

Regaining 131

Chapter 131: You Look Really Nice When You Smile

Radish and green vegetables, each has a preference.

Although Xu Nianhua liked it, she slowly realized that Pei Yicheng, judging by his upbringing, likely came from a family where there was never a lack of food or clothing, and a very good one at that.

He probably wouldn't like such homely fare, right?

Oh, if only Doctor Du were here, he seems like he would enjoy it.

"I'll give it a try."

Pei Yicheng, seeing that her expression seemed off, tried to lift the corners of his mouth into a smile to ease the awkwardness.

Xu Nianhua kept looking at Pei Yicheng, and when he smiled, softening his harsh features, she blurted out, "You look really good when you smile, you should smile more."

The smile froze on Pei Yicheng's face.

Xu Nianhua regretted her words so much she could have slapped herself; men probably don't like being told they look good, right?

The atmosphere turned awkward all at once.

"Brother Cheng, I've brought the chopsticks and bowls." Ling Dong had brought the items over, instantly breaking the awkwardness.

Pei Yicheng picked up the chopsticks and first tried the ginger in vinegar.

"Nianhua, may I try it?" Ling Dong asked Xu Nianhua, his mouth watering from the smell of the tangy ginger.

"Of course." Xu Nianhua nodded and said, "If you guys like it, my mom made a lot."

Nianhua seemed to sound better than Little Xu.

"Delicious." Pei Yicheng took a bite; the ginger was tender, a bit less sugary, but the sweet mingling with sour and the inherent spiciness of the ginger made it especially tasty.

Pei Yicheng finished a piece and commended, "Auntie is really skilled. It's the first time I've had such delicious ginger in vinegar."

Ling Dong, already drooling, picked a large piece and said as he ate, "It's a bit spicy, but, delicious."

After finishing a piece, Ling Dong picked another and his praises continued nonstop.

"I'm glad you like it." Seeing their genuine enjoyment, Xu Nianhua happily said, "Next time, I'll bring over another jar."

This jar seemed a bit too little.

Pei Yicheng then tried the chili sauce, which tasted very good; he said, "It's better than what's sold outside."

Pei Yicheng, who loved spicy foods, found the chili sauce perfectly suited his taste.

"I think so too." Xu Nianhua agreed, filled with pride. Having others appreciate her mother's cooking brought her more joy than praise for her own cooking.

"I think, if we produced this chili sauce on a larger scale, it could make money." Pei Yicheng spoke directly, "I'll invest the money, Auntie can provide the expertise, and we can start a chili sauce factory together."

Xu Nianhua was stunned; she came only to bring chili sauce, yet the conversation had turned to a business partnership?

"You, aren't interested?" Pei Yicheng frowned slightly; he wanted to help her family and hadn't thought of a way yet, but after tasting the delicious chili sauce, he believed there would definitely be a market if it were commercially produced.

"Willing."

Xu Nianhua, slowly processing the proposal, nodded repeatedly, showing her willingness, but then hesitantly asked Pei Yicheng, "You just tried a little, and you think it can make money? What if it loses money?"

Starting a factory wasn't something that could be done with an investment of just a couple hundred dollars.

"I trust my instincts." Pei Yicheng said emphatically.

Xu Nianhua returned home in a daze; in just a short time, Pei Yicheng had not only discussed the potential partnership but even mentioned how much to invest and even where the products could be sold.

Chapter 132: Why Come to Us?

In the evening, when he returned home, Xu Nianhua discussed the idea of starting a factory.

"Can pepper sauce actually make money?"

Ji Ying looked as if she had heard something shocking, her eyes wide and round.

Every chili harvest season, every household would make a lot of pepper sauce, and sometimes when there were no other dishes to eat, they would eat pepper sauce.

But now Xu Nianhua was telling her that pepper sauce could make money!

This completely overturned Ji Ying's understanding.

"Of course it can, mom. Your pepper sauce tastes good, so naturally it can make money," Xu Nianhua said earnestly.

"But, Pei Yicheng, is he really willing to invest? And invest five thousand yuan?"

Xu Nian'an focused on the key point and asked.

"Yes, that's what he said," Xu Nianhua nodded.

Xu Nianji frowned and said, "Five thousand yuan, that's a lot of money. What if nobody buys it?"

His concern was exactly what Ji Ying was worried about; she quickly said, "We shouldn't agree to this. If we lose money, even if we sold our whole family, it wouldn't cover the amount."

"Mom, I actually think it's feasible. Just think, if the pepper sauce can be sold, it would make money for Pei Yicheng and of course, we could make some money too," Xu Nian'an had thought a lot about it before concluding that it should be feasible.

They had sold mung bean jelly and bean sprouts, and Xu Nian'an deeply felt the profitability of doing business!

If they had not sold these items, Xu Nian'an could hardly imagine making just a hundred or two hundred yuan a month.

Having tasted the sweetness of business, Xu Nian'an naturally supported the idea very much.

"Second brother is right, that's what I think too. What we lack now is startup capital," Xu Nianhua knew clearly what the family lacked.

Unless they struck it rich overnight, gathering capital to make more money would take a year or two.

With Pei Yicheng's collaboration, it would be much easier to realize this plan.

Xu Nianhua had read novels about time-traveling and rebirth before, admiring those who easily made a fortune in those stories.

So far, Xu Nianhua, having been reborn for quite some time, had not thought of any big money-making ideas.

Her main expertise was in foreign languages, and she had run a translation training company very successfully in the past, but now it was 1979, not the future, and even with all her skills, she was at a loss.

As for other areas, she was completely in the dark.

Fortunately, she had learned to grow bean sprouts from an old lady before; otherwise, she wouldn't even know how to make them.

Ji Ying was dizzy from listening to Xu Nianhua and her siblings and turned to look at Xu Qinghe, who was silent beside her. She knew nothing about these matters, and in big decisions, she still needed Xu Qinghe to take charge.

"I don't understand business either, but, Nianhua, why would Pei Yicheng help us?" Xu Qinghe always felt that pie wouldn't just fall from the sky.

"Uh..." Xu Nianhua touched her nose, a bit surprised herself that Pei Yicheng had proposed this factory idea.

She had thought about it before, but without capital, nothing was feasible.

Xu Nian'an then spoke up, "Dad, Mom, although we haven't known Dr. Du's family for long, I always feel they are good people. Besides, in a partnership, Pei Yicheng can make money too."

"He's investing five thousand yuan. It might seem like a lot, but we need to buy large amounts of chilies, buy bottles, and then sell them, all of which require money," Xu Nian'an analyzed. "As long as he has a market to sell the pepper sauce, he can make money."

"Everybody makes their own pepper sauce, so why choose us?" Xu Nianji asked.

Chapter 133: Do You Want to Pay Off the Debt?

"Do we know each other?"

Xu Nian'an could only say that.

Xu Nianhua countered, "Big brother, everyone in our village praises Mom's chili sauce, don't they?"

"That's right."

Xu Nian'an immediately agreed.

Xu Qinghe also agreed that Ji Ying's capabilities were well-known within ten miles and eight villages around.

"So, do we agree to collaborate?" Xu Nianhua's eyes lit up instantly.

Ji Ying quickly said, "I can make it for our own family, but if I have to make it in large quantities, I am afraid I might not do it well."

What if she used all 5000 yuan for the chili sauce and it turned out badly?

Ji Ying felt her heart pounding, constantly feeling that she wasn't up to it.

Xu Nianhua sat down next to Ji Ying, holding her hand, and persuaded, "Mom, you can do it. Your chili sauce really tastes great. Just think, everyone could enjoy your chili sauce in the future. Doesn't that make you happy?"

Ji Ying thought about it and said, "No."

Xu Nianhua: "..."

"As long as you guys like it, it doesn't matter to me whether others like it or not," Ji Ying added.

"Mom, don't you want to pay off our debts?" Xu Nianhua changed his approach.

Ji Ying nodded repeatedly, "Of course, I do."

With debts at home, two kids preparing for college, and Xiaohe expecting a baby, wouldn't they need more nutritious food to nourish her body? Didn't all these require money?

"Then that settles it. Let's just try it out. We don't have to make a lot at the beginning, right?" Xu Nianhua urged enthusiastically, "We don't need to set up a factory right away either. If you can handle making large quantities of chili sauce, we can then consider setting up a factory, how about that?"

Xu Nian'an and Xu Nianji also joined in the persuasion.

If this idea really worked out, it would definitely make money.

Zhou He sat aside, feeling invisible. However, she didn't feel ignored at all; instead, she felt that the atmosphere in the Xu family was very good. Whatever the issue, there was always a discussion, just like a real family should have.

A glint of relief shone in Zhou He's eyes, grateful that she had married into the Xu family.

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The Du Family.

With the chili sauce sent over by the Xu family, Doctor Du even had an extra bowl of rice.

The chili sauce tasted exceptionally good.

Doctor Du, holding a cup of tea, sat outside enjoying the breeze. He always loved drinking tea, no matter if it was winter or summer.

"Grandpa, where is the skilled traditional Chinese medicine doctor you mentioned last time who specializes in treating legs?"

The question from Pei Yicheng almost made Doctor Du drop his tea.

"What did you just say?"

Doctor Du couldn't help but dig at his ears, looking incredulously at Pei Yicheng.

Previously, Pei Yicheng had been utterly passive about this matter, requiring constant reminders and even scoldings from Doctor Du before he would agree to checkups.

And now he was actually taking the initiative to see a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner?

"I said, a doctor who specializes in treating legs." Pei Yicheng pursed his lips. Before, he had thought his leg was hopeless, so Pei Yicheng didn't want his elderly grandfather to keep seeking doctors for his sake.

But now, Pei Yicheng felt he could still make an effort. Who knows, he might just meet a highly skilled doctor?

"Yicheng, have you really thought this through?" Doctor Du's face was flushed with excitement as he said, "If you've decided, that's great. I've asked around about several doctors who specialize in treating legs, and they're supposedly quite skilled, but the places are a bit far."

Doctor Du was so excited that if there had been a phone available, he would have wished to call them directly.

"Also, your dad has contacted a few traditional Chinese medicine practitioners as well. If you're willing, we can go for treatment immediately," Doctor Du said excitedly, his words tumbling out.

As soon as his father was mentioned, Pei Yicheng's face cooled down instantly.

Chapter 134: Not Inferior to Anyone

"Grandpa, it was a traditional Chinese doctor you recommended." Pei Yicheng muttered.

Doctor Du looked at him and knew what he was thinking. He sighed and said, "Yicheng, your dad, he has his difficulties too."

"Grandpa, can my legs really be cured?"

Pei Yicheng changed the subject. He hung his head low, looking at his legs that had lost all sensation. He had seen the x-rays and consulted many doctors, but they all told him that the chances of his legs recovering weren't great.

"They can." Doctor Du spoke with confidence. "Our traditional Chinese medicine is profound and extensive. I believe that as long as you persist, your efforts will pay off, and your legs will surely be cured."

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The next day, Xu Nian'an and Xu Nianhua both came.

Xu Nianji was selling bean sprouts, only ten pounds, but that was still ten pounds which could bring in a few bucks.

He didn't understand the business matters, so he didn't join them.

"Ling Dong, make tea." Pei Yicheng's words had just fallen.

Xu Nian'an quickly shook his head and said, "No tea needed. It's too hot in the summer to drink tea."

Xu Nianhua added from the side, "We're used to drinking plain water."

Ling Dong immediately went to pour some plain water.

Pei Yicheng said, "How have you considered it? I think starting a chili sauce factory will definitely make money."

"We'd like to try it first, and besides, setting up a factory requires a building, and the operation would have to be on a large scale. If, if my mom couldn't make that much, wouldn't it all go to waste?" Xu Nian'an expressed all their concerns.

"Moreover, we're almost out of chili peppers. It's hard to aim for large quantities even if we wanted to," Xu Nian'an voiced his second worry, looking straight at Pei Yicheng and saying, "And also, our families aren't that close. You shouldn't be short of money, right?"

Xu Nian'an's question was forthright, and his gaze was piercing as he looked at Pei Yicheng. Although Pei Yicheng's legs were disabled, Xu Nian'an thought that Pei Yicheng didn't seem to be lacking in funds.

"I'm not short of money, but nobody ever complains about having too much," Pei Yicheng answered openly. He said, "And with my legs like this, I have even more reason to make money. I want to prove myself. Even if I can't walk, I can still do business, still make money, still live better than others, second to none."

Pei Yicheng's voice was somewhat deep, and his words were clear and forceful. The tone carried a proud momentum that made it impossible to associate him with being unable to walk.

"Right, that's the spirit. So what if we can't walk? We still have our brains and hands," responded Xu Nian'an, fully agreeing with Pei Yicheng.

Hearing his words, Xu Nianhua was inexplicably reminded of the time her eldest brother got married and she confronted those aunts with her sharp retorts.

Xu Nianhua's eyes lowered slightly, her gaze faintly casting upon Pei Yicheng's legs. She had suffered burns before and spent a long time in the hospital. Having stayed there for so long, she had picked up a fair bit of knowledge. She knew that legs like Pei Yicheng's needed frequent massages to prevent muscle atrophy and increase the chances of recovery.

Later on, as her business grew, she adopted an orphan who also couldn't walk and needed daily leg massages. She took care of him every day and learned how to massage, even going so far as to study a specific set of massage techniques.

But he was a man, and she had grown up in a village where even if she told him her knowledge, he probably wouldn't believe her, right?

Besides, how was she supposed to explain it to others?

Chapter 135: Cabbage Price

Xu Nian'an and Pei Yicheng had opened up to each other in their conversation, and Xu Nian'an found that Pei Yicheng knew an awful lot.

Even though Xu Nian'an felt that he was well-educated, he still seemed rather shallow in front of Pei Yicheng.

Pei Yicheng, too, was very down-to-earth and amicable, sharing a lot with Xu Nian'an, which made Xu Nian'an feel as if his horizons had suddenly broadened.

After leaving Pei Yicheng's house, Xu Nian'an and Xu Nianhua had already decided to start a factory.

He was right, chili sauce, unlike other products, can't just be sold on a whim; it requires food licenses and the like.

Eventually, Xu Nian'an and Pei Yicheng agreed that Pei Yicheng would invest the money, they would sell the ready-made chili sauce, and for the remaining factory matters, Pei Yicheng wouldn't handle anything, splitting the profits sixty-forty.

Pei Yicheng wanted a fifty-fifty split.

Xu Nian'an wanted a seventy-thirty split.

In the end, both of them compromised, and it became a sixty-forty split.

Pei Yicheng got the larger share, sixty percent, while they took the smaller one, forty percent.

Without Pei Yicheng's money and his sales channels, no matter how good they were at making chili sauce, it wouldn't translate into money.

After getting home, Xu Nian'an told Ji Ying about it, and she, as if in a dream, said, "We're going to set up a factory?"

"Yes," Xu Nianhua said with a beaming smile, always feeling that since their rebirth, their lives had been getting better and better.

"But, what if, what if I can't make that much? What if no one buys it?"

Ji Ying started to worry again.

Xu Nian'an comforted her, "Mom, don't worry. Just do it the way you usually do, and you will definitely make money."

"That's right," Xu Nianhua chimed in, "Not only can we make chili sauce, but we can also make fish chili sauce. We can use dried chili to make crispy fried fish chili sauce, which definitely tastes delicious."

"Exactly, exactly— and the pickled ginger you make, mom, it also tastes great."

Xu Nianhua praised enthusiastically, the things his own mother made were always especially delicious no matter what they were.

After deciding to set up the factory, Xu Nian'an busied himself with the task, while Xu Nianji sold bean sprouts and Xu Qinghe was rushing to make bean sprout buckets these days. The bean sprouts were selling well, and Xu Qinghe was in a hurry. If he finished making the bean sprout buckets sooner, they could earn some extra money.

Ji Ying started to gather chili peppers, at three cents per pound.

It was really the price of cabbage.

When Xu Nianhua heard this price, the corners of his mouth involuntarily twitched. In the future, chili peppers would be expensive, a few bucks per pound, with red chili peppers even more costly, seven or eight yuan per pound.

But now, they were only three cents a pound.

"Nianhua, who else in the village buys chili peppers? Even in the county, there aren't many people buying chili peppers. At this price of three cents, people can earn three cents if they sell it, but if not, they can only keep it for their own consumption," Ji Ying explained.

Nowadays, every household had planted plenty of vegetables; who would spend extra money to buy chili peppers?

Take the county for example; not every household plants chili peppers, but most of them did.

Once Ji Ying explained, Xu Nianhua understood. Indeed, now people only bought meat and vegetables were grown at home.

Even during the off-season when fresh greens aren't available, there were dried vegetables like dried string beans, pickled vegetables, pickled radishes, and dried mustard greens. Along with eggs, as long as they could get through this period, the garden vegetables would come back again.

Pei Yicheng had money, and Xu Nian'an was industrious. After running around with Ling Dong for two days, they found the location for the factory.

Chapter 136: Can Be Sold for Money

It was a factory indeed, a cannery to be precise. It just couldn't produce anymore, and then, the factory had to be sold.

After Pei Yicheng spent the money to buy it, he first cleaned out a workshop, and then he could start making chili sauce.

The glass jars had also been bought back in the city by Ling Dong, a whole truckload of round glass jars.

When Xu Nian'an and Ling Dong brought these glass jars into the workshop, they were also seriously shocked.

How many chilies would it take to fill all these jars?

Xu Nian'an was very careful with his movements, afraid of breaking these glass jars.

"It's fine, these jars are quite durable," Ling Dong said while carrying boxes of jars inside.

"Isn't this a bit too much?"

When Xu Nianji came over to help and saw these jars, she was also deeply shocked.

"Not too much. If we didn't buy them by the truckload, they would give us a higher price. Moreover, transporting these jars from South City, if we transported less, it wouldn't be cost-effective, would it?" Ling Dong explained. He had put in a lot of effort going to buy these jars these past two days.

Previously, he didn't know the prices, but he was good at asking around. He inquired everywhere, bought these jars, and found a vehicle to transport them back to the county.

Ling Dong also handed the bills to Xu Nian'an, saying, "This is the cost of the jars and the freight, all listed here."

"Okay, I've got it," Xu Nian'an replied as he received the bills and carefully put them in his pocket.

Doctor Du was overjoyed knowing that his granddaughter was going to start a factory in partnership with the Xu family. Taking advantage of his free time, he went to handle some related documents for the food factory.

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Shuangzhu Village.

"Ji Ying, you weren't wrong, chilies can be sold for money?" Cai Feng's mother asked excitedly, looking at Ji Ying.

In the village, every household would grow lots of chilies, and whatever they couldn't eat, they'd dry and turn into dried chilies. But, every year, they still couldn't eat all of them.

Now that they could be sold for money, how could Cai Feng's mother not be thrilled?

Three mao per jin, that's three yuan for ten jin!

"Yes, they can be sold for money," Ji Ying explained. "But we only want red chilies, not green ones."

Green chilies wouldn't taste good in chili sauce.

Moreover, red chilies could be turned into dried red chilies when air-dried, but green chilies would turn into white chilies if dried.

White chilies fried taste good, but they don't look appealing when made into chili sauce.

Since she had decided to do it, Ji Ying naturally wanted to do it well.

"Then I have ten jin," Cai Feng's mother immediately said, "Wait for me, I'll go get them."

Cai Feng's mother was very quick, as though fearing that the chilies would no longer be salable if she was slow.

Ji Ying then went to find the Yao and Xu families.

Having the best relationship with these three families, she naturally started with their chilies first.

Soon, the Yao family, Cai family, and Xu family all started bringing chilies to Ji Ying. Bright red chilies that had been picked over, with not even a single bug-eaten one among them.

"Auntie Yao, Auntie Cai, Auntie Xu, I'll do the weighing," Zhou He volunteered to take on the task of weighing the chilies.

Cai Feng's mother inquired, "Ji Ying, why are you suddenly buying so many chilies?"

You should know that the canteens at the units in the county and the factory's canteens, they want to sell vegetables but have no access. The extra vegetables at home can only be dried.

As for things like winter melons, if not eaten in time, they simply go bad.

Chapter 137: I'll Help You

Ji Ying thought for a moment. She couldn't exactly say she was setting up a factory, so she smiled and explained, "It's like this, Dr. Du's grandson buys chili peppers, and he needs a lot of them. That's why I thought of you all."

The matter of setting up the factory was still not settled, and Ji Ying's explanation was somewhat vague.

"Ji Ying, I really can't thank you enough," Cai Feng's mother and the other two expressed their immense gratitude. Selling the chili peppers for three yuan each was a very good price. For people like them who farmed for a living, their entire yearly earnings depended on the little plot of land they cultivated, so opportunities to earn a cash income were not frequent.

Night fell.

Xu Nian'an told me that the bottles had been procured.

Ji Ying felt a wave of pressure.

"Mom, let's continue to buy more chili peppers from the village tomorrow. To prevent any from going bad, we can dry them if necessary. It's just as good," said Xu Nian'an, then he took out the notes and

handed them to Xu Nianhua, "Little sister, you're the most careful one. From now on, you'll keep track of these accounts."

Xu Nian'an thought that this meticulous task should be handled by his detail-oriented little sister, which couldn't be more fitting.

"Okay."

Xu Nianhua didn't refuse. She went back to her room, took a new notebook, and recorded all the notes in it.

Additionally, she kept a separate notebook for the chili peppers Ji Ying had acquired.

"School starts tomorrow, and we still haven't got the factory up and running. If these chili peppers go bad, whatever shall we do?" Ji Ying was worried.

"Mom, I'll help you after I finish selling the bean sprouts," Xu Nianji volunteered.

Zhou He also said, "And me, Mom, I can help too."

"We can dry them as well," Xu Nianhua was more optimistic. A new concern suddenly struck her, "Mom, if we're cutting the chili peppers by hand, can our hands handle it?"

Fresh chili peppers, unlike dry ones, can't simply be processed with a bamboo barrel and a rough knife to smash them into pieces.

Manually cutting fresh chili peppers is fine for personal consumption, but if it was to be done in large quantities, the issue wasn't just the volume, but also whether their hands would be able to withstand it?

"Mom, let's make some dried chili sauce tomorrow, what do you think?" Xu Nianhua hadn't considered this before, but now that she did, she instantly thought of a solution. She had previously realized that chili sauce has a short shelf life since fresh chili peppers, if not processed promptly, would spoil.

Unlike dried chili peppers, which can be kept for a long time without spoiling.

Now, they were simply skipping the first step.

"Sure," Ji Ying didn't see any problem with that. She said, "Won't Pei Yicheng think we're making empty promises?"

"Why would he, as long as it's delicious and can make money, any kind of chili sauce would do," Xu Nianhua didn't see this as a problem.

The next day was the start of the school term.

Ji Ying got up early to make the dried chili sauce. Since there weren't many ingredients available, she added garlic and poured hot oil directly over the chili sauce mixture, stirring continuously as the aroma wafted out.

Xu Nianhua involuntarily took a deep breath and exclaimed, "Mom, it smells so good."

"I'm not sure if it will taste as good."

Once Ji Ying had adjusted the flavor to her satisfaction, she looked at the finished product—it looked the same as usual. However, the added pressure of making more to sell made her more anxious.

"It will definitely taste good."

Xu Nianhua exaggerated a bit. Unfortunately, they would have to wait a while before they could taste it.

Today was registration day. Xu Nianhua and Xu Nian'an, the siblings, were ready early with their belongings and a change of clothes.

They had decided to stay in a rented house, which meant they could save on accommodation fees during

Chapter 138: Naming

When they were leaving, Ji Ying kept reminding them to come home whenever they had the time, to study hard, and not to worry about things at home.

Ji Ying watched her two children with reluctance, unable to let go even though she knew they were going off to school.

"Mom, just focus on picking the peppers, it doesn't matter how many." Xu Nianhua changed the subject and spoke to Ji Ying, then added, "It was good how you responded to Auntie Cai yesterday. Just tell them that Pei Yicheng is setting up a factory, so those gossipy people can see that Pei Yicheng is amazing even if he can't walk."

"You girl, don't mention his legs next time. It's been hard enough for him not being able to walk, don't poke at someone's sore spot," Ji Ying earnestly reminded her.

Xu Nianhua smiled in response. Leaving the village, she ran into the siblings Xu Zhiyuan and Xu Jiaojiao, and her smile instantly faded.

"Hmph."

Xu Jiaojiao had been kept at home these past days, and whenever she did go out, it felt like she was being pointed at and talked about, which made her furious, especially since it was all because of Xu Nianhua!

It was all her fault, if she hadn't shared it, how would her friends have had the chance to mock her in such a strange manner?

And Xu Zhiyuan, who had thought he was sure to be admitted, was shocked to find out he hadn't passed the entrance exam. He had been diligently reviewing his studies at home, hardly going out to meet anyone.

"Little sister, let's walk a bit faster," Xu Nian'an said, carrying the siblings' clothes but still moving briskly.

On the other hand, Xu Nianhua, who was only carrying a newly-made jar of dried pepper sauce, was actually walking slower than Xu Nian'an.

"Big brother, are you showing off your long legs!"

Xu Nianhua couldn't help commenting, grateful that their eldest brother had taken a lot of stuff to the county earlier that morning, or else the two of them wouldn't have been able to carry everything.

"Then you should grow taller," Xu Nian'an said, teasing her as they talked and walked toward the county.

Exhausted, Xu Jiaojiao tried to give her things to Xu Zhiyuan to carry, but he couldn't be bothered with her. He was already carrying her bedding, and now she wanted him to carry her clothes too? He was tired as well!

"Brother," Xu Jiaojiao called out, watching as Xu Zhiyuan walked farther ahead. Resigned to her fate, she slowly followed behind him, carrying her stuff.

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After registering, they got busy cleaning and weeding at the school. By the time they finished their tasks, it was already four in the afternoon.

The siblings hurried to the factory to fetch a large vat of water, intending to clean the bottles thoroughly.

Xu Nianji had finished selling the bean sprouts and had already cleaned quite a few bottles.

"Are you really here?"

Ling Dong had been waiting for them after class, but when they didn't show up, Pei Yicheng had suggested they might be at the factory, so he had come to the factory with Pei Yicheng.

Seeing the siblings already at work, Ling Dong couldn't help saying, "You work too hard."

Xu Nianji replied with a smile, "How can we not work diligently? We're paying rent for the house. If we can make and sell the pepper sauce earlier, we can earn money sooner."

"Ling Dong," Pei Yicheng turned to Ling Dong.

Ling Dong instantly understood and settled Pei Yicheng in a comfortable spot before joining the others to help.

Pei Yicheng sat to the side, his legs unable to help with washing the bottles. He said, "Today, when grandpa went to apply for the factory license, we overlooked a problem. What is our factory called? Also, what should we name our pepper sauce?"

"We should indeed pick a name," Xu Nianji nodded, washing bottles as she spoke. "I'm not educated enough to come up with anything. You all come up with something."

Chapter 139: Good Mother Hot Sauce

"Shunxin Food?" Xu Nian'an said subconsciously, "After eating Shunxin Food products, your heart feels settled."

"Lucky Food?"

Xu Nian'an thought such a name was quite good.

Pei Yicheng said, "Not bad, but it's not memorable enough."

Shunxin, Lucky, these are all good words, but the better the name, the more people use it, and it's harder to remember.

Not to mention anything else, just the name Shunxin, he had already seen several.

Xu Nianhua had absolutely no talent for naming.

Xu Nian'an rattled off several more names. Before anyone else could reject them, Xu Nian'an rejected them himself. Those names were too common, so common that they could not be more ordinary.

"Mama Xu's Chili Sauce?" Pei Yicheng suddenly suggested.

"No way."

Xu Nianhua reflexively denied it, saying, "If we say Mama Xu, doesn't that imply that my family also has a share in this factory?"

For the factory business, Xu Nianhua still did not want others to know. Keeping a low profile and quietly making a fortune was most important.

At least, not now.

"How about 'Good Mama Food'? Products made by a good mama are reassuring." Xu Nianhua felt more and more pleased with this name.

Pei Yicheng agreed.

Xu Nian'an and Xu Nianji, the brothers, exchanged looks and also thought the name was good.

Thus, the name for the food factory was settled.

The Good Mama brand chili sauce, destined for countless sales in the future, was born.

"Brother Pei, how is this dried chili sauce made by my mom?"

Xu Nianhua specifically asked Pei Yicheng about this and also explained the methods for making both the wet and dry chili sauces. The wet chili sauce, if chopped by hand, would cost a lot, as each person could only chop so much chili in a day.

Plus, it was too hard on the hands.

But the dried chili was much better: it was convenient to make, and dried chili was also easy to store and didn't spoil easily.

"Tastes good." Pei Yicheng thought back to what she had mentioned before, his mouth twitching slightly. "Brother Pei, you're not lying to me, are you?" Xu Nianhua, suspicious by the half-smile on his face, questioned, "Could it be that my mom botched it?"

"I'm not lying to you." Pei Yicheng kept a straight face and seriously said, "If you don't believe me, you can ask Ling Dong and your grandfather."

"Especially tasty." Ling Dong immediately chimed in. He grinned and said, "I had an extra bowl of rice at lunch. That chili sauce was very fragrant."

Seeing how much Ling Dong liked it, Xu Nianhua was relieved, knowing he wasn't lying.

"I'm only responsible for investing money and selling the chili sauce; the rest is up to you guys." Pei Yicheng, not wanting her to feel burdened, explained, "I don't really understand how to do this. Whatever you decide is fine."

"Alright then, we'll make the decisions ourselves."

Xu Nianhua was thrilled and thought she must grow Good Mama's chili sauce into something big and strong, so that Pei Yicheng, the major investor, could also make a profit.

"Right, at the end of this month, I'll put together all the income and expense details into an account book for you." Xu Nianhua figured doing this monthly and keeping detailed daily records would make things much easier.

"Okay." Pei Yicheng thought for a moment and added, "You still have to attend school. If it gets busy, giving it to me at the year's end is fine too."

"I prefer to finish today's tasks today; I want to update you about the factory's situation every day." Xu Nianhua thought about waiting until the end of the year to take inventory and felt overwhelmed. If there were fewer items it might be manageable, but with a larger quantity, tallying everything at once would be a huge effort.

Chapter 140: Why Don't You Go Ask?

Every day he talked about the factory's affairs, wasn't that a chance to see her every day?

Pei Yicheng's eyes brightened, then he said, "Still, let's make it once a month. You also need to attend school. I've heard that you are doing very well academically; your studies are important too."

She was in her senior year and had repeated a year. The pressure must have been enormous.

...

Shuangzhu Village.

Today, Ji Ying still had to gather chili peppers, both wet and dry ones. The Yao Family, Cai Family, and Xu Family were also the first to know about it.

Wet chilis were three Chinese cents per 10 grams, but dry chili peppers were two yuan per kilogram.

Wet chili peppers could be sold immediately after being picked, but dry chili peppers had to be sun-dried. Moreover, dry chilis weren't weighed with a scale, there was a lot in one kilogram.

Generally speaking, five or six kilograms of wet chili peppers could be dried into one kilogram. Hence, there was a significant price difference.

The Yao Family, Cai Family, and Xu Family informed their close friends or relatives. Thus, those who got the news rushed to Ji Ying's house, fearing they might be too late and she would no longer want the chili peppers.

Ji Ying and her mother-in-law Zhou He hadn't stopped the whole time.

Shuangzhu Village wasn't very large, but it wasn't small either.

However, when people repeatedly saw others carrying chili peppers in one direction, they felt something was off.

The festivals had just passed, and other than working in the vegetable gardens, there wasn't much else to do, so everyone, driven by curiosity, followed the crowd to Ji Ying's house.

Hearing that Ji Ying's house was collecting chili peppers for someone else, everyone almost wished they had wings to fly back home.

"Sister Cai, what is Ji Ying collecting so many chili peppers for?" A woman surnamed Liu asked Cai Feng's mother.

"Collecting for someone else. It's the same person from the last time Nianji got married—Doctor Du's grandson, the one who came to the village in a car," Cai Feng's mother learned from Cai Xiu that Liu's family and two other families were mocking Pei Yicheng behind his back.

Cai Feng's mother intentionally said, "Speaking of which, Doctor Du's grandson, although he has a leg issue, is incredibly capable in business. He not only wants to collect chili peppers, but he is also planning to start a factory. Who knows if he will need people to work for him in the future."

As soon as Aunt Liu heard this, she immediately panicked. If she had known earlier, she wouldn't have spoken carelessly about Doctor Du's grandson last time.

Now what if Ji Ying didn't want their chili peppers?

Her family also had plenty of chili peppers, and with school starting, they had already spent money. It would be great if they could earn some money by selling chili peppers.

Every household in their village grew a lot of chili peppers, kept mostly for their own consumption. If they could make money by selling them, of course, that was preferable; after all, they had plenty of dried chili peppers at home, and if not, eating less was always an option.

"Sister Cai, I've always said, he's a talented man who can afford a car, he must be no ordinary person." Aunt Liu grabbed Cai Feng's mother and praised profusely, while subtly inquiring if Ji Ying still wanted chili peppers.

Cai Feng's mother thought, Ji Ying had said whatever amount of chili peppers there was, she would collect them, but Aunt Liu didn't know that, which is why she was so anxious.

Aunt Liu and a few others had often gossiped about others in the village. Cai Feng's mother, clutching her basket and adjusting her hair, said, "I really don't know about that, why don't you go and ask?"

These words made Aunt Liu even more anxious.

After greeting Cai Feng's mother, Aunt Liu hurried off to Ji Ying's house.

Meanwhile, Liu Sanmei and Zhao Juxiang, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, had barely finished tidying the courtyard and the vegetable garden, and Liu Sanmei was so tired she couldn't straighten her back.

"Juxiang, you are really too slow," Liu Sanmei, massaging her sore back and seeing Zhao Juxiang hadn't even finished a single plot, suddenly glowered.