

Regaining 111

Chapter 111 Help

The lunar August 2nd, which is August 24th on the solar calendar, the Xu Family was bustling with activity.

Xu Yuchun and his spouse had come over early to help, along with the Cai Family, the Yao Family, and other relatives of the Xu Family.

Even though they were just setting up a few tables for a meal, there weren't enough tables and dishes at home, so they had to borrow them. The Cai Family, the Yao Family, and Xu Yuchun's family had all brought their own dishes when they came, and the remaining tables had to be carried by the younger and stronger youths.

The once nearly desolate old house had become vibrant with life due to Xu Nianhua and his family moving in, and now, the courtyard was filled with continuous laughter and joy.

Xu Zhong had thought about it for a long time at home and finally decided to come over to see if there was anything he could help with. Standing at the doorway, hearing the laughter in the courtyard, he found himself unable to take another step. Looking around, he saw that there were people helping with washing and cutting vegetables, but they were all outsiders.

Xu Zhong immediately felt a rush of anger in his heart. Xu Qingjiang had gone to school to prepare for the new term, but Zhao Juxiang was still at home, as was Liu Sanmei, who happened to come out of the house empty-handed.

"Yuchun, why haven't the tables at home been moved?" Xu Zhong asked, looking puzzledly at Xu Yuchun. Although he was angry with his wife and daughter-in-law for not helping at Xu Nianhe's house, family disgrace shouldn't be aired publicly.

"Uncle Xu, Auntie said that the tables at home still need to be used for meals, and there aren't enough dishes either," replied Xu Yuchun, who also held back his frustration. Originally, he thought, borrowing from anyone but Uncle Xu's family couldn't be an issue. Since Qinghe is his real father, tables and dishes should have been prepared well in advance.

But as soon as he entered the house, Auntie Liu, who is Liu Sanmei, made a few cutting remarks under her breath, nagging that Xu Qinghe and his family were being too disrespectful to them.

Xu Yuchun stormed out, and running into Xu Zhong, he couldn't hold back any longer. He said, "Uncle Xu, I am a junior, and normally I should not speak out, but I really can't hold it in anymore. Qinghe is your real son, and Nianji is your real grandson. When my son got married, my father both contributed money and effort."

As soon as he finished, Xu Yuchun didn't allow Xu Zhong a chance to respond. Excusing himself to go borrow more dishes from another household, he hastily left, truly feeling indignant on behalf of Qinghe. When the family hadn't yet divided up, when Qingjiang and Qinghu were still young, Qinghe had slaved away for the Xu family. Even though he got nothing good out of the family division, and now even when his son was getting married, Xu Zhong, as a grandfather, was also...

Xu Yuchun grew more upset the more he thought about it.

Xu Zhong stood frozen in place, taking a long moment to come back to his senses. Watching the hurried departure of Xu Yuchun, without even a chance to explain, he returned home with a dark face. Seeing Liu Sanmei and Zhao Juxiang cracking sunflower seeds, Xu Zhong's anger burst forth.

"Where's Qingjiang? Get him back here. It doesn't make sense that outsiders are lending a hand, while Qingjiang avoids involvement," Xu Zhong said solemnly, his face dark as the bottom of a pot.

Zhao Juxiang, very adept at reading the room, hurried out immediately.

"What's going on now?" Liu Sanmei muttered, "Qingjiang has gone to school."

"School doesn't start for several more days, and this work doesn't need to be finished today, does it?" Xu Zhong glared at Liu Sanmei with wide eyes as his words took several turns on his tongue before he finally added, "Nianji is my own grandson after all, and you've been called grandma for over twenty years."

Chapter 112: The Handsomest Groom

"If they weren't making a fuss about splitting up the family, I would have helped him bring his bride home before the new year too," he said.

Since Ji Ying's bride price wasn't coming from her anyway, Liu Sanmei was happy to say a good word; she said, "It's not that I don't want to lend the bowls and tables, but Qinghu is coming home today."

Xu Qinghu had recently been going through hard times. Initially, Liu Sanmei was unhappy about being kept in the dark, but as time passed and she saw her daughter getting thinner, her heart softened.

Thinking of her daughter's return, she wanted to make something delicious no matter what.

"She even has the nerve to come back."

Whenever Xu Zhong spoke about what Xu Qinghu had done, he would scowl and say, "Everyone else lends them, if I, her own grandfather, don't lend them, where would I put my face?"

The last time he was scolded by his uncles, he felt ashamed every time he thought about it. He was a grandfather, nearly a great-grandfather, and yet he was scolded terribly.

"Qingjiang, you're back just in time. Take the tables and bowls over," Xu Zhong gave the instructions as soon as he saw Xu Qingjiang returning.

"Dad, I came back just to get those things," Xu Qingjiang said with a smile.

"Dad, don't be mad. I went to school today, just to notify them. It freed up today and tomorrow. Nianji is getting married, and as his uncle, I should also help out," Xu Qingjiang said.

His words finally eased Xu Zhong's heavy heart.

Liu Sanmei didn't have her own sons or grandsons, so Xu Zhong could understand her bias, but Xu Qingjiang and Xu Qinghe were real brothers.

Xu Zhong accompanied Xu Qingjiang to deliver the bowls and tables.

Xu Qinghe, not knowing about Xu Yuchun's situation, said, "Dad, Qingjiang, that's great. We still need one more table and some bowls."

Zhao Juxiang was persuaded by Xu Qingjiang to come help too, but although she was there, she didn't do much.

Ji Ying, knowing the nature of this sister-in-law, didn't bother to say anything.

Tomorrow was the day his daughter-in-law would enter the family. Ji Ying didn't want to have unhappiness with others on such a joyous occasion as his son's wedding.

Ji Ying and Xu Qinghe had good reputations in the village; many people came to help, and many came to drink.

It was the third of August.

"Big brother, you already look very handsome, the handsomest groom," Nianhua teased. Today, his older brother wore a white shirt, dark blue pants, a large red flower on his chest, and shiny leather shoes on his feet.

Being in good spirits for a happy occasion, his face couldn't help but show an unstoppable smile.

With fine features to start, Xu Nianji looked even more dashing and handsome dressed in brand-new clothes.

"Little sister, stop teasing your big brother and check if there's anything amiss with what I'm wearing," Xu Nianji said, touching the pristine white shirt on his body, unsure where to put his hands.

It was the first time in his life that he was wearing brand-new clothes.

During his engagement to Zhou He, he had only worn Xu Zhihao's borrowed clothes.

"Especially handsome," Xu Nianhua thought his older brother was particularly suited to white shirts. He wasn't the overly thin type; his body had developed quite a bit of muscle from physical labor, yet he was still lean without appearing bulky. The white shirt seemed tailor-made for him.

"Looks great," Xu Nian'an thought, and decided that he too would buy a white shirt when he had enough money, praising his little sister's great idea. The siblings had managed to afford a whole outfit and shoes for him.

Chapter 113: Inconvenient Legs

"A car is coming!"

"What kind of car is it? It sure looks nice."

Because a sedan had arrived in the village, everyone was craning their necks to see.

As the car stopped at the Xu Family's door, someone had already gone to greet Xu Qinghe and the others, informing them that someone had driven there.

Ji Ying thought to herself that her eldest brother and his family were in Ningbei, her second brother worked in a textile factory in the city, and her third brother worked in a food factory in the county. They probably didn't own a car, did they?

The only concern they had was the Yue Family. They vividly recalled the last time the Yue family drove into the village.

Xu Qinghe and Ji Ying exchanged glances, secretly hoping that they weren't there to cause trouble.

"Xu Nian'an." As Ling Dong got out of the car, he sensed the curious faces around him. Ling Dong felt a bit awkward, feeling like a monkey in a zoo being observed.

The person he knew best was Xu Nian'an, so as soon as he got out of the car, he called out Xu Nian'an's name.

"Ling Dong?"

At the sound of the car, Xu Nian'an hurried out to see what was happening. He assumed it was the Yue Family, but when he saw Ling Dong, he immediately came forward and greeted him, "Are you here for my brother's wedding banquet as well?"

Xu Nian'an thought that aside from this, there was no other reason for his visit. It was just that he had arrived a bit early, not even seven o'clock yet.

"If I hadn't just run into someone from your village who mentioned it, I wouldn't have known that your elder brother was getting married today. We are shamelessly here to partake in the wedding banquet," Ling Dong said while accompanying Pei Yicheng, who couldn't move his legs, so Ling Dong had become his errand runner.

Grinning, Ling Dong said, "I knew about your brother's wedding today. Yicheng mentioned it. The bride's home is quite a distance away, so I brought the car over early. You never know, it might come in handy."

The news of Xu Nianji's marriage was something Ling Dong had found out about.

Yesterday, Xu Nian'an and his siblings hadn't come to sell mung bean jelly. Worried that something had happened like last time, he had made some inquiries, and not until then did he find out that Xu Nianji was getting married today.

Ling Dong thought that they were acquaintances, and additionally, Yicheng was particularly fond of that girl who sold mung bean jelly, so Ling Dong informed Pei Yicheng and Doctor Du about the news.

Doctor Du, who was busy, mentioned giving a gift and then urged Pei Yicheng to come to the banquet today.

"It's difficult with my legs," said Pei Yicheng.

Lately, Pei Yicheng would often recall Ji Ying's confident and sparkling eyes, and subconsciously, he didn't want to see her.

"Don't you have a car? You wouldn't have to walk," Doctor Du glanced at him and said, "Ling Dong mentioned that the bride is from Zhou Family Village, right? Zhou Family Village is quite far from Shuangzhu Village. If you were to walk, it would take two hours one way. That would take up the entire morning."

"Xu Nianji is a man, so of course, it's okay for him, but Ji Ying is a girl, and she's filial too. If she were to walk such a long distance..."

Before Doctor Du could finish, Pei Yicheng cleared his throat and said, "Ling Dong, tomorrow morning you drive there."

"I'm also going to the wedding. Aren't you coming too?" Doctor Du looked at Pei Yicheng and said, "Last time you mockingly said that girl looked as thin as a sprout, yet she's big-hearted and hasn't held a grudge. Plus, you paid her only a hundred dollars for translating that contract so well. That was rather stingy of you."

Pei Yicheng: "..."

The price he paid for the contract translation was higher than usual. How could that be considered stingy?

Doctor Du said, "I don't care, we're both going to the wedding tomorrow."

"You're already twenty-three, Xu Nianji is about your age, and he's getting married. If you don't step up your game, Ji Ying might be swept off her feet by someone else!" Doctor Du dearly wished he could chase after Ji Ying for Pei Yicheng.

Chapter 114: Stinky Brat

Doctor Du harbored the thought that there was no need for him to be more anxious than the emperor, but then again, he wasn't a eunuch, was he?

Doctor Du had no methods left for his own grandson and thought to come back the next day to persuade him. However, the next morning at six o'clock, Pei Yicheng was already neatly dressed, sitting in the yard reading a book.

If one could ignore that wheelchair, his grandson's handsome appearance and dignified aura were unmatched in the entirety of Gaoliang County.

In Doctor Du's heart, his grandson was a dragon among men, the most outstanding of all.

It was just unfortunate that due to an accident, his grandson could no longer stand up again.

Doctor Du restrained the pity in his eyes. He thought that his grandson's legs must be curable. For the past six months, he had been scouring various medical texts, hoping to find a way to heal Pei Yicheng's legs.

The girl Nianhua from the Xu Family was very good. When she smiled, it was incredibly sweet, almost as if her smile could make one forget all unpleasantness.

He thought if his grandson really took her to heart, for the sake of Nianhua, he might be more cooperative with the treatment, right?

"Yicheng, let's go have a drink early today," Doctor Du, fearing Pei Yicheng might not go, had Ling Dong carry him onto the carriage right after breakfast.

"Why so cooperative today?"

Doctor Du was surprised at how cooperative Pei Yicheng was being. When Ling Dong ran back to fetch the wheelchair, hearing Doctor Du's muttered words, he grinned and said, "Doctor Du, Brother Cheng had already planned to go to the wedding feast."

Doctor Du: "..."

That little rascal, to think he had spent half the night wondering what excuse to use to convince Pei Yicheng to go if he was unwilling, only to find out he had already decided to go to the Xu Family's today?

Consequently, the party of three arrived at the Xu Family's home before seven o'clock.

"Please come inside quickly."

Xu Nian'an invited Ling Dong inside, but Ling Dong mentioned that Doctor Du and Pei Yicheng had also come.

Consequently, Pei Yicheng made his appearance at the Xu Family's home, sitting in his wheelchair.

The Xu Family's dilapidated house was even older than what Pei Yicheng had imagined. Even though festive red wedding scrolls hung everywhere, and the character for happiness was placed all around, full of jubilation, it still could not conceal the shabbiness of the house.

The helping aunts from the Cai Family and others all sized up this person who came by carriage, wondering when Xu Nian'an had made the acquaintance of such wealthy people.

"Mom and Dad, this is Doctor Du, and this is his grandson, Pei Yicheng," Xu Nian'an introduced, and Xu Qinghe and Ji Ying instantly recognized who they were.

Weren't they the saviors who had saved their daughter?

Their gaze fell on Pei Yicheng's legs, indeed as their son had described, outstanding in appearance, but pity about those legs.

Xu Qinghe had the good intention of offering Pei Yicheng some words of consolation, but was glared at by Ji Ying, who made him realize he might be highlighting someone's sore spot.

"Uncle, Auntie, it doesn't matter. I've had this leg injury for quite some time, but I'm sure I can be healed," said Pei Yicheng as his gaze landed on Xu Nianhua, who had just walked out. As usual, she wore a plain grey shirt and pants. Her slender figure and that palm-sized face, with eyes shining brightly, made the most ordinary clothes shimmer with elegance on her.

"Doctor Du," Xu Nianhua greeted with a smile, placing the tray of fruit she was carrying onto the table.

After everyone got to know each other, Doctor Du also stated his intention for the visit. Besides joining the wedding feast, the car they had driven could be used to pick up the bride, and they even had a driver ready.

Chapter 115: Young Uncle

Xu Qinghe and Ji Ying, as a couple, quickly refused. Nowadays, nobody in the village used a car for weddings; instead, most would walk, carrying their dowries back home. Who would use a car?

"Nian'an and Nianhua, those siblings, they are filial and sensible, and I really like them from the bottom of my heart. Nianji is their eldest brother, so he must be a child who is also filial and sensible. I would feel quite embarrassed coming to drink wedding wine uninvited, but we didn't mean anything by it, just thought we could offer a little help, just a little."

Doctor Du's words were very sincere, treating Xu Nian'an and the others like beloved younger family members.

"Uncle Xu, Auntie Xu, the last time Nianhua helped me translate a contract, it really was a huge help. I can't move my legs, so the only assistance I can offer is to have Ling Dong drive people around," Pei Yicheng said, trying to persuade them.

"Doctor Du, Pei Yicheng, thank you for your kindness, I have taken it to heart," Xu Nianji sincerely thanked them. He didn't know how Nian'an and his little sister had become so familiar with them, nor about the contract translation they later assisted with.

But Xu Nianji knew that translating the contract had cost money.

"What circumstances my family is in, Xiaohe knows. If we really went to pick people up in a car, wouldn't that give them quite a shock?" Xu Nianji said, half-jokingly.

Xu Nianhua nodded silently to himself. His eldest brother's thoughts were always so direct and honest. He had never liked to take advantage of others. In the past, if Gu Mingzhu hadn't used some dirty tricks, how would his brother have...

Xu Nianhua shook off the thoughts in his head and looked at his elder brother, dressed particularly smartly today, and suddenly felt supremely content.

Now, they were doing better step by step than before, and in the future, they would become even better.

In the end, Xu Nianji still walked to Zhou Family Village.

Xu Nianhua followed her elder brother to fetch the bride. Although it wasn't comparable to modern weddings and they mostly walked, the suona and drums were loud along the way, creating quite a lively atmosphere.

With happy faces all around, the noisy crowd continued on as they picked up Zhou He, the bride. On their return journey, Xu Nianhua kept close to Zhou He, who looked exceptionally beautiful in her red dress.

They chatted and laughed merrily along the way, making the walk not feel exhausting at all.

Amid the sounds of firecrackers, she saw one joyful smiling face after another, chomping on wedding candy.

Xu Nianhua found it all very novel. Once they reached the Xu Family home and the formalities were completed, she stayed with the bride at home.

"Sister-in-law, are you hungry? Would you like something to eat?" Xu Nianhua asked with concern.

"I'm not hungry,"

Zhou He's face was flushed with color, whether from happiness or shyness, it was hard to tell.

Many people in the house were there to see the bride, and Xu Nianhua decided to step out for some fresh air. As soon as she left the house, she bumped into her uncle Ji Shan and his son.

"Hello, Uncle," Xu Nianhua greeted with a smile. Uncle Ji Shan hadn't changed much from what she remembered.

"Nianhua has grown into a beautiful young lady," Ji Shan observed Xu Nianhua. Unlike the quieter Nianhua of the past, he said, "Shuyuan, come over and say hello."

Ji Shuyuan, the second son of her uncle, had opened a law firm in South City and was a well-known lawyer.

She still remembered when her face was disfigured; he thought she had been harmed by the Gu Family and even went to the Gu Family to seek justice on her behalf. Unfortunately, the Gu Family was too shameful, and with Gu Mingzhu's health, they were too preoccupied to be in South City.

Chapter 116: Tenfold, Hundredfold, Thousandfold, Ten Thousandfold

"Little sister is getting prettier and prettier," Ji Shuyuan appraised Xu Nianhua and said, "and livelier than before."

Ji Shuyuan, resembling his mother a bit more, gave off a refined and elegant impression,

"Brother Shuyuan is also growing handsomer,"

Xu Nianhua's smile was radiant; she was always grateful to those who had once helped her.

After greeting her younger uncle, Xu Nianhua went out to relieve herself, probably because she had eaten quite a bit of watermelon in the afternoon and kept feeling the need to use the restroom.

Since the restroom at home was crowded, and Xu Nianhua was in a hurry, she had no choice but to go to the nearby Cai Family's restroom, where she found Cai Xiu and went back to Cai's house with her.

After taking care of her urgent needs, she felt completely refreshed. She talked with Cai Xiu all the way, who was also Cai Feng's sister and was one year younger than Xu Nianhua.

"That Doctor Du's family is really rich!"

"Heard that the car belongs to his grandson, but it's a pity, his grandson's legs don't work."

"Didn't they say it could be cured?"

"I know this Doctor Du, he opened a Du Family clinic on Bado Road. He has a grandson who is incredibly handsome, but since before the New Year, his legs haven't been working."

"Ah, before the New Year? So it's been almost half a year and still not cured?"

"Exactly."

"What a pity, what's the use of just being good-looking, without legs, how is that different from being disabled?"

"Exactly, such a shame for that face."

A few women sat there gossiping about Pei Yicheng, especially since Pei Yicheng had arrived in the village by car today, making everyone talk about him. That handsome face could make all the girls in the village swoon. However, the mere fact that he sat in a wheelchair was enough to make them hesitate.

"Xiuxiu, did you know? Doctor Du's grandson is a college student," Xu Nianhua's voice rose high, even while speaking to Cai Xiu, her gaze kept drifting to those aunties who gossiped behind others' backs.

As soon as she mentioned Doctor Du's grandson, those aunties almost pricked up their ears to listen.

Those people thought to themselves, what's the big deal about being a college student if he has no legs?

"He's really impressive," Cai Xiu seriously praised. As a student herself, she knew how difficult it was to get into college.

"His legs, because of an accident, can't stand. But that doesn't deny his excellence. He's still doing a medicinal herbs business. Compared to some people who spend their days gossiping, he is a hundred, a thousand, even ten thousand times more outstanding!"

Xu Nianhua's voice varied in tone, resonating with conviction. She looked at Cai Xiu and then glanced over the aunties, continuing, "Actually, those who mock him for not being able to stand are the truly disabled—morally and psychologically."

"Who's disabled, Xu Nianhua? You better make yourself clear,"

"That's right!"

Even if those aunties were slow, they could tell Xu Nianhua was scolding them.

With a serene smile, Xu Nianhua said, "Aunties, I didn't curse you. Why are you so agitated?"

"Could it be, you mocked him?" Xu Nianhua spoke pensively.

Her eyes, when they twinkled with mirth, curved like crescent moons, as if they held stars.

The aunties glared at her, puffing with anger, naturally not admitting that they mocked him. To speak behind someone's back is one thing, but to bring it up to their face? How embarrassing would that be?

Besides, to bring it up would mean admitting to being disabled themselves, wouldn't it?

Although they didn't understand what Xu Nianhua meant by moral and psychological disabilities, they were sure it was an insult.

Chapter 117: Hard to Find Even with a Lantern

"Xiuxiu, did you know? Dr. Du's grandson is a college student."

"His legs, because of an accident, cannot stand, but this doesn't negate his excellence. He is still in the herbal medicine business, which makes him ten, a hundred, a thousand, and even ten thousand times better than some people who spend their days gossiping."

"Actually, those who mock him for not being able to stand are the real disabled, morally and psychologically."

Since his legs had been injured, he had heard statements ten and a hundred times more horrible than those initial ones. From the initial indignation and anger at the injustice to eventual numbness, he thought he was indifferent to such comments now.

Every word from Xu Nianhua was like timely rain after a long drought, sprinkling over his heart and comforting his mind, which had become inferior due to his leg injury."

His gaze greedily fell upon Xu Nianhua's face, her eyes clear and upright, embodying the righteousness she spoke of."

Indeed, from their first meeting, Xu Nianhua had never discriminated against him because of his legs."

Heartbeat quickened.

"Nianhua, you seem to know him quite well?" Cai Xiu glanced at Pei Yicheng sitting in the wheelchair, realizing he must have heard everything that was just said.

Cai Xiu's mother had ideas about Nianhua, but Cai Xiu knew that a match between Nianhua and her brother Cai Feng was impossible."

Nianhua was a top student, and this time, if not for getting diarrhea and missing the foreign language exam, she would definitely have been admitted to college this year."

While her brother, though diligent and honest, just wasn't a match for Xu Nianhua..."

Cai Xiu glanced at Xu Nianhua, the large figure of her brother Cai Feng standing beside the strikingly attractive Xu Nianhua, indeed seemed a bit mismatched."

Xu Nianhua paused, then said plainly, "I've met him a few times, but I learned about his situation from Dr. Du."

As Xu Nianhua turned around, she encountered Pei Yicheng's profound gaze, not feeling it before when she was speaking, but now face-to-face, she felt somewhat embarrassed."

"Sister Nianhua, what you said was really good," Ling Dong said, his eyes gleaming as he looked at Xu Nianhua. His greatest worry had always been about Yicheng's legs. Now, Xu Nianhua had driven those people away, even calling them morally and psychologically disabled."

This girl is great!

Ling Dong said excitedly, "From now on, if anyone else talks about Yicheng's legs, I'll learn from you and talk back."

Pei Yicheng watched her, speechless, but Xu Nianhua could feel the joy in his gaze."

Could it be he was pleased she had confronted them?

Thinking this to herself, Xu Nianhua said, "Xiuxiu, I need to get back and accompany my sister-in-law. Let's head back."

"Okay," Cai Xiu nodded, following Xu Nianhua back.

"Brother Cheng, what Sister Nianhua said was really good. Such a great girl is hard to find even with a lantern!"

Ling Dong said, sneakily sizing up Pei Yicheng, the unspoken next line being: Such a hard-to-find girl, Brother Cheng, aren't you going to chase after her?

Pei Yicheng gave him a look but said nothing.

"Brother Cheng, Sister Nianhua doesn't despise you at all," Ling Dong added.

"If you think your current herbal medicine business is too small, I wouldn't mind doing a bit more," Pei Yicheng's comment startled Ling Dong, who quickly said, "Brother Cheng, please don't, I'm already so busy with just the herbal medicine business that I can barely touch the ground."

If we were to do more, wouldn't I be so busy I wouldn't even have time to

Chapter 118: Finally, the Day Has Come

Pei Yicheng was sent back to the banquet, and Ling Dong quietly spoke with Doctor Du about the incident that had just occurred.

"Good, good, good!" Doctor Du repeated the word "good" three times, especially when he heard about Xu Nianhua standing up for her grandson, his eyes sparkled, and when he laughed, the wrinkles on his face deepened. He said, "I knew I hadn't misjudged her. Nianhua is truly remarkable."

Doctor Du's intention to matchmake his grandson with Xu Nianhua grew even stronger.

However, Doctor Du was not a rash person. He wanted his grandson's leg to be healed before considering marriage; otherwise, it wouldn't be finding a good match for Nianhua, but rather bullying her.

However, the leg could be healed slowly, as Nianhua would later go to university. Love could be cultivated in the meantime, which is akin to "the early bird catching the worm" or "striking while the iron is hot."

After the evening banquet, as the guests gradually left, Doctor Du specifically sought out the Xu family to say goodbye. In front of Xu Qinghe and Ji Ying, Doctor Du made sure to boost his grandson's image impressively. Apart from his leg injury, his grandson was truly an incomparable individual.

"Doctor Du, I'm really sorry for taking up your whole day," Xu Qinghe said apologetically. They not only came for the banquet but also gave ten yuan as a gift.

In this era, wedding gifts were usually one or two yuan, sometimes three or five, but giving ten was indeed very rare.

Even his own father had only given five yuan.

Xu Qinghe felt uneasy about accepting such a gift, but since the money was taken, it couldn't very well be returned.

"Not at all, my grandson and I ate and drank at your place, I feel embarrassed. I've heard that the chili sauce you make is delicious. If you have some next time, could I buy some from you, and maybe Nianhua could bring it over?" thought Doctor Du, knowing that seeing each other often was important for fostering relationships.

Ji Ying and her husband were completely unaware of Doctor Du's intentions, she quickly said, "Of course, we'll have Nianhua and her siblings bring it over. It's nothing expensive, to talk of buying is too formal, we'll just give you a few bottles."

"Thank you so much for that."

Doctor Du left feeling completely satisfied.

Xu Qinghe expressed, "Doctor Du is really kind. Not only did he save Nianhua last time, but he also prescribed medicine to nourish her body, right?"

"Exactly, just waiting for the weather to cool down, then I'll stew it for Nianhua to drink." Ji Ying felt that life was looking more hopeful every day, her daughter-in-law had moved in, and who knows, perhaps next year they might even have a grandchild.

Ji Ying felt incredibly happy just thinking about it.

The liveliness at the Xu family continued until eleven at night, only quieting down after the suona was played.

In the newlywed room adorned with happiness characters, the bed was covered with a bright red wedding quilt embroidered with patterns of mandarin ducks playing in the water. Zhou He, in her bright red wedding dress, sat on the bed, her pretty face flushed with shyness as she shyly looked at Xu Nianji, stirring excitement in him.

She had finally married him.

"Xiaohe, I've finally reached this day." Xu Nianji sat beside her on the bed, gazing at Zhou He as if he could never look enough.

Zhou He smiled with pursed lips, their eyes met, and then she quickly looked away.

"Xiaohe." Xu Nianji held her hand, thought for a moment, and then said, "The money for our wedding was one hundred and sixty yuan, all earned by my younger brother and sister. When it's their turn to marry, I, as the eldest brother, will definitely need to help out. Our family also owes more than sixty yuan in debt," he said, looking guiltily at Zhou He.

The financial condition of his family was not good, and they still owed so much money.

Chapter 119: Dreaming of Returning to the Past (1)

"Dummy," Zhou He muttered as she tightly gripped his hand. Under the dim light, Xu Nianji's face appeared somewhat blurred, making it difficult for her to see clearly. She tilted her head upward and said, "I have no dowry, and my father took most of those two hundred dollars of betrothal money. Except for this bedding set, some clothes, and a few small items, I have nothing left. Will you despise me?"

"No," Xu Nianji answered without hesitation. He said, "Xiaohe, I will definitely treat you well in the future. Although we are poor now, I will work hard to make money so that you can eat well and dress warmly."

"Okay."

Zhou He sweetly said in her heart, "I will also be good to your parents, and to your younger brother and sister."

"Xiaohe, you look so beautiful today."

Xu Nianji's face gradually enlarged in front of Zhou He's eyes.

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Having been tired all day, Xu Nianhua lay on the bed, feeling each cell in her body relax and enjoy the comfort.

The moment her head hit the pillow, she didn't have a dreamless sleep till dawn as usual, but instead, she dreamt about the past.

"Nianhua, I am your father, your biological father," Gu Hai said excitedly, looking at Xu Nianhua. Seeing his daughter after over twenty years, the feelings in his heart were indescribable—both guilt and pity.

"I have a dad."

Xu Nianhua, who worked as an elementary school teacher in the county, looked guardedly at Gu Hai, who had suddenly appeared before her. She was inexplicably panic-stricken.

Her parents loved her so much, how could they not be her biological parents?

"Nianhua, I really am your father. I'm sorry, your dad didn't mean to lose you," Gu Hai explained urgently.

Xu Nianhua ran away in fright. She didn't even dare to return to her village or seek confirmation from her parents, as if confirming it would make it real, that she wouldn't be their child anymore.

Then, Fang Yue and Gu Mingzhu arrived.

It was her first time meeting Gu Mingzhu. True to her name, she was the Gu Family's treasured pearl. She had never seen such a beautiful dress on anyone as the one Gu Mingzhu wore, nor such sparkling rings that dazzled the eyes on her wrists.

Standing in front of Gu Mingzhu, a sense of inferiority inevitably surged in Xu Nianhua's heart.

And Fang Yue, needless to mention, was well-maintained and looked several years younger than Ji Ying, her mother. Her hair was styled and her dress made her look like a lady of high social standing.

"Nianhua, come back with us. I am your real mother, and I'm sorry for having made you suffer all these years," Fang Yue said softly, holding her hand with a teary sparkle in her eyes, radiating a unique beauty even in the moment of crying.

"Little sister, our parents were very disappointed to hear you couldn't attend university. If you come back to South City with us, they will support your university education. Your grades are so good, it would be such a pity not to attend university," Gu Mingzhu spoke as if having a conversation with her was an honor.

Xu Nianhua silently withdrew her hand and said, "I have parents, and being a teacher is good too."

"Little sister, you should go to university, you should have a broader life instead of being cooped up here as an elementary school teacher," Gu Mingzhu spoke forcefully, as though aggrieved on her behalf. She stepped forward, holding her hand tightly and said, "Little sister, look, we should be the same, yet here you are suffering while I am at ease. It makes my heart ache."

Following Gu Mingzhu's gaze, Xu Nianhua saw the two clasped hands. Gu Mingzhu's hand was white and tender, while hers was rough and dark.

Chapter 120: Dreaming of Returning to the Past (2)

"No, I don't feel bitter at all," Xu Nianhua shook her head. She looked at her hands, which had grown rough over the past two years from doing household chores. Yet, when she thought of her parents, her elder brother, and her deceased second brother, a feeling of fulfillment filled her heart.

"Little sister, even if you acknowledge us, you can still keep in touch with your foster parents,"

Gu Mingzhu's words made Xu Nianhua very uncomfortable. She abruptly withdrew her hand and took a step back defensively, saying, "They are not my foster parents, they are my biological parents."

The words 'biological parents' were emphasized heavily by Xu Nianhua. She looked coldly at the people in front of her, Fang Yue and Gu Mingzhu, and said, "I'm sorry, but I'm very happy with my current life, and my parents are doing well."

After speaking, Xu Nianhua ran away.

Once she returned to her dormitory, she couldn't stop thinking, why wasn't she the biological child of her parents?

However, the persistent visits from Gu Hai and Fang Yue left Xu Nianhua extremely puzzled.

Over the weekend, Xu Nianhua rushed home early.

Since the incident with her second brother, they had split from the Xu family and moved into the old house.

"You're back?"

Ji Ying, in her forties but looking more like she was in her fifties, her face aged, though her mother hadn't always looked this way.

"Mom."

Seeing Ji Ying with white hair, tears welled up in Xu Nianhua's eyes and she couldn't hold them back.

"Oh, what's wrong, my Nianhua? Did someone bully you at school?" Ji Ying watched Xu Nianhua with compassion. Her gentle and kind demeanor was much more intimate than Fang Yue's. After crying, Xu Nianhua wanted to talk about her origins, but facing Ji Ying's worried look, she found herself unable to speak.

No matter what, no matter how wealthy the Gu family was, the only people Xu Nianhua wanted recognition from were Ji Ying and her husband, Xu Qinghe.

Xu Nianhua put the matter out of her mind, and together with her mother, they went to the fields to hoe weeds and plant vegetables. Talking and laughing together, the days were harsh, but as long as the family was together, she felt content.

"Nianhua, you're not getting any younger. What do you think about that match I told you about last time? I think the boy is nice," Ji Ying chattered incessantly, "What's his name again?"

Ji Ying only remembered the boy's family background and forgot his name.

He had no parents, so after marrying Nianhua, she would have no in-laws to deal with. Although there was a younger brother and sister who needed schooling, Ji Ying had met the child and found him very sensible. Even though she would have to support her siblings-in-law, the boy from the Liao family had confided that when his parents had passed away, they had left funds for his younger siblings' education.

Ji Ying liked the boy very much.

"Liao Wenjie." Xu Nianhua pursed her lips and said, "Mom, stop arranging things for me. Focus on my elder brother first."

"Sigh, ever since Zhou He left, your elder brother hasn't been interested in marriage. I've introduced him to several potential matches, and he has rejected every one of them,"

Whenever Xu Nianji was mentioned, Ji Ying felt a pain in her chest and regretted her own weakness.

If only they had split the family sooner, Zhou He might have married into the family sooner, and none of the subsequent accidents would have happened.

And their second son wouldn't have ended up working at the brick factory to earn money, eventually losing his life.

The sorrow in Ji Ying's eyes flickered momentarily before disappearing. She didn't want to show it in front of her daughter and make her worry. Her daughter's heartache was even greater than hers. She said, "Nianhua, now I only have you and Nianji left. Your elder brother doesn't want to get married, do you also not want to get married?"