

## Regaining 531

Chapter 531: What Do You Want a Calendar For?

"Okay."

Xu Nian'an glanced at the price; it wasn't outrageously expensive. He strolled around the store with Xu Nianhua and bought the bed he liked as well as the sofa, bookshelf, and a small bed that Nianhua had her eye on.

"Brother, what do you want that small bed for?"

Nianhua's face was full of confusion.

"Of course for sleeping. Think about it, when you come to the store, I'll sleep downstairs, and you can sleep in the bed upstairs." Xu Nian'an thought this arrangement was quite good. Regardless, at least there would be a place to sleep, so there was no need to squeeze into the Pei Family's house anymore.

Although the Pei Family's place was nice, it still wasn't his own home. Plus, there was Pei Yicheng, the big bad wolf always ready to snatch away his little sister.

"Do you want to go to the Pei Family's?" Xu Nian'an countered.

Xu Nianhua immediately shook her head and said, "Golden nest, silver nest, none is as comfortable as our own dog nest. We'll just live in the store. But, we just painted the walls, can we really stay here?"

"Why not?" Xu Nian'an didn't see any issue. The painting was done downstairs, so why couldn't they stay?

Nianhua thought about it and agreed. It wasn't like the future where there was paint and glue that could cause pollution.

After settling the furniture, she suddenly noticed a pile of calendar paper next to the store owner.

"Boss, could you give us some of that calendar paper?" Nianhua asked sweetly, her radiant and affable smile instantly endearing. She continued, "My brother and I bought so many items at once. Could you just throw them in as a little extra?"

"Alright."

The store owner glanced indifferently at the calendar paper, which was originally meant to be sold as scrap paper, not worth much anyway.

Nianhua unceremoniously loaded the entire pile of calendar paper onto their cart.

The corners of the store owner's mouth twitched. He said he'd give some, not all. That much calendar paper could sell for a little bit; how could they just take it all?

"Boss?" Nianhua timidly spoke up, her big round eyes looking innocently at the boss. She carefully watched him, her eyes seemingly pleading: Boss, you did agree to give it to us, aren't you going to keep your word?

"What are you going to do with so much calendar paper?" The boss suppressed his disappointment and asked out of curiosity.

It wasn't as if he thought she would resell it. After all, the brother and sister, young as they were, had just spent several hundred on second-hand furniture. They couldn't be that poor.

"We're going to cover the dark walls at home," Nianhua replied promptly.

The boss: ...

Why not spend those few cents on food instead of papering the walls?

Perhaps noticing the boss's changed expression, she added, "You're a really good person, boss. I wish you prosperity in business. If our friends ever need to buy something, we will definitely come to you first."

Her words were as sweet as honey.

"Very well, it's a deal." People in business love to hear words like Nianhua's. After all, he had made a substantial deal today, so giving away the worthless calendar paper didn't matter.

Girls always love pretty things.

"Using this to cover the walls will definitely look nice." Xu Nian'an didn't understand why she wanted the calendar paper, but hearing Nianhua's words, he suddenly realized his little sister was quite thoughtful. The attic was originally not very bright, and if they covered it with white calendar paper, it would brighten up the space considerably.

"Most importantly, the lighting won't be so dim," Nianhua said with a smile. If time allowed, it would be best to paint the attic white too. But school was about to start, and they needed to stay today. Repainting the attic would be inconvenient and expensive. Right now, the most important thing was to get the store up and running.

Chapter 532: Not Planning to Date in College

"Eh, how did Yicheng know we were coming so soon?" Xu Nian'an spotted from afar the figure standing at the storefront entrance—who else but Pei Yicheng?

"Yicheng."

Xu Nian'an greeted him enthusiastically, putting his little sister's matter aside, Yicheng had always been exceptionally good to their family, beyond words.

The words Ji Ying had said before made Xu Nian'an feel that it would be really nice if his little sister and Yicheng were together.

Therefore, Xu Nian'an wasn't as guarded as before, but he felt a little sour inside, as if his own little sister was about to be snatched away.

"Did you go furniture shopping?" Pei Yicheng stepped forward to help carry things up to the attic.

Xu Nian'an said with a big smile, "Yeah, Yicheng, thank you for helping us rent such a great storefront."

"Between us, there's no need for such formalities," said Pei Yicheng as he put the bed in its place. His gaze fell upon Xu Nianhua. Not having seen the young lady for six days, she seemed to have grown prettier, her fair complexion blushing red from the cold.

Her slight frame was carrying a pile of calendar paper.

Pei Yicheng spoke up, "Nianhua, go outside and bask in the sun; you don't need to move things."

"It's no trouble, it's not heavy." Xu Nianhua wouldn't listen; time was precious and she couldn't afford to be idle. Going outside to bask in the sun, she said, "You guys move the stuff, I'll tidy up the room."

The once empty attic had become lively and warm with the addition of so many things.

With the bed set up, bookshelves placed to the side, she was cleaning the bed, shelves, armchairs, and tables with water.

The three people were bustling about, and soon they had everything arranged.

Xu Nian'an went next door to buy a few boxes of thumbtacks. Xu Nian'an pinned up the dusted calendar papers one by one onto the walls of the attic, quickly brightening the once pockmarked walls.

Xu Nian'an and Pei Yicheng were doing the pasting, while Xu Nianhua was in charge of handing them the calendar papers one by one.

"I can't hold it anymore, I need to use the restroom." Xu Nian'an said, clutching his stomach, unable to bear it any longer.

Xu Nian'an put down the items and hurried down the stairs.

Instantly, only Xu Nianhua and Pei Yicheng were left upstairs, in the quiet where the only sound was the chatter of workers painting walls downstairs.

Pei Yicheng's confession under the fireworks on New Year's Eve was still echoing in her ears.

Xu Nianhua was silently rehearsing her words in her heart, and didn't notice at first that when she stretched out the calendar paper, it wasn't taken from her hand for quite a while.

When she looked up, she saw Pei Yicheng's half-covered face, and beneath his thick black eyebrows were a pair of deep, pitch-black eyes.

A large hand took the calendar, revealing his high nose, slightly thin lips, and resolute chin. His handsome features even outshone those of the big stars in later years.

"Yicheng."

Xu Nianhua suppressed the palpitations in her heart and said, word by word, "I don't plan to date in college." I don't plan to date afterward, either.

"Then we'll be together after you graduate from college," Pei Yicheng responded calmly.

Xu Nianhua: "Yicheng, I don't want to hold you back."

"In three years, I'll only be 27 years old," Pei Yicheng reminded her. His gaze was intense as he looked at her and leaned in, causing Xu Nianhua to stumble backwards.

"What I mean is..." Xu Nianhua's eyes flickered; his closeness sent her heart racing so fast it almost leapt out, and she had forgotten all her well-thought-out words.

Suddenly, Pei Yicheng grabbed her hand, applied a little force, and switched their positions.

Chapter 533: First Love

"Nianhua, do you dislike me?" Pei Yicheng leaned against the wall, his gaze burning as he looked at her. It was as if his eyes were trying to melt her completely.

Xu Nianhua could only feel her heart beating like thunder, surrounded by his unique scent that filled the air around her nostrils.

"Dislike?"

Pei Yicheng's voice grew weaker.

Even though Xu Nianhua dared not look up at him, just hearing his voice made her think he was pitiful, like an abandoned puppy.

"I don't dislike you," Xu Nianhua quickly shook her head, keeping her gaze low, daring not to look at Pei Yicheng for fear she might fall into his trap.

"Then you must like me."

Pei Yicheng's steady voice rose again.

The attic was already dimly lit, and combined with his voice, it almost... made Xu Nianhua, who was a sucker for a good voice, feel as if she couldn't move.

Like?

Xu Nianhua suddenly raised her head, and in the dimly lit attic, it was as if a filter had been placed over his face.

"In the coming years of university, we can date, giving you enough time to understand me," Pei Yicheng seized the opportunity to speak.

Xu Nianhua: "..."

"February 11, 1981, our first day together." Pei Yicheng pulled out a small bottle from his pocket, a transparent glass bottle containing pink liquid, decorated with the unique logo of Liunian on the upper right corner, and in the center, the words 'First Love'.

"This 'First Love' is perfect to commemorate our time together," Pei Yicheng hinted meaningfully as he opened the lid and gently pressed it, allowing the sweet fragrance to waft through the attic and spread its delicate aroma.

The sweet scent of perfume, words that could make her ears 'pregnant', and the handsome man in front of her.

Xu Nianhua's heart was in turmoil.

"Nianhua, if there is anything I do not do well, you can correct me anytime," Pei Yicheng said with a smile, his eyes filled with adoration as he gazed at her.

"Cheng, I, um," Xu Nianhua's mind was a mess, Pei Yicheng's words following one after another, and she didn't know which to respond to first.

"Good girl."

Pei Yicheng raised his hand to her glossy black hair and smiled, saying, "What would you like to eat tonight? Shall I ask Aunt Jin to make it for you?"

"No, we are staying in the hotel today," Xu Nianhua subconsciously shook her head.

"That won't do."

Pei Yicheng objected, saying, "The hotel is too cold, you'll catch a cold. I will talk to Nian'an."

As he finished speaking, Pei Yicheng looked toward the staircase and said, "Nian'an, you can't stay in the hotel, it's too cold. Even if you aren't cold, you should care for your sister."

"Big brother? When did you get back?" Xu Nianhua incredulously looked toward the staircase at Xu Nian'an appearing there. Remembering the recent conversation, she felt extremely embarrassed; standing there, she didn't know where to put her hands or feet.

"Just now, just got back."

Xu Nian'an responded quickly, even emphasizing the words, but the faster he responded, the more it seemed like he was protesting too much.

"I'm going to buy some snacks," Pei Yicheng strode out, pulling Xu Nian'an along with him, saying, "You can stay in the hotel, but your sister can't. It's too cold here for a girl, and it's inconvenient. Aren't you going to be a good big brother?"

"Of course I am."

Xu Nian'an answered affirmatively, his face complex as he looked at Pei Yicheng, thinking, this man is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Chapter 534: Beating the Mandarin Ducks with a Stick

"Nian'an, it seems you're not happy with me wanting to be your brother-in-law?" Pei Yicheng laid his cards on the table with no intention of hiding his feelings. He liked Nianhua and wanted to pursue her openly and honestly, and naturally, he hoped to gain Xu Nian'an's support. Otherwise, he wouldn't have put so much effort into this shop.

If there had been enough time, the shop would have been fully renovated by the time they arrived.

Pei Yicheng stopped in his tracks and looked at Xu Nian'an, saying, "Who else do you think could be a better match for your sister than me?"

"Yicheng, you're too full of yourself," Xu Nian'an retorted with a big eye roll. If you were to say there's nobody in Gaoliang County good enough for his little sister, Xu Nian'an would have agreed, but after coming to Ningbei and seeing more of the world, not to mention just at their Medical University, he had met a plethora of outstanding students.

"Not to mention, is there anyone who would treat your sister better than I would?" Pei Yicheng continued, "Nian'an, we've known each other for quite some time now. Don't you trust me as a person? Don't you believe I can make your sister happy?"

Xu Nian'an paused for a moment, sized up Pei Yicheng, and said, "I do trust your character, Yicheng."

"Well, that settles it. It's better for your sister to be with someone like me, whose background you know well, rather than some stranger with unknown intentions." Pei Yicheng, eager to win over Xu Nian'an, was willing to put all his efforts into it and continued, "Besides, I like Nianhua, and she likes me too. It's mutual affection."

"As the old saying goes, it's better to tear down a temple than to ruin a marriage. Nian'an, you surely wouldn't want to be the one to break up a pair of lovebirds, right?"

Pei Yicheng's anxious demeanor brought a smile to Xu Nian'an's face. With his tall stature and success—he was almost deified by his classmates for being able to design a hotel before even graduating—Xu Nian'an found him exceptionally outstanding, someone to look up to.

Yet there stood Pei Yicheng, so cautious in seeking his support and approval. His nervousness reassured Xu Nian'an that Yicheng genuinely cared for his little sister.

And his little sister...

Xu Nian'an reflected on his recent conversation with her. Perhaps she hadn't realized it herself, but as an outsider looking in, he could clearly see that she felt something special for him too.

And just now, in the attic, when Nianhua was at a loss for words under Pei Yicheng's pressure, her blushing face was a clear sign of her affection. Since that was the case, how could he, as her brother, stand in the way of his sister's lifelong happiness?

Having considered all this, Xu Nian'an composed himself and looked at Pei Yicheng earnestly.

Pei Yicheng also straightened up unconsciously, ready to listen attentively.

"Pei Yicheng." Xu Nian'an no longer called him 'Yicheng' but used his full name instead, and spoke deliberately, "Do you truly like my sister? Do you want to date her with the intent of marrying her?"

"Yes," Pei Yicheng nodded resolutely. That decision had been made a long, long time ago.

Perhaps it started with that painting of the beautiful weather and the bright sunshine.

Or maybe earlier, when she stood up for him against the villagers because of his leg injury.

Or perhaps, it was the first time they met, and he saw her defiant spirit, unafraid of pain.

He didn't know exactly when she entered his heart, but he was glad that in this life, he met her and fell in love with her.

Chapter 535: You Deceived My Second Brother

"In this life, I will marry no one but her."

Pei Yicheng had just spoken.

Xu Nian'an shook his head and said, "I don't believe in vows. Words alone are not binding. Once someone wants to change their heart, no vow can hold them back."

Although Xu Nian'an had never been in love or made any grand promises, he felt that these spoken vows were the least reliable in his eyes and heart.

Pei Yicheng looked at him deeply and said, "Then let time prove it."

Xu Nian'an pursed his lips and warned, "I don't care about your background or how powerful you are. If you ever bully my little sister and make her cry, my fists aren't just for show."

As he spoke, he raised his clenched fist.

"Whoever dares to bully her, I will be the first to not forgive them, myself included." Pei Yicheng's voice was resolute.

Xu Nian'an looked at him deeply, not replying; this matter couldn't be settled just by talking.

"Also, Nian'an, could you not call me 'Brother Cheng'?" Pei Yicheng reminded, having wanted to bring this up earlier, but hesitated because he was older than Xu Nian'an and didn't want him to misunderstand.

But now, things were different. Xu Nian'an knew his intentions, and when he mentioned it, it was completely straightforward.

...

Up in the attic, Xu Nianhua was unaware of what Pei Yicheng and Xu Nian'an had discussed. She stood still, the scent of perfume still lingering in the air, faintly reminding her that everything that had just happened was real, not a dream or her own fantasy.

Her expression complex, she looked at the perfume she was clutching in her hand. Even facing a crowd of thousands at a venue, she could speak confidently without stage fright, but just now, in front of Pei Yicheng, she felt like a girl experiencing her first crush, completely at a loss.

Throughout high school and university, many had confessed to her, but Xu Nianhua had bluntly rejected them all.

Originally, she had planned to reject Pei Yicheng too, but somehow their conversation had turned into them dating as of the first day.

She stood there for a long time, unable to figure it out.

She took a deep breath, pressing her thumping chest, lifted her hand, and tightly grasped the perfume that smelled of first love.

...

"Oh, Yining isn't home?" Xu Nianhua walked into the house and discovered that the lit room was unusually quiet.

"She's gone on a field trip with classmates; she doesn't know you're back yet." Pei Yicheng closed the door and naturally took her hand.

Xu Nianhua's face blushed, and she struggled to pull away.

But Pei Yicheng, as if he had anticipated it, held her hand tightly and said, "Aunt Jin isn't home."

Xu Nianhua followed him into the house, but her eyes clearly showed disbelief.

How could the house be empty if the lights were on?

After entering, the room was brightly lit, yet there was no one around.

"You lied to my older brother." Xu Nianhua looked around. The lights were on, but it was empty.

She remembered how some people had just now made firm promises to her brother that Yining was at home.

"Today is our first day of dating; how could we let others be in the way?" Pei Yicheng led her to the dining table and sat down, mysteriously saying, "Just wait."

Pei Yicheng, with his tall frame, entered the kitchen, and soon after, he brought out steaming dishes.

"Did Aunt Jin cook these before she left?" Xu Nianhua looked at the dishes and spoke without thinking.

Pei Yicheng's face stiffened, and he said, "There wasn't enough time today. Next time, I will cook for you."

Chapter 536: What if It's for a Lifetime?

"Can you cook?" Xu Nianhua's gaze fell on his slender fingers. His fingers were well-defined and long, looking exceptionally attractive—hardly the hands of someone who cooked.

"You'll know in the future," he replied.

Pei Yicheng didn't directly answer the question, but instead made several trips to the kitchen and brought the dishes to the table, even serving the rice.

Xu Nianhua looked at the white rice in front of her, and the several dishes on the table: sweet and sour ribs, stir-fried beef, and boiled fish slices—all her favorites, made precisely to the taste of South City.

"Try them," Pei Yicheng urged, seeing her not moving her chopsticks. "I had Aunt Jin prepare them in advance. I just warmed them up. You took a train yesterday and have been tired all-day today. After dinner, take a bath and rest well."

Pei Yicheng's fussy words gave Xu Nianhua a feeling of an old, tranquil couple living peacefully together.

In her previous life, she had died alone, except for Xiaoting, the only child she had adopted, who treated her with great respect.

After her rebirth, eating with her parents and older brothers felt familial and warm, but dining today with Pei Yicheng was a wholly different experience.

"The fish slices are very tender."

"The sweet and sour ribs, I remember you liked them," he mentioned.

"Aunt Jin is particularly good at frying beef," he added.

Pei Yicheng kept adding food to her bowl until it was almost overflowing.

"Yicheng, if you keep adding, I won't be able to finish it all," Xu Nianhua said, looking at her bowl piled high with food, gently reminding him.

Pei Yicheng chuckled and said, "No problem, if you can't finish, we can just leave it there. Tomorrow Aunt Jin can take it to feed the chickens."

Xu Nianhua looked at the untouched food in her bowl, his comment somehow making her feel as if she was having a meal with the chickens.

"What would you like to eat tomorrow? I'll cook for you," Pei Yicheng said, eager to try.

"Tomorrow I'm just going to grab something casual with my second brother outside."

Xu Nianhua thought, it's better not to come tomorrow—a woman and a man alone together.

The dinner was a bit warm, but also slightly awkward.

Xu Nianhua was going to do the dishes, but Pei Yicheng took over the task. He swiftly went into the kitchen with the dishes and began washing them, his adept movements not at all those of someone inexperienced.

"So you really can cook?" Xu Nianhua asked curiously, still feeling that Pei Yicheng didn't seem the type to cook.

"Mhm."

Pei Yicheng nodded affirmatively and said, "Tomorrow I'll cook dinner, invite your second brother over, and Yining will be back too. I'll make sure you all eat well."

"Yining is coming back tomorrow?" Xu Nianhua was surprised.

"Yes."

Pei Yicheng nodded affirmatively, glanced at her sideways, catching her little thoughts, and said, "You should stay here tomorrow as well. It's better than squeezing into your brother's shop—what if you catch a cold?"

"I'm not that delicate," Xu Nianhua said as she placed the last dish in the cupboard. "Pei Yicheng."

"Yicheng," Pei Yicheng corrected. "Or you can call me A'Cheng."

Pei Yicheng had sliced some fruit and casually grabbed a clean towel to wipe his hands.

"I really don't have any thoughts of dating," Xu Nianhua said, but his tall silhouette instantly closed in: "Then just let me know whenever you do think of dating."

This time, Xu Nianhua didn't dodge. She looked up and said, word by word, "What if it's for a lifetime?"

Chapter 537: Eyes Can Talk

"I'll wait a lifetime then," Pei Yicheng answered without even considering.

Xu Nianhua's brows furrowed slightly. She was about to say that his lack of consideration might be too rash.

Pei Yicheng's voice rang in her ear again, "I believe in myself."

"Ah..."

Xu Nianhua looked at him, bewildered. Had she misheard, or had he answered incorrectly?

His handsome face loomed closer in her view, growing larger until only a small fist's distance was left between them, their breaths mingling. Xu Nianhua involuntarily held her breath, that sense of helplessness coming over her again.

"Do I look handsome?" Pei Yicheng's voice was low and deep, matching those profound eyes.

Xu Nianhua's gaze circled his face, nodding definitely.

If he wasn't considered handsome, then no one in this world could be.

"Then, am I excellent?"

Nod.

"Then do you think I am talented?"

Nodded definitely.

"Then is my personality good?"

Xu Nianhua blinked, thinking that he appeared a bit cold but was kind-hearted and helpful. She nodded again definitely.

Pei Yicheng, satisfied with the answers, smiled slightly, revealing a shallow grin, "You must be falling for me, right?"

Nod.

Xu Nianhua was completely mesmerized by the slight smile on his lips.

When he wasn't smiling, he was intimidating and hard to approach, but when he did smile, his warm grin softened his facial features, and his dark, profound eyes seemed as if they could speak.

"Wait, what did you just ask?" Xu Nianhua asked, belatedly realizing.

"You must be falling for me, so how could I possibly wait a lifetime?" Pei Yicheng's voice was laced with a smile.

Xu Nianhua: "..."

So, he had asked all those questions just to tell her he was charming and he couldn't possibly wait a lifetime?

He really was overly confident.

Xu Nianhua's lips moved, wanting to put him down a notch, but looking at his face brimming with confidence, she found herself speechless. She pursed her lips, "We can give it a try."

The next moment, Xu Nianhua's hand was tightly grasped by a pair of slightly rough, large hands.

"You won't regret it," Pei Yicheng grinned, showing his neat, white teeth, looking somewhat goofy in Xu Nianhua's eyes.

Feeling his joy, she added, "But, let me say this upfront, if we find we're not suited for each other, then..."

Pei Yicheng interrupted her, "That day will never come."

...

"Ling Dong, you're really thoughtful, coming to keep me company because you knew I was alone, right?" After having a hearty meal with Ling Dong, Xu Nian'an was ready to head back to the shop.

Ling Dong was driving the car, not towards the shop, but back to Pei Yicheng's home.

"Ling Dong, what are you doing? I need to get back to the shop," Xu Nian'an said, puzzled.

"Yining went out sketching today and said she wouldn't be coming home," Ling Dong said at once.

Xu Nian'an's expression changed several times, he urged, "Ling Dong, then hurry up, why didn't you tell me earlier?"

"Pei Yicheng is really too cunning!"

Xu Nian'an said through gritted teeth. How did he phrase it when he took his little sister away?

Assured that Yining would definitely be at home.

"Ling Dong, let's drive faster."

Under Xu Nian'an's consistent urging, they finally arrived. As soon as the car stopped, he hurriedly pushed open the door and went inside.

As Xu Nianhua was eating fruit and watching TV, she jumped in surprise upon seeing Xu Nian'an, asking, "Second Brother, didn't you say you weren't coming?"

Chapter 538: Do I look like that kind of person?

Xu Nian'an kept a straight face and glared fiercely at Pei Yicheng before plopping down next to Xu Nianhua and sizing her up to ask, "You weren't taken advantage of, were you?"

Xu Nianhua: "..."

Big brother, do you have to be so blunt?

"Pei Yicheng, what did you tell me earlier." Seeing his little sister's flushed face, Xu Nian'an immediately stood up, as if ready to start a fight with Pei Yicheng.

"Brother."

Xu Nianhua quickly grabbed Xu Nian'an and whispered, "No, we just had a meal together."

"Really?" Xu Nian'an didn't quite believe it.

"Nian'an, do I seem like that kind of person?"

Didn't he just want to have a meal alone?

If he really didn't want to tell Xu Nian'an, would Xu Nian'an even know Yining wasn't home?

Didn't he bring Xu Nian'an here just because he was worried about Nianhua living alone feeling uncomfortable?

Xu Nian'an gritted his teeth: "It's not about seeming like it, you are that kind."

"Little sister, you and him..." Xu Nian'an quietly whispered to Xu Nianhua.

"I've decided to give it a try." Xu Nianhua had thought it through, and although it disrupted her plans, she wanted to follow her heart. Since she liked him, why not try?

This feeling was strange to her, yet, not unpleasant.

"Are you sure about this?" Xu Nian'an asked again.

Xu Nianhua nodded affirmatively.

"Little sister, no matter what decision you make, I'll support you. However, if he dares to bully you, just tell me." Xu Nian'an raised his fist, as if to remind Xu Nianhua that he was her rock, and he would help her no matter what happened.

"Big brother, you're so kind."

Xu Nianhua smiled happily, faltering with a hint of shyness in her eyes, she said, "Big brother, can we keep this from Mom and Dad for now?"

If Mom and Dad found out, wouldn't they rush over to Ningbei?

"We can keep it a secret, but you must not let Pei Yicheng take advantage of you," Xu Nian'an earnestly reminded her, adding, "Before marriage, you absolutely cannot be with him, understand?"

"Your blood type is special, if you do get pregnant, you must not abort it."

The more Xu Nian'an spoke, the more straightforward he became. Xu Nianhua glared at him and said, "Big brother, what are you thinking? Don't worry, nothing like that will happen before marriage."

Xu Nian'an wasn't as optimistic as his little sister. With her being so pretty, amid the flowers and moonlight, could Pei Yicheng really restrain himself?

"Big brother, don't you want to pursue Su Xi? Otherwise, when school starts, I can ask Jiayi to find out what Su Xi likes," Xu Nianhua changed the subject.

Xu Nian'an quickly shook his head and said, "No, right now I just want to make money and study hard. You should do the same. Don't get so caught up in dating that you neglect your studies."

Xu Nianhua: "..."

In the following days, the Xu siblings busied themselves with the shop's business. Pei Yining returned, and he and Xu Nianhua were inseparable.

\*

South City.

Once Ji Shuyuan received the goods, he instantly understood why Xu Nian'an was so confident.

Even he, as a man, found these items particularly beautiful. Each package was clearly marked with the cost price and selling price. Xu Nianhua's graceful handwriting made everything perfectly clear to Ji Shuyuan.

Instead of selling the large batch of goods right away, Ji Shuyuan brought them home first to show his grandfather, Ji Xinghua, while also getting to know this batch of items. Soon, he'd be able to value the goods and know what price to set.

"Grandpa, I'm confident we can make money," Ji Shuyuan said with full conviction.

Chapter 539: We Made Money

South City, beside the bustling street.

Ji Shuyuan carried a woven bag on his back and a table, setting it up directly by the street.

On the table, he took items out of the bag at his feet one by one, various types of hair clips and beautiful scarves, which he displayed using a stick he'd fashioned into a scarf rack. The colorful scarves fluttered in the wind, drawing a lot of attention.

The street he'd chosen was one that the people of South City loved to stroll through, teeming with pedestrians. Before he'd even finished setting up, people began asking for prices.

"How much for this scarf?"

Ji Shuyuan paused in arranging his goods, glanced at the scarves, and, with a smile, quoted a price. Then he added, "These come from Ningbei. My cousin is studying there, and these are the trendiest scarves in Ningbei."

"From Ningbei?" The girl who had asked, initially thinking it a bit expensive, changed her mind when she heard they were from Ningbei. Plus, she'd never seen such beautiful scarves in her county. After trying one on—finding it warm and pretty—she immediately paid for it.

Ji Shuyuan's first transaction went exceptionally smoothly.

"Lili, why don't you buy one too? They're so pretty." The girl who had just bought a scarf urged her friend, then turned her eyes to the hair clips on the table. After asking for prices one by one, she ended up buying a bunch without realizing it.

Once people saw others buying, more and more crowded around. Ji Shuyuan was non-stop busy, his throat went dry, but the woven bag of goods sold out in a frenzy.

Ji Shuyuan looked at the empty woven bag and the bulging wallet; ignoring his sore throat, he happily went home with the table on his back and the bag in hand.

"Grandpa."

Ji Shuyuan headed straight for his grandfather's room.

It was just four in the afternoon, the time when his grandfather usually woke up from his nap.

"Shuyuan is back?" Ji Xinghua had indeed just woken up and was about to go out for a walk when he heard his grandson's happy voice. His gaze fell on Ji Shuyuan's empty woven bag and he asked, "Did you sell everything?"

"Mhm, mhm." Ji Shuyuan gleefully poured the bulging money bag out, and various denominations of bills covered the bed.

"Close the door."

Ji Xinghua's pupils contracted, and he quickly said.

Ji Shuyuan obediently closed the door and said excitedly, "Sold out, everything's sold out."

"Good," Ji Xinghua praised, "Our Shuyuan can make money too."

"Go drink some water. What has happened to your voice?" Ji Xinghua sat at the bedside, neatly stacking the bills by denomination.

Ji Shuyuan drank a full glass of water and excitedly started to count the money with Ji Xinghua.

He had never seen so much money in his life.

When he had to raise money for his grandfather's treatment, he only thought about it being other people's money, necessary for his grandfather's treatment, and he hadn't paid much attention to it. But this time was different; this was money he had earned by selling goods himself.

"Grandpa, we've made money."

Ji Shuyuan and Ji Xinghua counted three times, totaling three hundred yuan.

Three hundred! That was enough to completely cover the initial investment, and he had only sold half of the goods.

"Right, we've made money." Ji Xinghua's eyes also brimmed with happiness. Originally, he thought it would be good to make a few tens of yuan; who could have imagined making so much on the first go?

"Shuyuan, remember Nian'an's kindness; you guys are cousins, but don't let that relationship become distant." Ji Xinghua reminded him, finally feeling as though a huge weight had been lifted from his chest. His grandson was capable of earning money; from now on, they wouldn't need to rely on his mother to provide for his education or marriage.

Chapter 540: Grandpa, I will take care of you from now on

"Grandpa, I'm thinking with this money, we can stock up on more goods," Ji Shuyuan analyzed. "If we take in goods a few more times, we'll also have some surplus cash. Grandpa, don't worry, I'll take care of you in the future."

Ji Shuyuan felt that today was the happiest day of his life. He definitely wanted to make lots of money in the future, move out with Grandpa, and let Grandpa live in a spacious and bright room, instead of being cramped in this small one.

"Good, I'll be waiting," Ji Xinghua said, grinning, and he even broke precedent by drinking a little alcohol that evening.

Ji Shan guessed that the things Ji Shuyuan was selling must be doing well, but he didn't reveal his thoughts, merely joining Ji Xinghua in a drink.

The next morning, Ji Shuyuan called Xu Nian'an right away.

He dialed Pei Yicheng's number and, after some roundabout contacting, Ji Shuyuan found out that Xu Nian'an had already sent out the second batch of goods yesterday.

"Nian'an, thank you," Ji Shuyuan said, gripping the phone tightly.

"We're brothers."

Xu Nian'an said with a grin, "Nian'an, after school starts, I suggest you do like me and find a store to sell these goods exclusively. After these few batches of sales, you'll have enough to rent a small store."

"However, Shuyuan, about this matter, with your aunt..." Xu Nian'an wanted to remind him but wasn't sure how to say it.

The aunt, that is, Ji Shuyuan's biological mother Deng Juan, was only concerned about her elder son Ji Shuming. If Deng Juan found out about this business, Ji Shuyuan might well be left out of it.

He knew this all too well, but to bluntly tell Ji Shuyuan seemed akin to sowing discord between him, his mother, and his brother.

"I know," Ji Shuyuan changed the subject. "Nian'an, how should I send this money to you?"

"Don't rush, wait until the third batch of goods arrives, then send the money all together," Xu Nian'an finished speaking and shared some tips on selling the goods with Ji Shuyuan before hanging up the phone.

After Ji Shuyuan hung up, he sighed deeply. Xu Nian'an had sent three batches of goods to him, maybe just as his aunt intended, wanting to help him and Grandpa.

But...

Ji Shuyuan took in a deep breath, thinking of his mother's treatment toward him, how her favoritism was so blatant. The house Ji Shuming was living in now was the one their mother had divided up for him.

Ji Shuming was married, so he stopped mentioning the house, but why couldn't his mother support his own desires to study and make money?

Ji Shuming, time after time, took money from their mother, who thought Ji Shuyuan was in the dark, yet he knew it all.

Ji Shuyuan shook his head, casting these thoughts aside. He continued to carry the remaining goods on his back and sold them. He needed to make money, lots and lots of money, enough to rent a place and take better care of Grandpa.

\*

"Sis, you think, each time we send goods back, it's just too expensive," Xu Nian'an said with pursed lips, realizing that sending goods back home was costly, cutting at least one-third of their profits.

"If, if only there were cheaper trucks available," Xu Nianhua couldn't help but think of the logistics and express delivery services of the future, but alas, it was not to be. Instead of express delivery, not even freight services were available - everything had to be mailed through the post office.

"We're still doing fine, splitting it into three shipments." Xu Nianhua and Xu Nian'an had specifically calculated it to find the cheapest way to send the goods.

Pei Yicheng's voice rose from behind them, "Our Liunian transports a batch of goods to South City every three days."

"That's wonderful, the next time we send goods to Shuyuan, we can ride along with your shipment," Xu Nianhua said, her face alight with joy.

Xu Nian'an looked at Pei Yicheng with a complex expression, finding that he was always keen to impress his little sister.