

As Agreed 131

Chapter 131: Apologize

“Mrs. Wang, I’m sorry, but this is just kids being kids. I hope you don’t mind,” Shu Pan apologized, though her concern for her daughter was evident.

“I didn’t say anything wrong. Shu Joy really doesn’t have a dad. Her dad has never come to pick her up,” Wang Zihang chimed in, as if he was worried about being misunderstood.

“It’s not true! I do have a dad. My mom says everyone has a dad. It’s just that my dad works in a faraway place,” Joy, despite her small stature, held this belief deeply and defended herself like a little wildcat, which probably helped her in the fight against the taller Wang Zihang.

“Joy, be good. You can’t fight with your classmates. Apologize to Wang Zihang, ”

Shu Pan crouched down and stroked Joy’s head, though Joy wasn’t very willing.

“People these days have complicated relationships. I bet nobody even knows who the child’s father is anymore,” Wang Zihang’s mother sarcastically remarked.

“Madam Wang, please watch your words.” Shu Pan’s tone was very stern.

Wang Zihang’s mother reluctantly kept quiet.

“Wang Zihang, don’t say such things to Joy again. Everyone has a dad, okay?” The teacher, who had informed the parents, stood nearby, worried about Wang Zihang’s education as his mother continued to cross the line.

“I understand, Madam,” Wang Zihang replied with his head lowered, nodding.

“I hope you’ll be more careful in the future. We send our children to kindergarten because we don’t want them to get hurt,” Wang Zihang’s mother continued to scold the teacher.

"I'm sorry, Madam Wang. We'll be more careful in the future," the teacher apologized, feeling that she had failed to supervise the children properly.

With that, the incident came to a close.

On the way home, Shu Pan remained silent. Joy cast a timid glance at her mother and said softly, "Mom, I'm sorry, I won't do it again."

Joy had always been sensitive and could tell when her mother was upset.

Shu Pan stopped in her tracks, turned around, crouched down, and spoke sternly, "Joy, you must never use fighting to solve problems."

Shu Pan was genuinely surprised by what happened today. She found it hard to believe that Joy, who was so small and timid, could get into a fight just because someone said she didn't have a father. She was deeply shocked.

She realized she had underestimated the importance of a "father" in Joy's eyes.

Shu Pan suddenly felt selfish. She had given birth to Joy, and even though she could provide her with plenty of love, she couldn't replace the love of a father. "Wu..." Perhaps because of Shu Pan's stern tone, Joy burst into tears.

Shu Pan hugged her daughter, her eyes also misting up.

"Sweetie, I'm sorry. Mommy wasn't good enough to give you a complete family, complete love, but you were born, and I hope you can forgive Mommy!" Shu Pan reproached herself silently.

"Alright, let's go home. Mommy will make you some cola chicken wings, okay?" Shu Pan comforted her, shifting her attention.

“Okay, Mommy, you’re the best. I love you,” Joy suddenly stopped crying and smiled, her mouth as sweet as if she had just had honey.

Hand in hand, the two of them happily went to buy groceries.

Wen Chi parked the car downstairs from Shu Pan’s place. He sat in the car, staring in the direction of Shu Pan’s home, torn about whether to go up.

He really missed them, but the thought of his mother’s attitude made him unsure of how to face Shu Pan. He wanted to find a foolproof solution, not wanting to inconvenience them..

Chapter 132: Clean Break

Not long after, he saw Shu Pan and her daughter, hand in hand, returning.

Without hesitation, he opened the car door and walked towards them.

“Joy, did you miss Uncle Wen?” Wen Chi hugged Joy tightly, lifting her.

“Hehe, I missed you, Uncle Wen. How about coming to our place for dinner tonight? My mom is making cola chicken wings for me.” Joy said, her mouth practically watering.

“Sure, I’d love to. I also want to see if they’re as delicious as you say.” Wen Chi spoke while gazing affectionately at Shu Pan, as if waiting for her approval.

Shu Pan patted Joy’s little hand and said, “Come down and walk by yourself. Uncle Wen will get tired if you keep carrying you. Let’s go.” Shu Pan took the lead, and the two quickly followed.

After dinner, Joy went off to play on her own, giving Wen Chi a chance to talk to Shu Pan alone.

“Xiaopan, I want to apologize on behalf of my mother for making you feel uncomfortable,” Wen Chi said sincerely, abandoning his usual carefree demeanor.

“Chi, don’t blame Auntie. She’s also thinking about you. Indeed, it’s hard for someone to accept me like this, and I can understand it,” Shu Pan comforted him, speaking the truth.

“Pan, I’m sorry for putting you through this. I’ll talk to my mother again, and I hope you won’t give up,” Wen Chi felt sorry for her, seeing how much she was suffering.

Ye Xiaomeng had initially planned to go see Shu Pan and comfort her, but as she was about to leave, she received a call from her mother.

“Mengmeng, Cheng Yang came to our house again today. What exactly are you thinking? If you don’t want to give him a chance, just make it clear. Every time he brings over gifts, it’s inappropriate for the neighbors to see. Don’t drag it out,” Mother Ye earnestly advised.

“Mom, it’s impossible between him and me. I’ll talk to him clearly,” Ye Xiaomeng replied, feeling uneasy.

“Alright, that’s good. It’s been a long time since this happened. Everyone should forget about it and live well. Look around and see if there’s anyone better for you. Seize the opportunity,” Mother Ye was genuinely concerned about her daughter’s future.

“I understand, Mom. Don’t worry,” Ye Xiaomeng felt she hadn’t been a good daughter.

After hanging up, she felt it was time to have a clear conversation with Cheng

Yang.

As she was contemplating, she immediately called Cheng Yang.

“Xiaomeng, this is great! You finally called me,” Cheng Yang sounded ecstatic as soon as he heard Xiaomeng’s voice.

“Do you have time tomorrow? Let’s meet after work and talk,” Ye Xiaomeng said calmly.

“Sure, how about Gathered Dragon? Can we meet there?” Cheng Yang’s voice trembled with excitement.

“Okay.” Ye Xiaomeng hung up the phone.

On the other end, Cheng Yang continued to hold the phone for a long time without putting it down.

After ending the call, Ye Xiaomeng fell into deep thought. This time, she had to make a clean break. She had been single for a long time, and Cheng Yang might have thought she couldn’t let go, so things had remained unresolved. It was better to cut the ties and move on with their lives.

When Ye Xiaomeng arrived at Gathered Dragon, Cheng Yang had been waiting for her for a while.

“Xiaomeng, take a look at the menu. What would you like to eat?” Cheng Yang handed the menu to Ye Xiaomeng warmly.

“Anything is fine. You can order,” Ye Xiaomeng said indifferently.

Cheng Yang smiled awkwardly and said, “Alright, I’ll decide then.”

He ordered dishes that he knew Ye Xiaomeng liked. During the meal, neither of them spoke.

Finally, Ye Xiaomeng broke the silence. “Cheng Yang, please don’t come to my house anymore. It’s impossible between us..”

Chapter 133: Drunk

“Mengmeng, can’t you give me another chance? It’s been such a long time,” Cheng Yang’s eyes welled up with tears upon hearing Ye Xiaomeng’s words. How could he just abandon years of feelings like that?

“Cheng Yang, precisely because it’s been so long, many feelings have changed. I’ve fallen for someone else...” Ye Xiaomeng delivered a heavy blow.

“You’re lying to me, Xiaomeng. You can’t possibly fall for someone else so quickly?” Cheng Yang couldn’t believe it.

“This is the truth, Cheng Yang. Please take care of yourself. I wish you well, and I hope we won’t be entangled anymore,” Ye Xiaomeng said sincerely. She no longer held any grudges and wished for their respective happiness.

After saying that, Ye Xiaomeng left without eating her meal, as she had no appetite.

Leaving Cheng Yang sitting there deep in thought.

As night fell, Ye Xiaomeng wandered the streets aimlessly, not heading to Shu Pan’s house to avoid causing her any worry.

She spotted a well-known bar ahead and entered without hesitation. She ordered a bottle of alcohol and started drinking it one glass at a time without much thought.

He Ming felt that life had become incredibly boring lately. He had thought that once Brother Ting got engaged, he would be content, but it was the opposite. Brother Ting had been moody lately, and his temper flared unexpectedly.

Tonight, he had invited Gu Shaoting out for a drink, but Shaoting said he wasn’t in the mood and returned to Shuimu Qinghua. That had become his favorite place lately. When He Ming asked him what was wrong, he remained silent, lost in thought.

He Ming ordered a bottle of alcohol, intending to drink until he couldn't anymore tonight.

Just as He Ming was getting into his drinking, someone suddenly bumped into him from the side. It was unmistakably a woman who had clearly had too much to drink, unable to stand steadily. Her body emitted a strong alcohol odor, and she crashed into He Ming's arms.

He Ming cursed under his breath and tried to pull the woman away, but she clung to him like an octopus, refusing to let go. However, at this moment, He Ming couldn't help feeling reluctant to release her, with her soft and fragrant body in his arms.

He Ming glanced down at the woman in his arms, seeing her short and stylishly dressed with fashionable short hair.

. He Ming was still very rational and wouldn't take advantage of someone in a vulnerable state. He helped steady the woman, and at this moment, he finally got a clear look at her face.

The world was indeed small, and He Ming couldn't help but sigh. The woman who bumped into him was the same woman he had encountered in his car that day.

"Drink, have another glass," this woman was none other than Ye Xiaomeng, who had consumed quite a bit of alcohol. She seemed to be using the alcohol to mourn her lost love, as everything had become a thing of the past.

"You've had enough. Please don't drink anymore," He Ming pressed down her hand as she attempted to lift her glass.

He Ming genuinely felt like a pitiable man. He had gone out to relax, but now he had to take care of a drunken woman.

"In the future, you walk your sunny path, and I'll walk my solitary bridge," Ye Xiaomeng said something unexpected.

At this point, He Ming had likely figured out Ye Xiaomeng's intentions. She was seeking solace in alcohol.

"Alright, that's enough. Where do you live? I'll take you home," He Ming patiently coaxed her.

"I don't want to go home, I want to drink... Ugh..." Ye Xiaomeng threw up, feeling terrible..

Chapter 134: Sleeping Together

After vomiting, Ye Xiaomeng pulled He Ming to continue drinking. He Ming found her behavior annoying but eventually stopped caring.

The two had only met twice, yet now they sat face to face like old friends, ordering a few more bottles of alcohol and drinking them one after another.

Finally, both of them were completely drunk. They supported each other and staggered outside.

The morning sun illuminated the earth as if it had been gilded.

Ye Xiaomeng woke up groggily from her bed, stretching lazily.

Her head was heavy from a hangover, and it almost felt like she wasn't in her own body.

The bedsheets she touched weren't the light blue ones from her own apartment, and the overhead light was dazzling and magnificent, not the flickering bulb from her place.

Her throat felt like it was on fire, and her body ached as if something had torn through it recently. She raised her hand and noticed some bruises on her wrist.

This couldn't be a dream...

Ye Xiaomeng covered her mouth, not wanting to make any noise. She lifted the blanket and saw herself underneath, naked. She almost screamed.

Ye Xiaomeng decisively threw back the blanket, picked up her scattered underwear and coat from the floor, and quickly dressed.

As she opened the door to rush out, it happened to be opened from the other side, and the person coming in was him?

Yesterday, she remembered drinking and getting drunk, then bumping into a man, and afterward, they drank together.

After that, everything that happened, the time it took place, all seemed hazy to her.

But they were both adults, and they wouldn't make a big deal out of it. She was just embarrassed and didn't know how to face this man.

"I'm He Ming, remember that?" He Ming said when he saw Ye Xiaomeng not speaking.

Ye Xiaomeng finally looked at the man in front of her and saw his deep eyes, high nose, and fair skin that made women envy him. If compared to Cheng Yang, he would certainly pale in comparison.

However, what did he mean by that? Why did she have to remember it? After last night, they were practically strangers again, and this was just inexplicable.

"Do you have to introduce yourself?" Ye Xiaomeng glared at him.

"What, are you using me and planning to leave after sleeping with me?" This guy was really pushing it.

“What do you want then?” Saying this, Ye Xiaomeng took out a 100 yuan bill from her bag and threw it at him. “Consider it compensation.”

He Ming was dumbfounded. He had never expected Ye Xiaomeng to react this way.

Ye Xiaomeng wanted to leave, but He Ming stopped her. “Let’s be friends.”

He Ming didn’t know what had happened, but he could have stopped everything last night. He hadn’t been so drunk that he couldn’t think clearly.

Originally, he wanted to take her home, but she had kept clinging to him, and even after he had pushed her away, she still wanted to get closer. So, they had spent a wonderful night together.

However, when she woke up, she acted like she didn’t know him.

“Tell me your name. We keep meeting like this. It must be fate,” He Ming persisted.

“Do I get to leave if I tell you? My name is Ye Xiaomeng, is that enough? We’re all adults here. I hope we can treat last night as a dream,” Ye Xiaomeng replied, clearly irritated by He Ming’s persistence.

“Alright, let’s go. I’ll take you home.” He Ming got the answer he wanted, so he picked up his car keys and walked out..

Chapter 135: Shocked

“I don’t need it. I’ll take a taxi myself,” Ye Xiaomeng stopped him, not wanting any further involvement with him.

“Keep wasting time here, or let me give you a ride. It’s up to you,” He Ming spoke with an unyielding tone.

“Fine,” Ye Xiaomeng glared at him fiercely and then turned to walk outside.

Ye Xiaomeng didn’t want He Ming to know where she lived to avoid potential harassment. So, she told He Ming to drive her to Shu Pan’s house.

When they reached Shu Pan’s building, Ye Xiaomeng got out of the car and said goodbye to He Ming.

He Ming watched Ye Xiaomeng walk towards the stairwell. He intended to reverse and leave, but at that moment, he vaguely saw a figure holding a child coming from a distance. He didn’t pay much attention at first, but as the two figures approached, he realized who they were.

It was Shu Pan. What shocked him even more was that the child looked so much like Gu Shaoting, especially the eyes and nose. It was like a miniaturized version of him.

He felt as though he had been struck by lightning and couldn’t move. He couldn’t help but wonder, could this child be Gu Shaoting’s

He knew about it because he was one of the accomplices, and he had felt guilty about it.

He Ming had disagreed with Gu Shaoting’s decision, but he couldn’t persuade him.

Looking at the little girl in front of him, although she was small, her features were delicate, like a beautiful doll. If he had a daughter like that, he would probably dote on her to the core.

He Ming felt a pang of envy. He was even tempted to call Gu Shaoting and ask if he had made Shu Pan take any medication afterward and if this little girl was his daughter.

However, his rational side stopped him. Gu Shaoting had just gotten engaged to Tong Fei. If he found out about a daughter now, what would he do?

He looked at them in a daze as they entered the stairwell. Wait! They lived in the same building as Ye Xiaomeng, and they used the same stairwell?

He was stunned for a moment, then slowly started the car and drove away.

Back at the office, he went straight to Gu Shaoting's office without knocking.

"Is my office some kind of public place? You just walk in without knocking," Gu Shaoting said without raising his head, knowing it was He Ming since he was the only one who entered without knocking.

"Brother Ting, guess who I ran into today?" He Ming started to tease. Gu Shaoting could tell from his tone that he was up to something annoying.

"Who?" Gu Shaoting asked absentmindedly, seemingly not very curious about anything at the moment.

"Shu Pan," He Ming paused for a moment and then continued, "and a little girl."

Gu Shaoting listened and fell into a brief reverie. His fingers unconsciously tapped on his desk.

He Ming felt that by mentioning this, if Gu Shaoting decided to investigate, it would be proof of their fate. But if he chose to ignore it, that was fine too.

Given the current situation, Shu Pan had concealed everything well. She probably didn't want Gu Shaoting to find out.

"Oh, her matters have nothing to do with me anymore," Gu Shaoting concealed any unusual emotions and said indifferently.

"True, you're engaged now, and it doesn't seem right to care about your ex-wife. Forget I mentioned it," He Ming went along with his words, then made a zipper motion near his mouth with his hand. "Get lost..." Gu Shaoting looked at him, tempted to kick him..

Chapter 136: Concealing

He Ming looked at Gu Shaoting's expression, which seemed a mix of annoyance and embarrassment, and he had a vague feeling that something was amiss.

"Where did you run into her?" Gu Shaoting asked further.

"On the roadside..." He Ming deliberately tried to irritate him. It was rare for Gu Shaoting to ask for a favor.

Gu Shaoting, with a stoic expression, gave him the address.

Gu Shaoting made a mental note of the address.

Shu Pan looked at Ye Xiaomeng with some surprise. It was a miracle to see her so early in the morning at her place.

"What's going on? Why did you come over so early?" Shu Pan looked puzzled, seeing Ye Xiaomeng in crumpled clothes.

"Just avoiding bad luck," Ye Xiaomeng's words left Shu Pan puzzled.

"Where did you and Joy go so early?" Ye Xiaomeng quickly changed the subject, afraid that Shu Pan might continue to ask about her own situation.

"We went out to buy breakfast. Joy wanted to have some pancakes. Why don't you join us?" Shu Pan turned to the kitchen to get some utensils.

“Joy, can you share some pancakes with your godmother?” Ye Xiaomeng pretended to be pitiful and asked Joy.

“Sure, Joy will share with godmother,” Joy generously agreed.

“Thank you, sweetheart. Godmother will take you out for a big meal this weekend,” Ye Xiaomeng kissed Joy and made the promise.

“Don’t spoil her,” Shu Pan teased when she heard that.

“It’s okay, I want to spoil little Princess Joy,” Ye Xiaomeng had some regrets in her heart. She wanted to pamper Joy to the fullest.

Suddenly, she remembered something and hastily said goodbye to Shu Pan.

Then she quickly found the nearest pharmacy and bought an emergency contraceptive pill. Without water, she swallowed it, feeling the bitterness of the pill from her mouth to her throat, making her almost want to vomit.

But she had learned from her experience and knew she wouldn’t make the same mistake again.

He Ming had been trying to contact Ye Xiaomeng for the past few days, but his calls were always rejected, and his messages went unanswered.

He Ming was getting frustrated, pacing back and forth in Gu Shaoting’s office.

“Can you stop? You’re making my head spin,” Gu Shaoting rubbed his forehead. He felt that He Ming had been acting like a restless animal lately, a bit manic. “No, I get even more frustrated when I stop,” He Ming refused directly.

“What’s going on? Where’s your forest now?” Gu Shaoting teased.

“I’ve been interested in a girl lately, but she won’t answer my calls,” He Ming was getting irritated.

“You know where she lives, right? Wait for her like a patient hunter,” Gu Shaoting suggested. He was an impartial observer in this matter.

“Right, that’s a good idea. It’s the weekend tomorrow, she doesn’t have to work. I’ll wait downstairs in her building. I don’t believe she won’t leave the house,” He Ming thought this was a brilliant plan.

“Finally, I won’t have to deal with you hovering around me,” Gu Shaoting sighed in relief.

But what about his own problems? Since he had found out where Shu Pan lived, he had been hesitating. He wanted to see her, but what would he say to her? And Tong Fei was clinging to him.

He felt like he was sick. All he could think of now was Shu Pan. He had no interest in that aspect with Tong Fei, no matter how much she tried to seduce him. He felt a strong aversion inside.

The more he thought about it, the more depressed he became...

With Gu Shaoting’s guidance, He Ming got up the next day and drove to Shu Pan’s building.

He first tried calling Ye Xiaomeng, but as usual, there was no answer.

He was at a loss, so he decided to wait downstairs and try his luck.

In theory, there were plenty of young and beautiful women out there, but that one night had left a deep impression on him. Ye Xiaomeng had a unique charm that just happened to suit his taste perfectly. He could never win her..

Chapter 137: Waiting

He Ming sat in the car, patiently waiting. He had never done anything like this before.

After a while, while he was debating whether to continue waiting, he saw Ye Xiaomeng with a little girl, who happily bounced out.

Ye Xiaomeng said something to the little girl, and the little one laughed heartily.

Seeing Ye Xiaomeng's expression, so gentle and different from her attitude toward him, he quickly started the car and caught up with them.

"Hey, pretty ladies, where are you heading? Get in, I'll be your driver," He Ming was casually friendly, with a playful smile.

Ye Xiaomeng ignored him and continued walking with Joy.

But He Ming wasn't discouraged. He slowly followed them.

Finally, when Ye Xiaomeng noticed the curious glances from passersby, she had to stop and angrily asked He Ming, "What are you doing now? Didn't we agree that that night was just a dream? As a grown man, why are you still so persistent?"

Ye Xiaomeng had said enough to make him understand her intentions.

"What do you mean, 'just a dream'? That night, you clawed my back until it turned red, and it still hurts now. I was..." He Ming had a somewhat submissive expression, making Ye Xiaomeng want to stomp her foot.

"Can you be any more shameless?" Ye Xiaomeng glared at him. "What do you want?"

Ye Xiaomeng really didn't want to get involved in a new relationship. After being betrayed by Cheng Yang, the pain was deeply ingrained in her heart, and it still ached to this day.

“Get in, I’ll take you both out for a big meal,” He Ming said sincerely, looking at them with pitiful eyes.

“Alright, why not? If someone wants to treat us, why would I refuse?” Ye Xiaomeng replied straightforwardly.

“Little Princess Joy, this uncle will take us out for a big meal,” Ye Xiaomeng lifted Joy into the car.

“Godmother...” Joy was a bit scared when she saw a stranger.

“Don’t be afraid, Joy. He’s a friend of godmother’s,” Ye Xiaomeng comforted her, then got into the car herself.

“Hello, little beauty. I’m Uncle He. Let’s be friends,” He Ming extended a friendly hand to Joy.

He Ming was already convinced that Joy was Gu Shaoting’s daughter because she had been with Shu Pan that day and bore a striking resemblance to Gu

Shaoting. Now, up close, she looked even more like him. Suddenly, he envied Gu Shaoting. If Joy really was Shu Pan’s child, how would Gu Shaoting react?

“You’re godmother’s friend, so you’re my friend too,” Joy’s words made He Ming laugh.

As it turned out, Ye Xiaomeng was a good friend of Shu Pan’s. Otherwise, her daughter wouldn’t call Ye Xiaomeng “godmother.” The world was indeed small, and they had crossed paths in this unexpected way.

However, He Ming found himself in a dilemma. In the future, when it came to important matters, should he support Gu Shaoting or Shu Pan?

The car arrived at a well-known restaurant in Bin City. While they were eating, He Ming noticed Ye Xiaomeng arranging food for Joy. He strangely found himself yearning for this kind of life—a happy family eating together, so warm and cozy.

“Xiaomeng, let’s consider ourselves friends. Why didn’t you answer my calls?” He Ming took the opportunity to ask.

“I don’t pick up calls from strangers,” Ye Xiaomeng replied. She actually recognized his messages, but she didn’t want to engage with him.

Seeing his handsome appearance and suave demeanor, she knew that such a man had no shortage of beautiful women. After her experience with Cheng Yang, who had cheated on her despite their long relationship, she had lost trust in men. Therefore, she intended to keep her distance from him..

Chapter 138: The Picture

“I’m really sincere. Is there something I did wrong?” He Ming couldn’t understand why Ye Xiaomeng was so averse to him.

“No, it’s my issue,” Ye Xiaomeng’s words finally reassured him. It wasn’t that she was averse to him specifically. It was her attitude toward all men.

Watching Joy eat with relish, He Ming’s heart softened.

Taking advantage of their inattention, he took a photo of Joy with his phone.

Having spent some time with Joy, he now understood how challenging Shu Pan’s life must be. Taking care of a child was truly not easy.

“Joy is your friend’s daughter, right? She’s so cute, and she looks like her mom,” He Ming pretended to ask Ye Xiaomeng.

“Yes, and only that fool Shu Pan wouldn’t care about anything. She couldn’t even take care of herself, yet she had Joy. There was a time when she was really pushed to the brink. Even now, she lives frugally and often works overtime on weekends to earn money. But Joy looks just like her dad. They say having a daughter who looks like her dad is good fortune. Well, I haven’t seen any of that ‘good fortune’ yet,” Ye Xiaomeng fumed whenever Gu Shaoting was mentioned.

He Ming didn’t dare to say anything. He acted as if he knew nothing because he hadn’t gained Ye Xiaomeng’s trust yet. Mentioning Gu Shaoting would likely only complicate things further.

During a lull, He Ming sent the photo to Gu Shaoting, informing him that this was Shu Pan’s daughter. He didn’t know how Gu Shaoting would react, but he believed that Joy needed her father, and Shu Pan wouldn’t be too burdened then.

For a long time, there was no response from Gu Shaoting.

In fact, Gu Shaoting wasn’t ignoring the message. From the moment he received the photo, he was stunned. He never expected Shu Pan to have a child. Had she remarried?

He stared at the photo, almost as if he could see something through it. The more he looked at it, the more familiar it became. Eventually, he realized that the child resembled him.

At that moment, he couldn’t sit still. He took a deep breath and immediately called Secretary Zhang. Secretary Zhang answered quickly, “Mr. Gu, what can I help you with?”

“Find out about Shu Pan and her daughter. Send me their detailed information tomorrow,” Gu Shaoting said and hung up the phone.

Secretary Zhang was perplexed, holding the phone, unable to regain his composure. He had no idea what Gu Shaoting was up to. Shu Pan was his former wife, right? Weren’t they divorced already? Now Mr. Gu was asking him to investigate Shu Pan and her daughter? Had she remarried and had another child?

He was confused by the intricate relationships. Did Mr. Gu still have lingering feelings for his former wife? No matter how hard Secretary Zhang thought, he couldn't figure it out.

Finally, he sighed and accepted his fate, going to handle the task Mr. Gu had assigned.

Gu Shaoting sat in his office chair, his posture unchanged. He silently looked at the photo of the child. Was this really his daughter with Shu Pan?

Back then, he had definitely given Shu Pan birth control pills. Why had she still become pregnant?

He touched the photo of the child, his fingers tracing her eyes, nose, and mouth, and his heart softened.

The next afternoon, he got the answer he had anticipated. Just as he suspected, the child was indeed his daughter with Shu Pan. He felt a mixture of excitement and anger.

He immediately dialed Shu Pan's phone number.

When Shu Pan saw the incoming call, the number seemed somewhat familiar yet unfamiliar. Without thinking much, she answered the call. But when Gu Shaoting introduced himself, an inexplicable nervousness welled up in her heart..

Chapter 139: Meeting

"Miss Shu, I have something I need to discuss with you. Please choose a place," Gu Shaoting said, and for some reason, he felt quite excited when saying this. However, he deliberately lowered his voice to maintain a cold and stern appearance.

"What is it? We don't have much to talk about," Shu Pan became alert.

“Are you sure? Let’s meet first. Choose a location,” Gu Shaoting insisted, and it was clear that this meeting was non-negotiable.

Shu Pan knew that when Gu Shaoting had decided on something, there was no room for refusal. She reluctantly chose a nearby café, thinking that this environment would be conducive to a conversation.

Being close by, Shu Pan arrived at the café first. She took a seat by the window, pondering what Gu Shaoting might want to discuss. Soon after, Gu Shaoting entered.

He had a poker face but walked with a confident stride, exuding an aura of severity.

Gu Shaoting walked directly to the seat opposite Shu Pan. He was a man of efficiency and didn’t waste any words. He pushed his phone toward Shu Pan without saying anything.

“Explain this. What’s going on?” Gu Shaoting demanded.

Shu Pan was initially taken aback, but she asked, “What are you talking about? I don’t understand.”

Gu Shaoting pointed to the photo of the little girl on his phone and said, “You recognize this little girl, right? There’s no need for further explanation. She’s also my daughter.”

Shu Pan glared at him, picked up her phone from the table, and tried to delete it.

“Miss Shu, do you think doing this will change the facts?” Gu Shaoting’s words were like a bucket of cold water splashed onto Shu Pan.

Shu Pan’s lips turned pale, and she forced a smile. “Mr. Gu, this child is mine.”

“Are you certain she’s solely your child? Do we need to see a DNA test report? I can overlook your act of secretly having a child, but the child must be under my custody,” Gu Shaoting’s words were as icy as his tone.

“Don’t forget, you once told me to take birth control pills. You didn’t want to have a child with me. Why do you want the child now?” Shu Pan’s lips trembled in anger.

“That was then, this is now. The offspring of the Gu family must not remain outside,” Gu Shaoting’s tone remained cold and indifferent.

“You have a fiancée now, and you can have children with her. I only have Joy.

She’s my precious one,” Shu Pan said, her voice quivering with tears.

“Considering you know the law, as long as I provide a DNA test report to the judge, although you have the right to contest custody, don’t forget that you currently have a low income and debts to repay. I don’t believe someone who can barely support themselves financially can provide our child with a good upbringing and educational resources,” Gu Shaoting struck at the heart of the matter.

“Gu Shaoting.”

“If you agree to give me custody of the child, I will compensate you financially,” Gu Shaoting said generously.

Shu Pan, although financially struggling, didn’t have the confidence to utter such wealthy-sounding words. She took a deep breath and said, “I don’t need your money. I can’t be separated from my daughter.”

“I also don’t want my child to call someone else ‘dad,’” Gu Shaoting maintained his emotionless expression.

Shu Pan gazed steadily at Gu Shaoting, as if seeking a glimmer of hope in his eyes. However, it seemed that she would be disappointed..

Chapter 140: Uncompromising

Shu Pan couldn't imagine how she would go on if she lost Joy.

"Gu Shaoting, you will have other children in the future, but I only have this one precious child. I beg you, please don't fight for custody based on our past three years of marriage. If you want to see her, you can have more children at any time," she pleaded, tears welling up in her eyes.

Gu Shaoting's lips trembled for a moment, as if he wanted to say something.

Then, he suddenly looked up at Shu Pan, who had just blurted out those words. "All my hopes are pinned on Joy. Please don't be so cruel."

At this moment, her eyes were filled with tears, and for the first time, the usually stubborn Shu Pan yielded to Gu Shaoting.

Gu Shaoting gazed silently at her, feeling like a mix of emotions had been stirred up within him.

He looked at her tears and found it difficult to continue the conversation. It seemed too heartless.

He didn't want to treat her this way in his heart, but he couldn't compromise on the custody of his daughter.

She was his flesh and blood, and he couldn't just stand by. He wanted to give her the best life.

He feared that if he continued talking, he might give in when he saw her tears.

"Consider this carefully. You're single, and if you were the judge, who would you grant custody to? Can you provide the child with a stable home?" Gu Shaoting softened his tone considerably.

“Then if I remarry and provide a stable home, would you give up custody?” Shu Pan asked, tears in her eyes, forgetting herself.

“I hope you’re not saying something foolish. I won’t give up,” Gu Shaoting stood up, sounding uneasy at the mention of her remarrying.

Shu Pan wanted to say more, but Gu Shaoting interrupted with a final, “Think about it,” and left his seat.

Shu Pan watched his retreating figure, feeling like he was running away.

Gu Shaoting didn’t go straight home. Instead, he drove to Joy’s kindergarten.

When he arrived, the kindergarten children were playing on the playground.

He carefully observed, and as if by telepathy, Joy happened to look in his direction at that moment. He was overwhelmed with excitement, a feeling that couldn’t be compared even to signing a major contract.

His daughter was tall and slim, with outstanding facial features. Her eyes were bright and lively, her nose petite, and she had two small braids. When she smiled, her eyes narrowed into thin lines. The only drawback was the slightly worn-out dress she was wearing.

Yet, no matter how he looked at her, Joy was the most beautiful child in the kindergarten.

He believed that his daughter deserved the best, and this conviction only grew stronger.

With reluctance, he tore his gaze away from Joy and left the kindergarten.

Back at the office, he immediately called He Ming.

“I want custody of Joy. I can’t let my child live in that kind of environment,” Gu Shaoting went straight to the point.

“But the child has been living with Shu Pan for so long, and she can’t be separated from her mother. Also, you’re married to Tong Fei now. Are you sure Tong Fei won’t mind when she finds out about Shu Pan’s daughter? Women can be quite sensitive, and not many would accept such a situation,” He Ming thought Gu Shaoting might be overlooking this aspect.

If Tong Fei knew that Shu Pan had a daughter with Gu Shaoting, who knew what would happen?

“Joy is my daughter, and she should learn to accept it,” Gu Shaoting planned to meet with Tong Fei later to explain everything..