

Weak B 511

Chapter 511 Fair Competition

"Cultural Work Troupe, do you remember now?"

"No."

Kang Yiyang was a straightforward guy. After thinking for a moment, he simply shook his head.

"Really?!"

Lin Dan feigned surprise and said, "That day, you were in my dad's office with your aunt and my cousin. I had a brief encounter with you then."

Upon hearing Lin Dan mention that, Kang Yiyang finally remembered, but his expression remained unchanged. He said, "I remember now, you are Commander Lin's daughter."

Lin Dan smiled and nodded, "You're right, I'm Lin Dan. I didn't expect to run into you here today."

"Are you here on business?"

Kang Yiyang casually asked.

"I'm visiting the set. The actress who plays Nurse Xiao Wang in this play is a good friend of mine. Before this film started shooting, she asked me to come to the set if I had time. Thinking that our troupe doesn't have any performances in the next few days and tomorrow is the weekend, I took a day off to come and see my good friend Wang Min."

As soon as Lin Dan finished speaking, the Wang Min she mentioned, having just removed her makeup, came over: "Dandan, do you know Comrade Kang Yiyang?"

"Ah?"

Lin Dan turned to her close friend, "Sort of!"

"What do you mean 'sort of'?"

Wang Min playfully shook her head.

"Comrade Lin Dan, you talk to Comrade Wang Min, I have other things to attend to, so I won't stay here any longer."

Kang Yiyang looked natural as he spoke; he nodded towards Wang Min as a greeting and goodbye, then turned around and left.

"He's already walked away and you're still watching!"

Wang Min teased Lin Dan: "You wouldn't have fallen for Comrade Kang Yiyang, would you?"

With a slight twinkle in her eyes, Wang Min observed Lin Dan's facial expression carefully: "First answer me, where did you meet Comrade Kang Yiyang?"

"Our Cultural Work Troupe."

Lin Dan didn't hide it: "He's a newcomer recruited by our Cultural Work Troupe this year."

Wang Min: "So Kang Yiyang is from your Cultural Work Troupe? Did you know? Director Li almost praises Kang Yiyang every day on the set. He says he acts with a natural flair, as if he was born to be an actor. Director Li even suggested that Kang Yiyang should come work with our film company."

"Minmin, in the blink of an eye, you've changed the way you address Comrade Kang Yiyang. Isn't that improper?"

Could it be... her close friend also had feelings for Kang Yiyang?

Thinking this, Lin Dan didn't wait for Wang Min to respond, and with a bit of shyness, added: "Minmin, I'll tell you a secret. I fell in love with Comrade Kang Yiyang at first sight. You would support me being with him, right?"

Lin Dan was clearly playing mind games, aiming to let her close friend know that Kang Yiyang was her first choice so that she wouldn't fall for the same man. "..."

Wang Min's expression momentarily froze, but she quickly recovered and laughed, "I definitely support you. But it seems like Kang Yiyang isn't too familiar with you. He probably doesn't even know you're interested in him. Also, it seems he doesn't feel that way about you."

Lin Dan's cheeks turned a slight red: "I'm just beginning to get to know him. As time passes, he should be able to see my feelings."

Wang Min: "But what if Kang Yiyang doesn't like you back?"

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. If it really doesn't work out between him and me, I won't linger unrequited."

Having said this, Lin Dan's expression remained natural.

"Dandan, I don't want to deceive you; I actually also like Kang Yiyang. How about we compete fairly for him? What do you think?"

Wang Min didn't want to be the villain, so she decided to clear the air with her close friend before anything else happened.

Chapter 512: No Conflict Arisen

To avoid any rift in their relationship because they liked the same boy.

Lin Dan was stunned upon hearing Wang Min's words.

She hadn't expected that her savvy friend and confidante would play such an astute game with her.

With a slight frown, Lin Dan composed herself, her eyes filled with sincerity, "Are you sure you're not joking with me?"

"Dandan, why would you think I'm joking?"

Wang Min, with a smile on her face, said, "A good boy naturally attracts many girls. During the filming of this movie, I've come to regard Kang Yiyang as a good boy, the kind I'd like for a partner, so I've made up my mind to pursue him..."

Lin Dan cut her off, "But I just told you directly that I like Comrade Kang Yiyang. Since you know my feelings, why are you proposing a fair competition? Are we not good friends?"

"Dandan, that's a bit overbearing of you, even somewhat unreasonable! First, your feelings for Kang Yiyang are one-sided. In other words, we are on the same starting line in pursuing Kang Yiyang. Second, no one knows who Kang Yiyang will end up with. The person he chooses in the future might not be either of us. Do you understand?"

Wang Min's smile remained as she looked intently at Lin Dan.

"What should I understand?"

Lin Dan was perplexed.

Wang Min said, "We are friends, and now, we both like Kang Yiyang. As your friend, I would certainly wish for you to have your wishes fulfilled. But as a woman, I don't want to give up on my own feelings because of our friendship. Likewise, I hope you can do the same. If Kang Yiyang chooses you, I will definitely bow out and not cause any trouble for you."

"I understand now. You're right, anything more we say now is superfluous. In the end, we don't know who Comrade Kang Yiyang will end up with. It might even be... a girl neither of us knows," Lin Dan said, feeling a hint of bitterness in her heart.

She had been presumptuous!

Why should she assume that Kang Yiyang would reciprocate her feelings just because she liked him?

With that thought, Lin Dan smiled at Wang Min and nodded, "Alright, let's have a fair competition. If Comrade Kang Yiyang likes you, I will also bless your relationship and not cause you any trouble."

Wang Min linked arms with Lin Dan, her eyes brimming with laughter, "I knew Dandan was the most understanding!"

"Understanding?" Lin Dan snorted lightly, pretending to be displeased, "I don't want to at all, but what you said makes sense. If I were to fall out with you over this matter, where else could I find such a good friend like you?"

Wang Min proclaimed, "Good friends for life!"

"Yes, we will be good friends for life," echoed Lin Dan.

After removing his makeup, Kang Yiyang bid farewell to the director, other crew members, and actors, and then headed to the lodging provided by the production team to pack his personal belongings, ready to return to the compound.

Little did he know, just when he was about to take the car, Wang Min suddenly appeared.

"Kang Yiyang, I like you. Will you go out with me?"

Wang Min's action at this moment had a reason; she knew after today, seeing Kang Yiyang again would not be as convenient for her as it would be for Lin Dan.

So as not to let Lin Dan gain an advantage due to her proximity, she felt it was imperative to express her feelings to the boy she liked today.

Chapter 513: Untitled -

Kang Yiyang looked puzzled, "Sorry, I won't be in a relationship for the next ten years." Working in a film crew, Kang Yiyang naturally knew Wang Min and they had acted together more than once.

However, Kang Yiyang had absolutely no feelings for Wang Min and only saw her as a colleague on set.

Thus, facing Wang Min's sudden confession, Kang Yiyang felt it was extremely unexpected!

"No relationships for ten years?" Wang Min didn't look disappointed in her eyes, but rather surprised, "Why would you think that way? Can you tell me?"

Kang Yiyang paused for a moment, then nodded and said, "I have my own plans for the future." He would definitely take the college entrance exam in two or three years, and then spend four years in college, which added up to seven years.

After graduating from college, his life would have a new beginning, and if he thought about dating or marriage at that time, it would inevitably affect his work.

Therefore, a three-year buffer period seemed quite necessary.

And after ten years, he would only be 28 years old.

At that time, to discuss such personal lifelong matters wouldn't be too late!

Wang Min, "You... are you really decided on this?"

"Yes," Kang Yiyang nodded slightly, "Comrade Wang, if there's nothing else, then let's part ways here."

"...Do you know that Lin Dan is interested in you?"

Wang Min hesitated for a while, holding her own intentions, confirming Lin Dan's feelings with Kang Yiyang's assistance.

Because she knew that Lin Dan's father was the head of the North City Cultural Workgroup, and Lin Dan was as beautiful as her, and had the convenience of being close to the right places, she still felt a pang of jealousy in her heart.

Kang Yiyang maintained an indifferent expression, "Comrade Lin Dan and I have only met once, but even if Comrade Lin Dan feels as Comrade Wang says, I will still adhere to the decision I have made, goodbye."

Having said that, Kang Yiyang picked up his large travel bag and boarded the shuttle bus.

"He's just leaving like that?"

Wang Min watched the shuttle bus drive away, murmuring involuntarily, "Ten years without relationships..."

If that was truly the case, by then, she would be 30 years old. Not to mention whether she would worry about marrying late, her family absolutely wouldn't tolerate her being an old maid.

Should she give up?

Wang Min walked towards the set, her mind in complete disarray.

The courtyard.

"You're back?!"

Seeing Kang Yiyang carrying a travel bag into the living room, Kang Li immediately smiled brightly, and said to her doting mother, "Look, your eldest grandson has returned completely, now do you still worry?"

Cai Xiufang, the doting darling daughter: "Have I said anything recently in front of you?"

Kang Li pragmatically responded, "Not really."

"Know you haven't, what did you just say?" Cai Xiufang didn't want to admit that she missed her eldest grandson, not for any particular reason, but simply didn't want to vocalize her worries.

In fact, in front of her grandchildren or even her sons, Cai Xiufang was very restrained about her emotions.

It was only towards her darling daughter that she was unabashedly affectionate.

Loving her daughter, cherishing her daughter, and anything related to her daughter could be openly discussed.

Her feelings were quite outward.

Otherwise, she wouldn't have given Kang Li the nickname "Li Bao" from a very young age, making it known throughout the village.

So much so that other family members and villagers, upon seeing Kang Li, all called out her nickname.

Kang Yiyang placed his travel bag on the floor, flashed a big white-toothed smile, and said, "I know Grandma would worry about me, but Auntie is right, I really have completely returned now, thank you Grandma for your concern!"

Chapter 514 Incomprehension

The three little ones had been on winter break for over half a month now, and were playing in their own room. The moment they heard Kang Yiyang's voice, they all excitedly ran to the living room.

"Big cousin, I missed you so much!"

Milk Bun Ming Han hugged Kang Yiyang's long legs, tilting his little head back and gazing up with wide, shiny black eyes, filled with joy.

Xiao Ming Wei wouldn't be outdone, "I missed big cousin so much too!"

Kang Yiyang smiled, "Big cousin missed you guys too!" Then, Kang Yiyang looked at Min Rui, "Ruirui, didn't you miss big cousin?"

"Yes."

Min Rui nodded lightly.

"Sit down and let's talk."

Kang Li beckoned his older nephew to sit on the couch, laughter twining in her foxy eyes, "These three have been asking practically every day when you would come back, my ears are about to develop calluses from it!"

Xiao Ming Wei whined, "Mom, we just missed our big cousin so much!"

"I know. But you mention it every day, and really, my ears can't take it. Grandma feels the same as I do, not convinced? Ask Grandma," Kang Li said with a laugh.

Milk Bun Ming Han, "Grandma, do you?"

Cai Xiufang's eyes were filled with affectionate laughter as she shook her head, "No."

"Mom, did you hear that? Grandma said her ears don't have calluses!" Milk Bun said cutely, making a funny face at her mother.

At that moment, Kang Yiyang asked, "Why haven't I seen Grandpa?"

"He went back to our hometown. The day I came back from the film set, your grandpa left the next day, undeterred by any persuasions." Kang Li had actually seen the duties of the Team Leader weighing on Captain Kang from early on.

It can be said that within less than a week of arriving in North City, Captain Kang was getting restless and wanted to go back to his hometown.

But then he would think about how he might not know when he'd see his precious daughter again, so he withstood the longing for his hometown until Kang Li returned to the courtyard from the film set. After that, Captain Kang insisted on going back to the hometown no matter what.

That night, Kang Li made a call to the team headquarters back home to inform Big Brother Kang about Captain Kang's return date. After breakfast the next morning, they saw Captain Kang off on the train back to the hometown.

Kang Yiyang, "Grandpa couldn't let go of the team's matters."

Kang Li nodded, acknowledging the truth in the statement.

Cai Xiufang, "Your dad just can't sit still!"

"It's not about being restless, my dad has a strong sense of responsibility," Kang Li said with a smile, "After all, he bears the duty of being the Team Leader. Besides, if I had kept insisting that my dad stay that day, he might have ended up getting sick from the frustration!"

"Let him be, it's his hardworking fate," Cai Xiufang casually remarked, playing with Milk Bun Ming Han on the side.

"Auntie, what's with the girls in North City all being like that, huh?"

Kang Yiyang suddenly let out a sigh, seeing his furrowed brows, Kang Li couldn't help but be curious, "Like what? Tell me."

"Before leaving the set to come home, a female comrade who was acting with me out of the blue said she liked me. Auntie, I've only ever acted opposite that female comrade on set, and we've never had any contact off the set. How could she start to express her feelings for me just like that?"

Kang Yiyang's brows were almost twisted into knots, "Auntie, you don't think I'd end up entangled by some senseless girl like my little uncle, do you?"

At that, Kang Li didn't respond but simply asked with a smile, "How did you respond to the girl?"

Kang Yiyang, "I said I wouldn't be in a relationship for ten years."

Kang Li, "Not in a relationship for ten years? Why not?"

"Didn't you mention I have to take my college entrance exams in two or three years? From enrollment to graduation, it's a four-year gap, and after graduation, I need to work for at least another three years. Once everything is stable, then it wouldn't be too late to think about settling down for life. I think that's not too late."

Chapter 515: No Rush

Kang Li: "Getting married at twenty-seven or twenty-eight isn't late at all. So how did you respond to that comrade, and what did she say?"

Kang Yiyang: "She didn't really say much... Oh right, just before I got on the car, she mentioned that Comrade Lin Dan is interested in me and asked if I was aware. Kang Li, don't you find it incredibly odd? I mean, I barely know her, and I've only met that Comrade Lin Dan once. How come one after another, they're taking an interest in me?"

"Didn't you feel flattered at all?"

With a smirk on her lips and raised eyebrows, Kang Li asked.

"Not at all."

Kang Yiyang answered very directly.

Kang Li continued: "Not even a little flutter in your heart?"

Kang Yiyang shook his head: "No feelings whatsoever."

"Then just ignore it all. Besides, since you've said that, I suppose that comrade will understand your stance and won't show up in front of you again."

"Kang Li, are you sure? I'm actually scared, worried about ending up like my little uncle, with a crazy woman haunting him."

Listening to the conversation between her beloved daughter and her eldest grandson, Cai Xiufang finally spoke up: "Yangyang, are you really planning to get married that late?"

Kang Yiyang: "Grandma, didn't Kang Li just say that getting married at twenty-seven or twenty-eight isn't late? Besides, by then, I will be a college graduate, have a good job, and I'm not bad-looking either. I won't worry about not finding someone."

Kang Li: "That's actually true." Kang Li laughed and looked at her mother: "Mom, don't worry about your eldest grandson's marriage; my big brother and sister-in-law are taking care of it. But my little brother, you can nag him about marriage every now and then."

"I reckon your little brother probably feels the same way as Yangyang, especially after that crazy woman's incident; your little brother might even be scared to interact with girls now."

With a worried face, Cai Xiufang said: "How can that Yang Family girl be such a calamity? Such a decent girl, yet so shameless, latching onto a young man who has no feelings for her. Why is she so persistent?"

"How such people think, us ordinary folk just can't understand." As she spoke, Kang Li glanced at the three kids, observing each with their ears perked up, listening seriously to the adults' conversation, she couldn't help but laugh: "Do you understand what we're saying?"

Min Rui and the twins shook their heads together.

Kang Li smiled helplessly: "Since you don't understand, go play in your room then!"

The twins: "Okay!"

Min Rui: "I'm going to read a book." He got up, taking the twins with him as they left the living room.

Kang Yiyang: "Grandma, my little uncle isn't worried about finding a wife."

"Yangyang is telling you to stop rushing my little brother to find a wife." Kang Li laughed as she "translated" Kang Yiyang's words for her mother, and hearing this, Cai Xiufang said: "I'm not rushing; I'll just bring it up whenever I think of it."

Her son wasn't in dire need of a wife, so there was nothing to rush about.

Due to the extremely cold weather, Kang Li hadn't taken the three kids to the TV station to film the show for the past two to three weekends.

That day, after the filming was over, Wu Yue pulled Kang Li aside to a quiet spot, somewhat embarrassed to say: "My cousin Dandan has taken a liking to your eldest nephew!"

Kang Li: "I know."

"How do you know? I haven't mentioned it to you before today."

Wu Yue looked surprised.

Kang Li spoke in an even tone: "Yangyang told me. After he finished his scenes, he returned to the courtyard, and not long after entering, he mentioned a girl had confessed to him, which he found quite baffling. Later, that girl also said that Lin Dan was interested in Yangyang and asked if he knew."

"Who is it? Who's the blabbermouth that let out the secret of Dandan liking your eldest nephew?"

Wu Yue's face turned somewhat displeased.

Chapter 516: Look How Happy You Are

"There's nothing to worry about. My Yangyang said he's not going to be in a relationship for ten years." Upon hearing Kang Li's words, Wu Yue was stupefied, and after a while, she confirmed, "Are you sure? Did Yangyang really say that?"

Kang Li "Hmm"ed in response.

Wu Yue said, "If that's what he said, I guess my cousin will be crying her eyes out." After a brief pause, Wu Yue continued, "You definitely wouldn't guess, but my cousin fell head over heels for your nephew the moment she saw him. She's always asking me about Yangyang, but I don't know anything and naturally have nothing to tell her."

"You don't need to worry about your cousin's business, and as for my nephew's affairs... I'm not going to meddle. But you can tell your cousin what my nephew said, to prevent her from impulsively revealing her feelings to him, which might end with her being..."

Kang Li didn't finish her sentence when she saw Wu Yue nodding repeatedly, "I understand what you mean, you're worried my cousin would feel embarrassed if your nephew shuts her down with his response. But is Yangyang really not going to date for ten years?"

"That kid has a mind of his own. If he said it out loud, he's very likely to stick to it. Besides, Yangyang has always been set on taking the college entrance exam one day so he can get into a university for higher education. For that goal, he wouldn't jump into marriage too early and risk getting entangled in too much life stuff. If he gets the chance to take the entrance exam, he wouldn't be able to concentrate on studying if his life is too complicated, and he might miss the opportunity to go to university."

Kang Li said so, then paused before continuing, "Because of what happened with my younger brother, Yangyang is quite scared of interacting with girls, even more afraid of encountering one that is obtrusive and persistent."

Wu Yue: "That won't happen. My cousin has been raised well; she wouldn't do anything to lose face. Actually, I don't support Dandan chasing after Yangyang."

Kang Li looked at her with a meaningful gaze, "Why not?"

"Dandan is two years older than Yangyang, we can set that aside for now. It's her so-called love at first sight that I disagree with her pursuing Yangyang. In my view, love at first sight just isn't reliable."

"I know what you really want to say. Isn't it just that love at first sight is often shallow and based on appearance?! But as I see it, there's nothing wrong with that. Everyone likes beautiful things. Even if love at first sight starts with looks, who can say that two people won't develop true feelings while spending time together?"

"Hearing you say that, you don't oppose your nephew getting involved with my cousin, and you don't mind that my cousin is two years older than your nephew?"

"Did I say that?" Kang Li rolled her eyes at Wu Yue, "I just said there's nothing wrong with love at first sight. As for what happens between your cousin and my nephew, I won't intervene. But speaking of which, I've made it clear to you, Yangyang won't be in a relationship for ten years. If your cousin isn't afraid of being rejected, she can try interacting with my nephew. And it's probably best if you don't tell your cousin that someone has already informed my nephew of her feelings."

Wu Yue: "I shouldn't tell her. Otherwise, how awkward would it be for my cousin in the Cultural Work Troupe when she has to see my nephew all the time!"

Kang Li: "Exactly, as long as you know."

"I haven't congratulated you yet. Both Ruirui from your family and your student, Song Xuan, made it to the finals. I hope they can do well in the competition the day after tomorrow!"

As soon as the student winter vacation started, the North City TV Station began the preliminary rounds for the youth and children's ethnic musical instrument solo competition, followed by the semi-finals, and then the finals Wu Yue was talking about.

Kang Li: "I'll accept your congratulations on behalf of Xuan Xuan and Ruirui, and of course, I'll also accept the encouragement for them. Speaking of which, I'm delighted, and a little surprised, that Xuan Xuan and Ruirui both came in first in their semi-final groups. Especially Ruirui, he studied for a shorter time than Xuan Xuan, and he doesn't have the same natural talent in music, but imagine my surprise when the little guy made me so proud!"

"Look how happy you are."

Wu Yue's tone had a tinge of envy.

"I'm not just happy; I'm quite proud!" Kang Li said, winking her pretty fox eyes with a smile.

"Rubbing it in that I'm jealous, aren't you?"

Wu Yue pretended to be displeased.

Kang Li laughed out loud, "That's right, I am definitely trying to make you feel envious and resentful!"

"You little brat!"

Wu Yue gnashed her teeth and suddenly tickled Kang Li.

"I'm done chatting; I'm heading home."

Dodging Wu Yue's hand, Kang Li quickly left the recording studio.

"Sister, are you back?!"

Lin Dan once again came to Wu Yue's house. Seeing her cousin, Wu Yue didn't know what to say for a moment.

On a weekend when she should be resting at home, she ran to see her, the girl had only one goal in mind, which was either to use her as a sounding board or to learn more about Kang Yiyang from her.

"Hmm."

Wu Yue smiled in response and hung her bag on the coat rack before heading to the bedroom.

Lin Dan followed closely behind and casually shut the bedroom door behind her.

"Sister, why does Kang Yiyang keep avoiding me? Ever since he finished filming the movie and started working at the troupe, every time he sees me approaching him, he immediately turns and leaves in another direction. It's really depressing!"

Puffing up her cheeks, Lin Dan frowned deeply, clearly in a bad mood.

"Today, I found out something from Yangyang's aunt. Yangyang said he wouldn't date for ten years."

"What? Not dating for ten years... Sister, are you sure that's what Kang Yiyang said?"

"If you don't believe it, you can ask Yiyang directly at the Cultural Work Troupe tomorrow."

"Maybe he just said it offhand."

"Whether he said it offhand or means to stick to it, you can also ask Yiyang. The specifics are like this: Yiyang wants to go to college, and he's worried that if he gets the chance to take the college entrance exam but is married, he might have too many distractions and not be able to focus on studying, thus missing out on the chance to attend college."

"But will that day really come?" She had also thought about going to college, but where were her hopes?

Lin Dan was lost in thought.

After a while, she snapped back to reality, "Sister... are you saying I don't stand a chance?"

Wu Yue: "Don't falsely accuse me, you little girl. I'm just telling you what I know. Whether you believe it or not is up to you."

"..."

There was silence for a long moment before Lin Dan said, "Sister, can you tell me why Kang Yiyang is avoiding me?"

"How would I know that?"

Wu Yue spread her hands.

Lin Dan looked dejected: "I just want to talk to him casually."

Wu Yue: "How do you know Yiyang is avoiding you? Maybe he had something to do."

Lin Dan: "Intuition, my intuition tells me, he's dodging me."

Wu Yue: "You must be overthinking it. You two aren't close, why would he avoid you? Do you think you're a tigress who could eat people?"

"Sister!"

Lin Dan's cheeks flushed red: "How did I become a tigress? I'm very gentle!"

"Are you gentle? Sorry, I haven't noticed that."

Wu Yue eyed her cousin strangely.

"Sister, what's with that look?" Lin Dan felt uncomfortable being stared at and said hesitantly, "I... I may not be particularly gentle, but I'm not fierce..."

Chapter 517: Won't Happen

"Dandan..."

Wu Yue did not pick up where Lin Dan left off, she just quietly watched her cousin for a good while and said, "If you really have feelings for Yangyang, then as someone who's been through it and as your older cousin, let me give you a piece of advice!"

Lin Dan was stunned, "... Why so serious?"

"Let nature take its course, and don't go looking for Yangyang whenever there's nothing else to do, especially not like some lovesick puppy circling around him."

Wu Yue spoke these words from the bottom of her heart.

Without a second thought, Lin Dan responded, "I would never do that!"

"Is that really the case?" Without waiting for Lin Dan's response, Wu Yue frowned and continued, "Then why are you always seeking out Yiyang at the Cultural Work Troupe, and even saying that he's avoiding you?"

At these words, Lin Dan's cheeks reddened involuntarily, and she felt quite uneasy, "I..." After a long pause, there was no follow-up.

"Dandan, a girl must have self-respect and self-love, otherwise, she is demeaning herself and might even invoke a boy's aversion. Besides, I believe Kang Li wouldn't lie to me; since she said her grandnephew won't consider romance for ten years and is thinking about when he can take the college entrance exam, it shows that the young man has set a ten-year plan for himself.

If, after ten years, he hasn't heard the good news about the college entrance exam, he might give up on that obsession of his.

In short, you need to have a clear understanding in your heart.

If you truly like him, then let things go as they will. If you feel that ten years is too long, then while you're not yet in too deep, it's time to pull back your feelings -- there's no harm in that."

Ten years, to actually wait ten years to marry -- wouldn't her cousin be thirty by then?

Would the family allow the young girl to keep putting off marriage indefinitely?

Moreover, after ten years, what if Yiyang's bride ends up being someone else?

So even if Lin Dan could withstand the pressure from her family and not consider marriage for herself for ten years, she still might not get her wish.

Unless... she and Kang Yiyang both have feelings for each other; if that's the case, then everything else is negotiable.

But if that were true, why wait ten years before considering marriage?

Lin Dan's lips pursed slightly, and after a moment, she said, "Sis, I won't demean myself. I'll listen to you; I won't deliberately look for Kang Yiyang anymore."

Brought back to the present by Lin Dan's voice, Wu Yue smiled and pinched the tip of her cousin's nose, "Good." As both working in the Cultural Work Troupe, with frequent encounters owing to their close proximity, if there was truly fate between them, a day would naturally come when they mutually saw eye to eye.

Following Wu Yue's conversation with Lin Dan today, Kang Yiyang going to work at his unit became distinctly aware of something -- that Lin Dan was no longer appearing in front of his eyes as often as before, whether deliberately or not.

For Kang Yiyang, this realization was truly a breath of relief.

"Auntie, Aunt, the New Year is almost here, and our troupe is planning to stage a play. The commander informed me today that I've been chosen for one of the roles."

After returning from work, Kang Yiyang announced such good news.

"Really? It seems Commander Lin values you quite highly!" Kang Li's eyes, like those of a fox, brimmed with laughter as she busied herself moving dishes onto the table alongside her mother, casually responding to her grandnephew.

Cai Xiufen: "Since the leaders value you, you must perform well!"

"Yes, I will. Auntie, Aunt, what I actually want to tell you is that, in order to get the play ready before New Year's Eve, we need to rehearse overtime recently..."

Before Kang Yiyang could finish speaking, Kang Li's gentle voice interrupted, "Are you going to move to the dormitory for convenience?"

Kang Yiyang nodded, "It's for the convenience of rehearsal."

Chapter 518: Let's Go

"How are the dormitories arranged in your Cultural Work Troupe?"

"Two people per room."

"That's not bad. Are there any empty beds?"

"Yes."

"Then when you go to work tomorrow morning, just take your bedding roll with you. Since you won't be living at home, you'll have to rely on the cafeteria for all three meals, and don't forget to take your lunch box and toiletries with you."

At this point, Cai Xiufen asked, "Will you move back here after the New Year?"

Kang Yiyang shook his head. "No." To prevent his aunt and grandma from worrying further, Kang Yiyang added, "It's more convenient to live near work." Since the unit provided accommodation, he naturally had no reason to continue causing trouble for his aunt.

As the New Year's atmosphere grew stronger, like the previous year, Kang Li took her three kids along with Mrs. Qi to visit the Martyrs' Cemetery.

However, this time, their birth mother was naturally accompanying them.

By coincidence, as Kang Li and her three kids finished paying respects to their grandfather, they saw Old Lady Yu and Old Master Xiao walking over.

The two of them greeted Kang Li and Cai Xiufen, then squatted in front of the neighboring tombstone to place their offerings.

Old Lady Yu had cleaned the tombstone thoroughly, and Old Master Xiao had meticulously removed the weeds surrounding it.

"Mom, let's take the kids over there and wait for Grandma Yu and her group!" Kang Li called out to her mom, leading her three kids to the spot she was pointing at.

Cai Xiufen whispered to her beloved daughter, "What relation is the person Grandma Yu is paying respects to her?"

Kang Li replied, "Brother and sister. Grandma Yu had one brother and one sister; her brother died on the battlefield early on, and her sister died in an accident when she was just a teenager. Now, Grandma Yu has no other living relatives."

"In those early years, there was chaos everywhere with conflict, and countless families would end up destroyed or worse, with entire families wiped out."

While speaking, Cai Xiufen couldn't help feeling fortunate that the challenging terrain of their hometown kept enemies from invading; otherwise, whether she and her entire family would still exist today was questionable.

Ten minutes later.

"No need, no need. Last New Year's Eve we already imposed enough; this year, Old Xiao and I will just stay at our own home. You don't need to worry about us!"

After leaving the Martyrs' Cemetery, Kang Li invited Old Lady Yu and Old Master Xiao to spend this New Year's Eve at their home again, but Old Lady Yu directly waved her hand and refused.

Cai Xiufen tried to persuade her for her beloved daughter, "Auntie, why don't you and Uncle just listen to Li Bao? We can enjoy New Year's Eve together, and having more people around is merrier."

"No, really." Old Lady Yu firmly declined, saying, "We have everything we need for the New Year at home; we don't want to cause you any trouble."

Seeing that Old Lady Yu was immovable, Kang Li eventually had to respect the elderly lady's personal wishes.

...

The courtyard.

"Mom, tomorrow is New Year's Eve, and Luo Yanqing called a couple of days ago to say he can't make it back. So, I thought I'd visit him today, bring him some clothes, and also some food. What do you think..."

At around ten past noon, Kang Li personally made several kinds of cakes and beef jerky, among other food items, each packed securely and stuffed into a large travel bag.

Looking at the two large travel bags on the coffee table, what could Cai Xiufen say? All the preparations were made, and her daughter was going to the institute to visit her son-in-law—could she object?

"Go ahead! And if you decide to stay the night there, remember to call home." She had been in North City for such a long time, yet she hadn't seen her son-in-law come home even once. She couldn't fathom how her daughter had managed to get through the year!

Chapter 519: Just Tell Me If You Have It or Not?

Cai Xiufen felt pained for her daughter, sensing that having a husband or not made no significant difference in Li Bao's life after marriage.

True, she wasn't lacking money, and her three kids were sensible and obedient, but with her husband not by her side, if someday she fell ill... she couldn't bear to think further. Cai Xiufen dreaded that the more she thought about it, the more pained she would feel and thus might grow resentful towards her son-in-law whom she had never met.

"What? Stay there overnight?"

Kang Li hadn't considered staying over at the research institute, but now, hearing her mother's words, her eyes, fox-like, widened in surprise.

"What do you mean 'what'? It's settled, you don't need to come back tonight!"

Silly girl, barely seeing her son-in-law a few times a year, isn't she worried their relationship might become estranged?

Moreover, relationships need nurturing. Don't tell me a country old lady doesn't know this. Just think, a couple who hardly sees each other all year, how familiar can they get?

Without familiarity, how can there be affection?

Without affection, how can the couple continue their life together?

Does she expect her daughter to merely act as a "nanny"?

If that were the case, Cai Xiufen wouldn't accept it.

And the reason she initially strongly opposed her daughter marrying far away, only to agree later, though persuaded by her husband's arguments, was primarily because she believed the heavens wouldn't be cruel enough to deny her Li Bao any children.

In other words, she hoped her precious daughter could have a child of her own.

Whether a boy or a girl, as long as it was her daughter's own child, it was enough.

Only then could she rest easy and close her eyes forever when her time came.

Of course, Cai Xiufen thought this way not because she found her three step-grandchildren unreliable, but out of a subconscious belief that a blood connection would make the mother-child relationship more secure.

But if the daughter and son-in-law rarely shared a bed, how would they have a child?

Thus, Cai Xiufen was determined to have Kang Li stay overnight at the research institute.

"Why though?"

Kang Li, unaware of her mother's thoughts, had no idea that in the blink of an eye, her mother had worried a whole basket full of worries.

"Just think it over yourself!"

This shouldn't be! They'd been married for over a year, could her daughter really still be clueless? Thinking this, Cai Xiufen couldn't help but scrutinize her precious daughter carefully.

Kang Li, under her mother's scrutinizing gaze, slowly started to feel uncomfortable.

"Mom, what are you looking at? Is there something wrong with me?" Hearing her daughter's words, Cai Xiufen's expression changed and she couldn't help but ask, "You've been married for over a year now, have you and Yanqing shared a room?"

Upon hearing this, Kang Li first looked puzzled and then said, "Yes, ever since I came to North City, whenever Luo Yanqing is on vacation and comes home, he sleeps in the master bedroom."

"Then have you guys ever..."

Cai Xiufen couldn't bring herself to finish her sentence, even in front of her daughter, how could she ask if they had done what couples do.

"Do you really not understand what I mean by 'sharing a room'?"

Frowning, Cai Xiufen worriedly didn't know what to think.

Her daughter remained silent for a long while, her cheeks visibly reddening. Cai Xiufen found it amusing and tapped her daughter's forehead, "Just tell me, have you or haven't you?" Cai Xiufen knew her beloved daughter must have understood her meaning, otherwise, she wouldn't be blushing so intensely.

Bearing the embarrassment, Kang Li lied, "...Yes." Once she told the truth, her mother would surely worry over her excessively.

Cai Xiufen, hearing this, secretly breathed a sigh of relief and said, "It's almost eleven now, if you're going, you'd better hurry!" After a short pause, Cai Xiufen added:

Chapter 520: Not Surprising to be Recognized

"Between husband and wife, it's just like that, don't feel embarrassed. Besides, you're with your mother, and she's just concerned about you, asking if you've been sharing a room with your son-in-law."

"I know." Kang Li still felt a bit embarrassed as she responded, then hurried into the bedroom. When she came out again, she was fully equipped and said, "Mom, I'm off."

Unexpectedly, the three little ones suddenly ran out of their room.

Milk Bun Ming Han looked up with her little head and asked in a baby voice, "Mommy, mommy, where are you going, duck?"

Kang Li's fox-like eyes were filled with a smile as she said, "I'm going to the institute to bring your daddy some things."

"Oh, I see, then mommy, go ahead!" Milk Bun waved her hand at mommy and cutely said, "Mommy, tell daddy, I miss him so much!"

Xiao Ming Wei: "Mommy, me too!"

Min Rui, however, didn't make a sound.

"Alright, mommy will take your longing to daddy!" Kang Li ruffled the three little ones' heads, picked up a bulging travel bag in each hand, bid farewell to her mother and the three kiddos, and turned to leave the living room.

The bus was driving along when it suddenly stopped, and after the driver checked and restarted it, almost half an hour had passed. Some impatient passengers decided to get off and walk.

Kang Li thought about the distance to the research institute still being far, so she didn't get off. She waited on the bus until finally, she arrived outside the gate of the institute and looked at the time on her wristwatch, realizing the hour hand was pointing to one in the afternoon.

Without further thought, she carried the two travel bags and walked forward, telling the guard, "I'm a family member of Comrade Luo Yanqing, here to deliver some things to him."

"Do you need us to inform Professor Luo to come and meet you?"

The guard was very impressed with Kang Li; after all, her looks were truly stunning, making her memorable, and Kang Li had visited the research institute several times over the past year, so recognizing her was not surprising at all.

"No need, no need. I can go in by myself."

Kang Li shook her head and, after the guard let her through, walked straight through the gate.

She proceeded along the way until she reached the dormitory area.

The corridor was very quiet, and just as Kang Li was about to reach Luo Yanqing's dormitory door, Wen Siyuan's dormitory door opened from the inside.

Wrapped in a cotton coat, Wen Siyuan was about to go to the bathroom when he saw Kang Li. Finding her face familiar, he couldn't help but ask, "Are you... Comrade Kang?"

"Hello, Comrade Wen, it's me."

Kang Li set the travel bags down outside Luo Yanqing's dormitory door, removed her mask, pointed at the door in front of her with a smile, and asked Wen Siyuan, "Is Luo Yanqing inside?"

Wen Siyuan was taken aback and replied, "He should be... it's rest time now!" Group Leader Luo is really blessed. Knowing that the weather is so cold and they couldn't go home for New Year's Eve this year, she's made a special trip to see her loved one today. And counting today, Comrade Kang has visited their research institute several times... It's clear the relationship between Comrade Luo and Comrade Kang as husband and wife is very good.

As his thoughts reached this point, Wen Siyuan involuntarily felt a bit of heartache.

Why couldn't the woman in his own home think to care for him, her husband?

Kang Li: "Thanks, eh!"

Wen Siyuan: "No need for thanks. Comrade Kang, just knock on the door. If Group Leader Luo is there, he will surely open it right away."

"I have the keys." Kang Li smiled, took out a bunch of keys from her bag, found the one for Luo Yanqing's dormitory door, and went directly to unlock it.

These keys were given to her by Luo Yanqing so that, in case she came to the institute and he wasn't around, she could enter his dormitory and wait for him.