

Chapter 151: Breakfast

At this moment, Cheng Che who had just taken a seat at the dining table overheard Jiang Jin's words and said after taking a big sip of coffee, "Grandma, you must live to 100!"

Jiang Jin studied Cheng Che's face and asked, "Why are your dark circles so bad?"

Cheng Che took a bite of the toast that had been prepared before he said with a sigh, "It's the end of the year; there are too many things to deal with in the company. However, brother is always slacking off and shoving all the work to me. Grandma, you have to scold him. He's been too idle recently and not doing his job!" After he finished complaining, he glanced at the staircase as though confirming his words were not overheard by Mu Chen.

Jiang Jin narrowed her eyes and asked jokingly, "Cheng Che, do you plan to be as lazy as Mu Chen?"

Cheng Che nodded before he quickly shook his head. "How can that be? If both of us are lazy, what will happen to the company?"

Jiang Jin shook her in exasperation. "Cheng Che, tell me if you want to rest..."

Cheng Che sighed. "Grandma, I've only slept three hours a day for the past week..."

Jiang Jin pointed upstairs and said, "Your brother is probably going to sleep in..."

Cheng Che took a bite of the toast before he said through gritted teeth, "How's this fair?"

He put the toast down, about to rise from his seat when Jiang Jin stopped him and asked, "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to wake Brother Chen up! Why can he sleep in?" Cheng Che said, expressing his dissatisfaction.

"Because he has a wife, and you're single!" Jiang Jin replied domineeringly.

Cheng Che said, crestfallen, "Grandma, how can you discriminate against single people?"

Jiang Jin patted Cheng Che's hand and said with a smile, "Well, there's nothing I can do about it. However, I have a solution for you..."

Cheng Che looked at Jiang Jin curiously upon hearing these words.

"Find a wife for yourself..." Jiang Jin said with a smile.

Cheng Che choked on his coffee and coughed violently before he grabbed a piece of tissue to wipe his mouth.

Cheng Che complained, aggrieved, "Grandma, I'm not lucky like my brother. As soon as he went out, he picked up a wife!"

At this moment, Mu Chen's faint voice rang from the stairs. "Who are you talking about?"

Jiang Jin turned and saw her grandson holding the hand of her well-dressed and gentle daughter-in-law. She could not but feel happy all over again.

“Song Ning, come here quickly. I’ve asked Ah Yu to stew some bird’s nests for you. Drink it while it’s hot!”

Sister Yu brought a bowl of stewed bird’s nest and placed it in front of Song Ning with a big smile on her face.

The two elders looked at Song Ning and urged her, “Hurry up and drink it while it’s hot.”

As for the two grandsons, it was as though they did not exist.

Song Ning looked at Jiang Jin and Sister Yu in confusion.

Jiang Jin said, “You’re a doctor; you should take good care of yourself.”

Song Ning only nodded and obediently drank the stewed bird’s nest.

The two elders wore a satisfied expression as they watched Song Ning drink the stewed bird’s nest.

Meanwhile, Mu Chen pushed a glass of milk in front of Song Ning as he asked Cheng Che, “What’s the progress of the five mergers?”

Cheng Che looked at Mu Chen resentfully. “President Mu, can you please be reasonable? This is clearly your job, but you shoved them to me. Not only that, but you even dare to ask me about the progress!”

Mu Chen took a sip of his coffee before he replied, “Didn’t you hear Grandma? You’re single, and I have a wife. It’s natural that you have to pick up some of my work. I have to accompany my wife after all. Right, Grandma?”

Jiang Jin nodded with a smile before she comforted Cheng Che. “Your brother really isn’t trying to bully you this time. You’ll understand once you have a wife. At that time, you’ll be able to sleep in as well...”

Upon hearing the implications of Jiang Jin’s words, Song Ning’s face flushed red immediately.

Cheng Che sighed. “Fine. Then, I’ll stay single for the time being. Otherwise, who will do all the work?”

Jiang Jin hit Cheng Che’s arms. “You useless thing! Why don’t you think about marrying Jiahui as soon as possible?”

Cheng Che said, aggrieved, “Grandma, I’m not lucky like my brother. I can’t get married just because I want to. For me, my spring has barely begun. Grandma, you have to be patient...”

Jiang Jin said disappointedly, “You handled the matters in the company so well. Why is it so difficult for you to marry a wife? Tell me, what is so difficult? Grandma will help you!”

Upon hearing these words, Cheng Che waved his hand and hastily said, “No, no, no. I can do it myself!”

Jiang Jin said threateningly, “Let me tell you, I only approve of Jiahui. You better work quickly! I’m old now; you can’t make me wait for too long!”

Cheng Che nearly choked on his food. “Grandma! Why are you saying this? Didn’t you say earlier that you’ll work hard to live to 100 years old?”

Jiang Jin did not care about what she said earlier. “I want to see your brother and your sister-in-law giving birth to a great-grandson for me.. You’ll be a sinner if you anger me to death because you fail to marry a wife!”

Chapter 152: Yearning

Cheng Che put his chopsticks down; he had lost his appetite. “It seems like the wheel of fortune has turned, and I’m getting the shorter end of the stick...”

Mu Chen cleared his throat before he said, “Therefore, you must do more good deeds and share my workload. There will be rewards waiting for you in the future!”

Cheng Che widened his eyes and said, “Brother, what do you mean? Don’t tell me you’re thinking of skipping work today!”

Mu Chen straightened his shirt as he replied with a straight face, “I plan to accompany Song Ning to buy things in preparation for the new year.”

“Shopping in preparation for the new year?!” Cheng Che cried out in despair. “Brother, there are still three days left until the new year. Moreover, we already have a mountainous pile of things at home in preparation for the new year. Grandma and Sister Yu bought so many things because they said it’s going to be lively this year. However, the only addition is sister-in-law. If you buy any more things, we don’t even need to buy anything else for half a year. Brother, even if you want to accompany your wife, can’t you come up with a better excuse? Please be more serious!”

Mu Chen nodded. “I’m very serious about accompanying my wife to shop for new year goods. It’s not just about food; there are new year gifts to consider as well. Song Ning, have you thought about what to give Cheng Che?”

The change of topic was so fast that Song Ning almost could not keep up. She was still sympathizing with Cheng Che due to his workload. In the end, she only said jokingly, “Can I give him a wife?”

Jiang Jin immediately said, “Of course, you can! If you invite Jiahui over during the new year, you can consider it as a gift to him. In my opinion, if we wait for him to make a move, it’s going to be a long wait. Ningning, you have to help him.”

Song Ning hurriedly nodded. “Okay, Grandma. Jiahui will definitely come as long as I tell her there’s delicious food!”

Cheng Che took a sip of his coffee, trying to conceal his excitement. With the anticipation for the coming days, he left in a daze and diligently went to work.

Everyone looked at his retreating back with pity.

“Is this really okay?” Song Ning asked weakly.

Mu Chen rose to his feet and said, "Grandma, I'm going with Song Ning for a while."

Jiang Jin waved him off. "Go, go. Take your time and have fun! Song Ning has been exhausted recently so take this time to relax!" Then, she turned around and asked Sister Yu, "Don't you think I'm such a magnanimous and understanding elder? Quick, praise me!"

Sister Yu laughed before she said, "Yes, Old Madam is the most magnanimous and understanding elder and is loved by her grandson and granddaughter-in-law."

Jiang Jin smiled proudly.

After Song Ning bade farewell to Jiang Jin and Sister Yu, Mu Chen pulled her away.

The liveliness from earlier disappeared as silence returned to the dining room.

Jiang Jin sighed and rose from her seat.

Sister Yu stepped forward and held Jiang Jin's arm. "Shall we go for a walk in the greenhouse?"

Jiang Jin did not object, but she looked a little lonely.

Sister Yu asked softly, "What's wrong? Weren't you very happy just a moment ago?"

Jiang Jin sighed. "It's almost the new year. I'm afraid there won't be a complete family reunion in this lifetime."

Realization finally dawned on Sister Yu. She said, "Old Madam, think about it. Perhaps, a complete family reunion might not be a good thing for now. Besides, I think it'll be very lively this year..."

After a long time, Jiang Jin finally nodded. "You're right. What's the point of a complete family reunion if no one's happy? It's fine as long as everyone's happy. It'd be perfect if we have a baby in the family next year. Cheng Che must hurry up and get a wife as well so it'll be even more lively!"

Sister Yu went along with Jiang Jin and said, "That's right! Miss Jiahui is even more energetic than Young Madam. When that time comes, this house will be very lively. Moreover, both of them are good friends! This is something everyone will be envious of!"

Jiang Jin's mood improved upon hearing these words. "Alright! Let's exercise and live a good life! As long as we live well, nothing else matters!"

Sister Yu smiled and said, "That's right, that's right. Let's sort out the ingredients and goods we bought for the new year after this and plan for the new year. Moreover, we also have to plan for your gathering with the other Old Madams like the previous years. Previously, they even said they want to visit to try the Young Madam's cooking. When that time comes, you'll be able to enjoy yourself even more!"

Jiang Jin said, "I'm just afraid Song Ning will be exhausted."

"It's alright. When the time comes, I'll help the Young Madam. I promise you that I won't tire out your precious granddaughter-in-law!"

The entire morning, Sister Yu thought of various topics to divert Jiang Jin's mind from her son who was not in the country..

Chapter 153: Homecoming

In the afternoon.

At this moment, Mr. Jiang, the butler, hurried in and called out, "Old Madam, Old Madam!"

Jiang Jin was with Sister Yu, going through the gift list with her reading glasses. When she heard Mr. Jiang, she looked up and asked, "What's wrong? Is something on fire? Why are you so anxious?"

Mr. Jiang took a moment to calm down before he said, "Old Madam, look who's back!"

When Jiang Jin looked to the side, she saw a middle-aged couple holding hands, standing at the entrance.

The man and Mu Chen looked like two peas in a pod. The only difference was the man was a lot older. The wrinkles on his face told of the passing of time and the vicissitudes of life.

The woman was slender and pretty. At this moment, she wore a gentle but timid smile on her face.

Jiang Jin rose to her feet immediately; her body trembled.

Sister Yu hurriedly stepped forward to support her. "Old Madam."

Jiang Jin took off her reading glasses and took a few steps forward. She was not dreaming; her son, Mu Qing, whom she thought about day and night was standing in front of her.

Mu Qing took a few steps forward before he fell to his knees. "Mother!"

Tears streamed down Jiang Jin's face as she slowly walked forward. She bent down and cupped her son's face as she studied him carefully.

"Mother, I'm an unfilial child!" Mu Qing said softly as he looked at Jiang Jin.

Jiang Jin looked at her son intently for a moment before she straightened her back. She turned around and calmly said, "Ah Jiang, arrange a room for them in a hotel."

"Madam!" Sister Yu felt distressed for Jiang Jin. After all, she knew how Jiang Jin felt.

Liang Zhou, who was standing at the entrance, walked over and kneeled on the ground next to Mu Qing as well.

Jiang Jin did not turn around as she said lightly, "Alright, go..."

Mu Qing sounded teary as he said, "Mother, I brought Little Zhou back for the new year..."

Jiang Jin tried her best to control her emotions before she said, "Go. Mu Chen should be home soon... He's married now..."

Mu Qing's tears finally streamed down his face.

Liang Zhou said softly, "Mother, we just want to spend the new year with you. When we heard the Mu Chen has gotten married and has a family of his own, we thought perhaps, the knot in his heart has

loosened as well..." After a brief pause, she continued to say, "It's fine if we have to apologize to him and his wife. We just want to reunite as a family. You're getting old in age, and Mu Qing has missed you much over the years. Mother, he's your only son after all..."

Jiang Jin's body trembled slightly. Despite trying her best to suppress her emotions, she could no longer hold back her tears.

Sister Yu supported Jiang Jin and said in a soft voice, "Old Madam, why don't we let Master stay? With the Young Madam around, Young Master should be more patient..."

Jiang Jin did not know what to say.

At this moment, Mu Qing kowtowed and cried out, "Mother, I'm sorry."

Liang Zhou quickly followed suit and kowtowed as well.

Mr. Jiang could not bear it and stepped forward to persuade Jiang Jin, "Old Madam, why don't we let Master stay? We'll ask the Young Madam to speak the Young Master..."

Jiang Jin turned around and said through her tears, "Don't use Song Ning to pressure Mu Chen. I don't want this to affect their relationship!" She took the piece of tissue Sister Yu handed her and wiped her years away before she said, "Get up!"

Mu Qing hesitated for a moment but did not dare to disobey his mother. He pulled Liang Zhou up as well.

Jiang Jin did not even spare Liang Zhou a glance as she said to her son, "I can't allow you to stay. The matter between you and your son should be dealt with by both of you. I didn't intervene in the past, and I won't intervene now."

Mu Qing lowered his head.

Jiang Jin sighed. Her heart could not help but soften as she looked at her son. "He's married now, and he has a good relationship with his wife. However, I won't allow anyone to use his wife to pressure him. You have to take responsibility for your mistakes. Don't expect others to help you, understand?"

Mu Qing nodded gently.

At the same time, Liang Zhou said softly, "Mother, Mu Qing misses you very much!"

However, Jiang Jin did not look at her nor did she respond to her..

Chapter 154: Injured

Song Ning's voice rang out first before she appeared. "Grandma, we're back!"

Song Ning was a reserved person; it was rare for her to show her excitement. When Jiang Jin heard Song Ning's voice, she knew Song Ning was especially happy.

Song Ning finally walked in with a large box in her arms. It blocked her line of sight, but she refused to let Mu Chen carry it.

Meanwhile, Mu Chen hovered next to her, just in case she needed his help. A dotting smile could be seen on his face as he reminded her to be careful. He did not move his eyes away from Song Ning as he complained to Jiang Jin, "Grandma, you should tell Song Ning to take care of herself! She doesn't listen to me at all."

For some reason, Song Ning felt the atmosphere felt wrong. Her line of sight was blocked by the box so she could only turn to look at Mu Chen. She was taken aback when she saw the livid expression on Mu Chen's face.

At this moment, Sister Yu quickly stepped forward and took the box from Song Ning. She asked, "Young Madam, what did you buy?"

It was after Sister Yu took the box away that Song Ning saw two strangers in front of her. No, they were not complete strangers. One of them looked slightly familiar. She subconsciously held Mu Chen's hand; she could feel his hand was extremely cold. She called out to him in a soft voice, "Mu Chen."

Mu Chen's entire body was stiff. It was only when Song Ning called out to him that he seemed to regain his senses slightly. When he turned to look at her, his gaze was blank.

She looked at him and said with a faint smile, "Hubby, I'm thirsty..."

Mu Chen replied dully, "Okay, I'll get you a glass of water."

Following that, Mu Chen's eyes were trained up ahead, ignoring everyone; they did not stray at all as he walked toward the kitchen. His steps seemed slightly unsteady and his back was straight.

"Grandma?" Song Ning looked at Jiang Jin anxiously.

Jiang Jin said to Mu Qing and Liang Zhou in a trembling voice, "Did you see that? Did you see that? Why aren't you leaving yet? Do you want his life? Or do you want mine?"

"Mom..." Mu Qing's voice was filled with guilt and pain. Who knew if it was for his mother, his son, or both?

Song Ning knew this was not something she could intervene in. She said anxiously, "Grandma, I'm going to have a look at Mu Chen."

"Go. Hurry up," Jiang Jin said, equally as anxious.

...

When Song Ning rushed into the kitchen, she saw Mu Chen did not even have a steady grip on the glass of water. When he dropped the glass of water on the counter, he absentmindedly reached out to pick up the broken shards.

Song Ning hurriedly grabbed his hand.

His fingers and palm were red from being scalded by the boiling water, and the shards from the broken glass left a few cuts on two of his fingers and palm.

Song Ning calmly brought the first aid kit out. She quickly ran his hand under the cool tap water before she stopped the bleeding, disinfected the cuts, applied the medication, and bandaged the cuts. After that, she applied burn ointment on the scalded skin.

Subsequently, she lifted his hand and kissed the skin that was unaffected. She smiled and said, "Look at how careless you are. All I asked for was a glass of water, but you ended up injuring yourself. How are you going to serve me in the future?"

Mu Chen stared at Song Ning's warm smile in a daze. He raised his injured hand and slowly pulled her into his arms with his other hand.

Song Ning reciprocated by wrapping her arms around his waist.

He rested his chin on the top of her head.

She could feel the sorrow that his body emanated at this moment. She patted his back gently before she said, "Be good. I'm going to make something delicious for Grandma to eat today? Can you help me out?"

Mu Chen nodded slightly against Song Ning's head.

...

When the couple came out from the kitchen, only Jiang Jin and Sister Yu were left. Everything seemed as it was before. It was as though the two strangers that were here earlier were just a product of their hallucinations.

When Jiang Jin saw Mu Chen's bandaged hand, she panicked. "What happened?"

Song Ning smiled and said reassuringly, "Grandma, it's nothing. It's just a small cut. I've already treated him..."

Mu Chen was still in a daze.

Song Ning led him to the couch and pulled Jiang Jin over. "Grandma, look at him. He got hurt just trying to get me a glass of water. I understand now why you said he's unreliable..."

Jiang Jin's feelings were complex when she saw the warm smile on Song Ning's face. She held Song Ning's hand. "Ningning..." However, she did not finish her words. Only her eyes reddened.

Song Ning patted Jiang Jin's hand as she called out, "Sister Yu, I bought new presents for you and Grandma!"

Sister Yu rushed over upon hearing Song Ning's words. Similar to Jiang Jin, her eyes were red as well. Needless to say, she understood Song Ning's intention. She cleverly played along. "Young Madam, you bought a present for me as well?"

Song Ning was moved. Sister Yu was truly like family as well. She hastily said, "Of course! Have a look!"

Song Ning let go of Jiang Jin's hand to open the huge box. It was a little difficult so Sister Yu helped her.

When Sister Yu saw what was in the box, she was stunned.

It was two sets of Chinese-style jackets and skirts. One was red, and the other was pink.

“These... These are...” Sister Yu was speechless..

Chapter 155: Salvation

Song Ning pulled Jiang Jin over. “Look, Grandma, these are the clothes that I personally designed for you and Sister Yu for the new year! What do you think of this color? Does it look good?”

Jiang Jin reached out to touch the bright red clothes and asked, “This is mine?”

Song Ning nodded.

Sister Yu’s hand trembled a little. She touched the pink set and asked, “And this is mine?”

Song Ning nodded. “Do both of you like the colors I’ve chosen for both of you?”

The two elders replied in unison, “Yes!”

Song Ning smiled. Then, she reached out to unfold the red qipao. She explained, “This is a modern twist to the qipao. I didn’t completely design it on my own; I had Sister An Ran’s help. I drew the embroidery though. The red isn’t too gaudy; it’s just nice and festive. It’s perfect for the new year. I hope both of you like the design of the qipaos. This is my first time trying to design qipaos so you’re not allowed to disdain it.” When she spoke, she was bubbly. The red qipao she held up made her face look incredibly fair and delicate.

Tears brimmed in Jiang Jin’s eyes again, and she quickly wiped them away.

Song Ning pretended not to see it. After putting the red qipao aside, she unfolded the pink qipao.

Sister Yu could hardly tear her eyes away from it.

Finally, Song Ning said brightly, “Sister Yu, why don’t you and Grandma try on the qipaos? If it doesn’t fit, there’s still time to alter it. We should dress in festive colors to celebrate the first day of the new year, okay?” Then, she lowered her voice and said conspiratorially, “These designs are one of a kind. They’re Sister An Ran and my work, after all. I guarantee no one else will be wearing the same clothes...”

After she finished speaking, she urged the two elders to try on the qipaos.

After the elders left, she turned and tugged on Mu Chen’s sleeve. “Hubby, can you help me in the kitchen? I’ll make some fruit tea for you...”

This was the second time Song Ning had referred to Mu Chen as hubby outside of their bedroom.

Mu Chen’s eyes flashed as she tiptoed and gently kissed his chin. This was the highest she could reach. Well, if Mu Chen had lowered his head, she would be able to kiss his lips. Alas, he was not in the right state of mind now.

Mu Chen followed Song Ning and accompanied her in the kitchen. Since his hand was injured, she did not allow him to wet his hand. Most of the time, he was just standing next to her, watching her work and listening to her talk about the ingredients she was using. Although he was listening to her, he was distracted. It was as though his soul had left his body.

At this moment, Jiang Jin and Sister Yu entered the kitchen, wearing the qipaos.

Song Ning asked proudly, "What do you think? Don't you think I have talent in this regard as well? To think my mother underestimated me and didn't let me learn from her..."

Jiang Jin smiled and turned around slowly so Song Ning could have a look. "My granddaughter-in-law is good at everything!"

On the other hand, Sister Yu tugged at the qipao gently as she asked, seemingly ill at ease, "Is it appropriate for me to wear this? Won't I steal the limelight from the other Old Madams?"

Song Ning laughed. "Sister Yu, you're too adorable!"

...

Song Ning cooked lunch for everyone today. Although Mu Chen was her assistant, he had, in fact, done nothing.

It was clear that he was not himself; he was unusually silent.

Song Ning would tease Jiang Jin and sister Yu from time to time, and the atmosphere was very harmonious.

Song Ning picked out a few dishes and placed them in a food box. She asked Sister Yu to arrange for someone to send them over to Cheng Che. She said, "It's too cruel that he has to work during the weekend. We have to at least make sure he gets to eat something delicious. With that, he'll be motivated to work as well!"

Sister Yu smiled. "Young Master will be jealous!"

Song Ning glanced at Mu Chen and said, "It's fine. I'll coax him if he gets jealous. He's very easy to coax..."

Sister Yu felt really grateful. Her smile was filled with gratitude for Song Ning. Earlier, she felt as though her heart was in her throat. She was afraid Mu Chen would fly into a murderous rage when he saw that woman. If that happened, who knew if it would affect Jiang Jin's health.

Mu Qing had come to apologize sincerely, and Sister Yu could tell Jiang Jin knew her son was sincere as well. However, that woman, that woman who resembled the Madam, clearly bore ill intentions.

With those two around, it seemed like the new year was going to be ruined.

Fortunately, the Young Madam was around. She was quick-witted as well. With her presence, the Young Master did not lose his temper. Although the Young Master was clearly affected, at least the Old Madam did not have to witness an explosive fight between the father and son. For this, Sister Yu was incredibly grateful.

In Sister Yu's opinion, the Young Madam was like an angel sent from the heavens to save this family. She could not help the hope that bloomed in her heart. Perhaps, the Young Madam would be able to ease the conflict between the Young Master and the Master. Perhaps, this family would be harmonious once

again! After all, the fact that the Young Master did not erupt in an explosive rage today was something she did not dare to imagine in the past..

Chapter 156: Wishes

After dinner, Mu Chen returned to the study.

After Mu Chen left, Jiang Jin put her chopsticks down and sighed.

Sister Yu could not help but feel distressed for Jiang Jin. She pushed a small bowl of soup in front of Jiang Jin and said, "Old Madam, have a few spoonfuls of soup. Young Madam has been simmering this soup the entire afternoon."

Jiang Jin nodded and drank a few spoonfuls of soup. "It's delicious..."

Song Ning moved to sit next to Jiang Jin before she held Jiang Jin's hand to check Jiang Jin's pulse. Following that, she smiled gently and said, "Grandma, if you're not in a good mood, don't force yourself. It's not a bad thing to give an outlet to your emotions. If you're not happy, you can scold Mu Chen. Don't feel reluctant to scold your grandson..."

Jiang Jin chuckled, amused by Song Ning's words. She tapped Song Ning's forehead and said, "Ningning, you've been led astray by me..."

Song Ning rested her head on Jiang Jin's shoulder and said, "Grandma, I'll stand on your side no matter what. If Mu Chen doesn't stand on our side, I'll definitely think of a way to pull him to our side. What do you think??"

Needless to say, Jiang Jin understood Song Ning's meaning. She looked at Song Ning affectionately and said, "Back then, Grandma made a choice. Once I made a choice, I shouldn't regret it. I'll persevere. Mu Chen's heart is scarred by the matter of the past; for a long time, I was his only supporter. Now that he has you, he has gotten so much better. You can't send him back to hell..."

Song Ning rose to her feet and moved to stand behind Jiang Jin before she began to massage Jiang Jin's shoulders. "But Grandma, do you regret your decision?"

Jiang Jin shook her head and sighed. "How can I regret it? Although I wish I didn't have to make such a choice, I won't regret it for the rest of my life. It's fate; there's no helping it..."

Following that, Jiang Jin patted Song Ning's hand, indicating there was no need to massage her shoulders. When she rose to her feet, she said to Sister Yu, "Ah Yu, accompany me to the greenhouse for a walk. I should take a look at my flowers."

Sister Yu quickly went forward to help Jiang Jin.

Meanwhile, Song Ning brewed a pot of fruit tea before she went upstairs. When she pushed the door to the study open, she saw Mu Chen sitting in front of the computer. Although his eyes were staring at the computer screen, there was no movement from him at all.

It was only when Song Ning entered the study that Mu Chen slowly leaned against the chair.

Song Ning said, 'Come and have some tea. The dishes today are slightly greasy; the tea will help with digestion.'

Mu Chen rose to his feet and moved to sit across from Song Ning.

Song Ning asked, "Do you want to play a game of Go with me?"

"Alright," Mu Chen replied.

Song Ning's Go and chess skills were quite good.

Coincidentally, Mu Chen had learned the two games when he was young. Previously, the duo would often play a game of Go after dinner; both of them would take turns winning and losing.

However, Mu Chen's mind was clearly not on the game today. When he regained his senses, he was stunned by the number of his Go pieces that Song Ning had obtained.

Song Ning held onto one of the pieces as she asked gently, "Are you willing to share your thoughts with me?"

Mu Chen's hand that was about to pick up a Go piece stilled immediately.

Song Ning continued to say, "My grandfather once told me that a game of Go is the same as leading a troop of army. You have to strategize to win. However, when it comes to the unpredictability of the human heart, it's naturally more difficult to plan and strategize..."

Mu Chen understood the meaning hidden in Song Ning's words. After a moment, he asked, "How's Grandma?"

"She went to the greenhouse with Sister Yu. I checked her pulse earlier; I can tell she's troubled and upset. I'll brew some medicine for her to drink at night. It's not a big problem..."

Mu Chen did not respond to Song Ning's words. Instead, he asked, "Before we get home, were they getting along harmoniously?"

'So this is what is weighing on his mind?'

"Ningning, do you think I'm unfilial? Grandma is getting old, but she can't even see her son," Mu Chen said with a hint of uncertainty.

Song Ning met Mu Chen's gaze and replied, "Both you and Grandma consider each other's feelings. Both of you are willing to sacrifice what you want to fulfill the other person's wish..."

Mu Chen shook his head and said, "No, Grandma is as you said, but I'm not. I'm a selfish person..."

"Mu Chen, Grandma is old. I think her greatest wish is to be with her son and grandson. Moreover, she knows if she insists on the matter, you won't refuse her. However, she didn't do that because she doesn't want to hurt you. However, for you, the hurt has penetrated deep into your heart, right?" Song Ning asked softly.

"Yes." Mu Chen nodded.

"Then, are you willing to endure your pain for Grandma's sake?" Song Ning asked.

After a long time, Mu Chen nodded slightly. "I'm willing..."

Song Ning reached out and held his hand as she said, "Mu Chen, don't worry. You still have me. In the future, we'll have our own children. Our little family will definitely live a happy life!"

Mu Chen was incredibly moved by Song Ning's words to him. He said, "Song Ning, when I saw them, I really couldn't control my emotions at all. My mother was suffering so much back then; they bullied her too much. They harmed her and ruined her life. What right do they have to live happily and enjoy their lives after doing such wicked things? My mother died because of them; she was so depressed.. Why did she have to suffer while they remained happy?"

Chapter 157: Compromise

Mu Chen clenched his hands tightly, unable to vent his pain.

Upon seeing this, Song Ning moved to his side and hugged him.

Mu Chen rested his head against her chest as he said sorrowfully, "The person my father wanted to marry back then was my aunt. However, my aunt broke off the engagement and eloped with another man. In order to preserve their reputation, my maternal grandfather and grandmother decided to marry my mother off in her sister's place instead since they were twins. My mother did not want to deceive the Mu family and came clean about her identity to Grandma and my father despite the Liang family's wish."

"After the pain subsided, my father forgave my mother, and Grandma accepted her. To be honest, if there weren't any feelings between my parents at that time, they would not have given birth to me. My mother was stubborn, especially when it came to love and marriage."

"After marrying into the Mu family, my mother severed her ties with her family. She said when they used her as sister's replacement, essentially selling her off, she had already decided to sever ties with them. Therefore, she had no one to rely on since then and devoted herself wholeheartedly to Grandma, my father, and the Mu family."

"However, in the end, my father still betrayed her. What made it worse was he betrayed her with my aunt who put her in this predicament in the first place. How could my mother endure something like this? Her life was ruined by her parents, her sister, and her husband. In the end, even Grandma and I couldn't pull her away from the edge; she could no longer hold on. For a period, she found meaning in Yi Yao at the point when she was so badly hurt that she was barely holding on. Unfortunately, in the end, it was not enough; she no longer had the strength nor courage to hold on..."

This was the first time Mu Chen had spoken so much in a breath.

Song Ning could only hug him and pat him gently. She understood the pain he was suffering. Alas, although she could empathize with him, it was impossible for her to share his pain. All she could do was stay by his side and love him unconditionally. She would give him all her love to heal his wounds and fill the hole in his heart.

At this moment, Mu Chen said tiredly, "Song Ning, for Grandma's sake, I'll compromise."

Song Ning knew it took a lot out of Mu Chen to make these decisions. She could only imagine the immensity of the pain in his heart. She squatted down in front of him and looked up at him as she said, "Chen, I agree that you compromise for Grandma's sake, but I don't want you to suffer as well. We still have a long life ahead of us; we'll have children of our own in the future. I think we'll be very happy, don't you think so? You'll definitely make me and our children the happiest people on the planet, right?"

Mu Chen looked at Song Ning's honest and bright face. He reached out and held her face as he solemnly said, "I promise I'll definitely make you and our children happy. I won't ever do anything to let you down or make you sad!"

Mu Chen's tears finally fell. His tears dripped on Song Ning's face as he leaned down to kiss her.

Song Ning responded to his kiss gently. She knew some scars could take a lifetime to heal. She was not in a rush because she knew that she and Mu Chen had a long and happy life to look forward to.

...

The next day, Mu Chen's mood was visibly better.

Upon seeing this, Jiang Jin felt much relieved.

Cheng Che had also heard about what happened last night so during breakfast, Song Ning and Jiang Jin went along with his attempt to lighten the mood.

Mu Chen was the only one who remained expressionless.

Jiang Jin would sneak a look at her grandson once in a while; it was inevitable that she was distracted.

Cheng Che sighed. His skills were far inferior compared to his sister-in-law.

After Mu Chen put down his chopsticks, he called, "Mr. Jiang."

Mr. Jiang promptly entered the dining room.

Mu Chen said casually, "This is Ningning's first new year with us; it'll be rather lively. Go and ask Mr. Mu if he's interested in joining us at home for the new year..."

Everyone froze upon hearing these words except for Song Ning.

Mu Chen pretended not to notice everyone's reactions. He said nonchalantly, "Grandma, don't get too worked up. Song Ning, you concentrate on taking care of Grandma's health, don't do anything tiring like cooking dinner for new year's eve. You're the Young Madam of the Mu family; there's no one you need to take care of except for Grandma."

Song Ning smiled brightly. "Alright, I'll only take care of Grandma. The Young Madam of the Mu family will do her best to only serve grandma, alright?"

Jiang Jin's eyes reddened. She turned away to hide her tears as she said in a teary voice, "Alright, alright..."

Sister Yu chimed in with a smile, "How can we let the Young Madam work so hard? All she needs to do is accompany the Old Madam, and we'll do the rest." Tears fell from her face as well when she spoke.

At this moment, Mu Chen rose to his feet and patted Cheng Che's shoulder. "It's time to go to work. If you want to have a good new year, you better take advantage of these two days to arrange your work. Song Ning has invited Jiahui over on the second day of the new year. If you want to be here at that time..."

Cheng Che hurriedly stood up, the cream bun still in his mouth, as he said, "Brother, I'm going to work overtime over these two days!"

Everyone could not help but laugh at Cheng Che's reaction. There was no doubt Cheng Che was smitten with Jiahui..

Chapter 158: A Visit

Jiang Jin did not regain her senses until Mu Chen and Cheng Che had left.

Uncle Jiang wiped the tears from his eyes and said to Jiang Jin, "Old Madam, I'm going to inform Master about this..."

Jiang Jin pulled Uncle Jiang back. "Ah Jiang, did Mu Chen really say he'll allow his father to join us for the new year?"

Uncle Jiang nodded with a smile on his face. "That's right, Old Madam. Young Master said to invite Master back for the new year..."

"Is it really true?" Jiang Jin looked at Sister Yu.

Sister Yu nodded with tears in her eyes.

Jiang Jin was in a daze.

At this moment, Song Ning called out softly, "Grandma."

Jiang Jin grabbed Song Ning's hand. "Song Ning, it was you who convinced him, right? You're such a good child."

Song Ning smiled. She lowered her head shyly and said, "Grandma, Mu Chen figured it out on his own. It has nothing to do with me. All I said was when we have a child in the future, he's not allowed to betray me and the child..."

Jiang Jin tightened her grip on Song Ning's hand; she was too happy that she did not know what to say.

Song Ning asked with a smile, "Grandma, what else do you need to prepare? We need to hurry..."

Jiang Jin nodded happily. "That's right, that's right. Ah Yu, quickly prepare snacks, fruits, and vegetables that Mu Qing likes. Buy more of them!"

Sister Yu reassured Jiang Jin that she would do as instructed before she left to make preparations.

Following that, Jiang Jin pulled Song Ning to sit on the couch in the living room. She sighed, clearly still worried, as she asked, "Did Mu Chen tell you everything?"

Song Ning nodded. "He told me a few things."

Jiang Jin sighed. "Mu Qing was completely at fault regarding that matter. I feel really sorry for Liang Zhen; her life was too bitter. Her entire life was ruined by our family. Mu Qing's at fault for forcing her to the point of no return. I don't blame Mu Chen for being unable to forgive his father. In fact, Mu Chen's the one who suffered the most from that matter. It's too difficult for him to forgive his father..."

Song Ning sighed. Jiang Jin was righteous, and she pitied Liang Zhen.

...

At Zhuang Ji.

Song Ning had come over to pick a few handkerchiefs for Jiang Jin because Jiang Jin wanted to use them as gifts.

She recognized Liang Zhou at once when she saw Liang Zhou sitting in the lounge area. To be precise, she recognized Liang Zhou because of her resemblance to Liang Zhen.

Liang Zhou did not seem surprised when she saw Song Ning. Instead, she smiled amicably and asked, "Hello, can we talk?"

After Song Ning took a seat across from Liang Zhou, Liang Zhou did not beat around the bush and said with a smile, "I know you. I saw the opening ceremony of the film festival. I didn't expect Mu Chen to marry the female lead of Yi Yao in the end."

Although the smile looked friendly, Song Ning could not help but feel ill at ease.

"Mu Qing told me we were invited to go home for the new year. Ah Jiang said it's all thanks to the Young Madam. Therefore, I thought I should say thank you..."

Song Ning said politely, "I really didn't do anything. It's all between Mu Chen and Grandma..."

Liang Zhou smiled. "I think I know better than you what everyone in that family is like. I'm sure an outsider like you must have said something. Otherwise, they wouldn't have changed their minds..."

Song Ning remained silent.

A bitter smile appeared on Liang Zhou's face as she said, "They must have said a lot of bad things about me. They probably said I harmed Liang Zhen, stole her happiness, and that I'm a bad woman, right?"

Song Ning did not know how to reply to those words so she chose to remain silent.

At this moment, tears were already brimming in Liang Zhou's eyes. She said with a sigh, "They all made up their minds about me so hastily. However, is there anyone who's truly innocent? What can I do if Mu Qing likes me? He said he wasn't happy with Liang Zhen. In the end, my heart softened, and I agreed to be with him. I didn't do it intentionally nor did I have any malicious thoughts. I was in pain as well; I didn't want to destroy Liang Zhen's marriage. However, Mu Qing and I have a long history. There's nothing I could do since he chose me..."

Liang Zhou continued to say in a self-pitying manner, "Fate has always been mysterious. Although they've been together for so many years and even have a child together, as soon as I appeared, Mu Qing

immediately realized it was no love between him and Liang Zhen. It has nothing to do with me, and it wasn't my fault..."

Song Ning felt flames of fury rose in her heart upon hearing these words. She felt angry on behalf of Liang Zhen, Mu Chen, and Jiang Jin. Even if she was unaware of this matter, just hearing Liang Zhou airing out her grievances so pretentiously made her feel incredibly disgusted.

Liang Zhou casually took a piece of tissue from the table and wiped the corner of his eyes.

Song Ning paid no attention to Liang Zhou's tears. She thought to herself that no wonder Liang Zhen was no match for Liang Zhou; Liang Zhou was such an amazing actor.

Liang Zhou continued to say, "Song Ning, I came to look for you today with no ulterior motives. I hope you won't misunderstand me and treat me like a wicked woman like the others. I'm really not like that. In fact, I'm a very sentimental person; that's why I fell in love with Mu Qing. I really had no choice..."

Despite the many words Liang Zhou said, they all meant one thing: I'm innocent; Mu Qing was the one who chose me. I only followed my heart and chose love.. I'm not in the wrong!

Chapter 159: A Favor

Song Ning did not say anything because she truly did not know what to say? She did not say comforting words; Liang Zhou did not come for comforting words, and she did not seem to have any injuries in her heart that needed healing. Therefore, she remained silent and waited for Liang Zhou to speak.

Liang Zhou looked around the lounge before she asked, "I heard this studio is yours?"

Song Ning nodded.

Liang Zhou smiled. "Well, it's to be expected. As the daughter-in-law of the Mu family, naturally, they won't mistreat you. Moreover, you have the Old Madam's favor. It was the same for Liang Zhen back then. Although Mu Qing didn't like her, the Old Madam liked her. All the good things were given to her, and she was treated like a daughter by the Old Madam." At the end of the words, a disdainful expression could be seen on her face.

Song Ning replied calmly, "This studio was left to me by my mother; it has nothing to do with the Mu Group. However, I did ask for Mu Chen's help to manage the business; I don't have the talent nor the time to do it myself."

Liang Zhou's expression changed slightly. Then, she smiled and said, "Mu Chen is Mu Qing's only son; he loves his son to the bones. Although Mu Chen hates him, he still treats his son like a treasure and loves him dearly. It was also for this reason that Mu Qing and I don't have a child. As for me... Mu Chen hates me even more. However, I'm still related to him by blood, and I always wish for him to live well. Now that I see both of you are so happy, I feel happy on Liang Zhen's behalf as well..."

Song Ning looked at Liang Zhou wordlessly. What kind of lie was this? She discovered that it was exhausting talking to Liang Zhou because Liang Zhou was someone whose words did not match her feelings. Moreover, the things Liang Zhou said did not make sense to her at all. In the end, she could not help but say, "I heard from Grandma that your lungs are weak and aren't suited to giving birth..."

An awkward expression appeared on Liang Zhou's face immediately before she blurted out, "The Old Madam told you about this as well?"

Song Ning remained silent again.

Liang Zhou sighed. "It's true I can't have children. However, even if I could, I wouldn't. After all, Mu Chen is the only child whom Mu Qing loves..."

Song Ning averted her gaze and looked at the coffee table; she did not want to look at Liang Zhou anymore.

Liang Zhou held the cup in her hand, seemingly lost in her thoughts. After a moment, she slowly said, "Song Ning, I want to ask you for a favor..."

'Here it comes...' Song Ning thought to herself, relieved. The idle chatter was too tiring; she would rather Liang Zhou get to the point. Whether she refused or agreed to it, at least she could get it over with quickly. She looked at Liang Zhou silently.

After taking a sip of tea, Liang Zhou said, "Mu Qing and I don't plan to leave after returning this time. We plan to stay and build our lives here. Mu Chen is the sole owner of the Mu Group. Mu Qing is distressed since Mu Chen has to bear everything on his own. Moreover, both of you are still so young. It's good for young couples to spend more time together. It's not a bad idea to let Mu Qing manage the company. When you're young, you should use the time to stabilize the foundation of your relationship, after all. Otherwise, it'd be like..." She trailed off and chuckled.

After a brief pause, Liang Zhou continued to say, "As for me, I don't have any request. I can help you manage Zhuang Ji if you like. When I was young, I worked in a big company as well. Managing a small studio isn't a problem at all. That way, you don't have to trouble Mu Chen as well. You can just concentrate on being a doctor. Oh, that's right! If you want to continue acting, I can help you as well. I have some contacts. When I was young, I was approached by many directors to act. However, my family thought it was unbecoming and didn't allow me to go down that path. In their eyes, actors are not worthy. Now that the trend has changed, it's no longer a problem."

Liang Zhou looked at Song Ning and said with a smile, "I hope you know there are some things that aren't appropriate for us to say since we're elders. Therefore, I think you're the most suitable candidate to speak to Mu Chen. If Mu Chen agrees, the Old Madam definitely will not object at all. As for the board of directors, what can a group of small shareholders say about the business of the Mu Group? So I'll leave this task to you..."

Song Ning met Liang Zhou's gaze and said, "You overestimate my abilities. I'm afraid I'm not suitable for this task."

Song Ning really could not understand what Mu Qing saw in Liang Zhou. It was an insult to Liang Zhen. In her opinion, Liang Zhen was not hurt by Mu Qing's change of heart but because she lost him to such a person.

Liang Zhou's eyes flashed upon hearing Song Ning's reply. "How's that possible? I've asked around.

Liang Zhou's eyes lit up. "How is that possible? I've asked around. Everyone knows Mu Chen loves you dearly and dotes on you. He'll definitely listen to you. Let me tell you, when a man is in love with you,

you must strive for the greatest benefits for yourself. Even if he falls out of love with you one day, at least you'd still gain something. Look at how Mu Qing treats me and look at Liang Zhen. Do you understand what I'm saying? If she had been smarter and obtained some benefits from Mu Qing when he was good to her, perhaps, things wouldn't have ended that way..”

Chapter 160: Intentions

Song Ning tried to suppress the anger in her heart. The angrier she was, the calmer she became. “Mu Chen and I have come to an agreement to be financially independent...”

Liang Zhou reacted as though she had heard a particularly funny joke. “Both of you are really following the trend, huh? In fact, Mu Qing and I used to say this as well. However, as the days passed and with love in the equation, how could we differentiate clearly between our things? Let me tell you: currently, what's mine is mine, and what's Mu Qing is also mine...” She sounded proud at the end of her words.

Song Ning was speechless.

Liang Zhou was not pushy. She said amicably, “I understand we can't rush this matter. After all, being able to attend the reunion dinner for the new year is already a good first step...”

Song Ning felt chills running up her spine. She began to doubt her actions. Why did her good intention seem to have been twisted by the person in front of her? She suddenly wondered if she had caused trouble for Mu Chen.

Liang Zhou said, “Song Ning, it's been a pleasure chatting with you. We're going to be a family from now on. I hope you'll take my words to heart and help me with the favor. Mu Qing and I will remember your kindness.” Then, she looked at her watch and said, “It's getting late; I won't bother you anymore. I'll be waiting for good news from you...”

Song Ning was really speechless. When did she agree to help Liang Zhou? Liang Zhou had spoken in a way that brooked no argument. Although she was usually even-tempered, she was really infuriated by the lunatic in front of her. She exhaled and calmed down.

Jiang Jin, naturally, loved her only son, Mu Qing. Mu Chen hated his father to the bones, but for his grandmother's sake, he chose to compromise. Song Ning supported Mu Chen's decision to compromise as well since Jiang Jin was already advanced in age. However, what were Mu Qing and Liang Zhou's thoughts? Did they have ulterior motives or did they only want to accompany Jiang Jin? She was sure Liang Zhou had ulterior motives, but she was not sure about Mu Qing.

Song Ning did not plan to tell Mu Chen about what transpired today; she did not want to add salt to his wounds. She would keep an eye on Liang Zhou and Mu Qing. She would not allow them to hurt Mu Chen and Jiang Jin who were her family now. It was now her responsibility to protect them.

...

In the morning.

Ever since Jiang Jin knew Mu Qing would be coming back for the new year, she was incredibly happy and in high spirits.

Song Ning could tell Jiang Jin's good mood had affected her health positively as well when she checked Jiang Jin's pulse in the morning.

Meanwhile, ever since Mu Chen decided to compromise and fulfill his grandmother's wish, he had calmed down a lot. This was thanks to the comfort Song Ning provided. His mood had turned better as well and responded as he usually would when Song Ning and Jiang Jin teased him.

On the other hand, Cheng Che was on tenterhooks. He was not sure what would happen. Fortunately, there was Song Ning. At least, if something happened, she would be able to calm Mu Chen down. He fervently prayed that the new year would be peaceful this year.

...

New Year's eve.

According to tradition, other members of the Mu family would visit the Mu family house to greet Jiang Jin, the Old Madam of the Mu family, and Mu Chen, the head of the family.

With the addition of Song Ning, the new Young Madam of the Mu family, and the return of Mu Qing and Liang Zhou, the new year was livelier than usual.

Jiang Jin gave the helpers who had families of their own days off while old helpers who had been in the family for a long time stayed behind since they had long treated the Mu family as their own.

Song Ning, Jiang Jin, and Sister Yu came up with the menu for the new year's eve dinner. There were all kinds of delicacies on the menu.

When Mu Qing and Liang Zhou arrived, Song Ning and Sister Yu were pasting the new year's couplets. The entire place looked very festive.

At the same time, Jiang Jin directed the duo, laughing and teasing. She was clearly very happy.

Meanwhile, Mu Chen and Cheng Che did not get much respite during this time. The duo was holed up in the study to work. All they had to do was show up to eat during dinner.

When Mu Qing greeted Jiang Jin, his smile was incredibly wide. "Mom, happy new year!" Following that, he greeted everyone as well.

Although Jiang Jin was clearly happy, she still feigned indifference. She said, "It's the new year tomorrow; you can leave your greeting until then. Go and help out..."

"Alright!" Mu Qing readily agreed. He looked to the left and the right, not knowing what to do.

At this time, Liang Zhou called out affectionately, "Mom!"

Jiang Jin's expression changed immediately, and the atmosphere turned cold in just an instant.

At this moment, Song Ning saw Mu Chen and Cheng Che standing at the stairs from the corners of her eyes.

Jiang Jin replied indifferently, "You should refer to me as Old Madam."

Liang Zhou's face paled immediately, and she turned to look at Mu Qing for help.

Jiang Jin said bluntly, "There's only one Madam of the Mu family and that's your sister, Liang Zhen. Since you're her sister, I'm sure you can accept this for her sake."

Liang Zhou's expression changed a few times before she finally lowered her head and said, "Yes, Old Madam."

While this was happening, Song Ning was watching Mu Qing. She discovered that there were no changes in his expressions.

At this moment, Mu Chen and Cheng Che finally stepped off the stairs.

Cheng Che asked excitedly, "Sister-in-law, when can we eat? We're really hungry!"

When Cheng Che's gaze finally shifted to Mu Qing and Liang Zhou, he only bowed slightly at Mu Qing and said, "Uncle."

Mu Qing seemed delighted. "This kid is very promising!"

Jiang Jin's smile resurfaced again. "He only knows how to eat all day long!" Then, she turned to Mu Chen and Cheng Che and said with mock anger, "Both of you didn't even help out at all..."

Cheng Che wrapped his arms around Sister Yu's shoulders and said cheekily, "With Sister Yu and sister-in-law around, there's nothing for us to do! Brother and I will be in charge of eating. They'll be happy if we finish all the food they prepared. Isn't that right, Sister Yu?"

Sister Yu laughed happily.

Jiang Jin said with a smile. "Alright, you better remember your words and finish all the food today!"

Cheng Che saluted Jiang Jin and said, "Understood.. I will complete this mission well, my dear Grandma!"