

## Regaining 261

### Chapter 261: Aunt Wan

Everyone says mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are natural enemies, but Zhou He feels that she's extremely lucky to have such a wonderful mother-in-law.

The next day, Ji Ying mentioned giving the earrings as a gift. She turned to Xu Nian'an and said, "Nian'an, when you get married someday, I'll make sure you and your wife won't be shortchanged, just like your eldest brother and sister-in-law."

Ji Ying was fair and impartial, fearing that Xu Nian'an might feel slighted in the future. She had only two sons and naturally didn't want any animosity to arise between them over such matters.

"Mom, you make the decisions and that's fine. Both my future wife and I won't mind," Xu Nian'an's words elicited laughter from everyone. He continued, "I haven't made any money yet. It's actually the elder brother and sister-in-law who have contributed a lot to this family."

He spent most of his time studying, and since last summer vacation, he hadn't earned a single penny, only spending it.

"If it weren't for you and your sister selling mung bean jelly to earn money, our home wouldn't be in the state it is now," Xu Nianji immediately joined the conversation, acknowledging his younger brother and sister's contributions and goodness, of which he was well aware.

Therefore, many times, Xu Nianji would share the virtues of his brother and sister with Zhou He.

The family lived in harmony without any undercurrents. Seeing this, Xu Qinghe grinned from ear to ear with happiness. The factory was almost completed, and as the father, he was sure to be impartial once there's money.

Xu Nianhua watched the scene with a smile and, when she had free time, began making air-dried rabbit and beef jerky.

Four days later, Xu Nianhua packed up the spicy air-dried rabbit, the tasty beef jerky, a gold bracelet, and the letter she had written, and sent them all off to Ningbei Province.

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"Auntie Wan, is there a letter for me?"

As soon as Pei Yining returned home for vacation, her first question was about her mail.

"Little Yining, South City is half a month's trip away from Ningbei. It takes that long just for one round of mailing," Wan Hongxing looked at her with a kind face and said, "How's your study going? Do you like the food at school? I cooked your favorite chicken braised with potatoes today, come and try it."

"That's true." Pei Yining's eyes showed a hint of disappointment, but thinking that Auntie Wan's words were reasonable, she shelved her feeling of loss. Since the school term began, she had clearly felt that the homework, which used to be a struggle, was becoming a bit easier now.

Especially in foreign languages—she used to be utterly lost, but now, at least, she could understand some.

"Ring~"

The ring of a phone call sounded.

Pei Yining quickly answered and said, "Hello, is that Nianhua?"

"Little Yining, you're really not fair. You only remember Nianhua and forget about your brother Cheng Hao," Cheng Hao couldn't help feeling upset. Why did everyone else get a gift and not him?

"Oh, Cheng Hao." Pei Yining shifted to a more comfortable position and asked, "How is my brother doing? Did he go to Xi Province for his leg treatment? How's his condition?"

She asked with concern, ever since she knew that her brother Pei Yicheng was going to Xi Province for his leg treatment after the Lantern Festival, it had been on her mind.

"Want to know, huh?" Cheng Hao drew out his question teasingly.

Pei Yining's grip on the phone tightened as she said decisively, "Of course I want to know."

"Then call me," Cheng Hao leaned back against the phone booth, imagining Pei Yining far away rolling her eyes in frustration, and he couldn't help but crack a smile.

"Cheng Hao, brother," Pei Yining said without thinking. She was irritated; after all these years, she didn't know how many times she had called out like that. One more time wouldn't make a difference.

"Why does everyone get a gift but not me?" Instead of answering Pei Yining's question, Cheng Hao asked his own, voicing the quandary that had been bothering him for days.

#### Chapter 262: Joining in the Fun

Pei Yining, anxiously and worriedly focused, couldn't help but tighten her grip on the microphone as she thought surely her brother's legs would heal, yet she feared something unexpected might happen.

Wan Hongxing, who had been busy, stopped what she was doing and sat down on the sofa next to her, listening intently to Pei Yining's phone call.

"Cheng Hao!"

Hearing his words, Pei Yining couldn't help but roll her eyes. She pursed her lips and said, "Cheng Hao, I'm not joking with you, how is my brother really?"

"Tsk, Little Yining, just a moment ago it was Brother Cheng Hao, and now it's just Cheng Hao!"

Cheng Hao's voice came through the phone, tinged with loss as he persistently said, "The gifts—why isn't there one for me?"

Pei Yining: "..."

Cheng Hao's mind must have been waterlogged, why was he so fixated on the gifts?

"Little Yining?"

Having listened for a while and not hearing Pei Yining's voice, Cheng Hao said, "If you don't respond, I'm hanging up the phone. Anyway, Yicheng is still in Xi Province, and we can't contact him since there's no phone."

"Don't."

Upon hearing this, Pei Yining took a deep breath and quickly intervened, "Brother Cheng Hao, please don't hang up the phone."

Cheng Hao, looking at the crowd outside the phone booth, grinned and said, "That's more like it. I'm your brother after all. How could you be disrespectful?"

Pei Yining curled her lips and explained, "It's because you got a girlfriend, right? What if I sent gifts and your girlfriend misunderstood?"

"You are Yicheng's sister, which makes you my sister. My sister sending me gifts, what's there to misunderstand?" Cheng Hao replied without a second thought, feeling relieved upon hearing Pei Yining's explanation.

He knew he hadn't offended Little Yining.

"Next time when sending gifts, make sure to not forget me," Cheng Hao reminded. He then spoke about Pei Yicheng and said that Pei Yining would need a few more months of treatment in Xi Province.

"That's wonderful!"

Pei Yining stood up excitedly, her face beaming with an enthusiastic and thrilled smile. She said, "I knew it, I knew my brother's legs would definitely heal."

"What's my brother's condition right now?" Pei Yining asked urgently, wishing she could sprout wings and fly to Pei Yicheng's side.

Though Wan Hongxing could not hear the voice on the phone, from Pei Yining's answers, she learned that Pei Yicheng's legs could be saved. She clasped her hands together, eyes brimming with excitement, and leaning forward, she whispered in Pei Yining's ear, "Xiaoning, quickly ask for your brother's detailed address."

What use was the detailed address?

Pei Yining thought, but still went ahead and, holding the phone, noted down Pei Yicheng's address from a notebook beside her.

"Aunt Wan, I have the college entrance examination coming up, and I can't visit my brother," Pei Yining mentioned regretfully. When returning to Ningbei, her brother had fervently instructed her to focus on her studies and not to miss any class.

"Your father and I can go," Wan Hongxing responded.

While watching TV, Pei Yijian immediately ran over and said, "I also want to visit Yicheng."

"You still have school, what's the excitement about?" Wan Hongxing said, half laughing, half crying, as she looked at her ten-year-old son. "You should stay home and focus on your studies; don't disturb your brother. He's treating his legs."

"I miss Yicheng," Pei Yijian said unhappily, pouting, "Yicheng hasn't taught me boxing for a long time."

"Yeah, our Little Yijian hasn't seen his brother for a year," Wan Hongxing said, stroking Pei Yijian's hair. Owing to her, Pei Yicheng also wasn't fond of Yijian.

## Chapter 263: Who's Going?

"Dad, my brother's leg can be cured," Pei Yining shared the good news with her dad who had just returned.

"Where is he?"

Pei Guozhong instinctively searched the room for Pei Yicheng's figure.

Pei Yining stepped forward, smiling, and said, "Brother is still in Xi Province getting treatment for his leg. It might take a few more months to heal. Here's the address."

Pei Yining handed over a piece of paper with the address written on it.

Pei Guozhong glanced at it, his daughter's handwriting was elegant, and with one glance, he memorized the address. He sat on the sofa, his face stern, suppressing his joy, and hummed, "Who wants to go see him?"

"If you don't want to go, fine."

Pei Yining immediately took back the address and dropped her smile. She looked at Pei Guozhong unhappily and said, "Dad, he's your son. His leg is injured, and now there's hope for recovery. Aren't you happy?"

"Didn't he say he doesn't recognize me as his dad?" Pei Guozhong thought about the angry words spoken when he left, and wished he could beat him up.

He was his real dad, not a stepdad. He went out of his way to find doctors everywhere, but what about Pei Yicheng?

He wouldn't accept it, feeling instead as if he would harm him.

Because of the leg issue, the already strained father-son relationship had hit rock bottom.

Later, Du Chang took Pei Yicheng back to South City. Pei Guozhong intermittently heard from Wan Hongxing and Xiaoning about how Pei Yicheng was doing, which somewhat relieved him. He wanted to visit, but couldn't swallow his pride.

Even during the New Year, Pei Guozhong genuinely had matters to handle, and he feared being thrown out if he visited his father-in-law's house, not knowing how to interact with Pei Yicheng.

"Dad, can you really listen to his angry words?" Pei Yining stood up, visibly upset, and said, "Dad, I think you don't care about him at all."

"Xiaoning, your dad does care about Xiaocheng,"

Seeing that Pei Yining and Pei Guozhong were about to argue, Wan Hongxing hurriedly said, "Every time I send things to your brother, your dad always silently adds things to the package. Several times, I've seen your dad staring at your brother's photo."

"Who looked at his picture?" Pei Guozhong's expression changed; he always looked secretly!

"Alright, alright, you didn't look,"

Wan Hongxing went along with his words, quietly telling Pei Yining about the incidents she discovered during the nights.

Seeing Aunt Wan, and then looking at her dad's embarrassed annoyance after being exposed, Pei Yining knew that what Aunt Wan said was true.

Pei Yining was no longer mad at him; she discussed with Aunt Wan what gifts to bring her brother.

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At night, in the study, Pei Guozhong held a map, checking the distance between Xi Province and Ningbei Province.

"Knock Knock"

Wan Hongxing came in with tea, only to see Pei Guozhong quickly cover up Xi Province with a nearby book. Wan Hongxing smiled and said, "I inquired about it, the train to Xi Province, after reaching Xi Province, a two-hour drive will get you to Xiaocheng's treatment place."

"Who needs to know all this?"

Pei Guozhong pretended to look at other areas on the map, saying, "Didn't this brat say he's not getting his leg treated? He also said he doesn't have me as a dad; why should I care about him?"

"Guozhong, you clearly care about Xiaocheng, why do you have to say that?" Wan Hongxing disagreed, handing him the hot tea, and said, "Both of you are so stubborn. You're his dad; how can you argue with Xiaocheng like this?"

"Exactly because I'm his dad, when has a father ever bowed down to his son?" Pei Guozhong, holding the hot tea, felt warmth not just in his hands but in his heart on this chilly spring night.

Chapter 264: The Weather is Nice, The Sun is Shining Brightly

"Who's talking about bowing their heads?" Wan Hongxing placed her hand on Pei Guozhong's shoulder, rubbing it with just the right amount of pressure. Being a preschool teacher, she always spoke in a soft, gentle tone. She said, "There's no overnight feud between father and son. Xiaocheng is such an outstanding person, yet he might have to stay in a wheelchair forever. Back then, he surely felt a lot of pressure. He might have said some harsh words, but can't you, as his father, understand that?"

"Did I mess up finding him a doctor?" Pei Guozhong truly didn't understand the boy's thoughts at the time. Had he really chosen the wrong doctors?

This ungrateful boy even screamed at Wan Hongxing. As his father, what's wrong with scolding him a bit?

"You're right, you wanted to help Xiaocheng, and that was certainly the right thing to do." Wan Hongxing softly said, "I know, it was also my mistake that day."

"Hongxing, over the years, you've done well enough."

Pei Guozhong held Wan Hongxing's hand. Since Du Ya had left, he too had suffered, he too had been in pain, but was he supposed to never marry in his lifetime?

"Guozhong, Xiaocheng is a good kid, just sometimes he can't turn the corner."

Wan Hongxing truly didn't want to see father and son in conflict because of her.

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"Uncle Xu, Aunt Ji, do you really want me to bring a chicken and a duck to Xi Province?" Cheng Hao initially came to ask Nianhua if he should bring anything.

Unexpectedly, Ji Ying just handed him a chicken and a duck, saying it was to nourish Pei Yicheng's body.

"Aren't you driving there? These are chickens and ducks raised at home. The soup made from them is particularly delicious and nutritious," Ji Ying prattled on: "I've packed them in a snakeskin bag, and I've even poked holes in it to ensure that when you get to Xi Province, they'll still be hopping around."

Cheng Hao: "..."

So, was he going to be accompanied by chickens and ducks all the way to Xi Province?

"This is a small token from my parents. You wouldn't refuse to take it, would you?" As soon as Nianhua spoke, Cheng Hao hurriedly shook his head, "Of course not, I was just asking."

The future sister-in-law, he couldn't refuse, as he would still need her help in the future.

"Nianhua, do you have anything to give Yicheng?"

After he spoke, Cheng Hao quickly added, "Nian'an?"

"Yes." Nianhua ran back inside and came back with an envelope.

Cheng Hao's eyes lit up when he saw the envelope.

Nian'an asked, "Little sister, what did you write?"

"It's just a drawing." Nianhua didn't think it was anything secretive; she pulled out the letter and unfolded it—there was a drawing depicting a scene full of spring vibrancy, brimming with life and renewal. Next to it, she wrote a line of text: "The weather is so nice, the sunshine so brilliant."

Nian'an: "..."

Cheng Hao leaned over, looked at the drawing for a long time, and said, "It's really well done."

"Nianhua, what do you mean by this?" Ji Ying took a look, not understanding what kind of riddle this was.

Nianhua just smiled, without explaining.

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The weather is really nice, the sunshine brilliant, everything will get better.

The moment Pei Yicheng received the drawing, he understood what Nianhua meant.

His hand rested on the paper, and from a professional's standpoint, this drawing could at best be considered passable, but to his eyes, it was invaluable.

His gaze slowly traced the drawing, his eyes brimming with a gentle warmth, leaving Cheng Hao completely dumbfounded. It was just a drawing, so why did Yicheng look as if he had received a token of engagement?

#### Chapter 265: Framing Pictures

"Yicheng, what does this painting mean?" Cheng Hao looked at the painting again, the bright red sun, the vibrant grass, the big trees with tender sprouts—it all seemed quite ordinary.

The weather is so nice, the sunlight brilliant.

Cheng Hao thought about it for a long time but couldn't figure out what was romantic or joyous about it. If you ask him, it's not even close to giving flowers, jewelry, or a watch.

At the very least, watching a movie together would bring feelings closer much faster.

A painting that he couldn't understand; he didn't know what Yicheng found so pleasing about it.

"You wouldn't understand."

Pei Yicheng's voice was even gentler than usual as he carefully preserved the painting, his lips curling slightly as he said, "Haozi, help me find someone who can mount paintings and bring his tools."

"Yicheng, give me the painting; I'll find someone to mount it for you," Cheng Hao replied instinctively.

Pei Yicheng gave him a look and said, "I want to mount it myself."

Cheng Hao: "..."

Yicheng's mind, it's just different from others.

Just as Cheng Hao reached the door, Pei Yicheng reminded him, "Call Xiaoning and tell her the good news. Tell her not to come over here, to focus on her studies. If she doesn't get into Beining University, she shouldn't call me brother. And remember, only tell Xiaoning."

Aside from Xiaoning, Pei Yicheng had no desire to see anyone else from the Pei family.

"Okay," Cheng Hao thought, feeling a bit guilty since he had already given Yining the address a couple of days ago. What if Little Yining came rushing to Xi Province no matter what? Wouldn't Yicheng be furious with him?

As soon as Cheng Hao left, he went to call Yining. Hearing from the Pei family's maid that Yining had gone to school, Cheng Hao finally breathed a sigh of relief.

At this moment, Cheng Hao had no idea that Pei Guozhong and Wan Hongxing had already boarded a train to Xi Province. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been so relaxed.

Humming a tune, Cheng Hao found someone skilled in mounting paintings and also mentioned his desire to learn the craft himself. He made sure the craftsman brought a full range of materials and, of course, Cheng Hao was not stingy with the price, aiming to find the best.

Pei Yicheng's legs were becoming more and more sensitive day by day, and he was in a very good mood, even if, during his recovery, he couldn't roam around as before. Still, he was always holding a book in his hands.

After Cheng Hao found a person to mount paintings, Pei Yicheng devoted himself wholly to learning the craft.

Learning to mount paintings wasn't easy, but Pei Yicheng only wanted to be able to mount that one painting by himself, which naturally made it easier.

After half a day's learning, Pei Yicheng had already tried mounting two decorative paintings.

"Thank you, master," Pei Yicheng thanked the mounting master, grateful that having a teacher made learning faster.

That evening, Pei Yicheng sent Ling Dong and Cheng Hao out of the room.

"Yicheng, it wouldn't hurt for me to help you out," Cheng Hao said, craning his neck.

"No need."

Pei Yicheng, looking at the well-prepared materials, didn't think he needed any help.

Taking out the well-placed painting and admiring it for a while, he picked up a pencil beside him and flipped the painting over, writing in the corner, "I promise you a lifetime of Nianhua."

The pencil strokes weren't heavy, and the paper was thick, so they wouldn't show through. He carefully mounted the painting, fearful of damaging it and methodically following the steps his master had taught him.

Outside the room.

Cheng Hao, pressing against the wall, wished he had x-ray vision, and said, "Ling Dong, do you think there's something special about that painting?"

"The person it's given to is different," Ling Dong replied without hesitation.

"Hmph."

Cheng Hao waved a hand dismissively, finding Ling Dong's answer superfluous—everyone knows that.

## Chapter 266: Standing in Front of You

Under the bright light, Pei Yicheng focused on his work as if it were something very, very important, striving for perfection in every step.

After an unknown amount of time, when Pei Yicheng had finished mounting the painting, he looked at it with great satisfaction, his slightly curved eyes sparkling like brilliant stars.

The next day.

Cheng Hao took the opportunity of delivering breakfast early to glimpse at the painting Pei Yicheng had finished mounting. He shook his head and said, "Tsk, tsk, just as Buddha relies on gold and people rely on clothes, it seems paintings are no exception."

Yesterday, it was just a piece of paper; the painting looked rather ordinary. But today, upon a careful look, especially after it's been properly mounted and covered with a layer of glass, it seems the artistic conception has been elevated several notches. Looking closely, the painting actually seems quite impressive.

"Not only does Sister-in-law write beautifully, but her paintings are also beautiful."

No sooner had Ling Dong said this than Cheng Hao, who had just taken a sip of soymilk, sprayed it all out. He looked at Ling Dong incredulously and said, "Ling Dong, you're too..." Such a brownnoser!

"Are you saying Sister-in-law's painting isn't good?" Ling Dong asked, raising his eyebrows while taking a big bite of his meat bun, juice and filling abundant. With one bite, the savory taste of the meat spread through his mouth, delightfully flavorful.

"Cough!"

In his heart, Cheng Hao cursed Ling Dong for being sly and shameless—a real sycophant!

"Brother Cheng, of course Sister-in-law's painting is good, exceptionally good!"

As if to prove his point, Cheng Hao wished he could swear to the heavens.

Pei Yicheng withdrew his gaze, contentedly admiring the painting as if he could never get enough.

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"Yicheng, you just focus on healing your leg here, I'll head back first," Du Chang said, his heart filled with joy seeing his grandson's leg gaining more sensation day by day.

His leg's recovery made Du Chang happy, and as the heavy stone in his heart was lifted, he couldn't help but worry about the family's clinic back home.

After the New Year, they had not opened, or more precisely, had not seen patients. Du Chang felt uneasy at the thought that they might encounter someone who needed urgent medical care.

"Grandpa, don't worry about going back. In a few months, I will definitely be standing in front of you," Pei Yicheng said confidently, then turned to Cheng Hao and instructed, "Haozi, drive carefully and don't jostle Grandpa."

"Brother Cheng, rest assured, I'll make sure Grandpa gets home safely," Cheng Hao promised, thumping his chest. Just as they were about to leave, a familiar yet foreign voice came from outside.

"Pei Yicheng is in this ward."

"Thank you."

A nurse led Pei Guozhong and Wan Hongxing to the doorway of the ward.

Pei Yicheng's face darkened instantly, his gaze sweeping towards Cheng Hao in a flash.

Cheng Hao's heart shocked, he looked guilty, not knowing how Uncle Pei had found out where they were.

"Uh, Brother Cheng, I'll go check the car," he said quickly.

Cheng Hao retreated hastily, and at the doorway, he managed a greeting with a forced smile, "Uncle Pei, Aunt Wan, I... I have to take Grandpa back to South City, so I'll be going now."

Cheng Hao fled swiftly as if afraid that lingering would result in a severe scolding from Brother Cheng.

He truly was more wronged than Dou E; he had only mentioned it to Little Yining, not to Uncle Pei.

As soon as Pei Guozhong entered the room, he saw his son, whom he hadn't seen in a year, and his son's downturned face.

The ungrateful kid!

I travel a thousand miles to see you, and you still show me such a face!

As Pei Guozhong's inner fury rose, someone tugged at his sleeve. Glancing aside, he saw Wan Hongxing's gentle eyes. In his mind, he recalled the words she had spoken on the way, "Xiaocheng is still a child; as his father, he should be more understanding!"

Chapter 267: He Will Understand Sooner or Later

"It's a pity, my legs couldn't stand up as you wished—they'll never do so."

Pei Yicheng, leaning against the bed, turned into a sharp hedgehog at the sight of Pei Guozhong, his spikes erect.

"Yicheng!" Du Chang rebuked sternly.

Pei Yicheng turned his head away, his hand inside the blanket ice cold; he knew it was just framed—a layer of glass over it.

The anger that Pei Guozhong had suppressed bubbled up furiously. Clenching his lips and with a stern face, he said, "Wait until you can stand up before you talk."

His gaze fell on Pei Yicheng's legs, and, realizing they were fine, he moved to Du Chang, eased his expression, and said, "Dad, you've had a hard time these days."

"Yicheng is my grandson too; it's no hardship," sighed Du Chang, saying, "Yicheng, he..."

Before Du Chang could finish, Pei Yicheng said, "Grandpa, aren't you in a hurry to go back? Xiaohao has already prepared the car." Leaving now would get them to South City in time for lunch and some rest before arriving home by evening.

"Yicheng, Guozhong is your father; he traveled all the way from Ningbei to see you."

Du Chang was intent on mending their father-son relationship.

"Grandpa, he came to Xi Province for work; seeing me was just convenient," Pei Yicheng's lips pressed into a straight line, his words edged with sarcasm. His eyes downcast, he would never forget the scene of his mother's death, her hands still holding the lunchbox she had brought for him.

If not for Pei Guozhong's sole focus on work and money, his mother wouldn't have died.

All his life, his father had been either on a business trip or en route to one.

"Dad, you're heading back to South City today; shall I take you?" Pei Guozhong progressed past Pei Yicheng, fearing he wouldn't be able to resist the urge to grab something and beat him with it.

"No need, Xiaohao will drive me back," Du Chang declined.

Pei Guozhong said, "That's good; I brought you something."

As he walked out, Pei Guozhong raised his voice, "I also still have work to do."

"Guozhong, since when do you have work in Xi Province?" Wan Hongxing quickly explained, fearing Pei Yicheng might misunderstand.

"How not? I have it now," Pei Guozhong's voice grew fainter.

The room fell silent instantaneously. Ling Dong cautiously looked at Pei Yicheng; every time he saw Pei Guozhong, Yicheng's mood was never good.

"It's fine, I'm well. I will definitely stand before him one day and tell him how disappointed he has made me!" Pei Yicheng took out the painting from under the blanket. His hand gently skimmed the ice-cold glass, over the large tree, tracing the tender green sprouts.

"Guozhong, Yicheng must surely feel happy seeing you here," Du Chang explained, worried Pei Guozhong might feel uneasy.

"Dad, you needn't explain. What the boy thinks, do you think I don't know? He's been resenting me over Xiaoya's matter for years, treating me like an enemy whenever he sees me," Pei Guozhong sighed.

For Pei Guozhong too, Du Ya's death was a severe blow.

"Xiaoya, she..." As Du Chang mentioned his daughter who died young, a look of longing appeared in his eyes. "That incident was an accident; nobody wanted her to get hurt."

Pei Guozhong was silent, filled with guilt—if only he had been quicker, perhaps things could have changed.

"You and Xiaowan live well; Yicheng will eventually come around," Du Chang patted Pei Guozhong on the shoulder.

#### Chapter 268: Must Not Accept

His daughter's death pained him as well, but he knew clearly that Du Ya's death was an accident, and Pei Guozhong, too, was an innocent victim, who had lain in bed for half a year because of the car accident.

If there was anyone to blame, it could only be the person who drank alcohol and still drove, disregarding human life!

Five years after Xiaoya's accident, Pei Guozhong remarried Wan Hongxing, and Du Chang understood; he could not force Pei Guozhong to remain unmarried for the rest of his life just because his daughter had died.

Not to mention, Wan Hongxing was quite kind, a preschool teacher with a gentle nature, and she took good care of Yining. However, her grandson Yicheng, at the age of fifteen, was in the throes of his most rebellious phase. At this time, when Pei Guozhong wanted to get remarried, Yicheng completely regarded Pei Guozhong as his enemy!

Whenever the father and son met, they were like enemies.

Before leaving, Du Chang specifically took Yicheng aside for a talk, yet before he could open his mouth, he was interrupted by the boy's remark: "Grandpa, travel safely, wait for me to come find you standing."

"Grandpa, I don't want to see him, nor do I want to talk about him," Yicheng said, his eyes downcast, his words tinged with a pleading tone.

"Ah."

Du Chang sighed and said no more.

Du Chang brought a pile of gifts and returned to South City. Du Chang was reluctant to accept Pei Guozhong's things, but Pei Guozhong did not allow him the chance to refuse. He knew that some things were meant for him, and others were for Yicheng.

"Doctor Hu, how is his leg now?"

After sending off Du Chang, Pei Guozhong immediately went to consult Doctor Hu about the situation.

"His condition is improving, and after this batch of medicine is finished, he can try to stand up and undergo rehabilitation in a fortnight," Doctor Hu, knowing that he was Yicheng's father, did not withhold the information, sharing details thoroughly.

"Doctor Hu, thank you."

Pei Guozhong's words were full of gratitude as he handed over a leather bag.

Doctor Hu did not accept it, looking at him bewildered.

"I don't know how much the medical expenses will amount to; take this for now. If it's not enough, please let me know," Pei Guozhong said as he extended the money forward, making it clear it was for medical fees.

"No need, he has already paid," Doctor Hu pushed the money back.

Pei Guozhong then added, "Doctor Hu, besides the medical fees, this is also a little token of my appreciation."

"I can't accept that either, treating and saving patients is my duty as a doctor," Doctor Hu said with a stern face, his hair gray but his eyes piercingly sharp.

"Doctor, what he meant is that we find it inconvenient in Ningbei, so if there is anything he needs to buy, please help us," Wan Hongxing said smilingly; even in her forties, she maintained her youthful appearance and was approachable.

"I am a doctor, not a shopper."

Doctor Hu adjusted his glasses and said, "I've told you everything that needed to be told about his condition, you can go now."

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"Guozhong, why don't you give some money to Ling Dong privately, let Ling Dong buy some nutritional supplements for Xiaocheng to strengthen his body?" Wan Hongxing suggested.

"Do as you see fit," Pei Guozhong stuffed the money bag into Wan Hongxing's arms and headed out.

"Aren't you going to see Xiaocheng?" Wan Hongxing quickly asked.

"No, let him be," Pei Guozhong walked out and, having traveled a long distance by train, decided to go find a place to fill his stomach properly.

"Saying a word of care wouldn't cost a piece of flesh; you came especially to see him, you care about him, yet you say it's for work!" Wan Hongxing looked at his retreating figure and sighed helplessly.

#### Chapter 269: Qingsong Furniture Factory

"Ling Dong, it's been tough for you taking care of Xiaocheng. As for what his dad said, tell Xiaocheng not to believe that there are no jobs in Xi Province. His dad came all the way here just to see him. Knowing that his leg can be healed, his dad couldn't be happier."

"The very day he received the call, he promptly handed over his work and rushed to Xi Province overnight."

Wan Hongxing wouldn't actively approach Yicheng to bother him. Instead, she took the opportunity when Ling Dong came out to fetch something to speak with him. She explained everything in detail, regardless of whether Yicheng could hear her or not. At least, she made their intentions clear.

Ling Dong smiled and didn't say much, just that he would pass the message to Yicheng.

"Ling Dong, this money is his dad's way of showing he cares. Medical treatment and accommodation all cost money here. Buy more nutritious foods so he can replenish his health, especially things like bone broth. It would be best if he could eat more of that."

Wan Hongxing handed over the money she had prepared in advance.

Ling Dong hurriedly said, "No, please don't give it to me, Yicheng would beat me up if he found out."

Passing a message, he could do, but if Yicheng found out about accepting money, he would definitely throw it right back at him.

"Ling Dong, this is his dad's wish," Wan Hongxing stressed each word. "The misunderstanding between father and son isn't so deep as to be hatred. Surely, you don't want to see their relationship grow worse, right?"

"I know that you've been with Xiaocheng since very early on, and you two are close. You must want to see him happy, don't you?"

With Wan Hongxing's successive praises, Ling Dong hesitated for a moment.

In that moment of hesitation, Wan Hongxing had already stuffed everything into his arms, and then she turned and left.

\*

"Who needs his money?" Yicheng said, not even bothering to look at it.

"Yicheng, he's your dad, your own flesh and blood. Why not take the money he gives?" Ling Dong cleared his throat and relayed Wan Hongxing's words, but as he spoke the last part, he could feel Yicheng's icy stare.

With a gulp, Ling Dong said, "Yicheng, since the money has been accepted, it can't just be returned."

After contemplating the bag of money for a long while, Yicheng said, "Donate this money to the orphanage in my mother Du Ya's name."

"All of it?" Ling Dong felt his heart tremble.

This wasn't a matter of one or two hundred, nor one or two thousand, but ten or twenty thousand!

\*

South City, Gaoliang County, Shuangzhu Village.

The sound of firecrackers echoed, signaling the official completion of Qingsong Furniture Factory, and now with all the tools in place, the factory was set to officially open for business today.

High walls, spacious and bright buildings, and a dedicated area for displaying furniture.

During this period, besides building the factory, Xu Qinghe and his apprentice Xu Song, along with Cai Feng and Yao Gen, had already produced several samples. Almost the entire village had come to visit the factory.

The villagers' first impression of the furniture factory was how spacious and bright it was.

Their own homes weren't nearly as new as this furniture factory.

What a waste.

Such a large furniture factory, such vast buildings, must have cost a pretty penny, right?

With just those few pieces of furniture there, could they really make money?

These were the doubts held by many neighbors in the village.

Liu Sanmei also came to see and, viewing the grand furniture factory, regretted so much it was almost like spitting blood. If they hadn't separated from the Xu Family, this furniture factory would have been theirs!

Chapter 270: Shen Xu

After leaving Qingsong Furniture Factory, Liu Sanmei felt a stifling discomfort in her heart and urgently needed a breather. She made a special trip to the county town. Seeing her plump, fair-skinned great-grandson, Liu Sanmei's anxious heart smoothed out again.

"Mom, look how well Xiaoxu has grown; so plump and fair, just like a doll in a painting."

After the postpartum confinement, Zhao Juxiang did want to stay in the county. Sadly, her mother-in-law, Liu Sanmei, kept urging her to come back. Moreover, her relationship with her mother-in-law, Shen, wasn't good. Fearing she might mess things up, she returned to the village.

The newborn child was growing rapidly. In just a short time since she had last seen him, he had become even more beautiful - she had never seen such a beautiful child in the village.

"He has grown well."

Liu Sanmei looked at her great-grandson with deep affection, lavishing praise upon him.

"Grandma, Mom, please sit down and have some fruit." Shen Qiuyun courteously entertained them. Initially, because of the disputes over the child's name, relations between the two families had been strained, but eventually, the Shen family prevailed and the child took the Shen surname.

Shen's parents had split a house in the county for Shen Qiuyun and her husband, Xu Zhihao, and had agreed to get Zhihao a job at the canning factory.

"Qiuyun, you've done a great job raising Xiaoxu." Liu Sanmei beamed at her daughter-in-law. Despite showing immense assertiveness over the child's surname issue, she was generous in other aspects.

Shen Qiuyun gave a smile. She wasn't particularly warm or fond of Xu Zhihao's family. If it weren't for Xu Zhihao himself, she wouldn't have married into the family.

Liu Sanmei glanced at Zhao Juxiang, who cleared her throat and asked, "Zhihao, how's your job situation?"

"Next week, I can start at the canning factory. The handover at the supply and marketing agency is almost complete," said Xu Zhihao, recalling the envious looks from his colleagues.

Though a job at the supply and marketing agency was respectable, the canning factory offered a higher salary, almost double, and he would be in a managing position. It was no wonder he had been beaming with joy recently, not to mention having had a son.

Indeed, he hadn't even started working at the canning factory yet and had already received a house—all thanks to the Yue family.

"That's great." Zhao Juxiang heard this and immediately beamed with joy.

Liu Sanmei felt elated, forgetting the discomfort she had felt about Qingsong Furniture Factory's opening. She was filled with pride for her grandson. As for Xu Qinghe, so what if he had opened a furniture factory? What was so great about that?

Who knows, maybe no one would buy anything, and then they would face losses.

Liu Sanmei focused on playing with her great-grandson. Zhao Juxiang, eating an apple, asked Xu Zhihao to buy some meat to nourish Shen Qiuyun.

"Zhihao, let Aunt Zhou go buy it, to save Mom the trouble," said Shen Qiuyun quickly, smiling as she explained, "Mom should rest at home when she comes here. How could she go buy groceries?"

"Good, my daughter-in-law knows how to care for me," Zhao Juxiang thought of not having to go herself and immediately felt relieved.

Upon hearing this, Shen Qiuyun breathed a sigh of relief, immediately called Aunt Zhou over, and instructed her to buy several items.

If she let her mother-in-law do the grocery shopping, she couldn't stand to eat the dishes prepared.

"Qiuyun, you're so thoughtful," Xu Zhihao said while Shen Qiuyun was in the room fetching a diaper for the child. He embraced her firmly and gave her a deep kiss, feeling more than ever that he had married the right woman.

"She's your mom and Xiaoxu's grandmother; of course, I should host her well," Shen Qiuyun grinned.