

As Agreed 21

Chapter 21

When the morning sun shone into the living room, Shu Pan emerged from the guest room, and Gu Shaoting also stepped out from the study. The two inevitably crossed paths.

Shu Pan couldn't help it and finally spoke, "Gu Shaoting, I truly love you. Have you ever loved me?"

This confession without dignity was truly humble, but Shu Pan just wanted an answer.

"No," Gu Shaoting paused, finally uttering these two words. Those two simple words completely crushed Shu Pan. Deep down, she had already guessed the answer, but she couldn't help but seek a glimmer of hope for herself.

"I like you so much, why can't you like me?" she naively murmured. The humility in her tone brought tears to her own eyes.

But it was fine this way. At least she wouldn't be tormented by uncertainty anymore.

Shu Pan lowered her head, quickly walked into the living room, grabbed her bag, and left.

Her father would be discharged from the hospital in a couple of days. They planned to sell the house and couldn't return to live there. She intended to find a two-bedroom apartment in the city, where her father and aunt could stay until the debt issues were resolved.

Busy all day, but she didn't feel like going back to that home.

"Brother Ting, what's the situation now? How will Shu Laide's properties be handled? If you don't want to divorce Shu Pan, then don't go to such extremes. At least, it would be better to have some interaction in the future. Otherwise, I'll arrange someone to buy their properties," In a luxurious private room, He Ming suggested, looking at Gu Shaoting on the sofa, swaying a wine glass in his hand.

Gu Shaoting stared at the swirling red wine in his glass, images of Shu Pan's sorrowful face kept appearing in his mind. He felt increasingly annoyed and raised his glass, drinking it all in one gulp.

"Fine, we'll do as you say, but lower the price. I want Shu Laide to live in constant fear," Gu Shaoting tightened his grip on the glass, his slightly pursed lips revealing a hint of anger.

He Ming knew that Gu Shaoting wasn't someone who easily changed his mind. He could only go along with his instructions.

It wasn't until late at night that Gu Shaoting returned home.

Upon entering, the room was silent. Having consumed some alcohol, his steps were unsteady. He sat on the sofa, closed his eyes, and gradually felt the effects of the alcohol.

Suddenly, he heard a noise from the guest room. Drowsily, he opened his eyes and stumbled toward the guest room.

Before Shu Pan could turn around, a force suddenly wrapped around her waist. Her legs involuntarily took a few steps back, and she found herself enveloped by the solid chest of a man, with a faint smell of alcohol.

"What... what do you want?" Shu Pan saw the hidden danger in his eyes.

"What do you think?" Gu Shaoting touched her soft earlobe.

"You're drunk. Go back to your room and sleep," Shu Pan attempted to free herself, but he held her tightly, exerting force that she couldn't break.

"I'm going to sleep here tonight," Gu Shaoting, under the influence of alcohol, acted crazy. He didn't know what had come over him.

With a sudden force, the two of them fell onto the bed. Gu Shaoting raised Shu Pan's hands and his lips unhesitatingly moved toward her neck.

Shu Pan struggled, her body writhing. The friction between their bodies ignited Gu Shaoting's desire.

Through their clothes, Shu Pan could clearly feel the surging desire emanating from the man. She couldn't help but shiver, and then the man's lips descended upon her neck, lightly biting her earlobe.

Shu Pan's body instinctively stiffened, followed by a cascade of shivers that spread throughout her body from his teeth.

Shu Pan's heartbeat went out of control for a while. It was only then that she realized what Gu Shaoting intended to do next.

"Please... let me go..." Shu Pan struggled, her heart filled with an indescribable bitterness.

Chapter 22

Suddenly, Shu Pan raised her hand and began pushing him haphazardly.

Caught off guard, he nearly toppled off her body.

Gu Shaoting was a little annoyed. What happened? Had she really gotten bold?

She struggled even harder.

Gu Shaoting cursed under his breath, fueled by the alcohol, he grew even more infuriated.

"Let go of me, Gu Shaoting..."

Gu Shaoting didn't pay any attention to what she was saying.

But just as their lips touched, before he could even slip his tongue into her mouth, she suddenly went crazy. She opened her mouth wide and bit down hard on his tongue. She bit down with such force, as if she wanted to tear his tongue off.

A sharp pain shot through Gu Shaoting's back, causing him to instinctively reach out and firmly grip her jaw.

The pain brought him back to his senses instantly. Frustrated and filled with anger, he couldn't help but yell at her, "Why did you bite me? Are you out of your mind?"

What was wrong with this woman? Had she gone nuts?

The sharp pain from his tongue made Gu Shaoting involuntarily take a sharp breath.

Then it finally dawned on him just how excruciatingly painful it was. He felt a numbness in his tongue, accompanied by a prickling sensation.

Gu Shaoting furrowed his brows slightly and slowly shifted his gaze to the woman beside him.

Her lips, which he had just kissed, were unusually red, like a blossoming and vibrant flower. She looked pitiful, like an abandoned kitten.

Gu Shaoting felt somewhat at a loss, and there was also an indescribable twinge of heartache.

He couldn't make sense of his conflicting emotions.

He thought her voice would be choked with tears, but to his surprise, it carried a very calm and composed tone. "I'm a bit tired tonight and want to rest. Can you leave?"

Gu Shaoting's body trembled intensely, and he was somewhat stunned, unable to react to her calmness. In her face, he seemed to detect a trace of despair.

"Can you?" she asked again after he remained unresponsive for a while, her voice trembling slightly, unable to control the wavering emotions.

That barely noticeable tremor caused a sharp pang in Gu Shaoting's heart. He tightly pursed his lips, said nothing, and simply rolled off the bed, opened the door, and walked out.

The room immediately fell into silence.

Shu Pan pulled the blanket with her hand, curled up her body, and her trembling eyelashes were moistened with a few tears.

How did it come to this? What did she do wrong? Why did he treat her like this?

Was it wrong to love someone? She truly felt exhausted, questioning the significance of enduring silently like this.

Not long after, she heard a loud door slam from the adjacent bedroom. It must be because he was in a foul mood.

Gu Shaoting was undoubtedly unhappy. That woman was becoming more and more unbearable.

Gu Shaoting was now completely sober, and as he entered the bedroom, he swiftly went into the bathroom.

He took a cold shower, wrapped a towel around his body, and emerged from the bathroom into the bedroom. In the end, he irritably lifted the blanket and covered his eyes with it.

At this moment, he couldn't calm down. Was he under some sort of spell? Why did he lose control every time he faced Shu Pan? In reality, countless women would throw themselves at him if he wanted, but it was only Shu Pan who evoked different emotions in him.

When did he start feeling this way?

Gu Shaoting's mind was currently in turmoil, unable to fall asleep. He regretted his actions.

Chapter 23

Shu Pan was awakened by the pain. The dull ache in her lower abdomen escalated to a sharp twisting sensation, making it impossible for her to sleep. She broke into a cold sweat, soaking the sheets.

Hunching over, Shu Pan clutched her stomach tightly. She had intended to endure the pain, but as time passed, the agony intensified...

She struggled to get up, stumbling into the living room and gazing at the open door to the master bedroom. Gu Shaoting had already left, and she wasn't sure when.

Suppressing her discomfort, she hailed a taxi and headed to the nearest hospital.

In the emergency room, after the female doctor examined Shu Pan, her expression immediately turned serious. "You're five weeks pregnant with slight signs of miscarriage..."

Upon hearing the word "miscarriage," Shu Pan was dumbfounded. "I... I'm pregnant?" She could hardly believe her ears.

"You didn't know you were pregnant?" The doctor frowned. She had never seen such a careless expectant mother before, and her tone inadvertently became stern. "You're five weeks pregnant, but the fetus is unstable, showing slight signs of miscarriage. I've administered a progesterone shot to help support the pregnancy, but you must be careful. Avoid exhaustion and refrain from sexual intercourse for now. Get plenty of rest."

“Thank you, doctor,” Shu Pan expressed her deep gratitude. Although Gu Shaoting didn’t anticipate the arrival of a child, Shu Pan loved children, and she loved Gu Shaoting so much. She had always wanted to have a child who resembled him, and now her wish had come true. It gave her a renewed sense of hope in life.

Shu Pan gently touched her belly, her eyes filled with tender affection.

“Come in for a regular check-up when you are pregnant for three months. Next time, you can bring your husband along. If you experience any discomfort, come to the hospital immediately. Your condition is rather unique,” the doctor reiterated repeatedly.

“Alright, thank you, doctor,” Shu Pan expressed her immense gratitude. She packed her things carefully and walked out of the hospital with utmost caution.

The lazy sunlight enveloped her figure, casting a gentle glow.

When her phone rang, Shu Pan felt a bit annoyed. At this moment, she just wanted to be left alone and found it inconvenient for someone to contact her. She picked up her phone and glanced at it. It was an unfamiliar number. Slightly puzzled, she answered the call.

“Is this Shu Pan?” A soft but cold voice sounded in her ear.

“Yes, who is this?” Shu Pan replied calmly, though she was quite perplexed. Her mind was constantly trying to recall if she had heard this voice before.

After a brief silence on the phone, the person spoke again.

“Shu Pan, it’s Tong Fei. Are you genuinely unaware or pretending to be?” The tone suddenly turned somewhat forceful.

Shu Pan fell silent, her gaze fixed ahead, somewhat lost.

“Don’t tell me you have no idea about the past between me and Shaoting? Don’t you mind? Do you really think Shaoting loves you? Our affair is all over the media, making headlines. You don’t have any thoughts about it?” Tong Fei finally shed her usual elegance and nobility, confronting Shu Pan with a cold tone.

Shu Pan gazed at the tall phoenix trees by the roadside, their leaves all fallen, leaving only bare branches, a sense of desolation pervading. She placed her right hand on her belly, gently stroking it, gathering her courage.

“Miss Tong, I am Gu Shaoting’s legal wife.”

“Oh... Aren’t you curious why Gu Shaoting married you?” Tong Fei could really strike at someone, hitting the nail on the head with every word. Even over the phone, one could sense the chill in her voice.

Tong Fei’s nonchalant tone frustrated Shu Pan. Why should she care? “Because Shaoting hated your father. It was your father who drove Uncle Gu to his death. He married you to seek revenge on your father!” Each word she spoke felt like a malicious curse.

Although she had known the answer for a long time, having it revealed once again felt like rubbing salt on a wound.

A chilling breeze seemed to engulf Shu Pan, and she felt a coldness seeping in.

Silence lingered for a long time.

“Do you think there’s a need for your marriage to continue?” Tong Fei continued.

Shu Pan’s face turned pale, and she bit her lip. “This is a matter between us as a married couple. If I want a divorce, I need Gu Shaoting’s agreement. Why don’t you talk to him about it?”

There was a moment of silence on the other end of the phone. Tong Fei hadn’t expected Shu Pan to respond this way.

Suddenly feeling stifled, Shu Pan hung up the phone.

Chapter 24

Shu Pan arrived home and suddenly remembered what the real estate agent had said about someone already buying the house at a lower price than expected. But she couldn't dwell on it now because the deadline was approaching.

She immediately called Auntie Lu and informed her about the situation, saying that they could proceed with the paperwork once her dad was discharged from the hospital tomorrow. However, they still needed some more money. She planned to ask her friends if they could help, taking it step by step.

But she kept the news of her pregnancy to herself. It wasn't the right time to reveal it, given the circumstances.

Sitting down on the sofa, Shu Pan took out her phone and hesitated for a while before texting a few friends, asking for a loan.

She waited for half an hour, but only Ye Xiaomeng called back.

"Hey, did you send those messages?" Ye Xiaomeng sounded confused.

"Yeah, it was me," Shu Pan confirmed.

"I thought I was being targeted by a scammer. Why do you need to borrow money?" Ye Xiaomeng asked with bewilderment.

Taking a deep breath, Shu Pan felt a chill in her chest. "It's for my dad, he's in urgent need."

Ye Xiaomeng chuckled lightly. "Girl, if I hadn't recognized your voice, I would have thought your phone got stolen and someone else was texting me. You have a rich husband and a wealthy dad. Why do you need to borrow money?"

“Xiaomeng, it’s true. We need the money urgently, and I’m about to divorce Gu Shaoting,” Shu Pan’s voice carried a heavy weight.

Ye Xiaomeng paused for a moment, suddenly realizing the seriousness of the situation. “Girl?” She was taken aback.

Closing her eyes, Shu Pan replied, “Xiaomeng, I’m dead serious. My dad went bankrupt and has accumulated a lot of debt. We’re selling the house, but we still need more money.”

“How did that happen? Isn’t Gu Shaoting helping out? Just because your dad went bankrupt, he wants a divorce?” Ye Xiaomeng’s voice expressed her anger.

“This matter is partly related to him too. I guess he wants to see my dad in this state. Our marriage was a mistake,” Shu Pan’s voice choked with emotion. “Xiaomeng, I know you’re getting married soon and you need money, but do you have any spare cash?”

“You know me, I’m always splurging. My fiancé’s family has bought the house, and my family is responsible for the renovations. We haven’t set a wedding date yet, but I have a hundred thousand now. I can transfer it to you to help in this emergency,” Ye Xiaomeng offered.

Shu Pan ran her hand through her hair. “Borrow me for now, but I don’t know when I’ll be able to pay it back.”

“No worries, I’ll transfer the money to your account right away.”

“Thank you, Xiaomeng,” Shu Pan expressed her gratitude.

“By the way... um, have you considered asking Su Yuan for help?” Ye Xiaomeng cautiously suggested. “According to Cheng Yang, he’s now the regional manager of a major international corporation in Asia, and he’s quite well-off financially. And he still has feelings for you. He left his number with Cheng Yang.”

"Xiaomeng, are you out of your mind? Why would you think of that? What happened between him and me is in the past. Besides, I'm already married. Regardless of the situation between me and Gu Shaoting, I am currently Mrs. Gu," Shu Pan never even considered seeking help from Su Yuan. That was all in the past, and now everyone had their own lives to live.

Although Ye Xiaomeng's loan wasn't a substantial amount, it could alleviate the immediate pressure.

Shu Pan prepared a small meal and planned to rest early. She wasn't alone now. She had her precious baby. Gu Shaoting hadn't returned yet, and there were swirling rumors about him and Tong Fei. Shu Pan chose to ignore them.

Tomorrow would be a fresh start. Shu Pan lay in bed, watching the curtains dance in the breeze, her mind filled with turbulence. She needed to settle her father's and Auntie Lu's affairs first, and then figure out how to repay her debts.

Unable to resist, she placed her hand on her belly, silently pledging, "Sweetie, you have to be good. Even though you won't have your father's love, I'll shower you with all of mine."

Soon, overcome by exhaustion, she drifted into a deep sleep.

Chapter 25

The next morning, Shu Pan got up early and left. She went to the hospital to help her father with the discharge procedures and then took them to the house she previously rented.

Knowing that Shu Pan had sold all their properties to repay the debt, Auntie Lu couldn't stop crying.

Lu Lifan, too, treated Shu Pan well. She didn't have any children of her own, so she cherished Shu Pan like her own.

Shu Pan looked at her and pursed her lips, taking out a card from her wallet. "Auntie Lu, there's still some money in this card, please take it."

Lu Lifan didn't decline and accepted it. "Panpan, listen to us. Don't worry about the money your father owes. We are already old and ready to struggle. At most, we'll fight with all our might. But you're still young. Even if you divorce Gu Shaoting, you can still find a more suitable person. Don't let this situation hold you back." After living together for more than ten years, it was impossible for her not to care about Shu Pan.

Shu Pan sighed, "If I just leave like that, what will happen to those people?"

"Oh, you're so foolish," Lu Lifan said without saying much. "Things have changed. Now, you and Gu Shaoting have come to the point of divorce. Your salary is barely enough to get by, so how can you repay the debt?"

"Yeah, Panpan, Auntie is right. Forget about me. I can even go to jail. It's just a wretched life," Shu Laide chimed in. He couldn't bear to see his beloved daughter burdened with these debts.

"Father, please don't say that. I'll figure something out. Take care of your health," Shu Pan comforted her father, worried that he would blame himself.

After settling everything, Shu Pan went to her father's company. There was a security guard at the entrance, and inside, it was empty and deserted. Most of the employees had already left after receiving their salaries. Shu Pan took a deep breath. She spent the afternoon arranging the money to pay off the debt collectors. There were still a few left, but she had no other options.

"Get Shu Laide out here!" suddenly came a loud voice from outside the office.

Shu Pan came out and saw that it was those few people who still hadn't received their money. She acknowledged her fault and spoke politely, "Can you give me a few more days?"

She didn't expect them to find out so quickly.

"Don't play tricks with us. If you don't repay the money today, you won't be able to leave," one of the men said menacingly.

Shu Pan took a step back, feeling scared, but she pretended to remain calm and said, "I will definitely repay the debt. Please rest assured."

"Last time, you said you would repay, but now you're not. Do you think you can deceive us?" one of the men approached aggressively.

Feeling helpless, Shu Pan suddenly saw a black Mercedes stop by the roadside. A handsome man stepped out of the car and shouted, "Stop."

Then he approached and called out, "Pan."

Shu Pan snapped back to reality, realizing that among the people she knew, only Su Yuan would call her Pan. Looking at Su Yuan standing before her, she was stunned, feeling a bit overwhelmed. Although she had repeatedly assured herself that she had let go and could face him calmly if they met again, she was still a bit confused and didn't know how to react.

Su Yuan walked towards her, looking at the face that had been absent from his life for six years but had appeared in his dreams countless times. His emotion was not as calm as it seemed on the surface. He was excited and wanted to tightly embrace her, but he couldn't, because he wasn't allowed to.

In fact, when he returned to China, he had already found out about her workplace and couldn't help but send flowers to her there. He even secretly watched her leave work and go home, but he didn't have the courage to approach her. He was afraid that she hadn't forgiven him.

Shu Pan felt that her life was full of melodrama. She didn't expect to encounter Su Yuan in such a sorry state, and she felt a bit embarrassed.

"What are you guys doing? A few grown men bullying a woman?" Su Yuan's sharp gaze seemed to penetrate through them.

"Repaying debts is only natural. Who are you? It's none of your business," one of the strong men retorted fiercely to Su Yuan.

"If she owes money, I'll repay it for her. You all step back for now," Su Yuan spoke with a powerful and steady aura, tall and imposing in his expensive suit, giving an unapproachable impression. The men immediately took two steps back.

"Fine, keep your word. Repay the money now, and we won't bother Miss Shu," one of the men seized the opportunity and quickly stated their objective.

Up until now, Shu Pan still felt a bit bewildered. How did things turn out like this?

"Su Yuan, I'll find a way to solve this. I don't need to trouble you," Shu Pan didn't want to have any relationship or owe any favors to Su Yuan.

"It's alright. You can repay me when you have the money. Let's first resolve the immediate problem," Su Yuan understood what was in Shu Pan's mind.

Shu Pan knew that Su Yuan was true to his words, so she let him help resolve the situation. Looking at Su Yuan's tall figure and his calm demeanor, the young face from her memories had become a bit blurry.

Chapter 26

Money isn't everything, but without money, there's a lot you can't do. For Shu Pan, it was a troublesome matter that had her worried and stressed. But for Su Yuan, it was easily resolved.

When Shu Pan snapped back to reality, she sighed. When she looked up, she noticed that Su Yuan's gaze had never left her. She suddenly felt a bit awkward.

"Su Yuan, thank you for today. If it weren't for you, I don't know what would have happened. I'll repay you as soon as I have the money," she said gratefully, even though the feeling of being watched made her a bit uncomfortable.

"I'm not in a rush. Take care of your father. If you want to thank me, invite me for a meal. I happen to be hungry," Su Yuan winked at her and pretended to be relaxed.

In truth, he was quite nervous and worried that she might refuse. Ever since he found out about Shu Laide's situation from Cheng Yang, he had been restless, unable to find an excuse to get close to her. Now, he finally had one.

Su Yuan wanted to catch up with Shu Pan. He had heard from Cheng Yang recently that she was already married, but it was a hasty marriage. He wondered if she had forgotten him, or if her feelings for him were still the same, unable to let go of their past. He assumed that she had rushed to marry someone without a foundation of love.

That was why he couldn't control his own heart and couldn't resist coming to see her. Seeing her in such a difficult situation today, without her husband by her side, he couldn't believe it. What would the outcome have been if he hadn't come? The consequences would have been unimaginable.

"Alright, what do you feel like eating?" Shu Pan readily agreed. She treated him as a friend.

"You decide. I haven't been back to Bin City in years, so I don't know where the good food is anymore," Su Yuan said with relief when he heard her acceptance. His tone was like that of a long-lost friend, casual and natural.

"Then let's go to the Gathered Dragon. They have a milder flavor. I remember you didn't like strong flavors," Shu Pan said, but then she paused. Why did she bring up the past?

"Sure. Then I'll eat more," Su Yuan smiled with his eyes narrowed.

The two of them left the company together. Su Yuan considerately opened the car door for Shu Pan, closed it after she got in, then walked around the front of the car and got in from the other side. He started the car and drove away, leaving behind the indistinct dust swirling in the air.

Inside the car, Su Yuan turned on some soft piano music.

"Pan," Su Yuan focused on driving and called out softly.

Shu Pan turned her head and looked at him, waiting for him to say what he wanted to say.

"Are you doing well?" Su Yuan couldn't help but blurt out because he believed that any man who loved his wife wouldn't let her fall into such a predicament.

"Yeah, I'm doing fine," Shu Pan pursed her lips and replied softly.

The car fell into silence. Fortunately, the restaurant wasn't far, and they soon arrived at Gathered Dragon.

Su Yuan got out of the car directly, then walked around and opened the door for Shu Pan, displaying the epitome of gentlemanly manners, making her feel a bit embarrassed.

Gathered Dragon was quite crowded, but they managed to find a place in the lobby. Shu Pan held the menu and asked Su Yuan to order. Su Yuan relaxedly leaned back in his chair and said, "You're treating today, so you can order."

Shu Pan nodded helplessly.

Shu Pan flipped through the menu with her slender fingers as Su Yuan glanced at her from the side. Her profile had a soft contour, and a few strands of hair playfully fell down, creating a beautiful image that was hard to look away from.

She called the waiter over and ordered Kung Pao Chicken, steamed fish, a plate of sizzling beef, a plate of boiled Chinese cabbage, and duck soup. She thought that it should be enough.

"I've ordered these dishes. If you want anything else, let me know," Shu Pan turned to Su Yuan and asked.

"Sounds good. I love everything you ordered. We can order more later if it's not enough," Su Yuan's mind was elsewhere. He took the menu and put it aside.

"Pan, don't worry too much about your father's situation. If you need any help, just let me know," Su Yuan comforted her. Seeing her small shoulders carry such a heavy burden made him feel pity.

“Thank you, Su Yuan.” Shu Pan couldn’t express her gratitude with any other words besides thanking him.

Chapter 27

Although the restaurant was bustling with customers, the dishes were served quickly. Plate after plate of delicious and fragrant food arrived at the table.

Su Yuan helped Shu Pan serve the soup and pick the dishes.

With everything going on lately, Shu Pan hadn’t had a relaxed meal like this in a long time. She savored the soup, feeling a sense of warmth in her heart.

Meanwhile, Gu Shaoting happened to be at Gathered Dragon discussing a business partnership. He was in one of the VIP rooms, which was spacious, luxurious, and had excellent soundproofing. It was perfect for conducting business.

“Mr. Gu, you are truly remarkable. To achieve such success in your thirties and expand the prospects of the Gu Group is truly impressive.” The middle-aged man at the same table complimented. It was true, not only was he successful in business, but he also had a thriving personal life. There were even rumors about him and a famous female model in magazines recently.

“I am flattered by your kind words, Mr. Li,” Gu Shaoting replied with a charming smile, his eyes sparkling.

“After finalizing the contract, let’s have a drink to celebrate our successful collaboration,” Mr. Li suggested, holding the contract in his hand. The opportunity to partner with the city’s top enterprise was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for their company.

“Sure, let’s drink to that!” Gu Shaoting cheerfully raised his glass and finished it in one gulp.

With the business matters settled, the dinner was coming to an end. One by one, the colleagues and business partners started leaving. Since He Ming had something to discuss with Gu Shaoting, he decided to stay in the private room and wait for him instead of finding another place.

“Brother Ting, Shu Pan is also dining outside. Did you two plan to meet here?” He Ming’s voice could be heard before he entered the room. When he opened the door and came in, he looked puzzled.

“Who? Shu Pan? With whom?” Gu Shaoting furrowed his brows.

It seemed he was unaware, and seeing Gu Shaoting sitting in his chair with a perplexed expression, He Ming shrugged and raised his hands, saying, “I don’t know him, but judging by his extraordinary temperament, I guess he’s an admirer of Shu Pan.”

Gu Shaoting’s gaze shot at him like a sharp sword. If looks could kill, He Ming would have died several times over.

“What nonsense! She’s married, so how can she have an admirer?” Gu Shaoting’s brows furrowed even tighter.

“She’s probably still here. You can go outside and check,” He Ming suggested. Although they were as close as brothers, and they had grown up together, He Ming couldn’t understand Gu Shaoting. Normally, he didn’t seem too concerned about Shu Pan, but the mention of an admirer suddenly seemed to bother him. The hearts of men were truly unfathomable.

As Su Yuan finished eating, Shu Pan noticed that she was full as well. She put down her chopsticks and since they were sitting close to each other, she could observe him more closely. His face hadn’t changed much, still handsome and charming, but his aura had transformed. The youthful and sunny young man she once knew now exuded maturity, stability, and a hint of profoundness in his eyes that she couldn’t quite comprehend.

Su Yuan also gazed back at her, his lips slightly pursed. She had changed, he couldn’t quite put his finger on what exactly had changed, but she was different now. The Shu Pan of today was no longer the same Shu Pan who used to lean against him and laugh happily.

"Pan, I'm sorry," he finally spoke softly after a long pause. This apology was six years late, and he had been indebted for six years.

Shu Pan's heart ached, but she shook her head, "It's all in the past. We should both look forward."

She now had a family, a loved one. Although her relationship with Gu Shaoting seemed to go nowhere, she had a baby, her secret. So, she could find solace and let go of the past.

Chapter 28

When Gu Shaoting walked out of the private room and entered the lobby, he happened to see the two people by the window, seemingly gazing affectionately at each other. Suddenly, an unnamed anger ignited within him.

He approached with long strides and said, "Honey, why didn't you tell me you were having a meal with a friend?"

Gu Shaoting walked over, slightly bending down, and placed his hand on Shu Pan's shoulder.

Shu Pan was startled by his sudden appearance. The unexpected address of "honey" made her feel uneasy and anxious.

It had been a long time since he called her that. Lately, their relationship had become even more strained due to her father's situation.

However, she didn't want to embarrass him in front of Su Yuan. After all, they were still married.

"Su Yuan, this is my husband, Gu Shaoting. Shaoting, this is my friend Su Yuan. We haven't seen each other in a long time," Shu Pan introduced, and the two of them exchanged perfunctory greetings.

"Are you both full? Let's go back," Gu Shaoting said, eager to leave this place and take Shu Pan home.

“We’re full,” Shu Pan replied. Then she turned to Su Yuan and said, “Thank you, we’ll get together again when we have the chance.”

“Sure, let me know if you need any help,” Su Yuan advised.

Gu Shaoting couldn’t help but roll his eyes internally. Did he really think he was invisible?

He Ming looked at the three of them, feeling somewhat confused and unable to fully comprehend Gu Shaoting’s behavior. How could he treat Shu Pan with indifference before but show concern today? It was like Trump’s face-changing technique—ever-changing and unpredictable.

At night, as cars whizzed past, Shu Pan and Su Yuan waved goodbye. A black Mercedes-Benz parked in front of her, and after getting in, she turned her face to look out the window. The person in the car had a frosty expression, his face full of anger.

Suddenly, Shu Pan’s mind wandered to Gu Shaoting’s previous cold and indifferent attitude towards her, especially during her father’s situation. But just now, he had shown such warmth. Now, he wore a face of a stranger, resembling a magic trick of changing faces, unpredictable and capricious.

She had intended to take the opportunity to discuss divorce with him, but seeing him like this, she had to give up. Fortunately, her pregnancy wasn’t noticeable yet. She could keep it a secret for a while longer.

Back at home, Gu Shaoting finally exploded.

“Shu Pan, is this your strategy? Did you seduce a lover to help you repay the debt?” Gu Shaoting’s voice was cold and eerie, sending shivers down Shu Pan’s spine.

“And...” Gu Shaoting suddenly grabbed her chin, forcing her to meet his gaze. “Mrs. Gu, I’m telling you seriously now, don’t test my bottom line. Don’t let me find out that you’re not faithful. If you disgrace me, you’ll regret it. Understand?”

“I... I understand!” Gu Shaoting’s fierce demeanor frightened Shu Pan, and he released his grip.

Shu Pan slumped onto the sofa, still looking up, forcefully holding back her tears. Tears would only make her appear more pathetic.

She should have anticipated this outcome. Gu Shaoting glanced at her, then thought about He Ming waiting downstairs to discuss business. He took a step forward and paused at the doorway.

A beam of light shone on Shu Pan, blinding her.

The door was heartlessly closed, and Shu Pan covered her mouth, stubbornly refusing to let her tears flow. She placed her hand on her belly and whispered, "Baby, be good. You're my last support."

After descending the stairs, Gu Shaoting was pulled into a bar by He Ming. Seeing his gloomy expression, He Ming didn't dare to say a word, afraid of touching a raw nerve. He suggested having a drink.

Gu Shaoting was currently conflicted. He didn't want to treat Shu Pan this way, but whenever he thought of his deceased father and Shu Laide living well, he couldn't accept it.

Chapter 29

After settling her father and Auntie Lu, Shu Pan remembered the doctor's advice to rest, so she planned to stay at home during this period.

At noon, Gu Shaoting's secretary called and asked Shu Pan to get ready. Gu Shaoting would accompany her to the Gu Family's mansion that evening to visit his grandfather.

Shu Pan suddenly realized that it had been a long time since she last visited the Gu Family's mansion. She had seen her mother-in-law at the wedding, but they rarely met since they didn't live together. Besides, her mother-in-law had her own social circle, playing mahjong and shopping with wealthy ladies, showing very little concern for her. Shu Pan was fine with that.

The only person in the Gu family that Shu Pan worried about was Grandpa Gu. She realized that she had been busy lately and hadn't visited him for a long time, which made her feel unfilial.

She quickly tidied up, and in the afternoon when Gu Shaoting came to pick her up, Shu Pan casually glanced at his profile with the corner of her eye. His expression had become much colder.

Shu Pan felt as if she were frozen and the thought of greeting him disappeared instantly.

Gu Shaoting drove the car without initiating any conversation. He took out cigarettes during the idle time and lit them one by one. Except for occasional sounds from the lighter, there was no other sound in the car.

The smell of smoke wafted through the air and reached Shu Pan's nose. She felt a suffocating sensation in her chest, a feeling that made her want to vomit. But she suppressed it, not wanting to provoke Gu Shaoting's anger.

Finally, they arrived at the Gu Family's mansion. It was an independent villa where Grandpa Gu, Gu Shaoting's mother Song Can, and Auntie Wang usually stayed. Occasionally, Gu Shaoting's second uncle and other family members would come to stay for a while.

When Gu Shaoting turned off the engine, he quickly extinguished his cigarette, then glanced at Shu Pan before pushing open the car door and getting out first.

Gu Shaoting stood beside the car and didn't rush to leave. He waited for Shu Pan to get out of the car before starting to walk towards the entrance together.

As they approached the front of the house, Gu Shaoting suddenly reached out and grabbed Shu Pan's hand. His action came without warning, causing Shu Pan to stiffen. She instinctively wanted to pull her hand back, but Gu Shaoting seemed to sense her reaction. He tightened his grip and exerted more force while raising his other hand to ring the doorbell.

Unable to free herself, Shu Pan discreetly lifted her eyelids and glanced at Gu Shaoting, who was ringing the doorbell. His palm was warm, but his expression seemed icy. Shu Pan didn't dare to say a word.

Before she could react, the door opened.

Auntie Wang opened the door and joyfully greeted Gu Shaoting and Shu Pan. She enthusiastically ushered them inside while bringing them slippers. Then she hurriedly went upstairs to inform Grandpa Gu, saying, "Master, Young Master and Young Madam have arrived."

After changing their shoes, Gu Shaoting and Shu Pan entered the living room, where they saw Grandpa Gu coming downstairs from upstairs.

Suddenly, Gu Shaoting turned to the side, lowered his head, and whispered something in Shu Pan's ear.

To outsiders, it seemed like Gu Shaoting and Shu Pan were having a whispered conversation. However, as long as Shu Pan knew, he didn't say anything at all.

But with his proximity, his breath sprayed on her neck, gentle and warm, causing her heartbeat to inexplicably accelerate, making her appear nervous and unsure.

Shu Pan looked at him, feeling the air around her become thin. She noticed her breathing quicken. She couldn't help but despise herself. Why did she panic whenever she encountered him? How could she not see the reality of their current situation?

Chapter 30

"What are you daydreaming about?" Gu Shaoting suddenly squeezed Shu Pan's palm firmly. She snapped back to reality and instinctively turned to look at Gu Shaoting. At that moment, he seemed like a completely different person. The coldness on his face had disappeared, replaced by a gentle gaze filled with doting. He continued speaking with a deep and magnetic voice, like playing the violin, "Why don't you greet our Grandfather?"

Upon hearing the word "Grandfather," Shu Pan instantly understood.

The reason he appeared to be two different people was because he was acting. The person he cherished the most was Grandpa Gu, and for the sake of his grandfather, he was willing to put on an act.

And she foolishly became absent-minded and at a loss in his presence.

Shu Pan forcefully suppressed her self-ridicule and, facing Grandpa Gu, managed to squeeze out a serene smile and sweetly greeted, "Hello, Grandfather."

Grandpa Gu had already observed everything that happened after they entered the living room. Seeing them so affectionate with each other, he felt pleased. He asked them to take a seat while Auntie Wang brewed tea.

"Panpan, what have you been busy with lately? It's been a long time since you last came here to have a meal with me." Grandpa Gu liked Shu Pan a lot. He found her obedient and well-behaved. Previously, he had some reservations when Shaoting wanted to marry Tong Fei, feeling that a model who appeared in public was inappropriate and not in line with the values of the Gu family. Moreover, the constant appearance of their names in entertainment news was a source of amusement for everyone.

Moreover, every time Gu Shaoting brought her to the Gu Family's mansion, she would make a great effort to please everyone, with a strong sense of purpose.

On the other hand, Gu Shaoting's mother, Song Can, got along well with Tong Fei since they were both involved in the fashion industry. Song Can was also interested in this field and often received firsthand information from Tong Fei, which she could show off to her friends.

"I'm sorry, Grandfather. I've been busy lately, but I promise to visit you more often in the future." Grandpa Gu was very concerned about her, and Shu Pan suddenly felt a sense of guilt.

"You know what I want. Have a child, and I won't be so bored. You two have been married for several years. Don't make me wait any longer for that day." Grandpa Gu's greatest wish was to have a great-grandchild, and this issue had been a topic of discussion for a long time.

"I understand, Grandfather," Shu Pan responded softly. But in her heart, she felt sorry for the old man. In the current situation, Gu Shaoting had no intention of having a child with her. They were currently in an adversarial relationship, so how could they possibly have a child? Even if the child in her womb were to be born, they would bear the Shu surname.

Shu Pan silently apologized countless times in her heart, feeling guilty for the care and attention the old man had shown her.

“Grandfather, there’s no rush.” Gu Shaoting raised his legs and spoke in a perfunctory tone.

Shu Pan felt a bit awkward sitting there and got up to help Auntie Wang in the kitchen.

Just a few minutes after Gu Shaoting and Shu Pan arrived at the mansion, Auntie Wang began preparing dinner.

Grandpa Gu’s expression changed when he saw Shu Pan walk away. He wore a stern face and scolded Gu Shaoting, “Don’t think that I’m old and my eyes and ears are failing. The news and newspapers are filled with your scandalous news. You already have a wife at home, so don’t get involved with unrelated people.”

“Grandfather, don’t be alarmed. She’s just a friend. I know my boundaries,” Gu Shaoting quickly reassured him, concerned about Grandfather’s high blood pressure.

Before long, the meal was ready. Four dishes and a soup were served, and everyone sat down to eat. The atmosphere was harmonious, and Gu Shaoting occasionally picked up food for Shu Pan. The old man nodded in approval and finally started eating contentedly. Perhaps it was because there were many people and it was lively, he ate almost two bowls of rice.

After dinner, they chatted with Grandpa Gu for a while before leaving the mansion.