

Chapter 71: Planning

Jiahui was confused.

Before Jiahui could ask any questions, Song Ning swiftly changed the topic. "Silly, I provided you with food and drinks, aren't you even going to ask me about this place?"

With these words, Jiahui seemed to have realized something. She looked around curiously as she said, "That's right! What kind of place is this, Song Ning? It's really beautiful!"

Although the first floor was still messy, its potential shone through. The hall on the left was very spacious like an exhibition hall. Although it was Oriental-themed, the colors used were not intense like red or black. Instead, it was the soft color misty rain, stone green, the blue of the sea, and the white of moonlight. It was elegant and exquisite.

"Who designed this place? It's really tasteful. This kind of environment would make me feel embarrassed for speaking loudly. Even if I'm not ladylike, I feel like I have to be more restrained. Otherwise, it'd feel like I'm committing a crime against this place!"

Song Ning could not help but smile. She picked up her glass and clinked it against Cheng Che's glass before she said, "Thank you, Cheng Che!"

Jiahui turned around to look at Cheng Che. "Handsome, you did this? Amazing!" After she finished speaking, she clinked her glass against Cheng Che's glass as well.

Cheng Che modestly replied, "There's Brother Chen as well. He keeps an eye over things."

Mu Chen looked at Cheng Che and said calmly, "You should take credit for your work..."

Cheng Che smiled fawningly as he said, "I don't dare, I don't dare."

"However, what's this place?" Jiahui asked.

"It's an embroidery shop," Song Ning replied as she placed food on Jiahui's plate.

"Wow, that's amazing. It looks high-end and classy. Does President Mu own this place? No, it doesn't look like it. This kind of business is more feminine and not very popular. It belongs to you?" Jiahui speculated out loud.

Song Ning smiled. Jiahui was a very smart girl. "My mother left me this shop. I asked for Mu Chen and Cheng Che's help because I don't understand business management very well."

Jiahui's eyes widened in shock. "So this place really belongs to you?"

Song Ning nodded.

"Heavens! Song Ning, you're amazing! You really hid yourself very well. This shop really suits you; it suits your temperament." As usual, Jiahui was filled with nothing but praise for Song Ning.

At this moment, Cheng Che said, "Sister-in-law, the renovation will be completed in half a month. At that time, I plan to invite a few famous fashion designers over to discuss a collaboration. Embroidery is a very niche market, hence, I plan to popularize it by collaboration with famous fashion designers."

Song Ning said hesitantly, "My mother and Ms. Yun Yao had this thought before. However, they shelved the idea in the end due to the gap between embroidery and the fashion industry. I've thought about it as well, but I don't have any connections in the fashion industry."

Cheng Che said confidently, "You don't have to worry about this, sister-in-law. First, we'll position ourselves in an advantageous position. We won't be begging others to join us; we'll attract their attention instead. At that time, we can select a suitable candidate whose ideas align with ours from the crowd that swarms to our door!"

Song Ning was briefly stunned as she looked at Cheng Che whose face held a hint of pride.

Mu Chen patted her head. "Don't worry. Leave this matter to him. I'll help you keep an eye on him. I guarantee he won't act rashly and ruin the things your mother left behind."

Song Ning nodded solemnly. "Thank you, Cheng Che!"

Cheng Che scratched his head and chuckled, feeling slightly embarrassed.

Jiahui asked, "What kind of fashion designer are you looking for?"

Cheng Che immediately began to excitedly explain his ideas and plans to Jiahui.

Jiahui listened as she ate with an expression of confusion on her face. When Cheng Che finished speaking, she shook her head and said, "I don't understand what you're saying."

Cheng Che deflated like a balloon as soon as he heard Jiahui's words. His expression was rather interesting to look at as well.

Song Ning could not help but laugh upon seeing this.

"I have a cousin who studied fashion design. She likes oriental clothing very much, to the point of being obsessed actually. She even won awards abroad. However, I heard her mother saying that her work isn't going well recently. It seems like her ideas aren't in line with her company's ideas so she resigned three months ago. Therefore, she's not been in the best mood recently. I didn't really pay attention, but I think she has traveled south to look for inspiration. I... If it'll help, I can invite her over to have a look. What do you think?" Jiahui asked tentatively.

Song Ning's heart skipped a beat upon hearing this. She instinctively looked at Mu Chen.

Mu Chen nodded.

However, before Mu Chen could speak, Cheng Che hurriedly said, "Sure! Let's arrange a meetup!"

After that, Cheng Che continued to speak to Jiahui excitedly. When they finished eating, he brought her around the studio. It was very lively.

Song Ning could not help but laugh upon seeing this. Currently, Cheng Che looked as though his first priority was pursuing Jiahui while work ranked second.

Mu Chen squeezed Song Ning's hand lightly. "Don't worry. This kid knows what he's doing, and he won't act rashly."

Upon hearing his words, Song Ning could not help but ask curiously, "Are the two of you related?"

Chapter 72: The Fu Family

Mu Chen shook his head. "We're not related even though we grew up together. Cheng Che's grandmother and my grandmother are very good friends. There were some accidents in his home and he was left to his grandmother's care. Cheng Che's mother died during childbirth and left him behind. In fact, he has an inheritance of his own, but he refuses to forge his own path and insists on sticking to me instead. He's just trying to cheat my money off me."

Song Ning chuckled before she said, "It's obvious both of you have a very good relationship. You seem even closer than brothers. In fact, even Grandma treats him like a grandson."

Mu Chen nodded. "You're right. When I was young, I used to make my grandma angry, but he was really good at making her happy. He's rather useful as well when he pleaded for mercy on my behalf when I was beaten up..."

Based on what she had gathered so far, Song Ning could tell Jiang Jin was rather strict with Mu Chen. After a moment, she smiled and said, "Then, doesn't this mean you owe Cheng Che a lot of favors?"

Mu Chen also smiled. "I guess so, but I have no intention of returning the favor. After all, most of the beatings I received when I was young was because of him"

Song Ning thought that Cheng Che's quick wit complemented Mu Chen's calmness. Jiang Jin was also a blessing to Mu Chen.

Meanwhile, Jiahui took pictures of the shop before sending them to her cousin after she agreed to meet Cheng Che with her cousin. Following that, she received a piece of news that surprised Song Ning. It seemed like her cousin had some knowledge of embroidery as well.

Song Ning was very happy; the studio's progress was coming along very nicely. Recently, everything had been going rather smoothly. She wondered if God took pity on her and decided to bless her.

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After clarifying matters with Fu Le, Song Ning thought their paths would no longer cross in the future. She did not expect Fu Le's grandmother to be admitted to the hospital the next day.

Fu Le looked for her and told her that his grandmother wanted to meet her.

She had thought Fu Le's grandmother was seriously ill, therefore, she felt relieved after speaking to the doctor on duty. It seemed like Grandma Fu, who was in her seventies, did not have any major problems apart from her high blood pressure, blood sugar level, and lipids.

When Grandma Fu saw Song Ning, she held Song Ning's hand affectionately.

"Song Ning, why didn't you visit for such a long time? Grandma really misses you!"

Song Ning turned to look at Fu Le and found him winking at her meaningfully. In the end, she could only say, “Grandma, I’ve been busy recently, and I don’t have any holidays either.”

Grandma Fu sighed. “You’re too capable just like Fu Le’s mother. It doesn’t matter how high a girl’s education is. No matter how capable a girl is, it’s still better to marry into a good family. What’s the point in exhausting yourself? Look at you; you’re so thin now. You should look after yourself and eat more. Your mother is no longer around so there’s no one to look after you. Don’t eat out all the time. They’re not good for your health.” Then, she turned to Fu Guo, Fu Le’s father, and said, “When the housekeeper comes to deliver food tomorrow, bring some for Song Ning as well.”

Fu Guo quickly nodded in agreement. “Alright, mom. Don’t worry. We’ll definitely take good care of Song Ning.” After that, he turned to look at Song Ning and said amiably, “Is the load of your work really heavy? I heard Chinese medicine students will have to find a mentor. Do you need my help to look for a mentor?”

Song Ning quickly shook her head. “There’s no need to trouble yourself. I’m following Professor Li Sen now.”

Fu Guo quickly said, “That’s great. Well, you’ll have to work hard and establish a connection with him so he’ll agree to be your mentor. That way, your net worth will be higher after you graduate. Song Ning, you’ve always been focused on your studies so you’re not aware of how society works and the ups and downs of human relationships. It’s difficult for you to do everything on your own, and it’s best to have connections...”

Song Ning remained silent. She was not particularly close to Fu Guo or Grandma Fu in the past. She was only close to Ms. Yun Yao when Ms. Yun Yao was around. Over the past two years when Ms. Yun Yao was not around, she rarely visited the Fu family. Moreover, she had a feeling that Grandma Fu and Fu Guo did not think much of her but were somehow frightened of her? She was not good at dealing with people, to begin with, so she decided to maintain a distance. For all these reasons, she did not know how to respond to those words so she could only nod and smile perfunctorily.

At this moment, Grandma Fu called out to Fu Le, “Spend more time with Song Ning. Boys should be responsible.”

Fu Le quickly agreed.

After a moment, Song Ning said she still had classes to attend and took her leave. Before she left, she motioned Fu Le to follow her out.

When they were outside, before Song Ning could speak, Fu Le hurriedly said, “Song Ning, it’s not good for Grandma to get angry or anxious. We can’t tell her that we’ve broken up. It’s not good to agitate her emotions now.”

Song Ning looked at Fu Le silently before she said, “But you can’t keep this from her forever, right?”

Chapter 73: Confession

Fu Le said helplessly, "Song Ning, can you not be so stubborn? I admit that I was wrong; you have to, at least, give me a chance to change, right? Even if you can't do it for anyone else, can't you forgive me for my mother's sake? I'll definitely break up with Feng Man."

"Fu Le, whether you break up with Feng Man or not is your business. I have nothing to do with you anymore. As for your grandmother, I agree not to say anything for the time being so as to not agitate her. However, you're on your own. I have no wish to act with you," Song Ning said before she turned around to leave.

Fu Le reached out and grabbed her arm. "Song Ning, let's look for a place to sit down so we can have a good talk."

Song Ning pushed his hand away before she said solemnly, "Fu Le, there's nothing for us to talk about. Didn't we make everything clear? I've reflected on our relationship as well. Indeed, I'm not suitable for you. My mind is focused on my studies so I can't give you the romantic love you want. I can never change this about myself so don't waste your time on me."

Fu Le replied anxiously, "Who says you're not suitable for me? There's no need for you to change. I'll change. I'll change, alright? All I ask is for you to not break up with me. Let's find time to register our marriage. After we get married and settle down, you'll be able to see my determination..."

There was no change in Song Ning's expression as she looked at him and calmly said, "There's no need for that. I'm already married."

Song Ning did not want to have any more entanglements with him so she turned around to leave after she finished speaking.

Fu Le shouted at her back, "How can that marriage of yours count? Song Ning, marry me!"

The doctors and nurses in the surroundings exchanged a look upon seeing this small commotion.

Meanwhile, Song Ning did not pause in her steps at all; she really did not want to have anything to do with him anymore. He was just like a child. He probably wanted to get back together because he found that she had gotten married and was provoked by that. He was like a child who had discarded a toy, but when someone else picked up the discarded toy, he suddenly wanted the toy again. This alone exposed his selfishness.

Song Ning really felt lucky. It was clear that she and Fu Le were incredibly incompatible. She was really fortunate she did not get married to him.

At this moment, Song Ning's phone vibrated. Mu Chen had sent her a picture of Zhuang Ji's workroom. Her mood improved immediately when she saw the beautiful and meticulously decorated workroom.

She was pleasantly surprised when she found out not only did Jiahui's cousin, An Ran, like embroidery, but An Ran was an expert as well.

When An Ran discovered the studio had once belonged to Zhuang Yi, she burst into tears immediately. After all, Zhuang Yi was the reason she had fallen in love with embroidery and influenced her to embark on the road of fashion designing. Apart from that, she had been moved by Cheng Che's business

direction and philosophy. Therefore, she did not hesitate to sign a contract with Cheng Che, officially becoming the first employee of the new Zhuang Ji.

With this, Cheng Che felt like a tiger who had sprouted wings. Now that he had someone who understood the current trend and technology on his side, he became even more confident about seeking cooperation with others. He was so excited that he even asked Mu Chen if he could invest in Zhuang Ji and become a shareholder. He found that he was really interested in the business. In response, Mu Chen had told him to speak about this matter again after he had made Zhuang Ji famous.

In private, Mu Chen had spoken to Song Ning and asked her about her vision for Zhuang Ji.

Initially, Song Ning only wanted to keep Zhuang Ji from closing down. It was something her mother had left her, after all. She was unwilling to see her mother's hard work wither in her hands. However, currently, with Cheng Che's help, Zhuang Ji's future was limitless.

Song Ning mulled over the matter the entire night before she decided to let Mu Chen make the decisions. She believed in him. Her only request was that Zhuang Ji must not lose its heart and forget its roots.

Mu Chen, naturally, understood what she meant and reassured her.

Song Ning really felt the heavens were watching over her when she thought about these things.

...

In the afternoon.

Professor Li had asked Song Ning to go to the Inpatient Department to get a few case files for research purposes.

As Song Ning walked past the emergency exit near the Cardiology and Neurology Departments, she was hoping she would not run into Fu Le. When she heard the sound of arguments, she felt rather awkward. When she heard the words 'Song Ning' and the voices, she knew it was Fu Le and Feng Man who were arguing.

The sounds of Song Ning's grew softer; she did not want to be discovered since she wanted nothing to do with their matters and had no interest in listening to their arguments.

Nevertheless, the volume of Feng Man's voice made it difficult for Song Ning to tune out their argument.

"The entire hospital is now talking about you chasing Song Ning and asking her to marry you! How can you embarrass me like that?"

Fu Le said in a reassuring tone, "Manman, don't be angry. It's not like that. Listen to my explanation."

Feng Man ignored Fu Le and continued to say, "What's the point of explaining? Fu Le, I treated you sincerely, and this is how you return the favor? Are you worthy of me?"

Chapter 74: Conspiracy

Fu Le said reassuringly, "Manman, listen to me. I'm not really going to marry Song Ning. It's just a ruse..."

Upon hearing this, Song Ning's footsteps halted. She turned back and stood outside the door of the emergency exit. She wanted to know what ruse Fu Le was talking about.

Feng Man, who obviously did not believe Fu Le, continued to cry.

Upon seeing this, Fu Le grew even more anxious. He raised his hand and swore,

"Manman, the person I love is you. If I'm lying, I'm willing to be struck by lightning or hit by a car when I leave the house."

Feng Man quickly covered his mouth and said angrily, "What nonsense are you spouting?!"

Fu Le grabbed Feng Man's hand and said, "Manman, the only one I love is you. I'm not being sincere when I said I wanted to marry Song Ning. My father and my grandmother forced me to do it."

Upon hearing this, Feng Man began to cry again. "Doesn't this mean your father and your grandmother like Song Ning and dislike me? It must be because I'm not as highly educated as Song Ning that they dislike me."

Fu Le hurriedly explained, "No, no, that's not the case. My father and my grandmother don't like Song Ning either. In fact, my grandmother hopes that I'd marry someone from a wealthy family or someone from an average family. If I marry someone from a wealthy family, at the very least, we'd be equally matched in status. In her opinion, it'd be best if I marry someone from an ordinary family who would look after her husband and children. However, Song Ning falls into neither category. She's too independent and focuses too much on her career. You're different, Manman. When the time comes, you'll only need to express your wish to have a few children, and my grandmother will definitely like you."

Feng Man finally stopped crying. She said angrily, "You're so annoying! Who wants to have a few children with you? Do you treat me as a sow?"

"My grandmother likes children. There aren't many descendants in our family. Look, my mother only gave birth to me. My grandmother doesn't like women who focus on their careers. Therefore, you have to promise my grandmother that you'll have children and stay home to take care of the family."

Feng Man nodded. "I agree. Instead of spending time on outsiders, isn't it better to spend time taking care of your family?" After a moment, she asked, "Then, why are your grandmother and your father forcing you to marry Song Ning?"

Fu Le stammered, "I... I-it's just some business matters. I-I'm not really sure as well..."

Feng Man did not believe him. She said, "Fu Le, you have to be honest with me. I'm willing to trust you, but you have to show your sincerity as well, right? How can you expect me to trust you when you're still withholding information from me? All the doctors and nurses in the hospital know that you proposed to Song Ning earlier. I'm completely humiliated. Fu Le, I'm not capable and can't compare to Song Ning at all. There's nothing I can do even if you're not sincere toward him. After all, it's my fault for falling in love with you. However, the least you can do is be honest with me, right?"

Meanwhile, on the other side of the door, Song Ning could not help but sigh inwardly. Feng Man's words, well-timed tears, and knowledge of when to push and pull were really amazing. Even if she spent all her life studying them, she would not even be able to learn 1% of Feng Man's skills.

As expected, Fu Le grew distressed upon hearing Feng Man's words. He felt his heart ache. "Manman, my beloved, why are you spouting such nonsense? Are you trying to make my heart ache? My father and my grandmother want me to marry Song Ning because of our family business. My mother and her mother used to run a business together. Some of the patents belonged to Song Ning. If I marry her, I'd be able to obtain some of those patents. This matter is incredibly important to our family business. Only by obtaining those patents will we be able to cooperate with those big companies. Look, you want to be the Young Madam of the Fu family, right? Surely you must want the Fu family's business to flourish..."

Feng Man was clearly delighted by these words. "Really?"

On the other hand, Song Ning was dumbstruck as though she had been struck by lightning. She was not naive to the way of the world. She had experienced life, death, wealth, and poverty in her short 26 years of life. She had gone through many ups and downs in her life. However, she really did not expect the Fu family to plot against her to this extent.

Previously, she had seriously reflected on her relationship with Fu Le. Therefore, she did not hate him despite his betrayal. After all, she was lacking in many areas as well in their relationship. She felt that she had also played a part in Fu Le's betrayal of her. For all these reasons, she did not resent Fu Le, the Fu family, or Feng Man.

When Fu Le had sought her out and tried to reconcile with her, she had assumed Fu Le was just being immature and was behaving willfully like a young master.

Alas, as it turned out, his words of reconciliation were a part of a conspiracy!

Chapter 75: The Butler

When Song Ning's mother and Ms. Yun Yao started the business, they had trademarked and applied for patents. Everything was registered under Song Ning's name.

Back then, her mother had wanted to register under both Song Ning and Fu Le's names. However, Ms. Yun Yao had refused. She had said that a good man should not seek help from his parents and should forge his own path. Apart from that, she had also said Fu Le was the heir of the Fu family. Song Ning was different because she was a girl and had to rely on someone. Her mother could not dissuade Ms. Yun Yao so everything was registered under Song Ning's name in the end.

Song Ning did not expect the Fu family to covet the business Ms. Yun Yao left behind. Moreover, it seemed like they would do anything to get it. It was obvious Grandma Fu did not like her, and yet, Grandma Fu spent so much effort pretending to treat her like her granddaughter. She found the deception rather scary.

When she thought about Mu Chen's relative and the Ning family, she could not help but feel, at the very least, those hateful people openly opposed them. This was much kinder than the Fu family's deception.

Meanwhile, Fu Le finally managed to coax Feng Man into smiling.

Feng Man said coquettishly, "Then, you better not have any thoughts about Song Ning. I'll make sure to keep an eye on you..."

"Alright, alright. Why don't I go over to your place tonight?" Fu Le said happily.

"You're annoying!" Feng Man hit Fu Le playfully.

Song Ning no longer wanted to listen to the duo. She left quietly with legs that felt weak and a numb heart.

Her feelings at this moment were indescribable. She could not imagine what would have happened to her and Zhuang Ji if she had married Fu Le that day. It was likely that her mother and Ms. Yun Yao's hard work would disappear in the Fu family's hands. She was so lucky to have met Mu Chen and Cheng Che. At this moment, she felt incredibly grateful to have met Mu Chen that day.

As she raised her head to look in the direction of the dazzling setting sun, tears began to fall from her eyes.

It must have been her mother and Ms. Yun Yao protecting her and Zhuang Ji.

At this moment, her phone suddenly rang. It was Mu Chen.

When the call connected, she heard Mu Chen's warm voice. "I'll pick you up after work. Let's go to the supermarket since we've invited everyone over for dinner tomorrow."

"Okay," Song Ning easily agreed. After a beat, she called out softly, "Mu Chen..."

However, after calling out to him, she remained silent.

"What's wrong?" Mu Chen asked.

"Mu Chen..." Song Ning said again.

"Hmm," Mu Chen replied.

"I just want to call your name." Song Ning reached out and wiped the tears off of her cheeks.

Mu Chen chuckled. "Did you miss me?"

"Yes," Song Ning replied without any hesitation.

Mu Chen was briefly stunned by Song Ning's blunt reply before said, "I'm here. Whenever you need me, I'll always be here. Song Ning, you're not alone anymore. You have me now. We have a home..."

"Okay, I'll remember this." Song Ning laughed as she cried. She had a home now and people who loved her. She had Mu Chen and Grandma. She would protect herself and her mother and Ms. Yun Yao's legacy.

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After work, Song Ning made an appointment with Jiahui to have dinner at Zhuang Ji the next day. Following that, she made her way to the back entrance where she was supposed to meet Mu Chen. However, just as she was about to leave, someone blocked her path.

“Young Miss.”

Song Ning stopped and hurriedly looked around. She sighed in relief when she confirmed that everyone was in a hurry after work so no one had heard the way this person had addressed her.

The person in front of her was Ning Chun, the butler of the Ning family.

When Ning Chun saw Song Ning’s actions, he said respectfully, “Let’s talk in private.”

Song Ning remained silent as she followed Ning Chun to the parking lot.

Ning Chun came to a halt in front of a Bentley before he respectfully said, “Young Miss, Master asked me to invite you back for his 50th birthday next month.”

Song Ning tried to calm her surging emotions before she calmly replied, “I’m sorry, but I don’t have the time. Uncle Chun, please wish him a happy birthday on my behalf.”

Ning Chun looked at her awkwardly before he said, “Young Miss, Master misses you very much. Madam has passed away for so many years now; why don’t you let bygone be bygone? No matter what, you’re his daughter, and he’s your father. Master really missed you all these years... Why don’t you take this opportunity to reunite with the family during his birthday?”

Song Ning trembled involuntarily. She tightened her grip on her back and tried not to look at the person in front of her as she said, “Family? You’re referring to that family that includes outsiders, right? Sorry, I can’t do it. I don’t think I’ll be able to do it for the rest of my life.”

Ning Chun said with a sigh, “Young Miss, I’ve watched you grow up. As an elder, let me give you a piece of advice. You have to learn to see the bigger picture. As long as you return to the Ning family, you’ll always be the Eldest Young Miss of the Ning family. Master will never mistreat you.”

Song Ning could no longer hold back her tears at this moment. She smiled sadly as she said, “What about the mistreatment in the past? What about his mistreatment of my mother? Uncle Chun, there’s no medicine for regrets. Can he turn back time and return my mother to me?”

Song Ning supported herself on the hood of the car and panted heavily. The familiar feeling of drowning washed over her, making it difficult for her to breathe. Her consciousness was beginning to blur when she suddenly heard Mu Chen’s voice.

“Song Ning!”

Chapter 76: protection

After that, Song Ning felt herself being pulled into a warm embrace.

Mu Chen gently patted Song Ning’s back as he said, “Song Ning, Song Ning, don’t be afraid. I’m here...”

When Song Ning heard Mu Chen's strong heartbeat, she focused her attention on his heartbeat. Soon enough, the feeling of drowning gradually receded.

At this moment, Ning Chun finally realized that something was wrong with Song Ning and called out, "Young Miss."

Mu Chen looked up immediately and motioned Ning Chun to keep quiet. Then, he said softly in Song Ning's ear, "Ningning, be good. Don't be afraid, alright? Let's go home."

Song Ning inhaled deeply to calm herself down.

Ning Chun grew anxious and wanted to speak, but he was intimidated by Mu Chen's gaze.

Mu Chen calmly asked, "Who are you? Why are you looking for my wife?"

"Wife?" Ning Chun looked at Mu Chen in shock. He, naturally, recognized Mu Chen; he knew Mu Chen was the successor of the Mu Group. The Young Miss was Mu Chen's wife? When did this happen? When did the Young Miss marry into the Mu family? There was no wedding banquet from the Mu family. If Mu Chen were to get married, it would definitely be a huge event that would shake the entire city, right? How could there be no news at all of Mu Chen's marriage?

Ning Chun, not being one to hold his tongue, asked, "President Mu, this young miss is the Eldest Young Miss of our family. Did you just say she's your wife?"

Mu Chen raised an eyebrow. At this moment, he could vaguely understand why Song Ning lost control. He wondered how much did the Ning family hurt her. Did they want her to lose control whenever she met anyone from the Ning family?

After a moment, Mu Chen said, "She's my wife, Song Ning, not the Eldest Young Miss of your family. You've gotten the wrong person; please don't harass her again. Otherwise, I won't be polite."

After Mu Chen finished speaking, he bent down and carried Song Ning before he turned her head to face his chest, hiding her face. Then, he walked to his car and put Song Ning in the seat before driving away.

Ning Chun stood motionlessly as he watched the duo leave.

At this moment, the bodyguard behind Ning Chun quietly asked, "Uncle Chun, are we going to snatch her back?"

Ning Chun shook her head. "Let's return."

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Mu Chen carefully helped Song Ning to a bottle of water as he asked, "Do you still feel unwell?"

Song Ning closed her eyes and leaned back against the seat, gently shaking her head.

Upon seeing this, Mu Chen no longer spoke. He only held her hands and gently rubbed them to make them warmer.

After a moment, Song Ning called out softly, "Mu Chen..."

"Yes, I'm here," Mu Chen replied gently.

"I can't continue being like this. I keep torturing myself every time I see them," Song Ning said as she looked at her hands that Mu Chen gently held.

Mu Chen remained silent. In fact, he was very worried. His heart ached for her, and he felt distressed on her behalf, but he really did not know what to do.

After a moment, Song Ning said decisively, "Can you help me look for a psychiatrist?"

"Alright," Mu Chen hurriedly responded to her. He would find the best psychiatrist for her.

"I don't want to see the psychiatrist in the hospital. I don't want others to know about my past," Song Ning added in a soft voice.

Mu Chen reached out and tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear before he said with a smile, "Alright, leave this to me. Rest. Don't think about all those unhappy thoughts, okay?"

Song Ning nodded slightly. "Let's go to the supermarket."

Mu Chen was a little worried. "Let's go to the supermarket tomorrow. We should go home and rest."

Song Ning shook her head slightly. "No, let's go to the supermarket. It'll keep me occupied and stop me from thinking about those things."

Upon hearing this, Mu Chen replied immediately, "Alright, let's buy lots of things! You should start thinking about what you want to cook and the list of things to buy..."

Song Ning sat up slightly. Her complexion still did not look too good.

Mu Chen could tell she was trying her best to endure it and could not help but admire her strength. Her experience with her family had made her strong, and he knew she wanted to see a psychiatrist because she did not want to have any weakness. He really felt distressed for her, but he did not know how he could get her to open her heart so she could relax a little.

...

The Ning family.

Ning Chun rushed to Ning Zhe's study as soon as he got him. On his way there, he met Su Tong, Ning Zhe's current wife.

Su Tong looked behind Ning Chun briefly before she asked, "Why are you alone? Where's the Eldest Young Miss?"

Ning Chun replied, "The Eldest Young Miss said she doesn't have the time..."

Su Tong said airily, "How busy..."

Ning Chun did not respond to her words and only stood quietly at the side.

Su Tong looked up before she said with a smile, "Hurry up. Master be waiting for you anxiously."

Ning Chun bowed slightly and walked upstairs.

Su Tong looked at his back with an elegant and friendly smile on her face.

As the old sayings went, 'Blood is thicker than water', 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder', and 'There's no long-term feud between parents and their children'.

It seemed like Ning Zhe finally remembered he had a daughter. He could not even control himself and wanted to invite his daughter back for his birthday.

Su Tong scoffed softly. Ning Zhe must have forgotten that slap back then. She wondered if Ning Xia still remembered it.

At this moment, a voice rang out.

"Mom, I'm back!"

Su Tong quickly regained her senses when she heard her son's voice. She looked up and saw her son walking in with a basketball under his arm, beaming with joy.

'Ning Xia, if you've forgotten that slap, I'll happily remind you of it again.. Since you've left the Ning family, don't even think about coming back again.'

Chapter 77: A Dinner Gathering

Saturday.

Originally, Mu Chen and Song Ning planned to hold their dinner gathering in Zhuang Ji. The employees had not returned to work yet so they had the entire place to themselves. However, when Jiang Jin found out about it, she wanted to join them as well.

"Either Yu and I go to Zhuang Ji as well or you can ask everyone over to the house instead." Jiang Jin did not want to miss out on the fun of spending time with her grandson and her granddaughter-in-law.

Mu Chen felt a little embarrassed. He was worried Jiahui and An Ran would feel uncomfortable. He looked at Song Ning for help.

Song Ning smiled and held Jiang Jin's arm. "Grandma, you just want to have a look at Zhuang Ji, right?"

Jiang Jin's smile widened. "My granddaughter-in-law understands me the most. It seems like I've raised my grandson in vain!"

Mu Chen smiled. He had gotten used to his grandmother's ways. As long as Song Ning and his grandmother were happy, nothing mattered to him.

Song Ning thought about it for a moment before she said, "Why don't we go to Zhuang Ji in the morning? Grandma, you can give us some advice as well. When we get home, I'll start cooking, and you can rest for a while. Let's ask the others to come over. Jiahui is an especially cheerful girl, Grandma, you'll definitely like her."

"Alright, alright." Jiang Jin hurriedly nodded before she said, "In fact, I only wanted to have a look at your studio, but I was afraid you won't allow me to go out."

Song Ning reached out and hugged Jiang Jin. "Once you've recovered, I won't keep you at home. However, we have to prioritize your health now."

Jiang Jin nodded. "I'll listen to you, Song Ning. My granddaughter-in-law is a doctor, after all. I'm really blessed."

Yu chimed in, "That's right. Even I feel blessed. Young Lady has cured the pain in my foot. When you've recovered, let's travel the world!"

Song Ning and Mu Chen exchanged a look and smiled.

At this moment, Song Ning suddenly thought of something. She asked, "Why are your relatives so quiet?"

Those people did not look easy to deal with. They had visited previously with such great fanfare, but there was nothing following that.

Mu Chen smiled faintly as he said, "Recently, the Mu Group has launched an internal investigation. All the subsidiary companies are busy with their accounts. The reason for this sudden investigation has been leaked by Cheng Che to my uncles, and so, they've warned their women to stay away."

Song Ning was slightly surprised by Mu Chen's words. When she regained her senses, she said with a smile, "We'll have to make sure Cheng Che eats more when we see him..."

Mu Chen reached out and pinched her earlobes gently before he said, "Hey, it seems like you didn't get the point. It's all thanks to me, not Cheng Che, that those people are staying away."

"Alright, alright, it's all thanks to you." Song Ning smiled and avoided his hand.

The relationship between the duo had gotten better and better, and Mu Chen's affectionate gestures had also increased in frequency.

Upon seeing the duo's interactions, Jiang Jin and Yu were, naturally, delighted.

...

Cheng Che brought Jiahui and An Ran Cheng Che to Cloudy Peak Villa.

The two young women did not pay attention to the luxurious Mu family home. Instead, they were more interested in talking to Jiang Jin due to her sense of humor.

In the past, Mu Chen was like a block of ice and would only speak concisely when it was absolutely necessary. She had grown bored of relying on Cheng Che to lighten the atmosphere. She was very happy with the presence of the two young women.

Just as Song Ning had said, Jiahui and Jiang Jin got along swimmingly. They were like old friends meeting after a long time. They had all kinds of topics that ranged from ancient times to modern times to talk about.

In the end, Jiahui even volunteered to take over the acupuncture treatment and physical treatment for Jiang Jin.

On the other hand, An Ran was much calmer in comparison to Jiahui. However, it did not mean she was boring. She stayed in the kitchen to help Song Ning cook.

Meanwhile, Mu Chen and Cheng Che were discussing work.

While they were cooking, An Ran asked, “Ningning, Cheng Che showed me the list of employees. We both agreed that when work starts, we’ll probably have to let go of some employees.”

Slightly alarmed, Song Ning asked, “Why? Is something wrong?”

An Ran hurriedly reassured Song Ning. “No, no, don’t worry. It’s just that there are many confidential things. We have several technologies that have been patented so only employees whom we can trust are allowed to work with them...”

Song Ning understood An Ran’s meaning. After thinking about it, she said, “Some of the employees are my mother’s old employees, and some of them were introduced by those employees. I didn’t really manage the employees before this and relied on them to help me. If you discover any problem, we’ll do as you said. I won’t ask so much.”

An Ran smiled. “Even if you don’t ask, I’ll still report to you. We’ll test the employees first before letting go of the problematic ones. After that, we’ll work from there and adjust according to our needs.”

Song Ning said in admiration, “Sister An Ran, you’re amazing! Not only do you know how to embroider, but you even know how to manage a business!”

An Ran said with a faint smile on her face, “Well, I like embroidering more...”

Chapter 78: A Visit

Song Ning could not help but sigh as she said, “If my mother were still around, both of you would’ve gotten along very well...”

An Ran smiled and replied, “If Teacher Zhuang were still around, I’d pester her to accept me as her student and follow her for the rest of my life. Don’t worry. Even if Teacher Zhuang isn’t around, I’ll make sure her legacy, Zhuang Ji, stays around. Song Ning, I believe she’s watching us from heaven so we must work hard!”

“That’s right! We must work hard!” Song Ning could not help but be infected by An Ran’s enthusiasm. She was always filled with positive energy whenever she was around this group of people.

...

When the food was prepared, Jiang Jin had just gotten up from her nap after receiving her acupuncture treatment. Since she had rested well, she was in good spirits. When she saw the table filled with dishes, she asked tentatively, “Song Ning, is there anything I’m not allowed to eat?”

Song Ning smiled and said, “No, you can try all of them. You just need to pay attention to the amount you eat.”

Jiang Jin was delighted by these words. She turned to Jiahui and said excitedly, "I'll listen to Song Ning. I'll do whatever she tells me to!"

Jiahui patted Jiang Jin's hand and said, "That's right, Grandma. Even our classmates listen to her. When we're studying for our exams, we'll ask if certain topics would come out during the examinations. If she says no, we'll skip them; if she says yes; we'll study them crazily. That's why we nicknamed her our 'class treasure'."

Jiang Jin laughed before she asked, "Is Song Ning really so amazing?"

"Of course! Everyone in our class likes her. Two days ago, our professor even lamented that our class is learning much more compared to other classes because we don't plot against each other. Because of our treasure, we don't fight among ourselves at all. She usually shares her notes with us. Nevertheless, she's always first even if we're all studying the same notes! Well, we're not as diligent as her so we have no complaints," Jiahui said as she laughed.

Jiang Jin was filled with pride when she heard Jiahui's words.

At this moment, Song Ning placed a chicken wing on Jiahui's plate and said, "Alright, alright, don't talk so much..."

All of them chatted happily among themselves as they enjoyed the meal when Uncle Jiang suddenly came into the dining room. "Old Madam, Madam Ning is here to see you."

Jiang Jin was stunned. "Madam Ning? Which Madam Ning?"

Meanwhile, Song Ning's chopsticks clattered to the floor.

Mu Chen rose to his feet immediately and moved to Song Ning's side before holding her hand. "Song Ning, let's go upstairs, and leave this matter to Grandma."

In just an instant, Song Ning's face turned ashen, and her hands were cold to the touch.

The others looked at each other in confusion.

Jiang Jin asked, clearly worried, "What's wrong, Song Ning?"

Mu Chen wrapped an arm around Song Ning's shoulders and said in a deep voice, "If anyone asks about Song Ning, don't say anything and don't admit to anything."

After he finished speaking, he brought Song Ning upstairs immediately.

However, when they reached the top of the stairs, Song Ning suddenly stopped walking and said with a slight tremble in her voice, "No, there's no need for me to hide from her."

She turned around resolutely and returned downstairs.

...

Meanwhile, Jiang Jin had told Jiahui and the others to continue eating before Yu supported her to the living room.

At this moment, Su Tong studied the living room and could not help but feel envious when she saw the design and decoration. Although they looked slightly dated, they were still stylish and minimalistic. This was how it should be, unlike the Ning family house where everything was expensive and exquisite but lacked style.

Su Tong had mentioned more than once that she wanted to redecorate the house. Ning Dong, her son, had grown up, and it was best for him to live in an appropriate environment. However, Ning Zhe had always given her all kinds of excuses. She knew that Ning Zhe still had Zhuang Yi and Ning Xia on his mind. She had heard that it was said that Zhuang Yi designed the house, and Ning Xia had a say in every detail. However, she pretended to be unaware of it.

Su Tong sneered. So what if Zhuang Yi designed the house? The fruits of Zhuang Yi's labor were still enjoyed by herself, after all. Zhuang Yi's daughter had been kicked out of the house while her son was staying there. She had been Madam Ning for ten years now!

Su Tong had thought everything had been settled and there was nothing to worry about. Who knew Ning Xia would appear again?

First, Ning Zhe was clearly distracted after running into Ning Xia. Then, he decided to invite her back for his birthday next month. Fortunately, Ning Chun failed to invite Ning Xia.

However, Ning Chun brought back a piece of news that shocked everyone: Ning Xia was now the wife of Mu Chen, the heir of the Mu family!

Chapter 79: Stepmother

Su Tong did not deny that when she heard the news, she was filled with jealousy. She thought Song Ning should have fallen into dust like her mother. How could Song Ning marry into the Mu family? What kind of family was the Mu family? Did Song Ning think the Mu family was a family she could reach for without the support of the Ning family?

Su Tong knew Ning Zhe was incredibly shocked when he received the news. His daughter had married into the Mu family, but he was completely unaware of it. He even wanted to rush to the Mu family house to ask for an explanation from his daughter. In the end, she, along with Ning Chun, dissuaded him. Following that, she volunteered to visit Jiang Jin since she wanted to find out the truth as well.

Although there were only about 15 families living in Cloudy Villa, they did not interact with each other much and some of them were acquaintances at best. For example, the Ning family and the Mu family. One lived in the east while the other lived in the west. If they did not specifically seek each other out, it would be difficult for them to run into each other more than a few times a year. Moreover, the two families did not have business dealings with each other. Therefore, even if they knew of each other, they did not know each other. Nevertheless, it was an insult to the Ning family that the Mu family continued to act as though they had relations with the Ning family when Song Ning was a daughter-in-law of the Mu family.

Since Song Ning did not make things clear, Su Tong wanted to seize the opportunity to add fuel to fire. She had said to Ning Zhe at that time, "I don't know what's happening, but I'll visit the Old Madam of

the Mu family and see what her attitude is like. This matter is better suited for women to deal with. If you rush there like this, you'll only make things worse. At that time, the Mu family might disdain Ning Xia for your actions. Naturally, if they bully her, we won't let this matter go..."

Ning Zhe had easily agreed to Su Tong's suggestion since he thought it was better for Ning Xia if Su Tong went. Hence, she successfully weaseled her way into visiting the Mu family house.

At this moment, she was drinking the tea served by the helper in the Mu family in a demure manner. She was lost in her thoughts, thinking about what she should say to Jiang Jin.

When Su Tong finally saw Jiang Jin walking in, supported by one of the helpers, she could not help but admire Jiang Jin's bearing. As expected of Old Madam Mu, the unofficial leader of the Mu Group and someone from a noble family that had been around for generations. Her bearing was elegant and dignified.

Su Tong rose to her feet and greeted Jiang Jin, "Hello, Old Madam Mu!"

Jiang Jin smiled and invited Su Tong to sit. "You're Madam Ning?"

Su Tong hurriedly smiled and explained, "Yes, my husband is the chairman of the Ning Group, Ning Zhe. My name is Su Tong. You can just address me by my name. Our families live in such close proximity, it's our fault as juniors for not visiting sooner."

Jiang Jin nodded. "That's right. Although we're neighbors, we don't have many interactions"

Su Tong smiled brightly as she said, "If Old Madam doesn't mind, I'll come and visit often to help you relieve your boredom." Then, she looked to the left and to the right before she asked, "I'm assuming your grandson is rarely at home? It's the same for me as well. My husband is busy with work, and my son is at school most of the time. I'm the only one left in the huge house, and there's no one for me to talk to. It'll be nice if I can visit the Old Madam frequently."

Jiang Jin only smiled ambiguously and did not respond. She was in a different league from Su Tong, after all. If Su Tong was considered a genius in the workplace, then she was like God in the workplace. Su Tong's meager skills and petty tricks were really nothing in her eyes.

Nevertheless, Jiang Jin was unaware of the purpose of Su Tong's visit. She had seen Song Ning's expression changed drastically when Song Ning heard Su Tong had come to visit. Her grandson and her granddaughter-in-law were her treasures so she would make sure to protect them no matter what.

In the end, Jiang Jin only asked, "How old is your son?"

Su Tong's smile froze. Old Madam Mu was indeed amazing. She smiled sheepishly and said, "He's 16 years old and is going through the rebellious phase. He's rather difficult to deal with at this time. I only hope he has a bright future. Even if he's only half as outstanding as your grandson, I'd be satisfied. President Mu is so young and promising; I really envy you."

Jiang Jin only smiled as she picked up the cup of tea. She was not going to be modest if someone praised her grandson.

Su Tong decided to test the water so she pretended to ask casually, "President Mu is so outstanding; I wonder which young lady will be lucky enough to marry him in the future. After all, he's the number one bachelor in M City."

At this moment, Yu took Jiang Jin's teacup away before she said, "Old Madam, the Young Madam doesn't allow you to drink tea."

Following that, Yu turned to the helper behind her and took a cup from a tray before placing it in front of Jiang Jin. "This is the fruit tea Young Madam made for you. Have a taste..."

After Jiang Jin took a sip, she nodded. "It's delicious!"

Yu smiled before she dismissed the helper.

Upon hearing this, Su Tong feigned surprise and asked, "President Mu is already married?"

Chapter 80: Confirmation

Jiang Jin took another sip of the fruit tea before nodding with a smile. "Yes, he's married."

Su Tong maintained the surprised expression on her face as she said, "Is that so? It's such a big occasion and we live so close to each other, but I didn't hear anything about it at all. When did President Mu get married? I don't remember your family holding a banquet..."

Jiang Jin could barely conceal the pride on her face as she said, "They've just gotten married recently. They only registered their marriage for now. My granddaughter is still in university so she didn't want any fanfare. I don't mind following their wishes. After all, what's important is that they're filial to me..."

An ominous feeling rose in Su Tong's heart when she heard these words. She braced herself as she continued to ask, "I wonder which family your granddaughter-in-law is from? To keep her hidden so well, President Mu must be deeply in love with her. It seems like he listens to her a lot?"

Jiang Jin leaned forward as though she was going to confide in Su Tong before she said with a smile, "Let me tell you; it feels as though my grandson was raised by his wife instead of me. After my grandson got married, he's incredibly obedient to his wife. He listens to everything she says."

A thought flashed in Su Tong's mind. Then, she lifted her hand to cover her mouth as she pretended to laugh. "Since I have a son, I've always wondered what it'd be like to have a daughter-in-law. At that time, would he no longer have me, his mother, in his heart? Based on what you said, it seems like President Mu is like this?"

Jiang Jin leaned back before she said with a relieved expression on her face, "Fortunately, my granddaughter-in-law is even more capable than my grandson. Although she has yet to graduate, she's very skilled. She helps me take care of my body and even manages my meals. As long as she has the time, she'll cook for me. She worries about my health all the time. She's a really good child. It's our Mu family's blessing that Mu Chen's able to marry someone like her..."

Following that, Jiang Jin took another sip of the fruit tea before she continued to say with a sigh, "I often wonder how did her parents raise such a good child? Fortunately, she married into our Mu family. I'd be so envious if she married into another family."

Su Tong's thoughts were racing in her mind. The old lady was really good at taking in circles. Apart from showing off her happiness, she had yet to glean any information from the old lady. In the end, she could only grit her teeth and bluntly asked, "I'm really curious after hearing you speak so well of her. Which family is she from?"

Jiang Jin smiled. "Madam Ning, you definitely wouldn't have heard of her. That child's life is tough. Her mother passed away when she was young so she's the only one left. She's a very independent and good child. Her name is Song Ning, and she's studying Chinese medicine. She'll be graduating in a year. At that time, I'll definitely make sure they have a grand wedding. I'll have to share this happy news for our Mu family and invite everyone in M City to the banquet."

"S-song Ning?" Su Tong was perplexed. She wondered if Ning Chun made a mistake? However, Ning Chun clearly said Mu Chen had said Ning Xia was his wife before he brought Ning Xia away. However, Jiang Jin said her granddaughter-in-law's name was Song Ning. Even if Ning Xia changed her name, she should have taken the surname Zhuang.

"Madam Ning haven't heard of her, right?" Jiang Jin asked. She had long figured out that Su Tong's purpose of visiting was to confirm Mu Chen's relationship with Song Ning.

'So this is Song Ning's stepmother?' Jiang Jin felt that Ning Zhe must be blind. The woman in front of her was shrewd and could not even compare to a strand of Zhuang Yi's hair. How much water was in Ning Zhe's brain that he betrayed Zhuang Yi for such a woman? He even abandoned such an excellent child like Song Ning. He really deserved to die! No wonder Song Ning refused to return to the Ning family.

After a moment, Jiang Jin recalled the time Song Ning revealed her origin. It seemed like Song Ning had expected the Ning family to find her and did not want her to have any misunderstandings.

Su Tong shook his head awkwardly. "No, I haven't heard of her."

Jiang Jin nodded.

However, Su Tong did not give up. She said with a smile, "I wonder if President Mu and the Young Madam is home? Since I'm here, I should seize the opportunity to get acquainted with them. In the future, I can ask your granddaughter-in-law out to go shopping. Who knows we might even meet during a banquet."

Jiang Jin's expression stiffened slightly. She had already said so much but Su Tong still persisted. It seemed like Su Tong would not give up until she achieved her goal.

At this moment, a faint voice rang in the air. "Madam Ning, do you want to get acquainted with me?"

Song Ning walked out slowly as she held Mu Chen's arm.

Su Tong was so shocked that she unconsciously rose to her feet.

'It's Ning Xia! It's really her! She really married into the Mu family! The granddaughter-in-law whom Old Madam Mu praised, Song Ning, is Ning Xia!'

At this time, Su Tong looked as though she had seen a ghost. She felt the heavens were too unfair. Ning Xia was chased out of a wealthy family only to be accepted into another wealthy family! Moreover, Ning Xia even had the favor of the Old Madam of the Mu family! She really did not know how to put her feelings into words at this moment.

Some people spent their entire lives trying to climb to the peak like Su Tong, and there were people who were born at the peak like Ning Xia.