

## Regaining 251

### Chapter 251: You Are Not Suitable

Previously at the supply and marketing cooperative, he hadn't handled things well, and Xu Zhihao could only feel a sense of frustration as his ambition had no way to unfold. Now with the cannery, he thought, he would definitely make a lot of money and make his parents proud of him.

He heard that Ji Ying was making some sort of chili sauce at the food factory, but she just worked there and already acted so high and mighty. Wait until he got into the cannery, then he would be the one in charge!

By then, wouldn't the people in the village flock to ingratiate themselves with him?

"Really?" Zhao Juxiang's interest was piqued at these words.

"Mom, think about it, once I'm in charge at the cannery, would we need to worry about uncle's family running a furniture factory or getting into a food factory? Your son will be the manager, and whoever wants to get into the cannery will need my approval and nod to proceed."

Xu Zhihao said with a proud expression on his face.

As Zhao Juxiang became more and more tempted, she cast a sidelong glance at Xu Zhihao and pressed, "Did you already have this all figured out?"

"Uh..." Xu Zhihao looked guilty and couldn't bear to meet Zhao Juxiang's eyes, pleading softly, "Mom, do you want to be left behind by uncle's family?"

A mother knows her child best, but conversely, Xu Zhihao also clearly understood what his mother cared about. Xu Zhihao said, "This child will carry the Shen surname, but he is also my son. And if we have another son, won't he bear the Xu surname? When all's said and done, our family still has the advantage."

"Hmph."

Zhao Juxiang snorted softly, her eyes wheeling as she began to consider how to convince the Xu family.

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The Xu family was in upheaval over the matter of the child's surname.

Unaware of the things Xu Zhihao had stirred up, Xu Nianhua was happily bringing afternoon tea to the workers building the house.

Watching the once barren land bustle with the construction of houses and walls, Xu Nianhua was exceptionally moved. This furniture factory, established by her father, would surely flourish even more in the future.

"Dad, I made some dumplings. Have them while they're hot." Xu Nianhua offered the dumplings she held and took out a towel to wipe her father's sweat.

"Don't worry about it, Nianhua. School starts the day after tomorrow. Focus more on your studies, and your hands are freezing, so don't do these things anymore."

Despite the hard work, Xu Qinghe felt happiness in his heart, blessed with such a dutiful and understanding daughter. He felt his life was truly worthwhile.

"Dad, that's nothing for your daughter."

Xu Nianhua playfully said, "My hands are fine. I applied clam oil, and they'll heal in a few days. It doesn't hurt at all."

"Good." Xu Qinghe enjoyed the dumplings one after another. The pork and cabbage filling was especially tasty, and after eating one, he belatedly asked, "Have you eaten?"

"I have."

The affectionate scene between Xu Nianhua and her father Xu Qinghe was observed by many, who looked on with envy. Each of Xu Qinghe's children was successful in their own right.

Night.

"Xiaofeng, do you like Nianhua?" Zhang Meixiang called Cai Feng over specifically to ask.

Cai Feng's face flushed at once, and he stammered for a long time without managing to articulate a clear explanation.

Zhang Meixiang's heart sank, and she immediately said, "Xiaofeng, put that thought to rest. You and she are not suitable for each other."

"Why?" Cai Feng's expression changed instantly.

Zhang Meixiang sighed and said, "Nianhua's grades are good. Last year was an accident that she didn't get into university. This year, I've heard she scored first in the entire grade."

Cai Feng hung his head, immediately understanding his mother's meaning. She had a future with limitless opportunities as a university student, but what about him?

Chapter 252: Hush Money

"Xiaofeng, I also like Nianhua very much. If Nianhua could become my daughter-in-law, I would be happy, but you two really aren't suitable," Zhang Meixiang advised earnestly, "If the two of you were in love, I'd risk even my old face to help you marry her, but..."

Zhang Meixiang paused, and though she left her sentence unfinished, Cai Feng knew very well what she meant.

Indeed, he also knew all too well that he and Xu Nianhua could never be a couple. Not to mention the gap in education, the difference in their appearances made it clear. Standing before Xu Nianhua and looking at her smiling face, he always felt a sense of inferiority.

"How about the match I arranged for you?" Zhang Meixiang suggested tentatively, looking at Cai Feng with some concern that he might not accept.

"No need, Mom, I'm only twenty years old, I'm not in a hurry to get married." Cai Feng rejected the idea without a second thought, facing his mother's worried expression, he said, "I know what you're thinking, and from now on, I will treat Nianhua as a sister."

"Engagement and marriage take two years," Zhang Meixiang said, seeing that he had really thought it through but still a bit worried.

"Mom, I want to earn money first, replace our house with a new one, and then think about getting married," Cai Feng was really not in the mood to marry so soon.

...

"Is this from Cheng?" Xu Nianhua held the transparent glass bottle, not knowing where he had found such a container, round and short, filled with a milky white cream. Upon opening the lid, a faint scent of herbs was detectable.

"Yes," Xu Nian'an nodded, explaining, "It's our master's recipe. Cheng made it and said it's for you to apply on your hands."

"Did you thank Grandfather Du?" Xu Nianhua asked as she applied it to her hands, her eyes sidelooking. This unknown cream, which smelled nice and moisturized her hands well, reminded her of a hand cream from the future.

"Actually, I've been applying clam oil for a few days, and it's almost healed," Xu Nianhua said, her hands just a bit red but not really affecting anything.

"Apply this, it's said to heal faster, and by winter, if you use it daily, you won't get frostbite again," Xu Nian'an said while watching her clumsily apply the cream. He took the bottle from her, selected some cream, and began rubbing it on her hands, adding, "Look at your hands, they look as if someone has abused them. Little sister, next year, you must take good care of them to prevent frostbite."

"Thank you, Second Brother."

Xu Nianhua smiled, her eyes warmly watching him earnestly applying the cream, suddenly, her eyes became a bit teary, remembering her brother who had accidents early in life, she truly felt how good the present days were.

"What, Second Brother helps you apply cream and you're moved to tears?" Xu Nian'an teased as he looked at her teary eyes, and then playfully tapped her forehead, saying anxiously, "You better not cry, if Mom sees, she'll think I bullied you and beat me up again."

"Pfft~"

Xu Nianhua, who had just been moved, was instantly amused by his antics, touching the forehead he had tapped, she pursed her lips and said, "Who's crying their eyes out? It was clearly Second Brother who hit me, and now you want me not to tell Mom. You need to give me hush money!"

Xu Nianhua stretched out her hand towards him, her face all smiles.

Xu Nian'an: "..."

Chapter 253: Where did you buy it?

On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, right after the Lantern Festival, it was time to start school again. They were in their final year of high school and had just a few months left before the college entrance examination, especially Xu Nianhua's class, which consisted of repeaters. They were even more anxious and determined to bury their heads in their studies and perform well enough to get into college!

Getting into college would be a major turning point in their lives.

"Nianhua, thank you for teaching us your study methods. Our foreign language skills have improved a lot!" Zheng Jin said excitedly. In fact, she had wanted to thank Xu Nianhua right after last year's exams, but unfortunately, once the exams were over, her parents were so happy that they took her to her grandmother's house in South City.

It wasn't just the foreign language scores that improved, but all their subjects had shown significant enhancement thanks to the study methods taught by Xu Nianhua.

"Exactly, fellow student Nianhua, whether we get into college or not, we all thank you."

Chen Hu said loudly, his voice echoed loudly by his classmates. For their repeater class, Xu Nianhua truly had helped boost their scores considerably.

"Then let's push harder, strive harder, and aim to get all forty-two of us into college!" Xu Nianhua's voice was strong and resolute as she looked at each familiar face before her. She didn't know how many of the forty-two students could make it, but with half a year left, if they could all give it their best shot, there surely was a chance.

"Yes!"

"We all need to get into college."

The students, one after another, excitedly expressed their opinions.

It was only the first day of school, but everyone was enthusiastically engaged, wasting no time in diving into their studies.

Night.

"Big brother, next time ask Pei Yicheng where he bought this cream; it's really very effective."

After washing her face, Xu Nianhua applied the white cream from the glass jar to her hands, enjoying the faint herbal fragrance. Most importantly, it was particularly nourishing. The redness and swelling on her hands were nowhere to be seen, and her skin had become white and delicate again, feeling even better than before.

"I don't know, maybe I'll ask him next time?" Xu Nian'an replied casually as he soaked his feet in hot water, with the room lit by a lamp which, though not very bright, was still much brighter than candles.

He pondered, "Little sister, you think, I wonder how Yicheng and the others are doing in Xi Province?"

"I'm sure they can cure it," Xu Nianhua said with conviction.

"Speaking of which, we didn't even see them off."

Xu Nianhua added, as they had planned to depart on the sixteenth of the first lunar month, but they had already set off for Xi Province early on the fifteenth without notice.

Doctor Du, Pei Yicheng, Ling Dong, and Cheng Hao were all no longer at home.

"Perhaps they didn't want us to send them off. They must have quietly gone to Xi Province and will come back joyfully," Xu Nian'an earnestly said, "I really hope Yicheng's leg can be cured."

"It definitely can be cured," Xu Nianhua asserted again, lifting her head to look at the light bulb and changing the subject, "Big brother, wouldn't it be nice if our village also had electricity?"

There was no electricity at home, so when night fell, they could only light a kerosene lamp, which not only smelled bad but also provided poor light.

Xu Nianhua tried to recall which year their home got electricity.

"Maybe next year," Xu Nian'an said nonchalantly, "Little sister, you are now the celebrity at school. Everyone loves your teaching methods, and you generously share every test paper with everyone."

Chapter 254: My Grandson's Leg...

On this point, Xu Nian'an felt inferior.

When he first got Pei Yicheng's materials, it never crossed his mind that they could be printed and turned into papers to share with his classmates.

"Second brother, it doesn't matter whether I'm popular or not, I'm quite happy to be able to help everyone," Xu Nianhua said, pursing her lips. The steaming water soaked her feet and the warmth seemed to travel all the way up her body, making her feel all warm and fuzzy. She grinned, showing her even white teeth, and said, "If everyone can get into college, then all the years we've spent studying won't have been in vain."

"Yes, it would be great if everyone could pass,"

Xu Nian'an muttered to himself. For some, not getting into college could affect their whole life.

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In Shuangzhu Village, the Qingsong Furniture Factory was being built with great enthusiasm. The walls, taller than a person and brand new, have become a beautiful sight in the village.

Inside the walls, the rooms were spacious with no ceiling, allowing one to look up and see the roof tiles directly.

The house was not yet fully constructed, but inside, the room was bright and airy, looking quite impressive.

Every time the villagers came to look, they had nothing but praises to offer.

There were also skeptics—spending money on building houses and walls, they said, if the furniture remained unsold, wouldn't that be a loss?

Xu Qinghe and his apprentice Xu Song paid no attention to these doubts from outside. They were focused solely on making the factory building even better—from the area for storing wood to the place for processing it, to the part where the wood was being cut and the finished products were stored. Designing it well now would save trouble later.

Xu Nianhua and Xu Nian'an buried themselves in their studies, gearing up for the final sprint before their college entrance exams.

Ji Ying and Zhou He worked at the factory every day. Zhou He, who was pregnant, did lighter tasks like sticking labels on jars of finished chili sauce, which wasn't tiring.

The Chili Sauce Factory made money last year, and during the New Year, it got a fresh coat of paint and a smooth, even floor, inspiring those who worked there to put in even more effort. As long as they worked hard at the Chili Sauce Factory, they could earn more than the men each month. Life had indeed become something to look forward to.

Xu Nianji was busy selling bean sprouts at the stall every day. After selling the bean sprouts, she would collect more and also sell some chili sauce to the county, bustling about every day.

Busy days were fulfilling and filled with hope.

Pei Yicheng, whose situation had been a concern for everyone, also started his treatment in Xi Province.

On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, they rushed to Xi Province and met the traditional Chinese medicine doctor, Hu. With his white hair, face marked by the years, and bright eyes, Dr. Hu emanated the aura of a transcendent being.

Perhaps he really had the skill to heal his legs.

With hope in his heart, Pei Yicheng cooperated with Dr. Hu's treatments.

Dr. Hu's method of treatment was somewhat different from others. After finishing, he sat down to write out a prescription.

"Dr. Hu, my grandson's leg..." Du Chang, who was only more than a decade younger than Dr. Hu, watched him anxiously as he wrote the prescription, feeling an immense sense of hope welling up inside him.

Pei Yicheng seemed calm on the surface, but inside, he was experiencing a storm of emotions!

He had seen many doctors before, and all said it was too late, or that there was no cure, but Dr. Hu was different.

Dr. Hu did not speak. His steel pen kept writing the prescription, completely unaffected by their urgent emotions.

Chapter 255: How to Massage

In the consultation room, only the sound of the Chinese medicine doctor Hu writing briskly with his pen could be heard as he said, "Send someone to get the medicine."

After the prescription was taken away, Doctor Hu spoke up, "First, follow my treatment, taking medicine orally and applying it externally. If your leg regains sensation, it can be cured." Otherwise, it cannot be cured.

"Thank you, Doctor Hu."

Du Chang was visibly excited, his hands trembling as he placed them on Pei Yicheng's shoulder, so happy he didn't know what to say. Being a doctor himself, Du Chang was acutely aware that Doctor Hu must have a certain level of confidence to prescribe a treatment, unlike the places they had visited before where they didn't even get the chance to try any treatment.

"This is fantastic!"

Cheng Hao shouted excitedly, dancing with joy. The heavy weight that had been pressing on his heart for over a year was finally lifted!

"Yicheng, I told you, your leg would heal."

Ling Dong's eyes reddened with excitement. He had spent the longest time by Pei Yicheng's side. Pei Yicheng was such a proud person; Ling Dong had seen all his suffering, his pain, his frustration, and he felt the injustice even more keenly than Yicheng did.

Yicheng had done a good deed, saving someone, so why couldn't his leg heal?

Ling Dong had cursed the heavens for being unfair countless times, but now, he believed that the heavens would not let down a good person!

Compared to their excitement, the man himself, Pei Yicheng, was the calmest of them all. Ever since he harbored a never-give-up mindset, he had thought that his leg would definitely heal, even after encountering setbacks, his heart remained filled with hope.

Du Chang was also a doctor, and coincidentally, there were no patients at the moment. When Pei Yicheng and the others went to apply the medicine, Du Chang began discussing Pei Yicheng's leg with Doctor Hu.

Du Chang and Doctor Hu hit it off immediately, each with their own strengths in medicine, and in just half a day, Du Chang and Doctor Hu were already addressing each other as brothers.

"Doctor Hu, I've truly learned a lot today."

From the bottom of his heart, Du Chang expressed his gratitude. He felt that this trip was worthwhile, as they might heal Yicheng and he got to meet Doctor Hu.

"Brother Du, don't be modest. If it weren't for the massages you've given on your grandson's leg muscles from the beginning, preventing atrophy, I would have been at a loss," Doctor Hu said with a smile, curiosity sparkling in his eyes. He asked, "His leg maintenance is even better than that of a normal person. Do you have a unique massage technique?"

"I don't have any special techniques; at first, it was just the simplest method. Later on, I heard about a set of massage techniques that seemed quite effective, so I had someone perform it on Yicheng," Du Chang explained every word in great detail, sharing both of his massage methods.

The first set was what he had learned himself; the second set was found in a book by Xu Nianhua.

Doctor Hu's eyes gleamed with excitement. He slapped his thigh and said, "The second set of massage techniques is exceptionally skilled; it stimulated the acupoints in his leg. I knew it! How his leg not only did not atrophy but was actually better maintained than that of an average person."

"Speaking of which, he's lucky to have you, a grandfather proficient in medical arts, who has been massaging his leg from the beginning, occasionally applying acupuncture, and then following up with that set of massage techniques," Doctor Hu said, smiling until his eyes were mere slits. "Your grandson is truly blessed."

If he hadn't employed the second set of massage techniques, it would have taken at least twice as long for his leg to heal.

Chapter 256: The Girl is a Little Lucky Star

"Yicheng, I'm telling you, the girl is lucky, she's a little fortune star, she's our benefactor!"

Excitement shone on Du Chang's face. After a bumpy journey to Xi Province, the worries that had burdened his heart were finally set to rest.

Pei Yicheng looked at Du Chang with a baffled expression, not understanding what Du Chang was talking about.

"Let me tell you."

Du Chang happily recounted his conversation with the traditional doctor today. In short, Pei Yicheng's recovery was promising, and the massage methods from the books Xu Nianhua had referenced were also very crucial.

"Brother Cheng, it looks like we really need to thank little sister Xu," Ling Dong said. Initially, he thought that Du Chang was making wild guesses, but now he felt that Du Chang might not have been so off the mark.

In terms of appearance, Xu Nianhua might not dress like the wealthy ladies in Ningbei, but her face was truly beautiful. She also carried a tranquil quality that made her appear even more like a lady than those wealthy ladies themselves.

When it came to academic prowess, she was not lacking either. She not only scored top marks in her school but also used her knowledge to teach her classmates. It was said that many of her classmates had improved greatly thanks to Xu Nianhua.

In terms of character, she was grateful and mindful. Her interactions with the Du Family and Brother Cheng were always proper and measured. Even though she knew the two families were worlds apart in status, she was never sycophantic or obsequious, instead practicing courtesy and reciprocity.

The gifts Xu Nianhua brought every time were homemade yet exquisite items.

"Brother Cheng, our future sister-in-law is impressive!" Cheng Hao said, thumbs up in praise, for his leg now had hope of healing. Everyone was in high spirits, and at dinner in the hotel restaurant that night, they ordered a table filled with dishes.

Gaoliang County.

Xu Nianhua, whom they called a fortune star, was still buried in her papers.

Although her grades were the best at County No. 1 High, Xu Nianhua felt she could still go further, as there were questions she could have scored even higher points on.

"Second brother, why can't I solve this problem?"

After battling with the problem for half an hour, Xu Nianhua felt that her approach was wrong, but like a headless fly, she couldn't find a way out.

Xu Nian'an glanced at the problem. After a long moment, staring at Xu Nianhua's nearly furrowed face, he said, "Little sister, if you applied your smartness in foreign languages to other subjects, that would be even better."

"..."

Xu Nianhua pursed her lips in displeasure. Was her second brother implying that she was dumb?

"Second brother, then let's compete and see who scores higher in this month's exam," Xu Nianhua challenged, refusing to be outdone. She might be slightly weaker in mathematics, but she was stronger in other subjects than her brother!

Xu Nian'an: "..."

The little sister couldn't be provoked.

"You're overthinking this problem," Xu Nian'an resignedly explained, and sure enough, as soon as he started speaking, Xu Nianhua figured out how to solve it.

Under the light, Xu Nian'an and Xu Nianhua maintained the same posture, heads down working on papers, occasionally coming together to discuss a question.

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For half a month, Pei Yicheng applied a thick, mud-like black poultice to his leg every day, which emitted a pungent odor. Each time the medicine was changed, the smell lingered in the room.

"Grandpa."

Pei Yicheng stared intently at his leg.

"What's wrong, does it hurt somewhere?" Du Chang stopped unwrapping the medicine and looked at Pei Yicheng's face, asking with concern.

## Chapter 257: Bringing Good News

"My leg, it hurts."

Pei Yicheng's words quivered slightly.

Over the past half month, he had harbored endless hope, but his leg had remained numb, putting him through the agony of waiting.

Today was the first time since the injury that his leg had felt pain.

At that moment, Du Chang's eyes lit up, and he turned to find Doctor Hu.

By then, Du Chang had completely forgotten that his own old limbs couldn't possibly outrun Ling Dong.

By the time he went out, Ling Dong had already brought Doctor Hu over.

"Good, good, good."

After examining Pei Yicheng's leg, Doctor Hu said the word 'good' three times in a row!

Doctor Hu spoke with a beaming smile, "Pain is good. If there's no sensation, your leg would have been untreatable. Now let's change this ointment, and we'll switch to a different herbal medicine to apply for half a month. Coupled with daily acupuncture, your leg will be treatable."

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"Little sister, what do you think, why haven't Cheng and the others come back yet?"

It was another weekend, and Xu Nian'an had come up empty once again.

"It's a good thing they haven't come back," Xu Nianhua lifted her smile, her dark eyes curving as she said, "Think about it, the previous times they went to South City for treatment, didn't they come back very quickly? But what happened?"

The treatment was not successful.

This time, Pei Yicheng and co. had gone to Xi Province, and it had already been more than half a month, yet they had still not returned. This indicated that treatment was underway.

For all they knew, by the time they saw Pei Yicheng again, his leg might just be healed.

"Right, it is good news!"

Xu Nian'an's realization came belatedly as he said excitedly, "Cheng will definitely be able to stand up."

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Ji Ying stepped forward, grasping Cheng Hao to inquire, "Xiaohao, how is Yicheng's leg doing now?"

"Cheng Hao, has Cheng's leg already gotten better?" Xu Nian'an added.

Xu Nianhua stood quietly on the side, and although she didn't speak, she was also very concerned about the matter.

"Auntie Xu, everyone, rest assured, Cheng's leg is treatable," Cheng Hao said.

With these words from Cheng Hao, the factory erupted in a wave of warm and excited chatter.

Cheng Hao added, "I came back early to bring the good news and to deliver the goods that had piled up over the past half month. Grandfather Du will be coming back in a few days. As for Cheng, he might need to continue treatment in Xi Province."

"Traveling back from Xi Province takes a whole day, and the bumps along the road, Cheng's leg, which hasn't fully recovered, would not withstand it."

As Cheng Hao spoke, his grin almost stretched ear to ear.

"Oh, by the way, Nianhua girl, this is something Yining sent for you. We all weren't home, so I only just went to get it." Cheng Hao handed over the gift he brought, a big and full package.

Originally Yining wanted to send it directly to Xu Nianhua, but then she thought it would be better to let her brother and Xu Nianhua interact more, so she sent the gift to Pei Yicheng instead.

While Pei Yicheng was getting treatment in Xi Province, the gift was also entrusted to Cheng Hao to deliver to Xu Nianhua.

"Thank you, thank you, Yining."

Xu Nianhua received the gift, not surprised, as Yining had mentioned before she would send her a gift. However, there seemed to be an abundance of items.

"Open it up quickly and see what it is," Cheng Hao craned his neck, extremely curious. Last time when Yining came by, he didn't know how he had offended her, and he wondered whether she had sent him a gift too; after all, besides Xu Nianhua's family, Cheng and Grandfather Du could be excluded, even Ling Dong had received a gift. It wouldn't make sense if he hadn't gotten one.

#### Chapter 258: Pei Yining's Gift

"This... perhaps isn't so good," said Xu Nianhua, eyeing the large package with hesitation. Beside her, Cheng Hao mustered his courage and suggested, "It's a gift from Little Yining. It wouldn't be too much just to have a look, right?"

"Who knows, there might be something for me as well."

Cheng Hao clung to a great hope. There was a Cheng Ge men's watch, Old Du's favorite Puerh tea, even Ling Dong received a fountain pen. Surely, he would have a gift too, wouldn't he?

It must be that Little Yining had slipped it into the Xu family's bag of gifts.

"Really?"

Xu Nianhua looked at him, her eyes flickering, as she placed the large package on the table. As for Cheng Hao's curiosity, she felt sure that Yining's gift wouldn't include anything for him.

Once they opened the gifts, they saw various packages. She spotted the letter with Yining's delicate handwriting. It started with greetings to Xu Nianhua, mentioning how much she enjoyed her home, and how much she liked playing with her.

Several pages in, the letter expressed Yining's joy, and she briefly introduced what was happening at her home. Only at the end did she talk about her gifts.

The letter said: Nianhua, since Uncle Xu loves tea, I sent him Puerh tea, hoping Uncle Xu will like it.

I sent Aunt Xu some facial cream to help her stay young and beautiful.

The thick notebook is for your second brother. I saw he has quite a collection and really likes to take notes.

The colorful toys are for your older brother and sister-in-law's unborn child. I thought these toys aren't available in our county, and I'll bring more for you to play with next summer!

Also, that pink watch is for you, and you are not allowed to refuse!!!

At the end of the letter, Yining emphasized that she would visit Xu Nianhua during summer vacation and reminded her of their promise to get into Beining University together, repeatedly expressing her determination to study hard.

"Yining is really thoughtful."

Holding the letter, Xu Nianhua felt the few thin sheets of paper were as heavy as gold, filled with the deep affection of friendship.

After she had distributed everything, a belated realization dawned on Cheng Hao: There really was no gift for him.

"Which gift is mine?" Cheng Hao recounted the gifts: there was something for Uncle Xu, Aunt Xu, the unborn child of the eldest Xu brother and his wife, the second Xu brother, and for Xu Nianhua, but where was his?

"There's nothing for you," Xu Nianhua glanced at him and added, "If you want a gift, your girlfriend will give you one."

"How can a gift from my girlfriend be the same as one from Little Yining?" Cheng Hao retorted almost instinctively.

"How are they different?" Xu Nianhua probed.

"It's just..."

Cheng Hao stammered for quite some time but couldn't explain. He said, "Forget it, I'll call her next time. I'm off to move some goods in the warehouse."

Watching Cheng Hao's retreating figure, Xu Nianhua couldn't help but shake her head.

"Nianhua, isn't this too much?" Ji Ying eyed the gifts and noted that Yining had sent something for nearly every member of the family. The gifts weren't just chosen at random, but were all very thoughtful.

"Mom, Yining treats us well, so we'll treat her well when the time comes," Xu Nianhua said, looking at the gifts. Aside from the watch on her wrist which was somewhat expensive, the rest were quite normal.

Xu Nianhua was already thinking of what gift to give in return.

"That's true, but look at this watch," Ji Ying gazed at the ladies' watch on her hand. The pink watch was much nicer than those sold at the supply and marketing cooperative.

The watches from the cooperative, costing several dozens each, were quite ugly. In contrast, the one sent by Yining looked incredibly valuable.

Chapter 259: I Will Always Be Mom's Daughter

"The price mustn't be cheap," Xu Nianhua nodded in agreement, and with her discerning eye, she reckoned this watch must be over a hundred yuan.

An image of Pei Yining's delicate and pretty doll-like face surfaced in Xu Nianhua's mind, and she couldn't help but smile knowingly. Once upon a time, she kept her distance from everyone due to a disfigured face. At work, she was meticulous and serious. There were those who respected her, feared her, disliked her, but none treated her as a friend the way Pei Yining did.

"Mom, I remember we still have several rabbits at home, right? Let's keep one and I'll make a dried rabbit. Plus, we'll buy some beef to make beef jerky," Xu Nianhua said as she recalled Pei Yining's high praise for the Xu Family's meals, and she couldn't help but chuckle. Since Yining enjoyed it so much, she would make some extra.

"Sure," Ji Ying agreed readily, then asked, "But, these foods, they aren't expensive. Isn't the return gift a bit too light?"

Ji Ying wasn't foolish; it's just that she had been deferential in the Xu Family, always giving way to her in-laws. Moreover, Xu Qinghe often told her that if it weren't for Xu Zhong and Liu Sanmei, he feared he might not have grown up. Although Liu Sanmei was partial, she at least made sure he was well-fed and clothed, growing up safely.

In social interactions, Ji Ying always conducted herself impeccably. Even when she didn't have much in the past, she managed to take care of everything perfectly.

"So, my dear mother, what do you think we should give in return?" Xu Nianhua asked playfully, looping her arm through Ji Ying's, leaning against her cosily. Her voice was naturally gentle and sweet, and when she deliberately acted coquettish, it made one wish to offer up the best of the world to her.

Ji Ying looked at her actions and pretended to be displeased, "You're so grown up, yet you have no shame, still cooing at me."

"I will always be Mom's daughter, of course I have to act spoiled with Mom," Nianhua nestled against her shoulder, thinking to herself: she, Xu Nianhua, was Ji Ying's daughter, and she didn't care about blood relations, recognizing only Ji Ying as her mother.

Ji Ying glanced sideways at her coquettish daughter. From this angle, she could see her smooth forehead and the corners of her upturned lips. She lifted her hand to touch Nianhua's black hair, and thinking of her daughter's origins, she couldn't help but worry. What if, just what if her biological parents came looking for her?

Over the years, Ji Ying watched Xu Nianhua grow more and more graceful and sensible. The more she saw, the more afraid she became, fearful that Nianhua's biological parents might suddenly appear.

"Mom, have you decided? What should we give in return?" Xu Nianhua had waited quite a while without hearing a response from Ji Ying, thinking that Ji Ying was still pondering. She looked up and suggested, "How about buying a piece of jade or some jewelry?"

Almost every woman held an indescribable fondness for gold, silver, and jewelry, or jade, and in later generations, diamonds were even more coveted.

Curing a hundred ailments was an exaggeration, but after some thought, Nianhua realized that Pei Yining was still a student, and in these times, it was not easy to find a bag that was to one's liking, reasonably priced, and stylish.

There was no need to even mention skincare products. After much consideration, she felt that jade or gold ornaments would be best.

"You've already made up your mind, so why ask me?" Ji Ying pulled herself back from her thoughts, her face brimming with a full smile, and it just so happened that there was nothing particular for the mother and daughter to do, so they headed to the jewelry store to pick an appropriate gift.

Amidst the dazzling array of gold, silver, and jade articles, Ji Ying stepped on the gleaming, newly-polished floor, feeling a slight urge to back out. Her family had never been wealthy, and even after getting married, she rarely had occasion to visit the city. Therefore, it was the first time she had ever set foot in a jewelry store.

#### Chapter 260: A Gift for Sister-in-law?

If it weren't for the fact that she could earn money now, and the Qinghe factory was bustling with activity, the money made by her eldest son Xu Nianji from selling bean sprouts, most of which he handed over, gave Ji Ying a sense of confidence. Otherwise, she might have lost her nerve and walked away.

"Mom, did you bring enough money today?" Xu Nianhua whispered in her ear, her pair of bright black eyes playfully looking at her.

Ji Ying's hand subconsciously reached into her pocket, feeling the money there, and instantly felt empowered. She had brought three hundred yuan today, which should be enough. Her daughter's smile, combined with the money in her pocket, gradually alleviated Ji Ying's sense of discomfort.

As the saying goes, "When you have money in hand, your heart isn't panicked."

"Mom, which do you think is better, a bracelet or a pendant?"

"Or maybe this kind of jade pendant?"

Xu Nianhua's soft voice tugged at Ji Ying now and then, first showing her one thing, then another. Ji Ying was so busy looking and talking with Xu Nianhua that she also had to think about what kind of gift Pei Yining would like.

After a long time of picking and choosing, they finally settled on a gold bracelet. The bracelet had a simple design and was very likable, and the price was right, too—two hundred and ten yuan.

"Nianhua, what do you think of these earrings?"

Just when she was about to pay, Ji Ying took a liking to a pair of hoop earrings.

"Mom, these would look even better on you," Xu Nianhua said, pointing to another pair of hoop earrings.

"Your mom is too old for such things now," Ji Ying said, looking at the hoop earrings. They looked very nice, and Sister Xihua seemed to have gotten a pair for her daughter-in-law, too.

Xu Nianhua raised her eyebrows and asked, "Are they for your elder sister-in-law?"

Since they weren't for her, and there were only three women in the Xu Family, with her still being in school, gold earrings naturally would be of no use to her. It didn't take a question to know they were for her elder sister-in-law, Zhou He.

"Right, your elder sister-in-law came into our family one year late, and for that, the Xu Family is in Zhou He's debt. Throughout this past year, she must have faced a lot of gossip, and now she's even pregnant."

There were more unspoken words, but as Ji Ying's daughter, Xu Nianhua was well aware that the money Nianji made from selling bean sprouts—after buying beans and covering some daily expenses—was handed over to his mother without any shortage.

"It's the right thing to buy." Xu Nianhua even helped Ji Ying decide which to buy, and finally, they chose the hoop earrings that Ji Ying had first taken a liking to.

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"Mom, I can't accept this," Zhou He said, looking at the gleaming hoop earrings, feeling they were too valuable.

"What, you think what I bought isn't enough?"

Ji Ying deliberately said so.

Zhou He shook her head repeatedly, saying, "Mom, how could I think it's too little? It's just..."

Zhou He wasn't very articulate, and despite moving her lips for quite some time, she didn't know what to say.

"If I tell you to keep it, then keep it. Xiaohe's wife just got a pair too, I thought they looked nice, so I got them for you."

Ji Ying didn't give Zhou He the chance to refuse. After giving away the earrings, she asked Zhou He about her recent health.

"Mom, I'm in good health," Zhou He replied, holding the gold earrings.

Feeling a bit anxious, Zhou He brought up the matter to Xu Nianji at night. Nianji, however, didn't mind and laughingly said, "Xiaohe, keep what mom gave you, our family is not short on money. In the future, we just need to be more filial to our parents."

"Even without this, being filial to our parents is what I should do as a daughter-in-law, right?" Zhou He looked at the gleaming earrings and felt especially happy inside.