely you can handle that?"

"Looking like this, can I go wash dishes, clean and serve as a nanny?"

Chapter 1684

Pointing at her own dress, Xu Chunxia sniffled and said, "This dress I'm wearing costs over a hundred yuan, and you want me to wear it to be a nanny, to scrub plates and wash dishes? Kang Libao, what exactly are you trying to do? And look at my hands, just look—how well I've taken care of them. Can these hands scrub plates and wash dishes? Serve other people?"

Before returning to North City, she basically lived days where someone waited on her. Now she was supposed to wait on others, do the dirty job of scrubbing plates and washing dishes—wasn't that just humiliating her?

"Do you think you're so noble?" Kang Li curled her lips, her beautiful eyes laced with mockery. She said coldly, "Using your own hands to work, earning your own living—does that make you lose face?"

Kang Li didn't need to think much to guess what Xu Chunxia had been up to those years she disappeared.

After all, Xu Chunxia's clothes, makeup, and behavior all screamed that she'd been "eating easy meals" these past years.

That is, being someone's "Canary."

So, when she suggested Xu Chunxia should earn a living scrubbing plates, washing dishes, or being a nanny, Xu Chunxia looked at her with contempt, full of disdain.

"I... I never said those jobs were shameful..." Xu Chunxia looked uncomfortable. The corners of her mouth twitched, and she stammered, "Kang Libao, I just feel that with how I am now, those jobs you mentioned... aren't really suitable for me."

"Not suitable? What's not suitable?" Kang Li's face showed sarcasm. "Is it because you have a high degree, or do you have other skills for making a living?"

Xu Chunxia stayed silent.

"No education, no skills—do you think you can just sit and wait for food and drinks to come to you?"

Being mocked so coldly by Kang Li, Xu Chunxia felt particularly uncomfortable, but she couldn't argue back.

"Listen to me: I'll say it again. If you want to return to our hometown, I can buy you a train ticket, since we're from the same village. As for anything else, I can't help you."

Before Xu Chunxia could react, Kang Li opened the car door, about to drive into the compound.

Seeing this, Xu Chunxia hurriedly grabbed the car door handle, forgetting everything else.

"Mom!"

Guoguo saw Xu Chunxia lunging for the back car door, her big black grape-like eyes wide open.

"Don't be scared, little sister. That auntie can't get in."

Tangyuan comforted her sister in a childish voice.

Bun peered through the half-open car window at Xu Chunxia, then said to Kang Li, "Mom, that auntie seems to be holding onto the car door handle."

Kang Li nodded to show she knew, but she didn't get out. Instead, she called to the security officer in the guardhouse for help.

But Xu Chunxia looked like she'd thrown caution to the wind, gripping the car door handle with both hands and refusing to let go, no matter how the security officer pulled her.

Faced with this situation, Kang Li really wanted to swear.

But with Bun and the other two sitting in the car, she couldn't afford to be impulsive.

She took a deep breath to calm herself, stuck her head out the window, and said to Xu Chunxia, "Wait over there. Let me move the car so I'm not blocking traffic."

Xu Chunxia's eyes were red as she asked, "You sure you're not tricking me?"

"Enough. I always keep my word." Kang Li's expression was icy, and seeing Xu Chunxia still not letting go, her beautiful eyes narrowed: "Still not letting go? You want me to come down with a knife and chop your hands off?"

Xu Chunxia involuntarily flinched.

"Hurry up!"

Kang Li's tone was tinged with impatience.

"...If you trick me, I'll just wait here for you forever!"

Xu Chunxia looked aggrieved, almost in tears.

Kang Li just felt she couldn't bear to look; she might be a woman, but she had no idea what 'pitying the weak' meant.

Once Xu Chunxia let go, Kang Li drove the car over to the side by the compound's greenbelt. After parking, she told the three kids, "Sit tight in the car. Mom's going out to fix this mess, then we'll go home."

"Okay, Mom, don't worry about the mess. Guoguo won't get out of the car!"

"I'll sit quietly and wait for Mom too."

Guoguo and Tangyuan promised one after another.

Bun: "I'll be good!"

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Xu Chunxia watched as Kang Li got out and walked toward her. Before Kang Li could stop, she said, "Kang Libao, lend me five thousand—no, lend me ten thousand yuan. Once I get money in hand, I'll pay you back."

"Do I look stupid to you?" Kang Li's expression was cold, her eyes staring straight into Xu Chunxia's: "Five or ten thousand—just like that, as if it's only right. If you don't think I'm stupid, you must be treating me like your own parents. Am I?"

Hearing this, Xu Chunxia's cheeks flushed red: "Kang Libao, can't you stop being so nasty? I'm asking you for ten thousand yuan. It's not like you can't afford it. What's wrong with lending it to me? And given the price of your car, even if I asked for eighty or a hundred thousand, you'd manage easily, so why say all this nonsense to me?"

Chapter 1685

"You're absolutely right, to me, five or ten thousand is like a drop in the bucket. I could even take out eighty or a hundred thousand. But I'm not your mother or father, and I don't owe you anything. Where do you get the nerve to ask me for so much?"

Kang Li didn't want to waste any more words with Xu Chunxia. Her tone was cold: "I'll say it one last time—if you want to go back to your hometown, seeing as we're from the same village, I'll buy you a train ticket. Otherwise, I'm afraid I can't help you."

Xu Chunxia kept silent, just looking at Kang Li with a face full of resentment.

Kang Li: "Two minutes to decide."

"Kang Libao, are you really this heartless? We grew up together! Even if I did things that let you down, it's been so many years. Are you still going to hold a grudge against me?"

Xu Chunxia's voice took on a sobbing note: "Would I have come crawling to you if I hadn't been swindled out of everything? Kang Libao, can't you be a little kinder? If you don't help me, how is that any different from letting someone die right in front of you?"

Kang Li: "I'm not a good person. I don't have that kind of kindness you're talking about, Xu Chunxia. Instead of trying to play the victim in front of me, you might as well hurry up and find yourself a job. Oh right, if you pull at my car door again or stand in front of my car, don't blame me for calling the police."

What nerve, thinking she could morally blackmail her?

With a cold sneer in her heart, Kang Li figured the two minutes were about up and said, "Last thirty seconds."

"Kang Libao... if you don't help me, aren't you afraid I'll go back to the village and tell everyone you're a total penny-pincher who wouldn't give a cent?"

Xu Chunxia thought this could force Kang Li to loan her the money, but to her surprise, Kang Li just gave a chilly "heh" and said, "Do whatever you want."

"You're so cold-blooded! Kang Libao, why do you have to be this cold-blooded?"

Xu Chunxia wiped the tears from her face and glared at Kang Li: "Wasn't it just that I wanted to be with Zhou Weimin all those years ago? Do you have to hold a grudge until now? Besides, Zhou Weimin had already broken off the engagement with you at that point, and breaking it off wasn't even my fault to begin with! You've hated me all these years—how is that fair to me?"

At that, Kang Li didn't respond. She said flatly, "Time's up."

Turning around, Kang Li walked towards her car.

For a moment, Xu Chunxia seemed to go mad, lunging from behind to stop Kang Li from leaving.

But before her hand could even touch Kang Li's arm, Kang Li flipped her with an over-the-shoulder throw.

Her body slammed heavily on the ground. Xu Chunxia let out a cry of pain, and then everything hurt all over.

"Lili! Are you alright?"

It was Jiang Boya's voice. Today was Saturday. He'd just finished work out of town and immediately caught a flight back to North City, planning to see his precious daughter and little grandson at the old house. But as soon as he stepped through the door, the old man told him Kang Li hadn't brought Bun and the other two over. So Jiang Boya didn't waste a second and had the driver bring him straight to the compound.

It had been a good while since he'd last seen his precious daughter and grandkids.

All because of work.

To be more precise, the business overseas had run into some trouble and he'd had to go deal with it.

Then he'd flown back to Shen City because the company there was also in crisis.

By the time all was sorted out, another couple of months had gone by in a flash.

Jiang Boya felt exhausted. He should be enjoying a peaceful retirement just like the old man at home, but his precious daughter kept turning down the family business. She said her old dad was still young, that she wanted to teach her students, manage her own business, and had to pick up and drop off all three Buns at kindergarten—she was simply too busy to handle everything.

Sighing was useless. No matter how much he said, it made no difference. Jiang Boya could only keep working like an old ox, helping his precious daughter grow the family business.

Earlier, sitting in the car, he'd seen Kang Li almost get "ambushed" by Xu Chunxia, and immediately yelled for the driver to stop. He flung the car door open and rushed over to Kang Li on his long legs.

"Dad, when did you get back?"

Hearing Jiang Boya's voice, Kang Li immediately looked over. She put on a smile, and her voice was light and bright.

"I landed just over two hours ago. Got back to the old house and didn't see you or the three little Buns, so I thought I'd come by the compound to see you all. By the way, Dad brought you some presents, they're in the car. I'll get them for you in a bit."

Saying that, Jiang Boya turned his concern back to Kang Li: "You still haven't told me if you're alright."

"I'm fine, see for yourself."

Kang Li spun around in place in front of Jiang Boya.

Seeing for himself that his precious daughter wasn't hurt, Jiang Boya finally relaxed, then turned his gaze to Xu Chunxia: "Who is this crazy woman? What kind of grudge do you have with her that she'd try to jump you from behind?"

Xu Chunxia had already gotten up from the ground. She stared fixedly at Jiang Boya, then glanced at Kang Li for a moment, a flurry of thoughts swirling through her mind in that instant.

All of a sudden, tears welled up in her eyes and rolled down her cheeks. She called out to Jiang Boya, "Dad," and then, choking with emotion, she said, "Dad, I'm Jiang Lei, I'm your daughter. My mom took me to see you before, Dad, do you remember me?"

Jiang Boya's eyes were overflowing with disgust, as if he were looking at garbage. His expression was cold and stern: "If you want to dream, go home and do it there. Don't pollute the air here!"

"Dad! How can you say that to me? My mom is Fang Su, I'm your and my mom's daughter. Dad... You can't deny me and instead recognize a fake!"

Xu Chunxia was sobbing so hard she could barely speak, and she complained to Jiang Boya: "Kang Libao is not your daughter, I am. Dad, my adoptive parents and Kang Libao's family are from the same village. Everyone in our village knows that Kang Libao was born to her parents,

And Kang Libao and her brother are twins. Dad, you must have been fooled by Kang Libao. She wanted your money and stole my identity so she could acknowledge you!"

Damn Kang Libao. So... so all the pain and suffering she endured abroad was just her taking the fall for Kang Libao. Why? Why did she have to go through all that?

If she had to suffer and be wronged, then why did they shove her back to square one?

Shouldn't it be her that Mr. Jiang accepted as his daughter?

Xu Chunxia was certain, absolutely convinced she hadn't made a mistake.

The Mr. Jiang in front of her was exactly the same man that dead woman Fang Su had taken her to meet at a hotel all those years ago.

That dead woman said Mr. Jiang was her father, and now Xu Chunxia didn't care about anything else, she just wanted to make that dead woman's words come true.

She wanted to snatch back what rightfully belonged to her from Kang Libao's hands.

For example, that imported car parked not far away.

"Just a fake that bitch Fang Su found. You, wanting to be my daughter—are you even worthy?"

Jiang Boya sized Xu Chunxia up and down, a mocking sneer on his lips: "Dirty and disgraceful thing, get as far away from me as you can—immediately!"

"Dad!"

Xu Chunxia screamed hoarsely, grief-stricken. "My mom is Fang Su, she told me you're my dad. Why won't you acknowledge me? What's so good about Kang Libao? Why am I suddenly some filthy thing?"

Do you even know how much I suffered when I was taken overseas? Do you know I nearly died on a foreign street? Dad... How can you be this heartless! I'm your daughter, Kang Libao isn't, she's not!"

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Pointing to her own dress, Xu Chunxia sobbed, "This dress I'm wearing cost over a hundred bucks, and you want me to wear it to work as a maid, to wash dishes and clean tables? Kang Libao, what the hell are you thinking? And look at my hands, look how well I've taken care of them. Do you think these hands can go wash dishes, do housework? Can they serve people?"

Before she came back to North City, she basically lived a life of being waited on. Now she was being told to go serve others, to do dirty work like washing dishes—weren't they just humiliating her?

"Do you think you're so noble?" Kang Li curled her lips into a smirk, sarcasm flickering in her beautiful eyes. She said coldly, "Using your own hands to work and earn your living and support yourself—is that something to be ashamed of?"

Kang Li didn't even have to think to guess what Xu Chunxia was up to out there all those years she disappeared.

Chapter 1687: Ridicule

"Open your eyes and look carefully,"

Kang Li fetched a photo from the master bedroom, held it up in front of Xu Chunxia's face, and said coldly, "See it clearly? In this photo, one is my grandmother, and one is my grandaunt. My father found me using this photo. It was my father who recognized me, not me who went looking for him. Do you have anything else to say now?"

Xu Chunxia was dumbfounded.

Because the photo was obviously taken many years ago, and the faces of the two people in the picture... one of them looked almost identical to Li Bao.

As if feeling she hadn't shattered Xu Chunxia's daydream enough, Kang Li went on: "If you're still clinging to hope, you can go ask that Lady Fang you mentioned to confirm it. Ask her if I'm actually the child she abandoned all those years ago.

Xu Chunxia, it's your business if you like dreaming, no one else has the right to meddle, but if you drag my family into your unrealistic fantasies, don't blame me for crushing your dreams!"

Utterly shameless, always scheming to get something for nothing—this kind of behavior is simply despicable!

"Li Bao, you... you've gone too far!"

Xu Chunxia tore her gaze from the photo, met Kang Li's cold eyes, and accused, "All the suffering I endured after being tricked into going abroad is because of you, Li Bao, why don't you just drop dead?"

There was a crisp "slap."

Kang Li slapped Xu Chunxia across the face, sneering, "Was it me who made you get swindled into going abroad and suffer? Xu Chunxia, you still don't see your own faults. I really pity you, and also think you're nothing but a pathetic wretch!

After all, you got 'mistakenly recognized' by Lady Fang with a purpose—this could have been completely avoided. But you're vain, and just had to grab this pie falling from the sky. Later you couldn't tell good people from bad, got fooled and abused abroad—so who's to blame? Besides, if I hadn't picked you up off the street and had someone take you to the embassy, do you think you could have made it back to China alive?"

"So it was you... you saved me abroad..."

Xu Chunxia staggered back two steps, muttering, "No, I don't believe it. You're so cold-blooded and you hate me, how could you possibly save me?!"

"You think I wanted to save you?"

Kang Li scoffed, "Never mind that we're from the same village—even if you were just another Chinese person, I'd still lend a hand. So you really don't need to thank me."

After a slight pause, Kang Li's eyes grew complicated as she looked at Xu Chunxia, "Remember when I ran into you at the G City train station? I warned you not to get too close to strangers, but you didn't listen—you said I was meddling. Xu Chunxia, if I'm not mistaken, you're the one who went abroad with that foreign man at your side. You followed him yourself, didn't you? It wasn't coercion, nor were you forcibly kidnapped and taken abroad, right?"

"..."

Xu Chunxia's lips quivered, but for a long while, no words came.

"Are you awake now?"

Kang Li asked.

Xu Chunxia still didn't answer.

It wasn't that she didn't want to—it was that she had no idea what to say.

Her scheming had fallen flat, and now Kang Li was throwing sarcasm at her—Xu Chunxia was lost. Back when Lady Fang "mistakenly recognized" her as her daughter, why did she let herself get swept up in it?

Her mother had given birth to her out in the fields, which was something most villagers knew. But she just... she just believed what that Lady Fang said.

Vain?

She was vain. She just wanted a better life...

Thinking of this, Xu Chunxia glared at Kang Li: "Is it wrong for me to want a better life? Why do you say my wanting a good life means I'm vain?"

"Wanting a better life for yourself isn't wrong, but you knew the person recognizing you as her daughter had ulterior motives. Instead of thinking to prove your identity, you chose to go along. That's on you—you should have expected to fall from the clouds one day."

Kang Li said expressionlessly. Seeing Xu Chunxia had no reaction, she added, "Come on, I'll take you out."

But to her surprise, Xu Chunxia suddenly screamed hysterically, "I didn't want to prove my identity? You have no idea what it was like for me back then—how can you judge me? I fainted by the roadside and didn't know anything. When I woke up, I was in the hospital, and then that woman took me home to be her little maid.

At first I was fine being her maid, but then one day she suddenly called me into her room and told me I was the daughter she'd been separated from for years. There wasn't a flaw in her whole story, and ever since I was little the Xu family treated me harshly, so how could I not doubt my own parentage?

And that woman—seeing how much I hated my own family—she poured her heart out to me, saying I was her own daughter, that I'd been lost and that's why we were separated. How could I not believe it? She was truly kind to me—she took me out for haircuts, took me shopping for clothes, even arranged a job for me. If it were you, would you treasure this warmth? Would you rather go back to the Xu family who always treated their daughter so badly?"

Not giving Kang Li a chance to interrupt, Xu Chunxia kept sobbing, hysterically continuing, "Every day she made me learn this and that, because she said my birth father liked obedient, sensible, ambitious girls. She told me my biological father's surname was Jiang, said he'd definitely like me, and insisted I follow her every instruction every day,

Chapter 1688: Reviled_2

But I'm not a puppet, letting her pull my strings. So I started seeing a foreign man... In the end, isn't all my trouble tied to you, isn't it all your fault? If that woman hadn't mistaken me, if you and that woman had reconnected earlier, would I have been dragged home as her maid, would all that crap have happened after?"

Kang Li was stunned by Xu Chunxia's shamelessness, but nothing special showed on her face; she just twitched the corner of her mouth ever so slightly before she spoke: "Xu Chunxia, I really haven't met anyone as shameless as you. I've already said before, whether you called Lady Fang your mother or whether you went abroad, none of it was my doing—it's your own greed and vanity,

and because you just wanted too much, that's how all the mess that followed happened.

But if you insist on picking this apart, trying to figure out who's right or wrong, then at best you and Lady Fang split the blame fifty-fifty for the 'mistaken identity' thing. So if you want to resent someone, resent yourself and Lady Fang. I have no reason to carry the burden for you.

And for the record, I never thought of reuniting with Lady Fang, and I never will in this life. You're obsessed with having Lady Fang as your mom? Fine, I have no opinion on that. Right now I'll send you out, you go find Lady Fang if that's what you want."

Same greed for vanity, same selfishness—in Kang Li's eyes, Fang Su and Xu Chunxia were destined to be mother and daughter.

It'd be best if those two could get tied together, mess each other up from here on out, and stop popping up in front of her looking for attention.

"I'll walk her to the gate."

After nodding to Captain Kang, the old couple, and Jiang Boya—the so-called dad—Kang Li didn't care if Xu Chunxia really wanted to leave or not. She grabbed the woman's wrist, just like she had when bringing Xu Chunxia into the compound, and dragged her out of the living room.

Xu Chunxia struggled; she didn't want to leave.

After all, she'd come all this way and hadn't accomplished a damn thing, and now someone was hauling her out like a dead dog. How could she just accept that?

"I'm not leaving! Kang Libao, I'm not leaving, you still haven't lent me money!"

Xu Chunxia struggled backwards, damn determined to borrow money right there in Kang Li's house. But with Kang Li's strength, all her resistance was a joke.

"Shut up.

Kang Li parted her lips, scolding in a low voice: "Let me give you some advice. If you don't want to really turn into some rat crawling around in the gutter, you'd better get your head on straight, and earn your money with your own two hands."

"Who the hell are you calling a gutter rat?"

Xu Chunxia looked pissed—and obviously, she was feeling guilty as hell.

"Why so worked up?"

Kang Li glanced at her with cold amusement, half-smiling as she said: "Don't you realize that from head to toe, even deep down in your bones, you reek of sleaze?"

Her voice wasn't loud, but Kang Li made sure Xu Chunxia heard: "Playing dumb in front of me won't work, Xu Chunxia. Honestly, I knew you were shady, but I didn't think you'd fuck up so bad—messing up step after step, not knowing when to stop or make things right, until you just went full-on, selling your own body..."

With all her secrets laid bare, Xu Chunxia immediately shrank, terrified someone would find out about the sleazy things she'd done before coming back to North City. She lowered her voice, grinding her teeth: "Kang Libao, stop slandering me. I... I'm not some cheap slut. If people back home start spreading rumors about me, it'll most definitely be because of you, and then... then I won't let you off!"

At that, Kang Li snorted and said flatly: "Don't worry, I really don't care enough to blab your crap all over town."

Seeing the suspicion in Xu Chunxia's eyes, Kang Li sneered: "Back when we first met in North City, I never breathed a word about you back home. Now you've made yourself into such a mess, to me it's just surprising—but I'd never drag out your dirty laundry in front of the folks back home."

Also, you ought to take the time and get your health checked at a hospital. Don't catch something without realizing, and wait until the symptoms crop up—then it'll be too late."

Xu Chunxia glared at her: "You... you're cursing me! Kang Libao, who does that, seeing me and slapping my face, now you're wishing disease on me, you really are cold-blooded!"

Kang Li feigned solemnity, raising an eyebrow: "That disease? Which kind do you mean?"

Xu Chunxia's eyes were practically spitting fire: "Stop pretending to be clueless with me!"

Kang Li sighed: "So you do have some brains after all. Since they haven't all been thrown in the dumpster, try recalling what your private life used to look like. Xu Chunxia, I'm genuinely just reminding you out of kindness. Whether you want to listen or not is up to you."

Xu Chunxia couldn't care less about her swollen face, and her expression no longer showed any hysteria. She stopped glaring at Kang Li, and instead lowered her head, letting Kang Li drag her along step by step, mumbling: "I never messed around with people. I just... I just had a few boyfriends, that's all. Stop trying to scare me, I'm not gonna catch any dirty disease."

"If that's how you think, then just take what I said as nonsense."

Though Kang Li hadn't studied Chinese medicine in depth, when she was receiving elite family education, she did learn a bit, so the basics—taking a pulse, recognizing medicinal herbs—weren't hard for her.

And when she'd dragged Xu Chunxia into the compound earlier, just from Xu Chunxia's complexion she'd noticed something off, so she couldn't help but check her pulse.

Chapter 1689: Mockery_3

Basically, it can be confirmed that Xu Chunxia has an illness involving personal privacy.

At the entrance of the courtyard.

"Kang Libao, you... you really won't lend me money?"

Kang Li dragged Xu Chunxia out of the courtyard, then walked farther away from the gate. After that, she let go of Xu Chunxia, just in time to hear what the other woman was saying.

She didn't say anything, just quietly watched Xu Chunxia.

"I know what I said at your place before wasn't just excessive, it was totally unreasonable, but you already beat me up—can't just send me away empty handed, can you?"

And besides, even if I do what you said and go look for some dish-washing or nanny job, that's going to take time, isn't it? Right now I don't have a single cent to my name..."

"When things are like this, you still don't plan to go back to your hometown?"

"I don't want to return in disgrace."

"..."

Kang Li stared at Xu Chunxia for a moment, then asked: "By the way, how did you get tricked?"

"I don't want to talk about it."

Xu Chunxia was afraid Kang Li would laugh at how brainless she was and refused to say how she'd been deceived.

"It was a man who tricked you, wasn't it?"

As soon as she said this, Kang Li immediately saw a change in Xu Chunxia's expression and knew she'd probably guessed right. For a moment, she was rather speechless. In a dry tone, she said, "The difference between people and other animals is that we can think independently, discover problems, study them, and then try to solve them.

To put it simply, we humans have a kind of wisdom that other animals don't, but as for you, I don't know what you use your brain for. You managed to let a man swindle you out of all your money; impressive. Xu Chunxia, you're really something. Having a brain and not using it, you just handed a man a 'get rich quick' opportunity."

"I know you're mocking me."

Xu Chunxia looked at Kang Li. "If you can't lend me much, can't you at least lend me a little?"

"..."

Kang Li shifted her gaze to Xu Chunxia's outstretched hand. After a moment, she pulled two Great Reunion Banknotes from her pocket. "That's all I have. If you want it, take it."

"Twenty?"

Xu Chunxia stared at the twenty yuan Kang Li handed her, her eyes full of disbelief.

"Too little? Xu Chunxia, you realize this is half a month's wage for an apprentice worker."

In recent years, wages may have increased a bit, but apprentice workers only get 18 at the lowest, 26 at most. Even full-time workers start at just 36 yuan.

Besides, prices are low in this era, so money goes further. The twenty yuan she gave Xu Chunxia would last her a good ten days.

"Don't want it?"

Kang Li wasn't going to indulge Xu Chunxia's bad habits. Seeing the woman hesitate, she prepared to put the money back in her pocket.

Unexpectedly, Xu Chunxia snatched the twenty yuan out of her hand and said, quite disdainfully, "Having recognized such a wealthy dad, you're still so stingy. Kang Libao, you're really small-minded!"

"Yes, yes, I'm very small-minded. Now that I've given you the money, I won't waste any more breath with you."

With that, Kang Li turned toward the courtyard gate. "Don't come looking for me again. I don't resent you enough to be enemies, but neither do I want any connection with you. I especially don't want to get close."

As these words landed, Kang Li was already walking back into the courtyard.

Xu Chunxia gripped the twenty tightly, watching Kang Li's back and muttering under her breath, "Kang Libao, you think I want any connection with you, or want to get close?"

...

"She left?"

As she entered the living room, Kang Li heard Cai Xiufen ask. She nodded. "I lent her twenty."

Chief Kang said nothing.

Jiang Boya had been playing with the three dumplings, but after hearing that, he looked over at Kang Li. "People like that? You shouldn't even lend them a cent."

"I know someone like her isn't worth a thing, and she's not deserving of sympathy. But at the end of the day, she's still from our village. If I really don't lend a single cent, I wouldn't care about saving face, but if people in the village find out about today, they'll end up gossiping about my parents.

After all, people usually sympathize with the weak, and Xu Chunxia's family doesn't have a single reasonable person. If something happened to her here in Beicheng and her relatives found out, they'd cause trouble at our place for their own benefit, twisting facts in the village, and I don't want to hear that buzzing like flies."

When Kang Li finished, Chief Kang said, "People from the same village see each other all the time. If Libao really didn't lend even a cent, it wouldn't sound good at all if word got around."

Jiang Boya heard this and, without emotion, said, "She brought it all on herself; it has nothing to do with Libao, nothing to do with you, big brother, or sister-in-law. But, that said, you have a point. You've lived in the same village for years. If you really didn't lend her anything and it got around, it would sound pretty bad."

Kang Li said, "Dad, Xu Chunxia was taken abroad by someone. To be honest, it kind of helped me out of a jam, and I don't mean that out of pity."

"I know what you mean."

Jiang Boya's expression was hard to read. He said, "That woman from the Davis family, in order to cure her son's illness, will try anything. She arranged for someone to trick that lunatic just now into going abroad, all to make sure I wouldn't find out and ruin her plans.

Chapter 1690: Sullied_4

If it had been you who was taken away, and I didn't know about it, she might've extracted half, or even more, of your bone marrow just to save her son. Maybe I'm thinking too badly of that woman from the Davis family, but who knows, things like this can always take a bad turn."

Regarding Allen, Kang Li had never mentioned anything to Captain Kang or Cai Xiufen; she didn't want her parents to worry.

Even though Allen's illness had already been cured with a bone marrow donation from someone else, just bringing up what happened back then—there was no need to even think about it, Kang Li already knew how anxious her real parents would get.

However, now that things had been said to this point, Kang Li knew she could no longer hide it.

But since Jiang Boya, her conveniently acquired father, was present, she planned to tell the full story a little later on.

After sitting for about an hour at Kang Li's place, Jiang Boya got up to leave, taking all three little dumplings with him.

Watching as Jiang Boya's car drove off in the distance, Kang Li pulled her gaze back and turned to enter the courtyard gate.

Mingrui, Minghan, and Mingwei had returned home from school. As soon as they came in, the three of them went straight to the kitchen to cook, saying that since there was no school tomorrow, they could leave their homework until the next day.

"Li Bao, who's Allen? What's this about extracting bone marrow? Why did they want to take yours?"

The moment she stepped into the living room, Kang Li heard Cai Xiufen throw out three questions in a row.

"Mom, you and Dad don't worry, my bone marrow wasn't taken..."

Sitting down on the sofa, Kang Li explained everything about Allen and Miss Lily. When it came to Allen's background and Miss Lily, she inevitably mentioned Jiang Boya, and by the time she finished recounting the whole thing, Captain Kang's face had sunk, and he was silent for a long time.

Cai Xiufen, on the other hand, frowned and spoke coldly: "How could that woman think only about saving her own son and ignore whether others live or die?! Is her son's life the only one that matters and other people's don't?"

"Mom, you and Dad misunderstood, I think what my dad just said wasn't quite right."

Kang Li explained, "After getting to know Miss Lily, I not only saw but truly felt that she's a kind-hearted woman. She would never, just for Allen's life, disregard someone else's."

Cai Xiufen: "You're just defending that woman because of your Allen, aren't you?"

Kang Li: "No, I'm not taking sides for Miss Lily, nor am I letting her off because of Allen. Mom, Dad, Miss Lily really is a good person, but as for how she arranged for Xu Chunxia to be taken abroad, she really did go too far with that."

Cai Xiufen: "Chunxia only got taken abroad because that woman thought she was you! If she'd known you were Mr. Jiang's daughter, it would have been you who suffered."

"I wouldn't call it suffering. It was just to run a test, to see if the bone marrow matched."

Kang Li smiled, then said, "As for what Xu Chunxia said, I don't think it's related to Miss Lily at all."

"Then who's it related to? That Chunxia girl almost died overseas."

Cai Xiufen's face was not looking good.

"It has something to do with the man who took her, and also, probably, with the feelings between two people. Otherwise, if that man really liked Xu Chunxia, he wouldn't have let her end up fainting all disheveled by the roadside in the wilderness."

Kang Li didn't realize that what she'd just said about Miss Lily was pretty close to the real story; but to say Xu Chunxia fainting by the roadside was because of some love affair was off the mark.

Let's put it this way: even though Miss Lily had arranged for Jack to search for Jiang Boya's child and bring her to their country, she never intended to risk someone else's life for Allen, even if the bone marrow matched.

Miss Lily never said this aloud, but it's obvious from how she handled things with Xu Chunxia afterward.

The real reason Xu Chunxia was abused by Jack and fainted by the roadside was, without a doubt, because she wasn't Jiang Boya's daughter.

Jack was taking it out on her.

He liked Miss Lily, and by extension, really liked Allen too. But then he found out that all his efforts had been in vain.

Besides, Jack had never really had genuine feelings for Xu Chunxia from the start—he'd lied to get her overseas.

After finding out Xu Chunxia was a fake, in a fit of rage, he abused her as an outlet for his anger.

Later on, it was Xu Chunxia herself who managed to escape from the manor and wound up in the hands of the Jiang family's second branch.

All her money was taken, and unwilling to live as a maid or housekeeper, she managed to escape again from the Jiang family's second branch.

Exhausted and hungry, and without even a warm coat, it was no surprise she would faint while fleeing as a refugee.

"Let's not talk about Chunxia's situation anymore—just tell us about Allen's illness..."

Before Cai Xiufen could finish, Kang Li smiled, "Allen's already recovered. Miss Lily found a suitable bone marrow in their country, they never needed mine."

"Your mother and I were abroad for so long. Why didn't you ever mention this to us?"

Captain Kang asked.

"Didn't I? I could have sworn I mentioned it."