

Chapter 251: The Warnings

The atmosphere in the house was harmonious, even though the two men were love rivals.

However, the villagers outside the house were already starting a rumor of their own.

“What. The child in Xiao Lingyu’s stomach is fathered by that fine-looking man?”

“No. I heard that he was only taking the blame. The person who made Xiao Lingyu pregnant was someone else.”

“No wonder the man didn’t come to propose a marriage even when her stomach is so big. The child is not his.”

“But didn’t his grandfather come to propose marriage to the Xiao Family earlier?”

“There’s no matchmaker and no gifts. What kind of marriage proposal is this?”

“The man drove over in a cavalry. His family must be very rich. I thought Xiao Lingyu finally had a good marriage. With the child, she could marry into a rich family... Xiao Lingyu is really unlucky.”

“In any case, now we can be sure that the child in Xiao Lingyu’s stomach is really a bastard.”

The people who said bad things were the few who had a bad relationship with the Xiao Family.

These days, the Xiao family had been growing vegetables and strawberries. They had sold them at a good price and made a fortune. Some people were envious.

Now that they saw the customers coming to buy strawberries, they were even more upset. They wished that something bad would happen to Xiao Lingyu’s family.

However, no one was willing to offend Xiao Lingyu’s family openly.

Firstly, many people planted vegetables with a contract with Xiao Lingyu. Xiao Lingyu would buy their vegetables so they would not need to suffer the risk and losses.

Secondly, the Xiao Family hired people to do odd jobs every day. Sometimes, there were two or three people, but sometimes, there were 30 or 40 people.

Families close to the Xiao Family, like Xiao Chengbang’s family, worked odd jobs with the Xiao Family every day. Their daughter, Xiao Xinxin, worked in Xiao Lingyu’s shop for 1,200 RMB a month. After her probation, she would get 1,500 RMB a month. It meant that Xiao Chengbang’s family would get several thousand RMB a month. In a year, they could earn tens of thousands. It was much better than farming their own fields.

Other than Xiao Chengbang’s family, there were other families too. They were often hired by the Xiao family to do odd jobs.

The villagers realized this and tried their best not to offend the Xiao Family. The most basic thing was not to speak ill about them!

If they spoke ill of them behind their backs, it would always reach their ears.

Only dumb people would talk shit about people who could bring them benefits. They were shooting themselves in the foot.

They assumed that the Xiao Family would just take any abuse thrown their way. These people were crazy!

Everyone gathered around Xiao Zhengyang's house. They came when they heard about the marriage proposal. If someone came to propose marriage, it would be a good thing for Xiao Lingyu. The child in Xiao Lingyu's stomach had a father. It wasn't a bastard child at all. The villagers were also very happy for Xiao Lingyu's family. Recently, their lives had been getting better and better. It was all thanks to Xiao Lingyu.

Who would have thought that a discordant voice would suddenly rise?

"Xiao Lingyu's child is clearly a bastard. How shameless is she that she'd spread the rumors that it belongs to that rich man? She is ridiculous!" Zhang Xiaolan covered her mouth and laughed mockingly.

"That's right. Someone is really shameless!" Liu Changnu added.

Zhou Yan came over at this time and said angrily, "You people are unbelievable. You're speaking ill of someone in front of their door? Aren't you afraid of karma?"

Zhang Chunjiao mocked, "Haha, Zhou Yan, we all know that you have a good relationship with Xiao Zhengyang's family. You rely on them to earn money. Of course, you want to suck up to them. Even if they poop, you will say it's fragrant.

"Xiao Lingyu has done such a shameful thing. She slept with a man and came back pregnant with a bastard child. If she doesn't want other people to talk about it, then she shouldn't have opened her legs for an unknown man to fuck her.

"Let me tell you, Zhou Yan, other people are afraid of Xiao Zhengyang's family, but I'm not.

"I heard that man say with my own ears that Xiao Lingyu is not pregnant with his child. He will not take responsibility."

Zhou Yan said angrily, "Zhang Chunjiao, what you said is too much. Xiao Lingyu slept with a man. Is it Lingyu's wish? She was framed."

"Hehe, so what if she was framed?" Zhang Chunjiao said disdainfully, "She has lost her chastity, so she is tainted and ruined. She is no better than a prostitute. But to make matters worse, she isn't even ashamed of being pregnant with a bastard child. She is even proud of it. What a joke! If it was in the past, Xiao Lingyu would be drowned in the river already.

"And the rest of you. What if your daughter follows in her footsteps and gets pregnant before marriage? After all, the great Xiao Lingyu is now our role model! In fact, she has been the perfect example since she was young. Have your daughters follow her example then!"

Zhang Chunjiao's words stuck into people's hearts.

That's right.

Xiao Lingyu had been a role model for children since she was young. Many parents told their daughters to learn from Xiao Lingyu. But, now they were afraid that their daughters might really learn the bad things from Xiao Lingyu.

Zhou Yan was so angry that her face turned ashen. She pointed angrily at Zhang Chunjiao and said loudly, "Zhang Chunjiao, you've gone too far."

Zhang Chunjiao sneered and said, "How have I gone too far? What I say is the truth. Oh, that's right."

Zhang Chunjiao suddenly thought of something and continued,

"I remember now. Your daughter, Xiao Xinxin, is helping Xiao Lingyu, right? Zhou Yan, I'm just looking out for you out of kindness. Take good care of your daughter. Don't be surprised that one day your daughter might come home pregnant."

Zhou Yan's face was green and red with anger. After a moment, she laughed instead of being angry, "Zhang Chunjiao, you should worry about yourself first. I heard that when you were a teen, you hooked up with a married man and ruined your reputation. No one in your home village was willing to marry you.

"That was why you married to our village. If someone should be drowned in the river, you'd be the first. You still have the face to talk about others now. What a big joke.

"And, that's all not. I heard that your eldest daughter who married into Ten Miles Village, was also caught in adultery. Like mother, like daughter. She is going through a divorce now. Zhang Chunjiao, where do you find the face to gossip about others?"

"How do you know that?" Zhang Chunjiao was shocked. Then, she realized that she had indirectly admitted this matter.

Taoyuan Village and Ten Miles Village were quite far apart, so there wasn't connection between them. In addition, it wasn't like everyone had a cell phone, so the news didn't spread.

After Zhang Chunjiao heard about her daughter's incident, she was furious. However, for the sake of her face, she had kept this matter a secret. Yet, Zhou Yan still found out about it.

Zhang Chunjiao shouted angrily, "Zhou Yan, you're slandering my eldest daughter's reputation."

"We'll know if I'm slandering you once we ask someone from Ten Miles Village!" Zhou Yan said.

Zhang Chunjiao was so angry that her entire body trembled. She pointed at Zhou Yan and said angrily, "Zhou Yan, you awful woman. I will never forgive you!"

This time, it was Zhou Yan's turn to be smug. She snorted and said, "Zhang Chunjiao, I don't even want your apology."

At this moment, the Xiao family's courtyard door opened.

Gong Tianhao helped Old Master Gong out while the Yan siblings helped Old Master Yan out.

The outside of the courtyard became completely silent. Zhang Chunjiao's face was flushed red from anger and her chest was heaving up and down.

Gong Tianhao supported Old Master Gong without saying anything. However, when he passed Zhang Chunjiao, his sharp eyes glanced at her indifferently. Zhang Chunjiao was frightened, and her face turned pale. She staggered back a few steps. Her legs were bent and she almost knelt down.

This man's aura was too strong. Just one look from him was enough to kill someone.

Zhang Chunjiao looked at him and opened her mouth. She asked anxiously, "Is there a problem?"

Gong Tianhao curled his lips and looked at her mockingly. He said plainly, "Some people have black hearts. I wonder if their blood is black too."

Then, he helped the old man and left.

When Yan Siming passed Zhang Chunjiao and looked at the surrounding villagers, his originally beautiful face broke into a smile, causing the eyes of the villagers to be dazzled.

This man was really beautiful!

Yan Siming looked at Zhang Chunjiao, who was almost scared silly, and said with a smile, "Auntie, it's fine that your face is ugly, but why is your heart also so ugly? You shouldn't come out to scare people with your ugliness.

"I'm seriously warning you. My Lingyu is pregnant now, so she won't be able to withstand a scare. If you accidentally scared my Lingyu, I'll have to take retribution."

As he said this, Yan Siming threw a provocative look at Gong Tianhao.

Gong Tianhao couldn't be bothered with him.

However, Zhang Chunjiao was really scared by Yan Siming.

Yan Siming's family had driven several cars over, and it was obvious that they were very rich. The rural people had a natural fear of officials and rich people.

Zhang Chunjiao nodded foolishly and stammered, "I... I understand."

Chapter 252: Gong Tianhao's Warning

When they returned to the Gong family, the others left Old Master Gong and Old Master Yan in the living room so that they could catch up. The others went to do their own things.

Seeing that there was no one in the room, Old Master Yan asked anxiously, "Old Chief, why did you support Tianhao to pursue Xiao Lingyu? You know about Xiao Lingyu's condition. She is pregnant with the child of an unknown person. If Xiao Lingyu were to marry into the Gong family, wouldn't that be a joke to the people of the capital?"

Old Master Gong's face darkened as he said coldly, "A joke? I want to see who dares to laugh at the Gong Family. Since my grandson likes Xiao Lingyu, then we will naturally treat the child in Xiao Lingyu's belly as the Gong Family's descendant." At this point, Old Master Gong glanced at him and said indifferently, "Yan Zheng, don't bring up this again in the future. I don't like to hear it."

The child of an unknown person was a polite way of calling the child a bastard.

'How can the child of the Gong family be called a bastard? When my brat wins over Lingyu in the future, you all will know the truth.'

Yan Zheng naturally had no way of knowing what Old Master Gong was thinking.

However, he was aware of Old Master Gong's warning.

He didn't understand why Old Master Gong supported his grandson's pursuit of a woman who was pregnant.

Regardless, he opposed the fact that his own grandson wanted to pursue Xiao Lingyu.

Old Master Yan sighed and said, "Old Chief, since you've made such a decision, I won't talk about this matter anymore."

Then, the two of them began to reminisce about the past. What had happened since they left the military and so on...

Outside, Gong Tianhao was sitting at a stone table under a big tree in the courtyard. A cup of tea was placed in front of him.

Gong Tianhao took a sip and frowned slightly.

This tea was obviously brewed with the best tea leaves, but its fragrance was far inferior to that of the Xiao Family.

After Yan Siming arrived at the Gong Residence, he looked around before sitting down directly opposite Gong Tianhao.

As for Yan Ruyun, she couldn't stand the oppressive atmosphere these men gave her and quickly escaped.

Under the big tree in the courtyard of the Gong family, there were two young men. One was handsome and fierce, and the other was elegant and charming. The other was wearing a black suit with a gray shirt and a blue-gray tie. The other was wearing a red suit and a red tie with a white shirt. The two of them looked beautiful as a painting.

Yan Siming played with the teacup in his hand. The corners of his mouth curled up, and he revealed a wicked smile as he said, "I say, Gong Tianhao, you're the young master of the capital city. You can have any woman you want, so why are you interested in Xiao Lingyu?"

Gong Tianhao's sharp eyes shot over as he said indifferently, "Yan Siming, you're the young master of the City Z. You can have any woman you want, so why are you interested in Xiao Lingyu?"

Yan Siming, "... Can't we have a good conversation?"

Every time he asked a question, Gong Tianhao would throw one back.

Yan Siming sighed and said, "Indeed, why would someone of my status like Xiao Lingyu? What do you think?"

Gong Tianhao ignored him.

Yan Siming said again, "Gong Tianhao, can you tell me what you like about Xiao Lingyu?"

'Then, I can tell Lingyu to change those qualities.' Of course, he won't tell Gong Tianhao.

Gong Tianhao was a smart man. How could he not see through Yan Siming's plan?

He said calmly, "I like everything about her."

Yan Siming, "..."

Yan Siming said unwillingly, "Gong Tianhao, do you really want to pursue Xiao Lingyu? With your status, do you really don't mind the child in Xiao Lingyu's stomach?"

Gong Tianhao lifted his eyelids slightly and looked at Yan Siming with a hint of disdain.

He said, "Since I've already decided to pursue her, of course, I don't mind." She was pregnant with his child, so why would he mind?

Gong Tianhao then asked indifferently, "Why? Does Young Master Yan mind it that much even though he has already made that grand confession?"

He knew he shouldn't have asked him that question. It all bounced back to him.

Yan Siming chuckled and said, "Of course, I don't mind."

When Gong Tianhao heard that, his lips curled into a half-smile. His eyes were filled with sarcasm and mockery, but his words were filled with pride. "Yes, you don't mind. But I wonder if Old Master Yan minds or not. My grandfather doesn't mind. He has shown full support to me.

"In fact, he said if I fail to marry Xiao Lingyu, I should stop calling him my grandfather. He would kick me out of the Gong Family!" His words were very serious.

The smile on Yan Siming's face gradually faded. He furrowed his brows, and his expression became serious.

'Did Old Master Gong like Xiao Lingyu that much? So much so that he'd prefer her over his own grandson?'

He had a vague feeling that something was wrong. However, he couldn't figure out what it was. But he left it on the backburner.

His current problem was how to deal with such a powerful love rival.

Gong Tianhao pursued Xiao Lingyu with the support of Old Master Gong. This meant that he could use all the influence of the Gong Family to pursue Xiao Lingyu even though Yan Siming didn't think Xiao Lingyu would be moved by status and power.

But this would show their sincerity. Eventually, Xiao Lingyu might be moved and fall into this man's arms.

On the other hand, Yan Siming had a few free months to pursue Xiao Lingyu. However, he resisted his desire and hoped that Xiao Lingyu would become his lover instead.

However, before he could get a lover, he made a love rival.

His love rival was so powerful that he started to panic.

Competition is always a great motivator.

Now, he wanted Xiao Lingyu to be his wife. However, on this path, there were two huge blockages. One was Gong Tianhao, and the other was his grandfather.

So many people became his obstacles. His grandfather's silence meant great disapproval. His disapproval meant the Yan Family's disapproval too.

However, it did not matter.

As long as he defeated this love rival, everything else could be settled in the future.

Yan Siming smiled faintly and said, "Young Master Gong, you don't have to worry about that."

However, Gong Tianhao sneered and said, "Worry? Young Master Yan, of course, I won't worry about you. But I'm worried about the people around you!" At this point, his expression froze, and he warned, "Young Master Yan, I hope you know what you're doing. And you have a clear handle on the Yan Family."

As soon as Gong Tianhao said this, Yan Siming's calm expression froze.

Then, he said, "You don't have to worry about that, Young Master Gong!"

As he said this, he retracted his finger on his thigh. The Yan Family was a big family in City Z. They looked harmonious on the surface, but...

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Zhang Xiaolan, Zhang Chunjiao, and Liu Changnu gathered together.

"Chunjiao, don't be angry. Those two men are just bewitched by that bitch, Xiao Lingyu."

Zhang Xiaolan said, "That bitch must have cast some spell on the men so that they don't even mind she is carrying a bastard child."

"That's right!" Liu Changmei said disdainfully. "She looks like a vixen, and she is very cunning. The village men drool whenever they see her."

"Hmph, that's because she has the Little Cattle King," Zhang Xiaolan said disdainfully and jealously, "If I have the Little Cattle King, I would grow so many strawberries and make a fortune too. We'll see who dares to look down on us again! Men will fall heads over heels for us too!"

Speaking of the strawberries, Zhang Chunjiao rolled her eyes and asked, “Xiao Lan, Changnu, what if we destroy her strawberries?”

“Ah?!” The other two were shocked!

Chapter 253: Angry Old Master Yan

Old Master Yan and his family left the Taoyuan Village that night.

Although Old Master Yan really wanted to stay, there was no place for him in Taoyuan Village for the time being.

When Old Master Yan left, he said with tears in his eyes, “Old chief, I don’t want to leave you!”

Everyone, “...”

It was as if they were husband and wife leaving each other.

When Old Master Gong saw him cry, he felt a headache coming on, “Xiao Yan, how many times have you cried today? You’re only going home, not going to the battlefield. Why do you make it look like this is a final parting?”

“Plus, look around! Aren’t you ashamed with so many juniors watching?”

Old Master Yan held onto Old Master Gong’s hand and refused to let go. The juniors covered their mouths and tried their best to hold back their laughter. They laughed until their shoulders trembled.

Yan Siming and Yan Ruyu covered their faces. Their grandfather was too embarrassing.

Yan Siming put down his hand and walked to Old Master Yan’s side. “Grandfather, if you like it here, how about I build you a house here?” Yan Siming noticed Taoyuan Village was a good place to heal and recuperate. After all, Gong Tianhao sent his grandfather here for that reason. And reality proved that Old Master Gong’s health did improve after moving here.

When Old Master Yan heard this, he immediately stopped crying. He asked, “Ming ‘Er, are you sure? You’ll build a house for me here?”

“Yes!” Yan Siming said.

But he was a little worried!

If his grandfather lived in Taoyuan Village, then his pursuit of Xiao Lingyu would definitely be met with obstruction.

O well, as long as he could move Xiao Lingyu and get her to agree to be his wife, he could resolve the problems at home eventually.

Old Master Yan immediately stated his request, “The house must be built next to the Gong Family. I don’t need many rooms, but the courtyard has to be big, and the environment must be good...”

Yan Siming nodded. “Alright, grandfather, no problem. I’ll definitely do as you say!”

Old Master Yan nodded in satisfaction. "Mm, that's good." Then, he turned to Old Master Gong and said, "Old chief, we will be neighbors in the future."

Old Master Gong nodded. "Yes, that's good."

Then, the Yan family quickly left.

Yan Siming and Yan Ruyi drove back in their car. Old Master Yan had his driver.

When they returned to the Yan family's large villa in City Z that spanned several thousand square meters, Yan Zheng's expression immediately became solemn. All the servants and nannies of the Yan family came out to welcome them.

Old Master Yan got out of the car and sternly instructed the butler, "Get the eldest young master to come to my study!"

He knew it was impossible to talk about what happened in Taoyuan Village before the Xiao Family. Therefore, Yan Zheng had remained silent about Yan Siming's pursuit of Xiao Ling and his request to marry her.

Yan Siming knocked on the study door.

As soon as Yan Siming entered the study, Old Master Yan said sternly, "Kneel down!"

Yan Siming knelt down and asked, "Grandfather, I didn't do anything wrong. Why should I kneel?"

"You're still asking me why?!" Old Master Yan immediately threw a jade cup that was worth a million at Yan Siming. Yan Siming caught it quickly and tried to persuade him, "Grandfather, you can hit me, but you shouldn't waste money. This is the Chen Dynasty Cup that is worth three million!"

Old Master Yan glared, and his face turned green with anger. He pointed angrily at Yan Siming, "You... You unfilial grandson, are you questioning me now?"

Yan Siming held the cup and didn't say anything. Silence meant yes.

Old Master Yan was so angry that his entire body was trembling. He pointed at Yan Siming and scolded, "You unfilial son..."

"Grandfather, I'm not your son, but your grandson." The kneeling Yan Siming reminded him.

"You... Get lost!" Old Master Yan pointed at the door and shouted.

Yan Siming nodded, "Grandfather, then I'll go. Please don't be angry anymore." After saying that, Yan Siming put down the cup in his hand and immediately ran out of the door.

Old Master Yan reacted immediately and shouted, "Stop, come back!" But in his heart, he was cursing, 'Little Brat, I almost fell for your trick again.'

Yan Siming, who was about to run out of the door, paused, turned around, and said with confusion, "Grandpa, didn't you tell me to get lost?"

Old Master Yan sneered and said, "That was earlier, and this is now. Now, I want you to come back here and continue kneeling!"

Yan Siming obliged. He thought, 'It looks like I can't escape this time.'

Yan Zheng shouted, "Tell me, what's going on between you and that... that Xiao Lingyu?"

Yan Siming replied carelessly, "Grandfather, you already heard what happened. You should know everything already."

"How am I supposed to know everything?" Old Master Gong slammed his walking stick on the ground and asked in an unusually angry tone, "Since you're not the man who slept with Xiao Lingyu, why did you admit it? Do you know how much face I've lost today?"

"I went to that girl's parents to propose marriage because I thought she was pregnant with your child. I even called her parents our in-laws!

"But in the end, all of this was a blunder!"

"But we've already explained the misunderstanding, right?" Yan Siming said.

"Yes, we did!" Yan Zheng said, "But I'd rather I was still caught in that misunderstanding." It made him happy for nothing. He thought that he really had a great-grandson to hug already.

Old Master Yan took a deep breath and said, "Alright, since that child has nothing to do with you, just keep a distance from them in the future."

"No!" Yan Siming shook his head firmly. "Grandfather, I like Xiao Lingyu, and I want to marry her. Please give me your blessing, grandfather!"

"You want me to give you my blessing?" Yan Zheng said, "Do you know how much that will injure the Yan Family? Yan Siming, don't you know that if you marry a woman with a bastard child into the Yan family, not only will you be a joke in the upper-class circle, but the entire Yan Family will also lose face because of you."

"Grandfather!" Yan Siming shouted and was about to say something when he was stopped by Yan Zheng's hand gesture.

He said, "Alright, grandfather is very tired today and needs to rest. You can go now."

"Yes, grandfather!"

When Yan Siming stepped out of the study and closed the door, Yan Ruyu, who was in the next room, immediately pulled him away and asked anxiously, "Brother, how are you?"

Yan Siming loosened his tie and shook his head, "I'm fine!"

Yan Ruyu said, "Brother, just now, first uncle and aunt stopped me and wanted to know what happened. I didn't tell them anything!"

"Thank you!" Yan Siming said with a smile.

Yan Ruyu was shocked that she'd ever get a word of gratitude from her eldest cousin.

Chapter 254: A Fire in the Strawberry Field

It was late at night, and there was no light. Only the bugs could be heard.

A figure walked out of the village entrance. He was holding an old-fashioned flashlight with a few things in his hand. The figure was moving towards Tai Ping Field. Tai Ping Field belonged to the Xiao Family... except for the few patches owned by the few families who didn't rent their land to Xiao Lingyu. The land was covered in strawberries, peanuts, and soybeans!

Because of the strawberry business and its high value, Xiao Lingyu hired four men to take turns to guard it. It was to stop thieves and to prevent people from causing damage!

Every section of the road had street lamps, and the greenhouse was also equipped with sun lamps. The sun lamps were very bright. It illuminated everything inside the shed.

The figure didn't walk towards the street lamps. Instead, he wandered towards the location where the darkness was thickest. However, the street lamps still illuminated his faint shadow. The figure passed through a small ridge and then arrived at the side of the river.

The river was not big, only two or three times wider. The water wasn't rapid, but the river was uneven with deep spots and shallow spots. It was dangerous to cross the river at night.

There were many cedar trees planted on both sides of the river. Cedar trees were famous for their piercing leaves.

There was a small path that cut through the middle of the river. But if one wanted to wade through the river, one had to brave the cedar trees and the dangerous water.

The figure stood beside the river and hesitated. Then, he walked down the path in the middle of the river.

"Ouch!" However, the night was too dark, and the flashlight was weak, so he was stabbed by the cedar leaves. He cried out in pain.

However, he immediately covered his mouth. Then, he carefully made his way across the stream. Soon, he arrived before a large water pipe.

The pipe was installed a few years ago when the fields were a little dry. It was used to pump water with an engine. Water flowed through this pipe from the river into the fields.

The diameter of the big pipe was about 30 centimeters. During low tide, it would be fully exposed. Many children liked to walk on it when the river was shallow.

This figure bent down and used the pipe to guide his way across the river. The other side of the river was Tai Ping Field.

After getting on the riverbank, there was a lush grass patch. Bending his body, the figure carefully walked through the grass patch.

He had completely hidden thanks to the night.

There were four guards, and each of them guarded a corner. However, there would be loopholes since the field was so large.

The person carefully avoided the guards. He found his way to a patch of dry land in Tai Ping Field. The patch was about three Fen large.

The figure poured some liquid onto the land and then ignited a lighter.

The faint light from the lighter shone on the person's face, revealing a sinister and dangerous smile.

He said with a ferocious expression, "Xiao Lingyu and Xiao Family, we'll see how much you'll lose this time."

After saying that, he threw the lighter onto the ground.

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Pregnant women had to use the toilet often! Whenever Xiao Lingyu got up at night, she would pass through the computer and stop to look at the screen. The video showed the surveillance of the field.

The video quality was good.

When she saw a certain spot in the video, Xiao Lingyu shivered and woke up immediately.

She found her phone and made a call. As soon as the call was connected, Xiao Lingyu said anxiously, "Uncle Chengbang, quick, someone is setting a fire on Xiao Chengcai's land!"

When Xiao Chengbang heard that, he immediately replied, "Alright, we'll rush over now." The moment he said that the flames ignited. He said, "Not good. The fire has already started."

After saying that, he hung up the phone. Together with the three other guards, they grabbed the fire extinguishing tools and quickly ran to the place where the fire was.

Xiao Lingyu was extremely anxious. She ran to her parent's room. She knocked on the door fiercely as she said, "Dad, Mom, someone is setting fire to the strawberry field."

Hearing this, Mother Xiao and Father Xiao opened the door and asked in shock, "What? Is someone setting fire to the field? Who is so horrid?"

Father Xiao said anxiously, "No matter what, we have to go there now. No, we need to get the villagers' help to put out the fire." Thankfully, the field was close to a river. Xiao Lingyu also had the foresight to do a series of fire prevention and firefighting measures. But they needed people to operate.

"Yes, I'll go inform everyone." Mother Xiao turned to Xiao Lingyu and instructed, "Yu 'Er, you stay at home and are not allowed to go out, understand?"

Xiao Lingyu nodded.

Mother Xiao took out a loudspeaker and shouted loudly, "There's a fire! Please help! There's a fire!"

The people who were sleeping soundly immediately woke up when they heard about the fire. They asked the people beside them. "Did you hear that?"

“That’s right. It sounds like Qiuying.”

“Let’s go and take a look. Bring a bucket!”

“Yeah, I’ll go too.”

“Make sure the elderly and children stay at home. It’s dangerous with too many people!”

“Okay!”

Everyone received the news and came out of their homes with fire extinguishing tools. They asked, “Qiuying, Where’s the fire?”

Chen Qiuying said, “The fire is at the strawberry field.”

The villagers ran to Tai Ping Field. It usually took about ten minutes to walk from the village to the Tai Ping Field. But this time, they ran the journey in three minutes.

When they arrived, the fire was already burning.

The fire started from Xiao Chengcai’s field and quickly spread in all directions.

Since there was kerosene as an accelerant, the fire started quickly.

Even though Xiao Chengbang and the other three guards used fire extinguishers, they could not put out the fire in time.

Under the high heat, the plastic shed paper quickly melted. The fire quickly spread and started to burn everything.

The Gong Family also received the news. Old Master Gong quickly ordered everyone in the family to help extinguish the fire.

“Quick, go and help!” Old Master Gong urged, “Tianhao, quick, there are still a few fire extinguishers in the house. Each of you will take one and bring it with you.”

The others picked up the fire extinguishers and ran to the place where the fire broke out.

After everyone left, Old Master Gong paced around the room a few times. He was really worried about Xiao Lingyu, so he brought his flashlight and went to the Xiao residence to take a look.

When he arrived at the Xiao residence and saw that the lights were bright, Old Master Gong shouted, “Lingyu, Lingyu...”

However, no one responded.

This made him extremely anxious as he muttered to himself, “She wouldn’t have run off to save the fire, right? She is pregnant! What should I do? No, I need to find her!” He left the Xiao Family and headed towards the strawberry field.

On the way, someone saw him and asked in shock, “Old Master, are you going to help with the fire at your age?”

Old Master Gong said anxiously, "Quick, get someone to look for Lingyu. That child might have gone to put out the fire as well. It's too dangerous for her."

"What?" Someone was shocked, "This child has always been very steady in her actions. Why is she acting so rash now? Old Master, you don't need to come along. You should go back to wait for the news." After all, he was aged. If he went over, he would only be a hindrance.

Old Master Gong was also very self-aware. He nodded and said, "Alright, I'll go back now. Please look after the girl."

"Old Master, of course, we will."

...

Gong Tianhao followed Xiao Wang and Xiao Zhang to the place where the fire broke out. However, his eyes were sharp, and he saw two figures in the distance. One of them looked very much like Xiao Lingyu.

The two of them seemed to be arguing about something.

Gong Tianhao handed the fire extinguisher to Xiao Wang and said, "That figure seems to be Xiao Lingyu. I'll go and take a look."

When Xiao Wang saw it, he exclaimed, "That does look like Xiao Lingyu. Wait, the other person is pushing her!"

Gong Tianhao did not care about anything else.. He ran over like the wind.

Chapter 255: Intimate Contact

After her parents left, Xiao Lingyu was extremely anxious. She was pregnant. If she went out now, she would only cause trouble for others.

She paced back and forth in the living room a few times. Then, she thought of something and returned to her room to look at the surveillance video.

She rewound the video and noticed a figure passing through the bushes.

Xiao Lingyu narrowed her sharp eyes and immediately understood something. The figure moved along the pipe and through the bushes. That area was the camera's blindspot.

However, it was unclear whether the figure knew it was the blindspot or it was just a matter of luck.

Regardless, the arsonist would need to escape after setting the fire. Chances were, he would use the same route as earlier.

Thinking of this, Xiao Lingyu quickly ran out.

She wanted to catch that person on the spot.

It was the middle of the night, and the sky was dark. Everyone took torches and extinguishers to put out the fire. Therefore, no one noticed Xiao Lingyu when she sneaked out of her house.

Xiao Lingyu did not walk down the main road. Instead, she went up the ridge by the other side of the field.

She held a small flashlight and walked very carefully. Catching the culprit was important but not more important than Xiao Tong. She still knew her priority.

After walking for a while, Xiao Lingyu looked from afar. That person had already passed back through the pipe and was heading back to the village.

Perhaps he noticed Xiao Lingyu's flashlight, so he turned and ran back to the pipe.

Xiao Lingyu naturally wouldn't let him go so easily.

She gave chase and turned off the flashlight. Because of the spring water, Xiao Lingyu realized her vision was good in the dark.

Xiao Lingyu followed the figure and slowly caught up to him.

Because he was being pursued, the figure didn't dare to turn on the flashlight when he reached the river and pipe. However, he believed he would be able to escape based on his familiarity with the land.

Xiao Lingyu was still hot on his heels. The figure had to escape. He couldn't cross the river and return to Tai Ping Field because there were villagers there trying to put out the fire he had started.

The figure looked around and noticed a small hole under the tree by the river. It was the perfect hiding spot.

However, as the figure moved towards the hole, someone grabbed her arm. She panicked and was afraid.

She could vaguely see her captor's face through the weak light.

Then, she heard Xiao Lingyu's surprised voice, "Auntie Zhang, it's you!"

Auntie Zhang was panicked at first, but when she noticed Xiao Lingyu was alone, she calmed down. Instead, she started to puff up her chest.

She said with a little guilt, "Yes, it's me. What's wrong? Can't I come to the river? Do you own this land too?"

"It's you, isn't it?" Xiao Lingyu said directly, "You set the fire, right?" She sounded very sure.

Auntie Zhang was panicking, but she couldn't admit this. She tried to shake off Xiao Lingyu's hand and said, "Fire? I didn't set the fire."

Xiao Lingyu asked angrily, "If you didn't set the fire, who did?"

Auntie Zhang wanted to shake off her hand. She said with guilt and anger, "How would I know?"

"If it weren't you, why did you come here so sneakily at night?" Xiao Lingyu asked sharply, "I saw you crawl along that pipe. The pipe leads directly to Tai Ping Field. Everyone is working hard to put out the fire, but you were busy wading across the river? Why?" At this point, Xiao Lingyu shouted angrily, "Zhang Xiaolan, why did you set my field on fire?"

Zhang Xiaolan was gripped tightly by Xiao Lingyu's hand. She was already extremely nervous. Hearing the accusation, she became even more afraid. "I said I didn't set the fire. Let go!"

As she said this, she tried to use her other hand to pry Xiao Lingyu away, but she realized that Xiao Lingyu was very strong. Even for Zhang Xiaolan, who worked the fields daily, she couldn't move Xiao Lingyu.

Zhang Xiaolan knew that she couldn't be held here any longer. She became anxious and used her other hand to push at Xiao Lingyu's stomach.

When Xiao Lingyu saw this, her pupils contracted violently. She immediately let go of Zhang Xiaolan's hand. Zhang Xiaolan used this opportunity to push Xiao Lingyu back.

Due to the force and narrow space, Xiao Lingyu staggered and lost her balance. There was a ditch right behind her.

The ditch was about a meter deep. If she fell, the consequences would be unimaginable.

However, Xiao Lingyu couldn't stop the momentum of her falling body. She screamed in fear, "Ah!"

Zhang Xiaolan didn't care about Xiao Lingyu. She took off running.

Suddenly, someone grabbed her in his arms. The person also staggered a few times before he regained his balance.

After Gong Tianhao held her firmly, he asked anxiously, "Yu 'Er, how are you? Are you alright?"

Xiao Lingyu shivered, and then she lifted her head. She looked at Gong Tianhao, who rushed to save her. She didn't even register the intimate way he had called her.

Gong Tianhao assumed Xiao Lingyu was scared witless. He waved his hands before her eyes and asked anxiously, "Yu 'Er, say something. Don't scare me."

Only then did Xiao Lingyu realize that she was being hugged by Gong Tianhao. She was surrounded by his safe and warm embrace.

'He has saved me again. This is already the second time. Is it fate?'

Her face turned slightly red. Then, she pretended to be calm and said coldly, "Mr. Gong, can you let go of me now? I can't breathe."

When Gong Tianhao heard that, he immediately let go of her. When he ensured she was really fine, he immediately heaved a sigh of relief and said, "Yu 'Er, stay here for a while. I'll go and catch that culprit!"

He chased after Zhang Xiaolan.

Xiao Lingyu snapped back to it. She muttered, "Yu 'Er? Did he just call me Yu 'Er? Who gave him the permission to do that?"

Xiao Lingyu stood on the ridge and felt quite fearful. Her hands moved to protect her belly.

A moment later, Gong Tianhao came over with a person in his hand.

Her hands were tied up.

Gong Tianhao said, "Yu 'Er, I've brought the person back."

Xiao Lingyu nodded and said, "Let's go. We'll bring her back to the village."

Gong Tianhao was worried about Xiao Lingyu going back alone.

There were already many people fighting the fire, so he stayed to be Xiao Lingyu's personal guard..

Chapter 256: After the Fire

The raging fire continued burning for more than ten minutes before it was put out. There were no casualties, only the loss of property.

There were three reasons why the fire was put out so quickly.

First, there were many people. Each person had a bucket of water, and more than a hundred villagers participated in the fire-fighting operation.

Second, the fire-fighting measures were in place. Many fire extinguishers were stored in the shed, and a few water cisterns were dug. When the fire broke out, the water was pumped out by the engine.

Third, it was the geographical environment. There was no strong wind in the night. In addition, the field was next to a small river, so there was sufficient water.

When the last wisp of smoke was completely extinguished, everyone wiped the sweat on their foreheads and said with a smile, "The fire is finally out."

"Yes, the fire is finally out. Otherwise, if it continues to burn like this, the entire field will be destroyed, and the loss will be huge."

"However, based on the situation, the loss is not small either. The strawberries are very expensive. They are sold for 200 RMB per catty. Even if they lost 50 catties, that was already 10,000 RMB gone up in flames."

"Based on estimation, they've lost more than 50 catties." A villager said regretfully, "A few large sheds have been burned down, and the strawberries are gone."

"Speaking of which, how did the fire start?" A villager asked in puzzlement, "The source of the fire isn't at the strawberry field. In fact, I believe it came from that piece of land." The person pointed at the patch where the weeds had been burned to ashes. "Look, the fire probably started here. The sheds closest to this patch are the most damaged."

"You're right."

"This piece of land has been circled out, so this isn't part of the strawberry field. Whose land is this?"

"In Tai Ping Field, only three or four families didn't rent their land to Xiao Lingyu."

"This piece of land belongs to Xiao Chengcai."

“Oh, it’s Xiao Chengcai’s. He doesn’t grow anything here. It’s the middle of summer, and the grass is green. Why would a fire suddenly catch?”

“Were the night guards smoking, and they forgot to put out their cigarette butts? Didn’t the news on television say that a forest fire started because the lumberjack accidentally dropped a still-burning cigarette butt?”

Someone denied it immediately, “That’s because no one was on that mountain at the time. When they noticed the fire, it was already too late to do anything.

“Furthermore, that happened in the fall. The mountain was filled with dry twigs and fallen leaves.

“But we’re in the middle of summer. There are few dry weeds in the wild. Even a burning cigarette will have a hard time starting a fire with these conditions. Furthermore, if it was caused by a burning cigarette, the fire wouldn’t have accelerated so quickly. Chengbang and the others would have extinguished it easily. The whole village wouldn’t need to mobilize to help.”

“So, you mean someone did this on purpose?”

“Yes, that’s the only explanation.”

People were alarmed. “Someone deliberately set the fire? Who could be so evil?”

Father Xiao and Xiao Chengbang looked around to make sure there was no lingering ember. They were relieved not to find any.

However, the plastic tarp that covered the greenhouses had melted off, leaving behind only the steel skeletons.

The strawberries in the shed were charred. Mother Xiao’s heart ached terribly. She walked around and estimated that they had lost around one thousand kilograms of strawberries. And this was already the best result with everyone’s help putting out the fire.

Mother Xiao sighed. She gathered herself and said, “Thank you, everyone, for coming out so late at night to help. I didn’t mean to if it wasn’t truly necessary.”

Someone said, “Qiuying, you’re too polite. There was such a big fire. It is our responsibility to help. Do you think we’re going to stand there and watch the strawberries burn down?”

“That’s right, Qiuying.”

“Qiuying, the fire was ferocious. If we didn’t put it out, they would have spread through the field and into the village. The consequences would be unimaginable!”

Indeed, no one could guarantee that the fire wouldn’t injure their own properties.

Mother Xiao smiled. “Alright. I won’t stand on ceremony then. I’ll send two cattles of strawberries to all the families who participated in the fire fighting tonight.”

“Ah, Qiuying, that... that is too much. We can’t want that.”

The villagers immediately thought of the strawberry’s price.

“Moreover, your house doesn’t even have enough strawberries to sell. How can you give them away?” Someone added.

“Instead of giving away the strawberries, Qiuying, you should cook a feast for the village. We all love your cooking. In fact, the smell of cooking from your house leaves me drooling every day!”

Mother Xiao chuckled. “That is no problem. After this incident is over, I’ll treat everyone to a feast.”

“Okay, that’s a deal!” Someone immediately shouted.

Mother Xiao smiled, “Everyone must be tired from all the work. Thank you. You should go back to rest.”

After that, everyone left one after another.

Only Xiao Zhengyang and his wife, Xiao Mingyang and his wife, Xiao Chengbang and his wife, and the other three night guards were left behind.

Zhou Yan exploded and scolded her husband, “Xiao Chengbang, what kind of night guard are you? How can you allow this to happen?”

The four night watchers lowered their heads slightly, feeling very guilty. They failed to protect the strawberry field and allowed the big fire to happen.

Xiao Chengbang smoked a cigarette and said, “Someone set the fire on purpose. The four of us would go on patrol every half an hour.

“Before the fire broke out, we had just returned from our patrol, and we received a call from Lingyu. She said that someone was starting a fire. When we heard that, we immediately rushed over to put out the fire. However, the culprit used kerosene, so the fire spread quickly. We tried our best, but the fire was too strong.”

When Zhou Yan heard that she immediately said in shock, “Someone deliberately set the fire? Who is the culprit? Who is so evil?”

Xiao Chengbang shook his head and said, “We don’t know yet.” After that, he turned to look at Xiao Zhengyang and his wife and said, “I’m really sorry. Zhengyang, Qiuying. This is our negligence.”

Xiao Zhengyang shook his head and said, “It’s not your fault. My Yu ‘Er has done many fireproofing measures, but the culprit has succeeded. Thankfully, you discovered the fire early, or else the damage would have been bigger.”

Hearing that Xiao Zhengyang did not blame them, the four felt even guiltier.

They knew that Xiao Lingyu hired them to be the night guards because she knew there were people who were jealous. They might come to cause destruction. However, the guards were careless and allowed the culprit to succeed.

Xiao Zhengyang and his wife looked at the four of them, not knowing what to say.

Xiao Zhengyang patted Xiao Chengbang’s shoulder and said, “We’ll have to trouble your team to keep watch for the rest of the night. We’ll go back first. We’ll clean up these things tomorrow.”

Xiao Chengbang and the other three nodded and said, "Of course, you must be tired too. Please go back to rest."

On the way back, fourth aunt Xiao said angrily, "Who is the one who has a grudge against us? How could they do something like this?!"

Mother Xiao shook her head and said, "I don't know. But we should be able to find out soon."

Ever since their strawberries got popular, her daughter had set up surveillance cameras around the strawberry field. It was thanks to the cameras that Lingyu was about to discover the fire in time.

"The culprit is really hateful!" Liu Chunhua said angrily, "Doesn't their conscience hurt?"

The others were angry too.. They had to find out who this person was.

Chapter 257: Outsiders

It was late at night, and there was no light, so the road was not easy to walk on.

Gong Tianhao pulled Zhang Xiaolan, making her stagger as she walked.

On the other hand, he carefully guided Xiao Lingyu. He said with concern, "Be careful, don't trip." In fact, if it was possible, he wanted to carry her home. But it was clear that Xiao Lingyu wouldn't like that. Gong Tianhao didn't force it lest Xiao Lingyu became more resistant against him.

Zhang Xiaolan said fearfully from behind, "Xiao Lingyu, let me go! I was just passing by. I didn't start the fire. Don't accuse me."

When Xiao Lingyu heard this, she suddenly stopped in her tracks. Gong Tianhao immediately stood beside her to protect her.

Xiao Lingyu looked at Zhang Xiaolan and laughed coldly, "Auntie Zhang, do you think I will really let you go? I have no grudges against you, but you have to come to my land to start the fire in the middle of the night. What is your intention? Now, you want me to let you go? That's impossible.

"Also, I've already called the police. The police will be here soon. Whether you'll be let go, it'll depend on the police."

When Zhang Xiaolan heard that Xiao Lingyu had called the police, she was so scared that her entire face turned pale. She was so afraid that she knelt down on the spot.

Her expression was a little incredulous as she said, "You called the police? You actually called the police? Why did you call the police?"

Xiao Lingyu frowned for a moment and then said in a somewhat amused manner, "Auntie Zhang, you're very interesting. You set fire to my land, so why can't I call the police on you? Don't you know that arson is a crime?"

“Crime?” Zhang Xiaolan’s pupils constricted, and she looked extremely scared. Then, she knelt on the ground and refused to get up. She kept shaking her head and said, “No, no. I don’t want to go... I don’t want to go to jail.”

“It’s too late now.” Xiao Lingyu said. “Why didn’t you think of that before you started the fire?”

“No, I won’t go!” Zhang Xiaolan refused to budge. Before she started the fire, she didn’t think that she would be caught red-handed.

She had a thought-out plan. After she started the fire, she would quickly retreat. Once she waded back through the river, she could disappear into the night.

However, she didn’t expect she’d be caught by Xiao Lingyu, who was waiting for her at the riverbank. However, she was still not that afraid then. Being caught by Xiao Lingyu was not that scary. All she needed to do was to shake off Xiao Lingyu and go back to her maiden home to hide. When the dust settled, she could return.

She didn’t think that arson would be a crime, and she could be arrested.

One had to admit that a lack of education was very scary!

People knew that murder was a crime, but they didn’t know that arson was a criminal crime too.

Zhang Xiaolan was shocked and terrified.

Gong Tianhao pulled her a few times, but she did not want to get up. This made him frown.

Xiao Lingyu said, “We can’t allow her to act crazy like this.” Xiao Lingyu looked across to the field. People were still fighting the fire. She couldn’t distract them. She came out in a hurry, so she didn’t bring her phone either.

Gong Tianhao thought for a while and said, “Since she doesn’t want to leave, we’ll wait here with her. The fire is already dying down. I’ll call someone over in a while.”

Gong Tianhao came with Xiao Wang and Xiao Zhang. They had helped him notice Xiao Lingyu earlier. They would come looking for Gong Tianhao after the fire was put out.

As expected, the fire died after a few more minutes. The people started to disperse.

Xiao Wang and Xiao Zhang subconsciously looked over to where Gong Tianhao was. They had undergone special training, and their eyesight was better than ordinary people’s.

They immediately saw Gong Tianhao and Xiao Lingyu.

“That’s eldest young master and Xiao Lingyu. What happened over there?” Xiao Wang asked curiously.

Xiao Zhang frowned.

Gong Tianhao made a hand gesture. Xiao Zhang said, “Eldest young master seems to be calling us over. Let’s go over and take a look.”

When they approached, they saw a woman kneeling on the ground with her face full of panic.

The two of them greeted Gong Tianhao, "Young Master!"

Gong Tianhao pointed at the woman on the ground and said, "This woman is the culprit behind the fire. She refuses to leave, so I need you to haul her back with you!"

Xiao Wang and Xiao Zhang were stunned for a moment. Then, a burst of anger appeared on their faces as they said, "So, someone really set the fire on purpose. This is too hateful. We'll drag this woman back with us!"

They moved to grab Zhang Xiaolan by her armpit, and they dragged her away.

Zhang Xiaolan struggled with all her might as she said, "Let go of me! What are you doing? Let go of me!"

The villagers who were walking back heard Zhang Xiaolan's shouts and aimed their torches this way. They saw Old Master Gong's subordinates dragging a woman.

Everyone's eyes widened when they realized that this woman was Zhang Xiaolan.

Zhang Xiaolan saw the villagers and immediately started to struggle and shout, "Help! Help! They are trying to bully me! You can't allow these outsiders capture me!"

When someone heard this, he immediately went forward and asked, "Xiao Wang, Xiao Zhang, what's going on? Why are you holding Auntie Zhang?"

Little Zhang said very angrily, "This woman is the culprit behind the fire."

"What?" The villagers were shocked. "There's really an arsonist, and it's Zhang Xiaolan? How is this possible?"

"No, no, I didn't set the fire. Xiao Lingyu is framing me!" Zhang Xiaolan shook her head and defended herself. "She wronged me. I didn't set the fire."

Xiao Wang asked sharply, "Auntie, why would Xiao Lingyu frame you? Plus, what were you doing on the other side of the river when everyone was busy putting the fire? It was because you tried to run away from the crime scene, and Xiao Lingyu caught you."

Xiao Wang and Xiao Zhang had found out everything from Xiao Lingyu.

Zhang Xiaolan defended herself loudly, "Who said I set the fire? Even Xiao Lingyu didn't see me do that! Why do you believe her and not me? Village chief, are you going to let these two foreigners treat me like this?"

The village chief, who was called out, didn't look too good. He spoke fairly, "Zhang Xiaolan, although Xiao Wang and Xiao Zhang are from the outside, they are good people.. They definitely wouldn't grab you for no reason. Also, you said that you didn't set the fire, so what were you doing on the other side of the river when everyone was helping to put out the fire?"

Chapter 258: Wife and Husband

When Xiao Zhengyang and his wife returned to the courtyard, they saw that the courtyard was filled with people. They were confused. Shouldn't the villagers have gone back to rest? Why were they gathered in their courtyard instead?

Before they entered the courtyard, they heard a familiar voice say loudly, "I've already told you. I didn't set the fire. Why don't you believe me? Xiao Lingyu, you have no right to hold me. I want to go home now. Tell them to let me go."

Mother Xiao understood everything immediately. They had captured the culprit.

She immediately ran into the courtyard angrily and stopped in front of Zhang Xiaolan. She pointed at Zhang Xiaolan and asked, "Well done, Zhang Xiaolan. So, you were the one who set the fire tonight! We have no grudges against you. Why did you do this?"

Zhang Xiaolan still stubbornly refused to admit anything.

She said loudly, "I told you. I didn't set the fire. How many times do I have to say it before you can hear me clearly? I'm telling you, you are not going to pin this on me!"

Zhang Xiaolan was no longer tied, but she was forced to sit on the stool by Xiao Wang and Xiao Zhang.

Xiao Lingyu sat on her special recliner. Gong Tianhao stood beside her.

Xiao Lingyu said with a faint smile, "Auntie Zhang, why are you so nervous? I have already told you. We will wait for the police to come and launch an investigation. If you really didn't set the fire, I'll go to your place tomorrow to make amends and give you 10,000 RMB as compensation for mental and reputation damage. What do you think?"

10,000 RMB? That was a lot.

The villagers were very familiar with each other. Zhang Xiaolan was a person who liked to take advantage of others. Not to mention 10,000 RMB, even if she could only get 10 RMB, she would sit here all night!

However...

"Why would I want your money?" Zhang Xiaolan suddenly became very strong-willed. "I'm tired. I just want to go home and sleep!" When she said this, her heart was bleeding. She had just rejected 10,000! However, the prerequisite for getting that money was her innocence. She knew that she was not innocent.

Instantly, the other villagers knew what was going on. Zhang Xiaolan had exposed herself. She was probably the one who set fire to Xiao Lingyu's strawberry field.

Xiao Lingyu said coldly, "Auntie Zhang, I'm really sorry. Before the police arrive, you will have to stay here. The police will decide if you're guilty or not."

Zhang Xiaolan was completely at a loss. She repeatedly said, "You're accusing me and slandering me. Let me go!"

At this moment, a villager sneered and said, "Auntie Zhang, the police will tell if you're innocent or not. Your words have no meaning."

Not many people present dared to speak up for Zhang Xiaolan. After all, the result was too clear. Zhang Xiaolan was most likely the culprit. Why would they help the arsonist? That was inviting trouble.

When Zhang Xiaolan noticed that none of the villagers was speaking up for her and was instead watching the show, her heart gradually sank. Her heart was so heavy that she couldn't breathe. It amplified her heartache. She needed to escape the courtyard urgently.

Zhang Xiaolan was flustered, afraid, and guilty at the same time. She pointed at everyone present and said loudly, "All of you are with Xiao Lingyu. You're blaming me to please her!"

When the villagers heard this, their faces turned ugly. They knew Zhang Xiaolan was throwing around accusations because she was panicked.

"Zhang Xiaolan, you did something wrong, and you're trying to blame us for it?" The village chief was furious. "How could you say that we're in cahoots with Xiao Lingyu? If we're really on one side, that's because we're on the side that's right, and you're on the wrong side!"

"Village chief, you're so right!" Someone immediately echoed.

Zhang Xiaolan was so angry, but there was nothing she could do now.

At this moment, Zhang Xiaolan's husband, Xiao Chengcai, rushed over.

Zhang Xiaolan's husband, Xiao Chengcai, had the same name as Xiao Jun's father, Xiao Chengcai. However, their personalities couldn't be more different.

Xiao Jun's father was very reasonable, but he married an unreasonable wife. Thankfully, he never indulged his wife. Therefore, Chen Guaihua never had the courage to do anything out of line. The only thing bad thing Chen Guaihua did was to 'borrow' 300 from Xiao Lingyu and refuse to return it. Xiao Chengcai had to drag his wife and his family to apologize to Xiao Lingyu.

However, this Xiao Chengcai was different. He was a wife-slave. He was cowardly before his wife. He would never say anything against his wife. When his wife did anything wrong, he would always be there to comfort and coax her.

Zhang Xiaolan was so brave today because her actions were condoned by her husband.

Xiao Chengcai was thin and tall. There was not a single bit of flesh on his cheeks. His eyes were completely sunken, and he looked listless. He looked like a skeleton.

When he arrived, he raised his hand without saying a word and directly slapped Zhang Xiaolan's face. The slap was resounding.

This caused everyone in the courtyard to be greatly shocked.

Xiao Chengcai scolded angrily, "You bitch!"

No one expected the cowardly man to come in to directly hit his wife. He even called her a bitch. It was like the man had changed overnight.

Zhang Xiaolan was also stunned by her husband's slap.

She touched her face and asked in disbelief, "You dare to hit me? Xiao Chengcai, you useless man, you actually dare to hit me?"

Xiao Chengcai said coldly, "Not only that, but I also want to divorce you."

"What?" Zhang Xiaolan was shocked, but soon, she was angry. She challenged Xiao Chengcai, "Xiao Chengcai, you useless thing, you dare to divorce me? Who gave you the courage to do that?"

"You've done something immoral, so of course, I'll have to divorce you!" Xiao Chengcai said coldly.

"Ah! I'll kill you first!" Zhang Xiaolan suddenly stood up and rushed toward Xiao Chengcai like the wind.

This was a matter between husband and wife, so Xiao Wang and Xiao Zhang didn't stop her.

Seeing Zhang Xiaolan rush over to hit him, Xiao Chengcai suddenly took two steps back. Then, he nimbly grabbed Zhang Xiaolan's arm and swung his hand at her face. He growled, "Bitch, I've put up with you for a long time already. You call me useless every day. If I'm so useless, where do Xiao Chun and Xiao Dong come from?"

"Did you cheat on me? You complained that I couldn't earn money and give you a good life. I gave you every penny I earned, but you still belittle me like this. I... I've had enough."

How much Xiao Chengcai loved Zhang Xiaolan in the past was how much he hated her now. All the bullying he had suffered exploded. He retaliated without holding back.

Zhang Xiaolan was a weak woman, so she was no match for her husband. Zhang Xiaolan cried out loudly as she was smacked, "Xiao Chengcai, you useless man. You only know how to beat up a woman. Why don't you go and beat up those who have been bullying your wife? What kind of man are you?"

When Xiao Chengcai started to kick and punch his wife, the villagers had to stop him.

Xiao Chengcai kept punching and kicking her. "You've been calling me useless, but how useful are you? You're so smart that you actually have the guts to commit arson! If you implicate the rest of my family, I'll beat you to death!"

He would really kill Zhang Xiaolan if he didn't stop.

The village chief came over and said, "Stop, Xiao Chengcai. Are you trying to kill her?"

Chapter 259: The Deadly One

When Xiao Chengcai hit Zhang Xiaolan, his eyes were sharp and filled with hatred. However, from the corner of his eyes, he secretly looked at Xiao Lingyu. Xiao Lingyu completely ignored him.

Even when Xiao Chengcai threatened to beat Zhang Xiaolan half to death, Xiao Lingyu did not open her mouth to stop him. Instead, it was the village chief who stopped him.

The village chief said angrily, "Xiao Chengcai, you can divorce Zhang Xiaolan, but you can't kill her. Moreover, you haven't divorced her yet. She's still your wife."

Xiao Chengcai stopped and grumbled, "Village chief, look at what this bitch has done. It's embarrassing. If I don't teach her a lesson, how am I supposed to face the villagers?"

Xiao Lingyu raised her eyebrows when she heard that. 'This is interesting. It is true that the silent ones are the deadliest. Xiao Chengcai is normally so weak, but he is really the brains behind everything.'

The village chief frowned slightly and said, "Alright, but you need to watch your force. Look at your wife. She is half-dead. What is this?"

Xiao Chengcai tightly pursed his lips, and the anger on his face did not fade. He nodded and said, "I'm just teaching her a lesson."

Then, Xiao Chengcai walked up to Xiao Lingyu and apologized sincerely, "Lingyu, I'm sorry. My wife has accidentally burned your land. However, I've already taught her a lesson. I believe she won't dare to do it again in the future. Do you think you can forgive your Auntie Zhang this time?"

When Xiao Lingyu heard Xiao Chengcai earlier, she was already expecting this. Xiao Chengcai beat up Zhang Xiaolan so that he could plead on her behalf and demand mercy from the crowd. The moment Xiao Lingyu forgave Zhang Xiaolan, she would be spared from a prison sentence.

Xiao Lingyu looked at Xiao Chengcai and said with a smile that was not a smile, "Uncle Cai, my forgiveness is not that important. Even if I forgive her, the fact remains that Auntie Zhang has committed arson. The police will be involved."

Father Xiao and Mother Xiao also caught up to Xiao Chengcai's plot. They were so angry that their faces turned green.

Mother Xiao said angrily, "Xiao Chengcai, what is the meaning of this? After that beating, you want us to forget that Zhang Xiaolan has burned down our field? You sure are a cunning man.

"Do you know how much we've lost because of your wife? Let me tell you. It's over 100,000 RMB!

"Plus, did we ask you to beat up your wife? Why does she deserve our forgiveness after your beating?"

There were some things that Xiao Lingyu, the junior, could not say, but Mother Xiao could.

Mother Xiao's words enlightened most of the villagers. They understood why Xiao Chengcai was beating up his wife without any warning. It was to vent his anger and to make him look like the victim.

It had to be said that this was indeed a smart move.

They had really underestimated this silent man.

After his intentions were exposed, Xiao Chengcai's face turned red and he did not know how to refute. Then, Xiao Chengcai thought of something, "Xiao Lingyu, my wife was burning the weeds at our land. It was an accident that the fire spread to your field. Even if the police are involved, the result will be the same."

'Interesting.' The corner of Xiao Lingyu's mouth curled up slightly. 'This cowardly man is quite smart.'

The villagers were impressed. The village chief demanded, "Xiao Chengcai, so you mean your wife didn't mean to set fire to the strawberry field? It was an accident?"

Xiao Chengcai nodded and said, "Of course!"

Xiao Lingyu didn't want to argue, so she said with a cold expression, "Uncle Cai, the police will confirm whether it was intentional or not. As for forgiveness, that is impossible."

Xiao Chengcai said with a livid expression, "Xiao Lingyu, we are neighbors. Do you have to be so cruel?!"

"Xiao Chengcai, do you still remember we're neighbors?" Xiao Zhengyang was angry after Xiao Chengcai's tone turned aggressive. "Your wife didn't sleep at night and came to set our field on fire. If it weren't for the help of the villagers, my family would have lost more than 100,000 RMB. A simple beating, and you think we should forgive her?"

"If I burn down your house, will you forgive me because I'm your neighbor?" Mother Xiao retorted. "Plus, we didn't even ask you to hit your wife."

Xiao Chengcai was clever, but he was not fluent with his words. He couldn't win the Xiao Family in the argument.

Xiao Chengcai said angrily, "Do you have to be so cruel? Do you have to send my wife to jail?"

He was not Zhang Xiaolan. He knew that arson was a big criminal offense. He turned around and addressed the villagers. "Village chief, have you considered the consequence if one of us is arrested and sent to jail?"

When Gong Tianhao heard this, his sharp eyes narrowed slightly. 'This skinny man is interesting. Since the Xiao Family is unwilling to forgive his wife, he plans to use the entire Taoyuan Village and its reputation to pressure the Xiao Family?'

Xiao Chengcai continued, "Everyone knows that we'll all be implicated if one of us goes to prison. The entire village will be despised and criticized by the other villagers.

"The best example is the Chen and Lan Family Villages. They are now looked down upon by other villagers. They are being avoided like the plague. Right now, the youngsters from these two families can't even find people to marry them."

The entire crowd became quiet. The villagers were all silent and deep in thought.

Xiao Chengcai's words made sense. If one of them were imprisoned, the whole village's reputation would be affected. Their children's future would be affected. They would be mocked and criticized like the people from the Chen and Lan Villages.

However, most of the villagers present were smart people, and they didn't dare to speak up for Xiao Chengcai and his wife.

This was because Xiao Zhengyang's family was not easy to bully.

If they spoke up for Xiao Chengcai and his wife, they might be barred from picking Little Cattle King's manure in the future.

Many villagers were in a dilemma.

Chapter 260: Sharp Rebuttal

However, the villagers didn't have time to hesitate for long because the police soon arrived.

The road between Xing An Town and Taoyuan Village was paved, so it was very convenient. The police took only twenty minutes to arrive. The police came and went straight to Xiao Lingyu's house.

When they saw the crowd, the police asked sternly, "Who called the police?"

"It's me!" Xiao Lingyu stood up and said, "Officer, I was the one who called the police. This woman set fire to my land in the middle of the night!" Xiao Lingyu pointed at Zhang Xiaolan, who was still lying on the ground.

The police officer saw Xiao Lingyu and smiled, "Oh, it's you guys again!" It was this same officer who came last time when the Chen Family came to make a scene.

Xiao Lingyu said a little embarrassedly, "Officer Li, I'm really sorry to trouble you guys again."

Li Xing said, "This is no problem. This is our duty. However," He looked at Xiao Lingyu and asked suspiciously, "Why is this woman lying on the ground?"

Xiao Lingyu answered truthfully, "She was just beaten by her husband!"

"Her husband beat her?" Li Xing looked around and saw Xiao Chengcai standing separately from the crowd. He guessed that this person was the husband.

"This person set fire to my family's land and caused my family to lose more than 100,000. Uncle Chengcai was very angry when he heard that. In his anger, he beat his wife. We didn't get the chance to stop him."

"Help her get up first!" Li Xing frowned and said, "Although it's summer, it's still late at night. We don't want her to catch a cold." After he said that, a few village women went to help Zhang Xiaolan up.

However, when the villagers touched her, Zhang Xiaolan cried out in pain and started to curse her husband again.

Li Xing frowned when he saw Zhang Xiaolan's red, swollen, and bruised face. Li Xing asked Xiao Lingyu directly, "What's going on?"

Li Xing knew that it had to be the Xiao Family's land that was burned. Which family's land could be so expensive?

Xiao Lingyu said, "Officer Li, my family grows strawberries on a few Mu of land. It is harvest season for strawberries. I was afraid that something might happen, so I installed surveillance cameras around the strawberry field.

"Tonight, as usual, I checked the surveillance. I was shocked because I saw a figure sneakily walking toward my strawberry field with something in her hand. Not long after, a big fire broke out in the field. Fortunately, with the help of the villagers, the fire was quickly put out, or else the losses would be more serious. As for the culprit..."

Xiao Lingyu glanced at Zhang Xiaolan. "In order to find the clues, I replayed the video. I knew the culprit was trying to escape the scene, so I ran to stop her. I caught her red-handed."

"Officer, that is not true." Xiao Chengcai immediately defended. "My family's land is close to Xiao Lingyu's land. Our land is deserted because we haven't had anything to plant in half a year.

"But recently, my wife wanted to redevelop it. It's too troublesome to hoe the patch of land, so we decide to burn the weeds instead. It is a complete accident that the fire spread to Xiao Lingyu's field. My wife didn't do it on purpose." Xiao Chengcai pleaded with Xiao Lingyu again, "Lingyu, your Auntie Zhang really didn't mean to do this on purpose. Our lands are adjacent to each other, and it is unfortunate that this happens. However, this is an accident. We can settle this among ourselves, so we don't need to trouble the police."

Xiao Lingyu didn't say anything, but Officer Li Xing had something to say.

He sternly asked, "She was just burning the weeds. But why is she doing it in the middle of the night? She's an adult. Does she not know burning weeds will easily lead to a fire?"

"Since we've been called here, there is no settling in private. I'm telling you directly that arson is a serious crime. The severity of the punishment will be determined according to the damage caused by the fire.

"According to the country's criminal law, the penalty for arson is as follows: anyone who endangers public safety through arson without causing serious consequences shall be sentenced to three to ten years of imprisonment.

"If the arson causes serious injury, death, or serious public or private property damage, the offender shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years, life imprisonment, or death.

"If the crime of arson is committed by negligence, the offender shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than three years but not more than seven years;

"If the damage is minor, the offender shall be sentenced to imprisonment not more than three years."

The villagers were stunned. They gasped, "Is it that serious?"

Officer Li looked at Xiao Chengcai, then swept a glance at Zhang Xiaolan, who was so frightened that her entire body was about to go limp. Her entire body was trembling. Office Li said, "From the looks of it, this is an intentional arson. Moreover, you've caused another party serious property losses. You will be punished with imprisonment of more than three years."

Zhang Xiaolan had just been helped up from the ground. When she heard this, she fell with a thud. She muttered, "I don't want to go to jail, I don't want to go to jail. I... I didn't do it on purpose. I didn't do it on purpose."

Xiao Chengcai looked at her and was so angry that his entire face turned green. His hands were clenched into fists.

He looked at Xiao Lingyu and said through gritted teeth, "Xiao Lingyu, are you really so heartless that you don't care about the camaraderie between neighbors and the village's reputation anymore?"

Hearing this, Xiao Lingyu's face darkened. Then, she chuckled mirthlessly. "Uncle Chengcai, are you seriously calling me heartless? Why didn't you stop Auntie Zhang when she tried to set fire to my field then?"

"When Auntie Zhang committed arson, why didn't she think of the consequences? She caused me to lose hundreds of thousands! Who is the heartless one?"

"She burned down my property, so why can't I call the police? I am obliged to forgive you instead?"

"If you were me and someone set fire to your property and caused a huge loss, would you be willing to forgive the arsonist?"

"Besides, regardless of whether Auntie Zhang is intentional or not, it is a fact that she has committed a crime.

"This is no longer an issue of heartlessness or forgiveness. If you want to beg for forgiveness, sure. Ask these police officers. See if they're willing to forgive the criminal."

Officer Li said, "As police officers, we will definitely not let any criminal go. We will never condone any crime."

"Uncle Chengcai, you heard that, right? This is arson, a crime. It's not a question of whether I forgive the culprit or not.

"Let's say I forgive the culprit, but what will that change? The police will still take the culprit away. Besides, why should I forgive someone who doesn't admit her mistakes, who doesn't apologize, and who keeps saying I'm framing her?"

Xiao Lingyu said with a sharp tone, "And to bring up the matters of the village's reputation... This is just an assumption. Someone in our village committed a crime and we decided not to have her face the law? Do you want the whole village to harbor a criminal?"

"In that case, we might as well start going around starting a fire to anyone's house that we don't like. After all, we're going to protect arsonists anyway.

"Let the whole world burn. After all, we have to forgive these arsonists because we're from the same village, right?"

Only Xiao Chengcai knew how to use the village reputation as leverage? Hah!

"Then, I think we shouldn't be called Taoyuan Village but the Arsonist's Village. We'll be so famous because of it."

Xiao Lingyu's words enlightened everyone present. She was right.

Zhang Xiaolan set fire to things and caused Xiao Lingyu to lose hundreds of thousands. It was impossible for news of such magnitude not to spread. If the other villages found out that they had decided to forgive the criminal and harbor her, Taoyuan Village's reputation would go down the drain too.

Therefore, they had to make Zhang Xiaolan face the law to save the village's reputation.

When the villagers thought of this, they immediately rebuked Xiao Chengcai, “Xiao Chengcai, you make no sense! You’ve burned down Lingyu’s strawberry field and caused her family to lose hundreds of thousands. Now, you still want them to forgive your wife? Are you crazy?”

“Xiao Chengcai, does this mean that arson is a forgivable crime to you? In that case, tomorrow, we’ll send people over to burn your house down instead! Let’s see if you’ll forgive them then!”