

## Weak B 541

### Chapter 541: You Really Came to Show Off to Me!

As for how things escalated to this point today, the cause was her sister... It was Su Qing, that despicable woman, who came looking for trouble, not only slapping her but also scratching her face.

And her family, who had clearly favored her before, were now standing on Su Qing's side, saying she was immature and shouldn't be at odds with her own sister who shared the same mother.

Thinking back to the events that had occurred at the Su Family home just over two hours ago, Su Man was instantly filled with resentment and grief towards her family.

And the more she thought about it, the more it felt as though the argument with Su Qing was happening right before her eyes.

"Appearing before me, are you boasting about how well you're living now?"

Having been in the countryside for nearly two years, Su Qing had finally returned to North City home for the Lunar New Year, and she was undoubtedly very happy, even if the visit required bringing her husband, Zhou Weimin, with her; she was still extremely pleased.

But as she walked through the front door, looking at her family members' clothes and the food laid out on the dining table, all her feelings of grievance surged up instantly.

Her countrified husband, even though he worked at the town's supply and marketing cooperative, still looked countrified compared to her family members and the young men she saw on the streets of North City.

Perhaps thinking too much, she had already gone to bed at night, but restless, she got up and stood in front of the window to breathe in the cold air, so much so that she caught a severe cold two days after coming home, that is, on the first day of the lunar year in the early morning.

The New Year had not passed well, and today, as the family hosted guests, she also heard that her younger sister, Su Man, had brought many fine things for their parents.

Su Qing immediately became angry.

If it weren't for Su Man cutting in front, staying in North City, marrying Comrade Wen Siyuan would have been her fate!

In other words, Su Man was despicable, shameless, and unprincipled, having stolen the marriage that rightfully belonged to her.

And now, to make matters worse, here she was, flaunting herself in front of Su Qing, wanting to see what the hard life in the countryside had made her become?

"Sister, what are you talking about? I just heard from Mom that you fell sick soon after coming home and haven't recovered yet, and I thought I'd come in to check on you, to show some concern, not to show off anything to you."

Actually, Su Man did indeed harbor thoughts of boasting when she appeared before Su Qing.

In her previous life, she ran to the countryside for love and lived in hardship while Su Qing, by getting married, avoided going to the countryside and married a man with a high income, leading a comfortable and satisfying life. How could she not be jealous?

Especially during the Lunar New Year period when she had returned from afar to visit her family and brought local delicacies, the gifts brought by Su Qing were treated as incomparably superior by everyone, and the way her family looked at her... Even though it happened in her previous life, she still could not forget it.

—Disdain, disregarded.

As these thoughts flashed through her mind, Su Man's eyelids drooped slightly, and a shadowy spark briefly gleamed in her eyes.

Since she was fortunate enough to return, return to her prime, then the hardships she endured in her previous life had to be experienced by her dear sister this time around.

Turning up the corners of her lips, Su Man, as if she hadn't seen Su Qing glaring at her, smiled and added, "By the way, sister, are you getting accustomed to living in the countryside?"

"You really did come to boast!"

Unable to bear it any longer and seeing no need to endure further, Su Qing threw off her blankets, not even bothering with shoes, and, despite still being sick, lunged at Su Man.

Perhaps because her action was so sudden, or perhaps because Su Man didn't expect Su Qing could do much to her, she didn't dodge, taking a slap from Su Qing and also getting scratched.

A sharp cry of pain rose, and soon, the rest of the Su family ran into Su Qing's room, only to see Su Qing astride Su Man, madly pounding and scratching her.

Chapter 542: Both the Palm and the Back of the Hand are Flesh

Meanwhile, Su Qing was only focusing on defending herself, hardly having a chance to fight back.

"Su Qing, you've gone mad! Dad! Mom! Won't you pull Su Qing away? Do you want to see me beaten to death?"

Enduring the pain on her face, Su Man kept using her hands to fend off Su Qing's scratching at her face, while she hysterically screamed.

"I do want to kill you! You're not my sister, you're a homewrecker! I let you steal my marriage arrangement, I let you flaunt it in front of me..."

Su Qing's eyes were like shooting flames, seriously laying into Su Man, but ultimately, the family members managed to pull her off Su Man.

Looking at the scene before him, Zhou Weimin stood at the doorway, his expression bewildered, not knowing what to say.

"Crazy! Su Qing, you are just crazy!"

Pulled by her arm by Father Su, Su Man tried to return the slap and scratch she received from Su Qing, but no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't break free from Father Su's grip.

"Mother Su, I'm here, you take Zhou Weimin back to the living room," Mother Su said as she sent Father Su and son-in-law Zhou Weimin, along with the other people in the room, away.

Once the door was closed by Father Su, leaving only the three of them in the room, Mother Su asked her daughters, "Now, tell me, what exactly is going on here?"

They just started fighting out of the blue. Does anyone know what day it is today?

With furrowed brows, Mother Su's expression clearly showed displeasure.

"Mom, haven't you realized? Su Man came here just to brag about how well she's doing. But her good life was stolen from me, and now shamelessly, she's flaunting it before me, trying to provoke me, trying to drive me to my grave?"

Saying this, Su Qing cried uncontrollably. "The family was arranging a marriage for me, although I was emotional, I didn't refuse the meeting. Yet, Su Man somehow learned that the suitor the family mentioned for me was good, so she harbored ulterior motives. She undercut me, her own sister,

Mom... I know I've never been articulate, and I'm not pleasing to look at either, so you like Su Man more than you like me. But no matter what, Su Man and I are both flesh from your body,

In the past two years, I've been assigned to work in the Northwest. I don't need to elaborate; just by looking at how I've been since I came back, you can easily tell how hard my life in the Northwest has been."

Covering her face, Su Qing cried more sorrowfully, as if she was crying out all the frustrations she had endured over those two years in the Northwest.

"I didn't! Mom, I didn't have the slightest intention to boast. I simply heard that my sister was sick and came over to check on her, to show some concern,"

Su Man also appeared wronged, tears swirling in her eyes, her face stubbornly denying any intention of boasting or feeling that she was in the wrong.

"Manman..." Among her two daughters, Mother Su did favor Su Man a bit more. But then again, the palm and the back of the hand are both flesh. Especially since the elder daughter wasn't wrong, it was Su Man who intercepted her sister's marital arrangement.

As for Mother Su believing that her younger daughter was not scheming would be doubting.

As for why she scolded her older daughter "It's because you didn't want it yourself" after Son-in-law Wen and Su Man got engaged, the fundamental reason was because Son-in-law Wen and Su Man liked each other.

In such a situation, she had no choice but to wrong her older daughter.

But what she hadn't expected was that just after two years of going to the countryside, Su Qing, her elder daughter, had not only become thin and frail, but at a glance, she appeared several years older than her city peers.

The rural life clearly hadn't been easy on her.

Mulling over this, Mother Su involuntarily sighed to herself. She looked at her younger daughter and said, "You know exactly how your marriage came about. It was originally your sister who was supposed to meet Son-in-law Wen that day,

Chapter 543: Useless

But it was because your sister threw a tantrum back then that you found an opportunity. Now your sister isn't having an easy time being sent to the countryside, you should be more understanding. Don't say unnecessary things in front of her, it will only make her unhappy."

"Mom... what do you mean I found an opportunity? It was clearly because my sister wasn't willing to become a stepmother the moment she stepped through the door and didn't want to become related to the Wen family. I was the one who stepped forward and took a liking to Wen Siyuan. You can't blame me because my sister is having a hard time in the countryside..."

Su Man hadn't finished speaking when she was interrupted by Mother Su: "That's enough. Let's leave it at that. If you don't want to stay at home any longer, take the children with you and go."

"Are you trying to drive me away, Mom?" Su Man asked incredulously, tears streaming down her face, "What have I done wrong to be driven away by you now?"

"It's all my fault. Take the children and go home. Let your sister rest properly; she has to head back to the Northwest in a couple of days. With you here, I can't guarantee that you and your sister won't end up fighting again."

No sooner had Mother Su finished speaking than Su Man said, "Fine, I'll go. I'll leave right now!" She wiped away the tears from her face, not caring about the marks on her cheek, Su Man left the room, went to Father Su and Mother Su's bedroom, picked up her sleeping son, wrapped him tightly in a small blanket, called Wen Yue and her three sisters, and left the Su family's home.

Calming her mind, Su Man stopped her sobbing, telling herself that once she had a chance, she would exact today's humiliations she suffered at the hands of Su Qing at the Su family, on her.

She would forever remember the slap and the scratch on her face!

In the dimly lit detention room, Su Man pressed her lips together, thinking of her current situation, and couldn't help but resent Kang Li.

Was it necessary to have her sent to the police station just because she said a couple of harsh words?

A surge of intense hatred welled up in her eyes, Su Man clenched her teeth and muttered silently, "Kang Li, you bitch! I'll wait and see you weeping and wailing next year!" The Luo family's mixed-sex twins will be kidnapped by traffickers next year, and she hadn't forgotten about it.

The courtyard.

Wen's family.

"Why can't you just handle Su Man properly when she's up to something?" Wen Siyuan received Mrs. Wen's phone call as soon as he got off work, and she came over immediately. Upon entering and seeing Wen Yue and her three sisters along with the grandson whom Wen Siyuan was holding, she felt a headache coming on, and without a good tone, she spoke to Wen Siyuan.

"I've tried handling it."

Wen Siyuan tugged at the corner of his mouth, tasting bitterness: "But it was no use."

"No use?"

Mrs. Wen frowned: "Doesn't she listen to you?"

Wen Siyuan: "She agrees to my face, then does it again later."

"So what do we do now? Do you really expect me to look after Wen Yue and the four siblings here?"

Mrs. Wen had not expected Su Man to be such a troublemaker, given that she had specifically inquired before and heard that both Su Family's daughters were good, and that Su Man and her son Siyuan had been living quite well after their marriage. Why then had she suddenly become troublesome, ending up getting herself into a police station?

"I have to return to the office early tomorrow morning."

Upon hearing this from Wen Siyuan, Mrs. Wen asked, "Do you need me here for a few days?"

"Three days, Su Man can get out after three days."

"Did you find out why she went around insulting and slandering others for no apparent reason?"

"I asked, she said there was no particular reason."

"Has she gone mad like a rabid dog?"

"..."

"Alright, keep an eye on the children. I'll go to the kitchen and cook something for you all."

Mrs. Wen placed her cloth bag on the couch and turned toward the kitchen.

Wen Yue: "Dad, I'll play with my little brother for a while, you sit down and have a rest."

"Okay."

Wen Siyuan put his not yet one-year-old son in a softly padded stroller,

Chapter 544: Why Hide?

He then sat on the sofa, watching Wen Yue and her two sisters gather around the stroller, playing with their son Wen Peng.

"Daddy, does Auntie Su not like Aunt Kang?" Suddenly, Wen Yi's childish voice rang out. She looked at her dad and said, "Aunt Kang is a good auntie. It's wrong for Auntie Su to speak ill of her."

Wen Siyuan was momentarily stunned, then he asked, "Are you girls familiar with Aunt Kang next door?"

Wen Yi nodded her little head. "Sister got a burn on her hand, and Aunt Kang helped apply ointment. Aunt Kang also cooked meals for us. Daddy, my sisters and I all really like Aunt Kang. Her braids are super pretty!"

"Aunt Kang has told Little Fish stories. Aunt Kang likes Little Fish and says Little Fish is a good baby!" That was Wen Yu's voice. She blinked her glossy black eyes and looking at her dad, she cooed, "Daddy, can you ask mom to stop talking badly about Aunt Kang, please?"

Of the three Wen sisters, only Wen Yu still called Su Man mom.

"Okay, Daddy will talk to your mom about it."

The minds of children are the purest. They can clearly sense whether the people around them are good or bad, and based on this, Wen Siyuan didn't doubt his daughter's words at all.

But it was because of this very reason that Wen Siyuan grew increasingly disappointed with Su Man.

If others could not only take good care of their own children but also show love to other people's kids, why couldn't Su Man? Instead, she seemed to always have her eyes on Comrade Kang. No...not seemed, his wife indeed kept picking on Comrade Kang repeatedly.

Why was that?

What was the reason behind it...?

Could it really be as she had once said, that she simply couldn't stand Comrade Kang?

But what did Comrade Kang ever do to provoke her?

The answer was undoubtedly no.

Comrade Kang was clearly not the type who liked to gossip or meddle in other people's affairs...

The Luo Family.

The night outside the window was quiet. Luo Yanqing leaned against the headboard reading a book. Hearing footsteps approaching, he casually placed his hand on the nightstand.

"You're not reading anymore?"

Kang Li casually remarked, getting into bed to lie in his usual spot. Unexpectedly, Luo Yanqing stretched out an arm and pulled Kang Li into his embrace.

"Little brother, what are you trying to do?"

Lying on top of the man, Kang Li raised her head, her clear, fox-like eyes filled with confusion.

"I was waiting for you."

This was Luo Yanqing explaining why he put the book down.

"Oh."

Kang Li blinked, not quite understanding but still nodded. Then she asked, "So what are you trying to do now?" Hearing this, Luo Yanqing leaned in close to her ear, his lips slightly parting as he spoke in a very soft voice.

Instantly, Kang Li's cheeks flushed red, and she glared at the man. "I don't want to deal with you anymore."

Without hesitation, Luo Yanqing kissed her lips.

Kang Li: "Hmm..." Kiss her every time a conversation starts, can he not be so domineering?

The temperature in the room gradually rose, and after what felt like a long time, an intimate scene came to a close.

Luo Yanqing gently stroked Kang Li's back, kissing her forehead, and said, "If you don't want to be neighbors with them anymore, we can change yards." He would ask the director later to see if there were any empty yards left in this large courtyard.

"No need, our yard has been time and effort getting it just right according to our own preferences. Moving away, I don't know who would benefit from that. As for the neighbor next door, I can avoid her if I can't afford to provoke her."

It's just a mad dog; she might as well just avoid it.

Luo Yanqing: "Why should you have to avoid it? If she hasn't learned her lesson this time,

Chapter 545: Why didn't I meet you sooner?

"If she acts arrogantly in front of you tomorrow, just kick her with your foot."

Due to the previous intimate moment, Luo Yanqing's voice was still somewhat husky.

Kang Li rubbed her forehead against the man's beautifully contoured jawline: "Can't I use my hands?"

Luo Yanqing: "Hands will hurt, just kick with your foot."

"Big brother is right. If there's a next time, I'll kick her directly, but I still hope there won't be a next time, and that she'll learn her lesson in this lifetime."

Tracing circles on the man's chest with her finger, Kang Li spoke languidly.

"I'm nearly ten years older than you."

As soon as Luo Yanqing spoke, he was immediately met with a puzzled look from Kang Li: "You change topics so quickly."

With laughter contained in his phoenix eyes, Luo Yanqing still didn't continue the conversation but instead asked, "Who did you learn it from?"

"Learn what from whom?"

Kang Li didn't understand.

Luo Yanqing: "Big brother?"

"Do you want me to call you old brother?" Kang Li's eyes twinkled playfully, and she said: "Even though you are nearly thirty and an old man, you should be glad that you look young. Be thankful for your high attractiveness. Otherwise, I definitely wouldn't have agreed to marry you. No matter how much money you make, I would resolutely say no!"

Luo Yanqing let out a low chuckle from his throat: "So you really like good-looking ones?"

"I'm from the Association of Aesthetic Appreciation." Kang Li held back her laughter, feigning seriousness. Watching her, Luo Yanqing laughed: "Seems like I need to take good care of my face."

Kang Li: "Indeed, it's necessary."

As her voice fell, she couldn't help but laugh out loud. After a brief moment, Kang Li stopped laughing, but the amusement in her eyes didn't fade as she said:

"Okay, don't listen to my nonsense. Actually, in my heart, looks are just one aspect. The most important thing is having a good character and temperament. If someone has a decent exterior but acts outrageously and vulgarly, I won't bother giving them a second glance."

Luo Yanqing's eyes softened with tenderness: "How could I have not met you sooner?"

"How much sooner do you want?" Kang Li's gaze was meaningful as she said: "Last year I was eighteen. If you had met me a few years earlier, would you really have been able to take me home to marry?"

Luo Yanqing: "..."

"You couldn't possibly have thought of that, right?"

Kang Li raised an eyebrow.

Luo Yanqing: "I would have waited for you, watching over you as you grew up."

Kang Li's eyes were teasing: "If that were the case, I suspect my dad and my brothers would've chased after you to give you a beating! Silly man, even if you had met me a few years earlier, that 'Kang Li' wouldn't have been me."

With a flicker in his eyes, Luo Yanqing said: "I have long legs." Hearing this, Kang Li couldn't help but laugh again: "You mean to say that you can run fast, right?"

The two chatted intermittently, and gradually, Kang Li fell into a deep sleep in the man's arms...

The next day, dawn broke.

Getting into the car, Luo Yanqing waved at Kang Li through the window.

"Go inside, it's cold out."

"I know."

Kang Li smiled and waved back.

Watching the car drive away, Kang Li stamped her feet and turned to enter the gate.

In the car.

Luo Yanqing didn't speak a word to Wen Siyuan all the way to the research institute.

"Group Leader Luo..."

Heading to the laboratory, Wen Siyuan finally couldn't hold back and called out to Luo Yanqing.

"What is it?"

Luo Yanqing did not stop walking; he just glanced indifferently at Wen Siyuan.

After a moment of silence, Wen Siyuan spoke: "Yesterday at the station I talked to Xiao Su seriously, and warned her that if she troubles Comrade Kang again, I would divorce her. I think she will take my words to heart."

Chapter 546: Clearly Distinguish Between Public and Private

"You didn't have to go to such lengths." Luo Yanqing spoke with a detached tone, "If your wife wants to continue making a fool of herself in public, wants to get into the police station, let her be arrogant in front of my wife."

Taking quick steps, Luo Yanqing widened the distance between himself and Wen Siyuan.

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At lunchtime in the canteen, He Wei sat on the dining chair beside Wen Siyuan. He nudged Wen Siyuan with his elbow and asked, "What did you and the team leader do yesterday afternoon? Why do I feel that you guys are acting strange at work today, especially you? You seem preoccupied. If something's up, tell your brother, maybe I can help."

"What could be the matter with me?"

Wen Siyuan frowned and said, "If your mouth is idle, just shove a piece of candy in it."

"I'm just concerned about you."

He Wei looked slightly embarrassed.

Wen Siyuan: "Thanks, but I'm fine, no problems at all."

He Wei opened his mouth but ultimately said nothing more.

He could tell that Wen Siyuan didn't want to talk much with him at that moment.

At a table not far from the two, Director Song and Luo Yanqing were having lunch. Thinking about the incident from the day before, Director Song asked Luo Yanqing, "Is Li Bao alright?"

Luo Yanqing: "Yeah."

Director Song: "What did the police station say?"

Luo Yanqing: "Detained for three days."

"I talked to your godmother on the phone and told her, after Xiao Su comes out of the police station, to have a good talk with her."

"Will it work?"

"As long as she cares about her husband's future, it will certainly have an effect."

"I hope so."

Some people, even after hitting a wall, still don't turn back. In Luo Yanqing's view, Su Man was such a person.

Suddenly, Director Song said, "Don't let the issues between women create a wedge between you and Xiao Wen." Upon hearing this, Luo Yanqing was taken aback for a moment but didn't make a sound.

"Xiao Wen is a member of your research team; you're aware of his capabilities, and you've always worked well together."

After hearing Director Song's words, Luo Yanqing looked at him and said indifferently, "Work is work, personal is personal; I can distinguish between the two."

"Good."

Director Song nodded with satisfaction.

Their voices were not loud, and since there was nobody else at their table, the conversation between Director Song and Luo Yanqing remained between them.

"By the way, Director Nie from the Langfang Welfare Institute called me this noon. He said Wang Guilan's second son had gone to the institute before the year's end, asking for your contact information, saying Wang Guilan was seriously ill and needed hospitalization but the family couldn't afford it. He wanted you to help."

...

"Is that true?" Luo Yanqing stopped eating and fell silent for a while before asking.

Director Song: "It is true that Wang Guilan is sick, but it's not a serious illness that requires hospitalization. As for your contact information, Director Nie didn't give it to them."

After a prolonged silence, Luo Yanqing said, "I understand."

Director Song: "What are your thoughts regarding Wang Guilan?"

"When she's older, I will send some money for her care." For his birth mother, Luo Yanqing now felt neither hatred nor much affection, but he couldn't deny the blood relationship. Therefore, he naturally would fulfill his filial duties.

But as he had told that person before, this would be under a certain condition; otherwise, he wouldn't give a penny.

And that condition was for the whole family not to cling to him!

Langfang.

Qingan Commune, Ma Wang Brigade.

Meng Family.

"Mom, if you don't figure something out, do you really want me to stay single my whole life?"

#### Chapter 547: You Think I Want To?

Meng Xingsheng stood in the middle of Wang Guilan's room, his eyes bloodshot, his hands clenched into fists at his sides, as he struggled to control his emotions,

refraining from losing his temper at his mother, who was sitting cross-legged on the kang. But seeing that his mother was completely ignoring him, he finally lost control and shouted in a raised voice:

"You could find a wife for my elder brother, so why can't you come up with the money for me? Don't you know how old I am this year, or do you simply not care about me as your son?"

"Second brother, you're pressuring our mother!"

Third brother Meng Xingping walked into the room from outside, looking unwell. Approaching Meng Xingsheng, he said in a loud voice, "If our family had money, wouldn't Mother want to arrange marriages for us brothers? Mother has been sick recently; she's not even fully recovered. Is it right for you to yell at her like this?"

Meng Xingsheng glared at Meng Xingping: "You think I want to yell?"

Looking on the verge of tears, Meng Xingsheng cried out, "I'm already in my early twenties, but with the state of our home, when can I ever take a wife?"

Now, I've finally met someone suitable. Her family only asks for two hundred yuan as a dowry, nothing else. Yet Mother won't give the money to help me bring her home. Does she think only my big brother is her son, and I, the second child, am not born to her?"

Pausing for a moment, Meng Xingsheng continued, "You dare say you're not eager to get married? Nineteen, you're nineteen. That's not young anymore. In our brigade, guys our age have already brought wives home or are engaged, just waiting for the big day to welcome their brides. Some even have kids already..."

Meng Xingping frowned and interrupted Meng Xingsheng: "Others are others, we are us. Every family has its own circumstances. Even if I really want to get married, what can I do?"

You now feel that since big brother got married, Mother doesn't treat you like her own son. But aren't you clear about our family's current situation? Besides, if Mother had any money, wouldn't she use it to arrange our marriages?"

"The family doesn't have it, Mother doesn't have it, but the Luo Family's eldest brother does!"

Meng Xingsheng stated as if it were obvious: "Mother is also Luo Family's eldest brother's real mother. As long as she asks him nicely, I don't believe Luo Family's eldest brother would be so heartless as to refuse to give the money."

Meng Xingping hadn't expected that after the previous incident, his second brother Meng Xingsheng would still not forget to reach out to their stepbrother for money. With an ugly expression, he said:

"You know the attitude of the Luo Family's eldest brother towards our mother. If he was willing to give our mother a lot of money, he would have done so right away. But does the Luo Family's eldest brother even have it?

He doesn't. He only gave us traveling expenses, and even that was begrudgingly on account of our mother's face. Now you want Mother to go knocking on the Luo Family's eldest brother's door again, so the people in that big compound can gossip about her?"

"Our mother bore him for months..."

Before Meng Xingsheng could finish speaking, he heard their mother's voice erupt, "Shut up!" Wang Guilan's face was stern as she stared at her second son: "Among the six of you brothers, your big brother is the eldest. If you marry a wife before him, it won't look proper anywhere we go."

He was such a reserved kid growing up that you couldn't get a peep out of him, but now that he's of age to think about marriage, not only has he become articulate, he's also become craftier. Who knows what little hussy has been putting ideas in his head,

Wang Guilan thought, her expression growing even darker as she said, "How did I marry your father,

Chapter 548: Guilt, Unwilling to Lose Face

Lao Wu and Sixth Child might not be very clear about this, but you older ones probably know something,

"Back when we went to North City, I plucked up the courage to look for your eldest brother from the Luo Family. And what was the result? We were all taken to the police station. Weren't you scared then, didn't you feel disgraced?"

Meng Xingsheng opened his mouth but didn't speak for a long while.

"When I married your dad, I really did wrong by my first son. Over the years... for you all, for this family, I never thought about my son, nor did I ever visit him, until last year when it came time for you to talk about marriage. Because the family really couldn't come up with any money, I then set my sights on my son.

"But when I actually saw him, I just couldn't speak. Yet for your sakes, in front of him, I still shamelessly stated our purpose for coming to North City. You all saw and heard clearly... He had no affection for me at all; otherwise, he wouldn't have said those harsh words to me."

Wang Guilan said, feeling a tightness in her chest.

Having lived in the village for many years, she was so roughened by the hard life that anyone who dared to give her trouble would find themselves stripped of a layer by her, even if it meant making a scene.

To sum it up, Wang Guilan was definitely not someone who took losses lying down!

Even if she was in the wrong, she would still twist and wrangle her way to seeming a bit right.

Because of her tendency to cause a stir, her reputation in the village was not very good.

But what could she do?

With so many kids at home, to get through life, if she didn't make a fuss, were they all supposed to survive on the Northwest wind?

But... to make a scene in front of her son Yanqing, to be dramatic and overact, she couldn't do it.

These were Wang Guilan's true feelings.

Whether it was because of the guilt she felt towards Luo Yanqing, her son, or because she didn't want a son so capable of seeing her in such a disreputable light, Wang Guilan couldn't behave as shamelessly as she did in the village.

Moreover... Wang Guilan actually had feelings for Luo Yanqing, after all, he was her very first son, and her marriage to her first husband had been born out of true affection. With that being the case, as a mother, how could she not love her own child?

The answer, of course, goes without saying.

As for loving her son and yet choosing to remarry and leave him behind, that just shows that when it came to her own interests, Wang Guilan loved herself a bit more.

It was precisely because she had some unresolved feelings for her son Luo Yanqing that Wang Guilan, upon seeing him, was filled with guilt, didn't want to lose face in front of him, didn't want her son to see her acting like a madwoman, and chose to quietly retreat from North City.

And over the year, despite the efforts of the second eldest to work on her mindset, she was unwilling to return to North City.

But Meng Xingsheng, eager to marry, and unable to find a breakthrough with Wang Guilan, took matters into his own hands and went to Langcheng, thinking that since Luo Yanqing had lived in the Langcheng Welfare Institute for several years and was now working in North City, he might still have connections with the Institute, so he left his contact information in North City.

If he could somehow get this contact information from the Langcheng Welfare Institute, then by using the excuse that his old mother was gravely ill, he might be able to ask Luo Yanqing for money and get his wish.

But wishes are beautiful, and reality is harsh.

Director Nie of the Langcheng Welfare Institute didn't pay Meng Xingsheng any mind at all, let alone give him Luo Yanqing's contact information?!

Having made a futile trip, Meng Xingsheng felt frustrated, and with the girl who wanted to get together with him stirring things up behind his back, this led to Meng Xingsheng's current predicament.

"From what Mother is saying,

#### Chapter 549: Increasing Pressure

"Am I supposed to hold out my hand to the Luo Family's eldest brother and ask him to bring a wife into my home for me?"

Meng Xingsheng's expression was despondent, yet if one paid close attention, it was not hard to detect a hint of resentment in his eyes.

Wang Guilan: "I don't have the face for that."

Meng Xingsheng: "So you're going to let me and the other brothers remain bachelors?"

"Are you all without hands or feet, unable to earn your own dowries?"

The old coot had kicked the bucket swiftly, leaving her alone to suffer in this household. Had she known this day would come, she would have never entered Old Meng's Family's door.

As Wang Guilan glanced at Meng Xingsheng and Meng Xingping, then looked out the doorway at a few of the younger ones, she felt a burden so heavy she could hardly breathe.

"Mom..."

Meng Xingping suddenly spoke up.

Wang Guilan: "Speak if you have something to say."

Meng Xingping: "Relying on earning work points and waiting for the year-end payout from the brigade, it could still take at least two or three years for my second brother and me to afford a bride."

"Having some is better than none. If worst comes to worst, you'll have to think of other ways yourselves." Without their share of the public grain, like all the other villagers, weren't they all earning work points in the fields?

If you don't want to work, fine, but come time for the brigade to distribute the grain, you'll get nothing. And at the end of the year when they distribute the cash, you'll still get nothing.

"Put a bit more effort in, with the labor of you and your second brother, the money you get before the New Year won't be little."

Hearing his mother say this, Meng Xingping pursed his lips and, ultimately, said nothing more before turning around and leaving the room.

Meng Xingsheng then asked Wang Guihua: "How much money can our family come up with right now?" Shuicao was a good girl, and he didn't want to wait any longer.

"Can't you do the math yourself? When your elder brother got married, our family already owed quite a bit of debt, and we've only managed to pay back a portion so far." Wang Guihua's meaning was clear—there was no money!

If there was, it would have been used to pay off debts long ago.

Meng Xingsheng clenched his fists, took his gaze off his mother, and then left without looking back.

In the woods to the west of the village, as evening approached.

"Did Auntie agree to give my family a dowry of two hundred yuan?"

"We don't have that much money in our family."

"So what do you plan to do?"

"When my elder brother got married, we already borrowed money and we haven't finished paying it off yet. If we were to borrow more from the village, I'm afraid no one would..."

"My mother said, without a dowry of two hundred yuan, she won't agree to betroth me to you."

The speaker was a seventeen or eighteen-year-old girl, tall and slender, with a comely face, her hair done up in a big herringbone braid.

Her surname was Cui, and her given name, Shuicao.

"You... don't worry, I will definitely find a way to come up with two hundred yuan for your family's dowry." That was Meng Xingsheng's voice, standing face-to-face with Cui Shuicao, his demeanor slightly constrained, but his eyes revealed genuine affection.

Looking at him, Cui Shuicao's face turned red, and biting her lip, she said, "Brother Xingsheng, I really do want to be with you, and I'm willing to wait, but if your family doesn't send a matchmaker to my home to propose marriage soon, my parents might start looking at other potential suitors for me."

In the current times, for city folks to marry a bride, the dowry given to the girl's family was usually around two or three hundred yuan.

Of course, for families with better conditions, it could go upwards of five hundred or more. For example, the dowry Luo Yanqing gave to Kang Li was definitely considerable.

But leaving the city aside, considering the dowries in farming families, those that gave a lot managed at most sixty or seventy yuan, going over a hundred was rare.

Some families could bring a bride home with just twenty or thirty yuan.

By comparison, Cui Shuicao's family asking Meng Xingsheng for two hundred yuan in dowry was essentially demanding a king's ransom. To put it bluntly, they weren't marrying off a daughter, but selling her off.

#### Chapter 550: Suggestions

However, Meng Xingsheng was more than willing to be hooked by Cui Shuicao, and agreed to pay a dowry of two hundred yuan to marry such a bride.

At that moment, after hearing what Cui Shuicao had said, he felt anxious and blurted out, "Give me one year, Shuicao. You go back and talk to Auntie, just one year. I will definitely send a matchmaker to propose to your family."

Cui Shuicao: "Okay, I'll listen to Brother Xingsheng and tell my mother once I'm back."

Meng Xingsheng: "Then... then we have agreed on this, you wait for me."

"Mm."

Cui Shuicao nodded, then bashfully walked towards the edge of the woods, "I'll head back first."

"Two hundred yuan..."

Watching Cui Shuicao's receding figure, Meng Xingsheng's eyes filled with distress as he murmured softly, "Where on earth can I get that money?"

After a while, he slightly flickered a glint in his eyes.

It seemed... that if he wanted to marry Shuicao, there was no way he could avoid going to North City, but once there, what should he do?

The Luo Family's eldest brother and his wife both disliked this half-brother of theirs. Not to mention asking for money outright, even if he tried to borrow... it was doubtful that the Luo Family's eldest brother and his wife would agree...

Time passed quickly, and before they knew it, it was May.

North City.

On this day, Kang Li was walking Ming Rui and the twins to school when she was nearing the courtyard's gate and heard a male voice beside her, "Comrade Kang, are you also on your way to take the kids to kindergarten?"

Turning her head, Kang Li saw that the man was an acquaintance and couldn't help but smile, lightly nodding her head, then said to Ming Rui and the twins, "This is Uncle Xiao."

Twin with mixed sex: "Hello, Uncle Xiao."

Ming Rui: "Hello, Uncle Xiao."

Xiao Jin smiled: "Hello." Then, he said to the two children sitting on the bicycle, one in front and one in back, "Jian, Tongtong, say hello to Aunt Kang."

Jian indeed was the son of Shen Yun and her foreign ex-husband.

Tongtong, full name Xiao Tong, was Xiao Jin's own daughter.

"Hello, Aunt Kang."

Xiao Tong was not shy, though a bit bashful, and still tenderly greeted Kang Li. Jian, on the other hand, was pursing his lips, only looking at Kang Li, showing no intention of speaking.

Seeing this, Xiao Jin appeared slightly embarrassed and couldn't help but prompt his stepson, "Jian, you haven't said hello to Aunt Kang yet."

Still, Jian remained silent.

Kang Li laughed, "The child might be shy, don't frighten him." With that, Kang Li led the twins and Ming Rui, who was holding his younger brother Ming Han's hand, and they walked out of the courtyard.

Xiao Jin pushed his bicycle and walked alongside them.

"Have you ever considered taking on more hosting work for another TV program?"

Caught off guard by Xiao Jin's question, Kang Li was taken aback, then soon shook her head with a smile, "I am rather lazy; I don't really have much ambition when it comes to work."

Xiao Jin: "You are very well-qualified. Whether it is your vocal quality or your proficiency in Mandarin, or even your appearance, all are impeccable. Personally, I think you could easily host two more programs."

Kang Li smiled apologetically: "I really don't have much ambition career-wise. Besides, as you can see, Director Xiao, I have three kids at home, who are still young and need my care."

"You could hire someone to look after them." Xiao Jin offered a suggestion, and after a moment of silence, he added, "You don't look very old, the age when you would be full of drive. Why not give yourself a chance to progress?"

With confusion in his eyes, Xiao Jin looked at Kang Li.

"Director Xiao, you don't need to persuade me. I'm not one for great ambitions; I'm content leading a simple, uncomplicated life."

Kang Li's face bore a light smile, and her tone sounded relaxed and indifferent.