

Rebirth: Regaining Joyful Moments

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Chapter 41: Chapter 041: The Little Girl Who Isn't Afraid of Pain

"Yicheng."

When Du Chang heard the noise, he thought something had happened to Pei Yicheng. Seeing the girl appear out of nowhere in the courtyard, a girl who was injured at that, Du Chang's eyebrows lifted, and his gaze fell on her bleeding arm. He said, "Little girl, you're injured. Come, let me bandage that wound for you."

Shortly after, Du Chang went inside, and when he came back out, he was holding a wooden tray in his hands, on which there were disinfectant and gauze.

Xu Nianhua, holding her arm, seemed a bit surprised. Du Chang had actually brought these things so quickly.

"My surname is Du, I am a doctor," Du Chang seemed to understand Xu Nianhua's surprise and said, "I'll treat your wound."

Xu Nianhua hesitated, thinking that such a minor injury could easily be dealt with when she got home.

Du Chang added, "I won't charge you."

"Thank you, Doctor Du. I, I didn't bring any money today. I'll pay you next time." Xu Nianhua stepped forward obediently. She herself wasn't afraid, but if her second brother or parents saw this wound, they would surely worry.

"Ha-ha, I said I won't take your money," Du Chang said with a smile, and when he applied the medicine to Xu Nianhua, he did so with some surprise. The wound was deep, but the little girl didn't even frown.

This little girl didn't seem old, but she really could endure.

Pei Yicheng, apart from his one query 'Doesn't it hurt?', didn't say anything else, as if he wasn't concerned about anything.

She wasn't like Xiaoning; if Xiaoning had this injury, she probably would've made sure the whole world knew about it.

"Thank you, Doctor Du."

After the wound was bandaged, it was no longer visible, but what about the torn clothes?

They had blood on them. She could wash them clean, but this cut...

"Little girl, have you come across some trouble?" Du Chang glanced at his taciturn grandson and asked Xu Nianhua.

Xu Nianhua paused, then said, "It's nothing. Thank you for your concern, Doctor Du. You really are good. Next time, I'll pay you, to thank you for saving my life."

Xu Nianhua's face was lit with a sweet smile as she thought that Nian'an might be waiting for her. In a rush, she left the Du Family estate and headed straight for the Big Locust Tree. Nearby there was a vegetable garden and Xiaoxi, Xu Nianhua specifically searched for water to clean the bloodstain off her clothes.

"Little sister."

When Xu Nian'an saw her, he felt much relieved and said, "Where did you go? I looked around and didn't see you."

"Why are your clothes wet?" Xu Nian'an examined Xu Nianhua's clothes. Although it wasn't very obvious, his sharp eyes quickly spotted the tear from the injury.

Xu Nianhua had thought that while waiting for Nian'an, she would sew up her clothes, but now, there was no need to sew.

"What happened to you? Did something happen?"

Xu Nian'an anxiously looked over Xu Nianhua, checking her from top to bottom, fearing she might have other injuries.

"Second brother, I'm fine," Xu Nianhua hurriedly said: "It's just a small cut on my hand; it's nothing serious, look, I came across Doctor Du. He's a good man, and he treated my wound for free."

"Really?" Xu Nian'an was doubtful.

Xu Nianhua thought for a moment and gave a selective account of what had happened, omitting the dangerous parts. She said, "I was lucky, I happened to escape to Doctor Du's home."

Thinking of the doctor from the Du Family, the handsome man who sat in a wheelchair, yet was infuriatingly good-looking, she always felt it was a pity.

Such a fine and dignified face, when smiling, must be quite a sight to behold, right?

Chapter 42: Chapter 42 How Did You Get In

"You're saying that person wanted to bully you?" Xu Nian'an's face darkened, wishing he could drag that person over and give them a good beating for daring to bully his sister.

"Probably, but..."

Xu Nianhua looked down at her own appearance, though she was not ugly, she certainly wasn't to the extent that would drive someone crazy, right?

"You're saying that person was masked?" Something suddenly flashed through Xu Nian'an's mind.

Xu Nianhua nodded, and the next moment, her eyes shone as she looked at Xu Nian'an, saying, "Second brother, could it be that they were masked because I know them?"

"Also, that person's voice, it seemed like they deliberately made it lower." Xu Nianhua reflected seriously, that person's voice did indeed sound like they were afraid of being recognized and had intentionally lowered it.

Masking the face is to avoid recognition, but what about the voice?

An acquaintance?

Xu Nianhua and Xu Nian'an exchanged a look and said, "Gao Jianshe!"

If she had offended someone, it would have been Gao Jianshe—after all, previously Gao Jianshe was beaten up by Xu Nian'an. Moreover, Zhong Juan always misunderstood, thinking it was her who spoke out, causing them to get caught. Since Zhong Juan was married to Gao Jianshe, it was inevitable she would whisper in his ear.

"Let's go."

Xu Nian'an returned to the village and went straight to the Gao Family's home, only to learn that today, Gao Jianshe and Zhong Juan had gone to Zhong Juan's grandmother's house. His eyebrows furrowed.

"What do you want with my son Jianshe? I haven't even settled the score with you for last time, hitting my Jianshe like that was just too much."

Upon seeing Xu Nian'an, Mother Gao became angry.

She couldn't bear to see even a single hair on her son's head harmed, yet Xu Nian'an had beaten him.

Xu Nian'an couldn't care less and simply turned to leave.

He thought that Gao Jianshe would ultimately have to come back tomorrow, right?

Nian'an's sister had injured Gao Jianshe's stomach; all he had to do was lift his shirt, and the injury would be visible!

You can run away as a monk, but the temple won't run away. If he dared, he could just never return to the Gao Family for the rest of his life.

Under Xu Nianhua's repeated instructions, and after agreeing their story with Xu Nian'an, they said that her hand had been injured in an accidental fall, nothing serious.

In the summer, trying to hide it was impossible.

Outside, wearing long sleeves could protect one from the sun, but at home, one usually wore short sleeves.

Just that now, with her hand injured, the task of making mung bean jelly fell entirely on Xu Nian'an.

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"Come on, tell me how that fearless little girl got in today?" During dinner, Du Chang sipped his wine, smiling as he asked his grandson.

"Fell from a tree." Pei Yicheng was usually a man of few words.

"Why didn't you send her away?" Du Chang looked at his grandson, half-smiling. After the leg injury, there had been a long period of despair, and then, from the bustling Ningbei Province, he ended up in Gaoliang County, a dilapidated small town.

His grandson was indifferent to everything and disliked being disturbed in his tranquility. He particularly enjoyed watching the persimmon tree in the yard; sometimes, he would close his eyes and rest under it. Once, when the neighbor's little Chen's new ball fell into their yard, he had outright chased the boy away.

Yet, he hadn't chased away that fearless girl today, which was a big surprise for Du Chang.

Pei Yicheng was silent for a moment before saying, "Last time, Xiaoning also fell from a tree."

Automatically completing Pei Yicheng's thought, Du Chang recalled the winter vacation when Pei Yining came over, naughtily climbed a tree to take some bird eggs but failed and ended up falling from the tree.

Pei Yining had been pampered from childhood and could hardly bear any hardship. After the fall, she kept wailing in pain and acted coquettishly towards Pei Yicheng for a long time.

Chapter 43: Chapter 043: Life after the Disaster

Compared to Pei Yining, the little girl today who wasn't afraid of pain made him see her in a new light. She seemed so young, yet he hadn't expected that she could treat her injury as if it were nothing.

"If you're missing Xiaoning, I can call her for you," Du Chang said, looking lovingly at his grandson. Once upon a time, he had been so outstanding, but now...

Du Chang suppressed the regret in his heart.

"No, Grandpa," Pei Yicheng interrupted, "Xiaoning has to take her college entrance exams next year. It's time for her to study hard, don't disturb her."

"Yicheng."

As soon as Du Chang began to speak, Pei Yicheng poured him a glass of wine, "Drink, I'm fine."

The aroma of the wine filled the glass. Normally, Pei Yicheng would restrain him from drinking too much, but today he was pouring it voluntarily.

With a long sigh in his heart, Du Chang sipped his drink and said, "Yicheng, it's not that Grandpa dislikes you, but you're already twenty-three years old. Have you really not considered your lifelong happiness?"

It was 1979, and according to the marriage law, men could marry at the age of 20 and women at 18. Now that Pei Yicheng was already 23, he still showed no intention of getting married.

Before his leg injury, Pei Yicheng was busy managing the many businesses of the Pei Family, but after his injury, he became listless for a while and then absorbed himself in work once again.

The only difference was that Pei Yicheng seemed to be doing his own business, not managing the Pei family's as before.

"Grandpa, I'll make sure you get to hold a great-grandson," Pei Yicheng promised.

Pei Yicheng's words earned him a stern look from Du Chang, who said, "You rascal, don't change the subject. Tell me, how can I hold a great-grandson if you don't even have a girl by your side?"

Pei Yicheng silently continued pouring wine for Du Chang.

Looking at the wine, Du Chang said, "Don't think that pouring me wine will stop me from urging you. A man should marry when it's time, and so should a woman."

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As night deepened,

At the Xu family residence, Xu Nianhua, having been reborn, typically slept straight through until morning, but tonight she was awakened by a nightmare.

Dazzling flames, billowing smoke, and indescribable pain took Xu Nianhua back many years, back to the midst of the Sea of Fire.

When she opened her eyes, the room was pitch black, lit only by the bright moonlight streaming in through the half-closed window.

Outside, the frogs sang an incomprehensible song.

There was no trace of sleepiness in Xu Nianhua's eyes. She reached out and touched her bandaged hand. Did it not hurt?

It hurt, but such pain was like a drizzle to Xu Nianhua.

When she had leapt into the Sea of Fire, her heart cold and grey, she had done so with the intention to die. She had lost the family member she was closest to, and though she had hoped for even a sliver of paternal love from her blood father, it turned out...

Xu Nianhua's eyes drooped, and even in the warmth of June, she felt a chill throughout her body. The Gu Family, it was nothing but a pit that killed without drawing blood!

In this lifetime, she would rather die than return to the Gu Family. She would not become a daughter of the Gu Family!

Xu Nianhua's fist clenched quietly. Surviving the Sea of Fire was indeed a miracle.

Thinking back to that day, despite the years, despite a lifetime in between, she could remember clearly. When she jumped into the Sea of Fire, in an instant, her hair, her clothes, caught fire. The smoke was thick, suffocatingly so, and the pain of being burned alive was something that even now sent chills down her spine.

Chapter 44: Chapter 044: Three Years

Perhaps even the heavens felt she shouldn't die; having embraced the certainty of death, Ji Ying, after surviving the Sea of Fire, found her instinct to live compelling her to struggle. By some stroke of luck, she survived, thanks to a large wooden barrel full of water that someone had filled in that building.

Using the last of her strength, she flipped over and fell into the water barrel, against all odds, surviving.

When the fire died down, Xu Nianhua slipped away from the Gu Family under the cover of night. Eventually, exhausted, she collapsed and was taken to the hospital. But with the extensive burns over her body, and particularly on her face, it took two days in the intensive care unit before she pulled through.

She had no identification on her, and her face was unrecognizable; some kind-hearted soul gathered the money for her surgery, starting her on a long road to recovery.

The only thing she could be thankful for was that the Gu Family thought she had been burned to ashes and did not come looking for her. Moreover, with the matter of Gu Mingzhu, even if the Gu Family wanted to find her, they were powerless to do so.

Only she understood the agony of her treatment. She meticulously recorded every penny donated to her, and after being discharged, she began working as a translator. With a special talent in languages, Ji Ying translated books, contracts—essentially anything related to translation, she could handle.

Bit by bit, she earned money, repaying all those who had donated to her.

Although her appearance was ruined, it didn't mean she'd lost the skills she had learned. Little by little, her reputation grew, and she eventually started teaching language training classes.

Wearing a mask, she still attracted many students to her courses. The materials she compiled helped students remember vocabulary faster and learn the language better.

Her training company expanded and eventually earned her tens of millions.

Aside from her daily living expenses, Xu Nianhua used the rest of her money to not only clear her surgical debts but to give it all to those in need.

Sometimes she wondered if, perhaps, she had done many good deeds in the past that had earned her a chance to start over?

Unable to sleep, Xu Nianhua simply lay in bed, planning her future.

In three years' time, the Gu Family would come looking for her. By then, she was determined to transform the Xu Family.

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"Little sister, is it that your hand hurts so you didn't sleep well?"

Xu Nian'an looked at the dark circles under Xu Nianhua's eyes and worriedly glanced at her arm.

"My hand doesn't hurt, I just had a nightmare and couldn't sleep," Xu Nianhua yawned and replied casually.

"Were you scared yesterday?"

Xu Nian'an quietly inquired beside her ear, saying, "Little sister, don't be afraid. Next time, I'll stay right by your side."

"Thank you, second brother."

Xu Nianhua lifted her head and looked at Xu Nian'an with a beaming smile. Her second brother was really wonderful.

"Nianhua, be careful when you and your second brother go to the county; it's hot now and your hand could get infected," Ji Ying worried for Xu Nianhua, whose hand injury had yet to heal, yet they were going to the county to sell Mung Bean Jelly again.

"Missing one day of sales won't matter much."

Selling Mung Bean Jelly could make them a few bucks a day, but the children were what mattered most.

"Mom, I just accidentally took a fall, I'm really fine," Xu Nianhua reassured her, not daring to admit that she had nearly been assaulted the day before—for if Ji Ying knew, she might confine her daughter and never let her leave the house again.

"Mom, don't worry; I'll take care of little sister and make sure she doesn't get hurt," Xu Nian'an said, filled with guilt. If only he hadn't thought it'd be quicker to split up the day before, his little sister wouldn't have caught the attention of a bad person.

Chapter 45: Chapter 045 Earn Some Tuition

"Hmph, Gao Jianshe, I don't believe he can hide forever!"

Xu Nian'an specifically detoured to the Gao Family, only to find out that Gao Jianshe had not returned, so he followed Xu Nianhua into town.

After placing the mung bean jelly in Granny Cai's well, Xu Nian'an and Xu Nianhua, brother and sister, packed a lunchbox full of mung bean jelly and headed straight for Doctor Du's house.

"It should be here, right?"

This area was part of the old-town district with especially many small alleys, each looking pretty much the same in Xu Nianhua's eyes.

"You aren't lost, are you?" Xu Nian'an observed his little sister, who was generally quite smart but somewhat weak in terms of sense of direction, often unsure of north, south, east, and west.

Apart from the simpler, more familiar routes, she would get a bit dizzy.

"I should be able to find it; I remember there is a big persimmon tree."

When Xu Nianhua had left yesterday, she had made a point of remembering the way because she owed Doctor Du money for treating her wound, and she had intended to pay him back the next day.

However, her memory was getting a bit fuzzy looking at these nearly identical alleys.

Suddenly, Xu Nianhua saw a familiar face; she quickly approached him and said, "Doctor Du, Doctor Du."

"Oh, the brave little girl from yesterday?" When Du Chang saw Xu Nianhua, he immediately remembered that yesterday Pei Yicheng had uncharacteristically not chased people away.

"Uh."

Xu Nianhua touched her nose.

"Doctor Du, thank you for saving my sister yesterday," Xu Nian'an said gratefully to Du Chang.

"Don't thank me; thank my Yicheng," he said.

While inviting them to walk to his house, Doctor Du asked, "What's your name?"

"Xu Nian'an, and I live in Shuangzhu Village," Xu Nian'an replied as they entered the Du Family's home, only to realize that they had walked past the entrance twice already.

The Du Family's home was a small bungalow, somewhat resembling a courtyard house but less refined. It had a yard at the front and another at the back, with many herbs drying in the front yard, whose scent hit them as soon as they entered.

"Doctor Du, why haven't you opened a medical clinic?" Xu Nian'an inquired.

Smiling and stroking his beard, Du Chang replied, "Aren't you afraid that I'm not a good doctor?"

"How could that be, Doctor Du looks very skilled," Xu Nian'an praised, genuinely sensing that Du Chang was a highly skilled doctor.

"The Du Medical Clinic at the entrance of the alley is mine," said Du Chang, stroking his chin, amused by the siblings.

"Du Medical Clinic? I remember many from our village go there for medical treatment," Xu Nian'an recalled and then directly asked, "Doctor Du, how much do I owe for my sister's wound dressing from yesterday?"

"No charge," Du Chang looked at Xu Nianhua and said, "I already told your sister yesterday, no charge."

He waved his hand, effectively stopping any further discussion from Xu Nian'an, adding, "If you insist on paying, then I might have to ask you to leave."

Du Chang kept a stern face; having said he wouldn't charge, he couldn't go back on his word.

"Doctor Du," Xu Nian'an again expressed his thanks and, at the same time, offered the mung bean jelly they had made, saying, "Doctor Du, you won't take money, but you must accept this mung bean jelly. I made it myself, and it tastes quite good."

"There have been a lot of mung bean jelly vendors on the streets recently; are you selling it too?" Du Chang remembered the recent surge of vendors.

"Hehe."

Scratching his head somewhat embarrassingly, Xu Nian'an said, "Yes, earning some tuition money."