

Chapter 17: Gifts

When they were in the midst of putting the items back into the boxes, Song Ning picked a white silk kerchief out of the third box. It was embroidered with delicate pines and cranes on one of its corners.

Mu Chen leaned over to have a look before he exclaimed, "It's so beautiful!"

After looking at him, Song Ning flipped the silk kerchief around.

Mu Chen was stunned when he saw the back of the silk kerchief. There was a different version of the pines and cranes on the other side of the kerchief. He asked in surprise, "Double-sided embroidery?"

Song Ning nodded with an expression filled with pride. "Wasn't my mother amazing?"

"Yes! This is a work of art!" Mu Chen sighed in admiration.

After a moment, Song Ning put the silk kerchief into her bag.

Upon seeing this, Mu Chen shook his head and asked, "Are you going to use it? Are you really fine with using this masterpiece?"

She asked with a smile, "Do you think Grandma will be happy to receive this as a gift? Will she obediently receive the treatment if we give her this?"

Mu Chen was surprised by her words. He did not expect her to care about his grandmother so much. Even at such a moment, she was thinking about his grandmother. When he regained his senses, he nodded and said, "Grandma will like it very, very much."

Then, Song Ning urged him to clean up the mess quickly so they could return home earlier to see his grandmother.

After Mu Chen put the last box back into the safe, he sighed. "If you give such an expensive gift to Grandma, she'll start treating you like her granddaughter and treat me like I'm adopted."

Song Ning chuckled when she heard him teasing her.

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During their journey home, Mu Chen asked Song Ning as he drove, "What are your plans for the future?"

Song Ning leaned back in her seat and looked at scenery flashing past through the window before she said, "I'll be graduating in a year, so during this time, I'll be relatively busy. I have to work on my graduation thesis and visit the hospital with my professor. I've been struggling to maintain my mother's small studio as well due to my workload. However, after seeing what she left for me today, I'm even more determined to keep the studio running regardless of how difficult it would be. That place was my mother's blood, sweat, and tears."

After a moment, he said, "Take me to the studio tomorrow. Maybe there's something I can do to help..."

Song Ning stared at Mu Chen silently.

When he did not hear a reply from her, he glanced at her from the corners of his eyes before he asked, "What's wrong? You don't believe me? I'll have you know my grandmother brought me with her to sit in during the board of directors meeting when I was just eight years old."

Song Ning shook her head and explained, "No, that's not it. The thing is I don't understand business matters at all. Can I hire you to help me?"

Mu Chen was slightly taken aback. Then, he chuckled and said, "Okay! But I can only work part-time. You don't mind, right?"

She shook her head. "It doesn't matter. The studio isn't that big anyway. Moreover, business is dwindling as well. After all, embroidery is a niche nowadays. After my mother passed away, all her assistants were poached away, leaving behind only the mediocre but loyal employees. We're barely breaking even now." She felt slightly embarrassed talking about this.

Mu Chen held the steering wheel with one hand as he reached out to rub Song Ning's head lightly. "You only need to focus on your studies. Leave these things to me."

As she escaped from his huge hand, she said, "It takes a lot of energy to maintain a business so you can keep the profits if there are any. The only thing I care about is to keep this business running since it's the result of my mother's painstaking effort."

He asked with a chuckle, "So you're saying you want to pay me?"

Song Ning nodded seriously in response to his question.

"That's not enough." Mu Chen shook his head gently.

Feeling a little guilty, Song Ning suggested, "Then, I will take care of Grandma for you. I will take care of her forever, not just half a year. What do you think?"

Mu Chen shook his head again.

She bit her lower lip nervously before she asked, "Then, what do you suggest?"

Mu Chen looked at her from the corner of his eyes before he said with a faint smile on his face, "I don't want to be paid. I'm content with having you by my side."

Song Ning turned to look at him, stunned by the sight that met her eyes.

At this moment, the dappled sunray illuminated his face and tinted his body with a faint glow. His pure eyes and gentle smile looked so dazzling under the sun that she felt as though she had to squint. He was shining so brightly in her eyes.

'Mom, are you watching? Did you lead him to me?