

Sweet Love 3171

Chapter 3171: Innocence 86

Dongyu suddenly let out a feather-like laugh that carried a sigh with it.

“Don’t you... want to see me?”

I didn’t move. I lifted my gaze to the door again, but no matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t muster the courage to open it.

It had been eight years.

Dongyu, we haven’t seen each other for eight years, but I’ve always been trapped in your world and never managed to escape.

How am I supposed to face you?

Am I to confront your happiness and witness you holding the hand of another woman, walking down the aisle of the church, taking your vow of lifetime commitment before the priest?

Time had not only worn down our youth, it had also worn down the courage of my youth.

It was hard for me to imagine how I used to hold him, forced a kiss on him, coerced him into loving me, and even brazenly asked him if I could break the bond of our ties to be with him, if I let the blood out of my body.

Ridiculous. Laughable.

Childish, naive.

Thinking back, I could only sigh.

And now, the love of my life was right outside the door, but I couldn’t muster up the courage to open the door to greet him. Should I hold his hand, smiling like a flower, and tell him, “Brother, I’m home! I haven’t seen you for eight years. How are you?”

“Congratulations, you’re getting married! From now on, I have to work hard at it too!”

Should this be the way?

Must it be so cruel?

To have to smile in response to cruelty was probably the cruelest thing.

More than anything, I wanted to ask him, *“Dongyu, do you really love her?”*

That girl by the name of Anning.

Is she the girl that you once said you would meet one day? The girl that you’d come to know, understand and spend the rest of your life with?

I sat on the bed in silence.

Then through the door, I heard my mother's voice. "Dongyu, Xiachun has just returned and she's still a little unfamiliar! Besides, she must be tired from the long journey. Let her have a good rest in her room first. We'll have a proper gathering tonight!"

I could hear the sound of Dongyu's deep breathing.

"Okay."

Their footsteps faded.

I stood up and went to the door. I opened it surreptitiously and peered through the crack in the door. I caught a fleeting glimpse of his back. He was dressed in a smart looking suit, tall and lean, his jet black hair was neatly trimmed. At a glance, he had the air of a mature man.

I shut the door again and locked it, feeling like I was running away from reality!

Later that afternoon, a knock on the door woke me.

As I sat up in bed, I heard my mother calling out, "Xiachun, are you hungry?"

I didn't respond.

My father added, "Dongyu has already gone out with Anning. He still has some matters to attend to. The wedding is tomorrow, so he has to attend to the more pressing matters. He'll only be back tonight."

Only then did I get up and open the door. I saw Mom and Dad standing outside. They exchanged glances.

"I was afraid that you'd be hungry, so I kept some food for you. Shall I heat it up for you?"

I nodded.

While we were eating, my mother suddenly handed me a business card. I took it, looking puzzled.

"What's the matter? Don't you remember Su Qi?"

I looked at the calling card. It carried the print "General Manager of Nanjie Network Technology Co., Ltd.: Su Qi".

A rare smile appeared on my face. "Su Qi? He started a company?"

My mother nodded and was relieved to see me smile. "Yes! After graduation, he started his own business."

"Oh..."

"He told me to let him know if you're back. I thought that I might as well give you his name card so that you can call him yourself!"

Chapter 3172: Innocence 87

I squeezed the business card in my hand, hesitating.

However, my father said, "All these years, Su Qi has been visiting us. The lad still misses you. It's been eight years. Don't you want to see him?"

Su Qi...

I stood on the balcony, dialing his number repeatedly before hanging up again. I held the phone in my hand and paced back and forth. Then I leaned against the windowsill, my eyes unfocused.

It had been eight years since I saw him.

He was probably caught off guard by my hasty departure eight years ago.

I was surprised that he had started his own company and was doing so well.

Some things are still the same, only people had changed.

I dialed the number again, but this time, I didn't hang up. Very shortly, the calm baritone voice of a man answered, "Hello, who is this?"

"Make a guess!"

"You are..."

"You don't recognize my voice anymore?!"

I laughed, trying to hide my embarrassment. "Someone left a business card with my mother. Weren't you expecting my call?"

"Xiachun?!" He almost choked.

...

Su Qi asked me out to meet him. He was now so different from the arrogant and flamboyant young man that I used to know. Perhaps it was because he had weathered the real world, or perhaps it was because he had been through eight years of vicissitudes. He had also lost that overbearing attitude of his youth and cared to ask for my opinion seriously.

"Is that skating rink still around?"

He was stunned for a moment and then looked highly amused. "You still remember how to skate?"

"I can pick it up again!" Compared to facing Dongyu, I was not as reserved with Su Qi.

We arranged to meet at the skating rink where he had brought me to long ago. Now, skating was no longer as popular as before, and business was nowhere as brisk.

The skating rink had obviously been renovated, but even that could not erase the signs of wear by the passage of time.

At the entrance, I saw a man in a white shirt and black suit pants.

He stood at the doorway with his suit jacket casually draped over his arm. Perhaps he didn't recognize me at first glance. I walked up to him with my hands clasped behind my back and said, "Hey." He turned his head and studied me. His expression changed.

“Xiachun...”

There was a look of unease and seriousness on his face. Compared to how relaxed he sounded on the phone, he seemed at a loss when I stood before him.

With my hands still behind my back I walked around him. I sized him up and laughed.

“General Manager Su, you’re rather imposing! Wearing a suit to skate is so classy.”

My words set the atmosphere.

Su Qi appeared to relax and he blinked a couple of times before replying, “Isn’t it because someone said she wanted to meet at the skating rink? Of course I have to risk my life to accompany you, my little missy.”

I stared at him, suddenly recalling Dongyu’s birthday those years ago, when Dongyu and Lin Li had gone to look at lanterns. I had burst out crying uncontrollably at the deserted dining table, staring at the uneaten birthday cake.

To cheer me up, Su Qi quickly cut the cake and ate it enthusiastically, as if the more he ate, the happier I would be.

I told him, Su Qi, let’s date!

The teenager, who had always been unruly, suddenly smiled like an innocent child. He held my face and asked gently, “May I kiss my girlfriend now?”

This Su Qi was such a young fool.

An endearing fool...

I stepped forward and held his arm, smiling. I said, “It’s been a long time since I last skated. I’ve forgotten everything that Teacher Su taught me. It’s my treat today. Let’s play to our heart’s content.”

Chapter 3173: Innocence 88

“You make it sound so lofty...”

Su Qi was terribly amused by me.

We entered the skating rink, bought tickets, and changed into some old and dirty looking skates. I held onto the wall and walked to the entrance with difficulty. Su Qi was already waiting for me at the entrance.

“Here, little missy. Take my hand and I’ll lead you.”

He extended his palm towards me.

I raised my hand and was about to place it on his outstretched palm when I suddenly pulled back stubbornly and snorted. “Brother Su Qi, you underestimate me!”

He was stunned.

Brother Su Qi—when I was dating him, most of the time, I liked to call him Brother Su Qi. Occasionally, when I got angry, I would call him Su Qi.

I was also taken aback by how this address came so subconsciously. I lowered my head and supported myself against the railing.

It had been a long time since I had been on skates. It felt so unfamiliar.

I held on to the railing, sliding step by step.

He was patient, though. He stayed by my side, sliding slowly step by step with me.

“In the eight years you were gone, everything here has undergone huge changes. Only this skating rink has stayed the same.”

Even Su Qi found it unbelievable. “Young kids these days no longer skate. I’m curious why this place hasn’t closed down yet.”

I held onto the fence as I went along.

Every step was clumsily difficult. It was like the road I had been on for the past eight years, every step was heavy and I stumbled along.

Mustering his courage, Su Qi probed, “How have you been all these years in America?”

“Okay,” I replied. “All good.”

Perhaps I looked too calm and nonchalant, to the point that it was unconvincing.

I asked him, “What about you? How have you been?”

He said bluntly, “Not good.”

“...”

“Neither Dongyu nor I have had a good time.”

“...”

Su Qi said, “Do you know, Xiachun, after you left, it was as though Dongyu had developed some illness. He was like a madman and went on a hunger strike, refusing to eat and drink. He locked himself in his room and smashed everything he could. He did everything he could to protest. He told me that if he had been a step earlier, he would have found you. He wanted to take you away from the city, but alas, he came home and was held back by your father. He broke away and went back to the bus station and saw you getting onto the bus. He couldn’t catch up. He looked for you frantically, but could not find you.”

I suddenly stopped in my tracks and looked up at him.

“Why are you telling me this?”

Su Qi turned around to face me. “After that, Dongyu became anorexic. Once, I saw auntie kneeling before him and cautiously pushing the bowl towards him. Then, she coaxed him and lied to him, saying, “You have to start eating, stat eating, and I’ll return Xiachun to you!’ However Dongyu refused to eat.”

“What... what happened then?”

Su Qi smiled. “After that, Dongyu received a month of treatment in the hospital before he got better. I don’t know what kind of agreement he made with your parents. He got back on track with his studies and got into a key university in the country. Then, he graduated and started a business.”

“...”

“What about me?”

Su Qi smiled in self-mockery. “I’ve been thinking of you every day since you left.”

I suddenly didn’t dare to look at him anymore. I held onto the railing and looked ahead, clenching my teeth as I walked forward.

He caught up to me easily. “What’s the matter? You seem a little off.”

I avoided him and continued to move forward.

He suddenly grabbed my hand and drew me into his embrace. He held my waist and looked down at me.

Chapter 3174: Innocence 89

He suddenly grabbed my hand and drew me into his embrace. He held my waist and looked down at me.

He looked at me so seriously. His eyes were so dark they sparkled, and I saw my pathetic expression reflected in them. He smiled faintly and asked in a reserved tone, “Xiachun, tell me how you can always smile like nothing matters. Teach me how to do that.”

I was at a loss for words.

Su Qi’s tone gradually became tense. “Because just looking at you makes my heart ache so much that I can’t breathe.”

I tried to push him away, but he tightened his embrace.

I felt a little angry, but I just couldn’t bear to lash out. Rather than anger, perhaps it was more of a sense of embarrassment.

Su Qi fixed his eyes on me. “Do you know that your name is like a thorn in my heart? Every time I breathe, it hurts! I, Su Qi, have never been in such a sorry state before. I have no lack of suitors. I can’t figure out how I am so defeated when it comes to you.”

I laughed. “Poor judgment. Get it treated early.”

Su Qi asked me back, “What if I don’t wish to be treated?”

I was silent for a long time before I said helplessly, “Su Qi, you’re 27, right? You should be married, right?”

...

“I’m not married. I’ve been waiting for you.”

I pushed him off in a panic while trying to steady my center of gravity. With my back to him, I took a ragged step and slid forward. “There’s just no possibility between us now.”

He caught up easily again, not letting me off. “I don’t mind.”

I finally couldn’t take it anymore and turned around. “Do you want to be with me, even if I don’t love you?”

Su Qi said, “I’ll work to win your heart somehow.”

I said, “Su Qi, don’t be like that. Okay? I’m already 23. You’re 27. We’re not kids anymore. So don’t say such willful things.”

He stopped in front of me again and pointed at his chest, saying, “You have someone in your heart. Similarly, I have you in mine.”

“...”

“When you finally let go of Dongyu, that’s when I’ll let you go.”

“...”

Su Qi continued, “You keep asking me to give up on you, but you’re insisting that I do something that you’re unable to do yourself.”

I suddenly stopped moving.

He embraced me from behind and in a faint voice said, “There are many things in this world that cannot be reasoned with. I love you just like you love Dongyu. It’s not something that anyone can interfere with.”

“It’s been eight years. Everything has changed.”

I feigned a casual smile. “Coming back here is like coming to a foreign country. Many changes can take place in eight years, Su Qi. There are a good many eight years ahead of you. They don’t necessarily have to involve me. You’ve done well in the last eight years without me too.”

“Done well?”

Su Qi turned me around by my shoulders and tightened his grip. “Did I do well, really? Xiachun, do you know that I had gone to America to look for you and like a madman tried to track you down? I asked your parents about you, but they wouldn’t breathe a word! I’ve waited so many years for you to come back, yet you say I’ve done well in the past eight years without you? What makes you so confident things were that way? Life had been hell for me!”

“People are always unwilling to accept things not going their way.” I stated flatly, “Perhaps everyone thinks that the most-cherished things in life are things that we cannot have. But Su Qi, I’m really not someone you should cherish.”

Chapter 3175: Innocence 90

I said nonchalantly, "Su Qi, there's no such thing as not being able to go on without another person. After I left Dongyu, it wasn't as though I couldn't go on."

However, he expressed his doubts. "Really?"

I found myself averting my gaze.

"Uh huh! It's true."

Even after I left him and was in a foreign land, I had never curled up in a corner of my apartment, hugging my pillow and crying my eyes out.

I had never stared at the bracelet that he gave me and thought of him for days on end, hardly eating or drinking.

I didn't work my hands off to earn enough money for an air ticket to fly back home from Los Angeles, only to find that my family had moved and gave me no contact address. Neither did I cry in despair when that happened, as I held the crumpled air ticket in my hand.

Instead, "Life was fine for me." I said and smiled faintly.

But Su Qi gave a feeble laugh and replied, "It wasn't that way for me. I had never tried letting go of you."

His arms tightened around me and his voice trembled slightly as he said, "But I regret it. I regret it. This time, I won't let go before you!"

"..."

"Xiachun, won't you be my girlfriend?"

"..."

"Let's be together. Whether you wish to stay in the country or return to America, I'm willing to compromise. As long as we can be together..."

"..."

"Xiachun, won't you say yes?"

...

I stood there helplessly as he tried all ways and means to persuade me, repeating his request tirelessly, as though he would go on till the end of time or until I agreed.

Alas, I had to disappoint him.

The end of time would not come, and I also wouldn't give in, in a moment of weakness.

I told him, "Su Qi, I'm unable to love anyone else. It's been eight years and so much has changed, with the exception of this one thing."

Su Qi stared at me and suddenly his eyes curved like crescent moons. “Well then, I have the right to wait for you!”

My chest tightened.

“I will wait for you. I’ll keep waiting, until you are willing to be with me.”

I felt my nose stuffing up all of a sudden. “Su Qi, why are you being so silly?”

He lowered his head and nuzzled my nose. “Because I love you so much, silly.”

Exhausted, I took in a breath of fresh air as we walked out of the skating rink. My restless heart calmed down almost immediately.

After saying goodbye to Su Qi, I returned to the apartment. I looked at the time. It was already seven in the evening.

I hadn’t eaten dinner, but I wasn’t hungry. Just thinking about the wedding tomorrow made me uneasy and even a little anxious. As time passed, this sense of anxiety grew stronger.

I’d rather suppose it was my smoking addiction acting up, so in order to calm myself, I convinced myself to walk half an hour from the city center to the apartment.

When I finally arrived at the apartment building, I raised my head and saw that the lights on the fourteenth floor had gone out. My heart, however, was pounding like a drum. I felt around for my keys and glanced hesitantly at the dark windows again. Ultimately, I didn’t have the courage to open this particular door.

I thought I needed to calm down some more. At the very least, I should learn to face him with a certain peace of mind.

It was already late at night, and most of the lights in the apartment building had gone out. There was only the white light cast by the few street lamps in front of the apartment building, but they only accentuated the bleakness of the night.

I leaned against the wall dejectedly and lit another cigarette.. Pinching the cigarette box, I realized it was empty.

Chapter 3176: Innocence 91

My greatest achievement of going abroad in the past few years was learning to smoke.

I learned to smoke only because in times of anxiety or desperation, I needed something to fill in the gaps.

In those days, my smoking addiction was extremely bad. It was a form of spiritual food for me. Whether it was to numb myself or to indulge myself, at least it filled the gap in my heart.

The sound of the lighter being lit seemed exceptionally loud and clear in the silence of the night.

I took a deep drag, and then a wisp of smoke escaped from the tip of my nose. From the corner of my eye, I inadvertently saw a shadow that was cast diagonally on the ground. I followed the shadow and looked up. Then I met with a pair of steel cold eyes that were as deep as the abyss, I instantly froze on the spot, stunned and at a loss.

Dongyu stood motionless under the streetlamp. His tall figure became the focal point of my vision, and his handsome face was made even paler under the light.

In my memory, he always had a gentle and refined temperament, only now it had developed an icy edge. His cold and dark eyes were focused on me as he stood there in silence. His gaze studied me from head to toe till it finally landed on the glowing cigarette butt between my fingers.

His sudden appearance caught me off guard. I hadn't even thought about how I was going to finally confront him.

I nervously tossed away the cigarette butt in my hand and tried to act like nothing had happened. It felt exactly like it did whenever I was caught red-handed doing something I shouldn't have, in my younger days.

He only looked at me silently, as though in this quiet window of time he was observing the eight years that had passed.

I felt like he was a stranger now. I didn't recognize him anymore. If it weren't for those eyes that were still exactly the way they were in my memory, I definitely wouldn't have been able to recognize him at the first glance, that this man was Dongyu, whom I had been yearning for.

Dongyu, the name that evoked joy and sorrow, the man I must not love.

He was the subject I'd been deliberating for the last eight years, and still it remained a code I could not crack.

But...

Life is unfair.

I knew it was impossible between us.

I came to this world all alone, I was given hope and tenderness, then the bloody reality cut me into pieces like the blade of a sharp knife.

It just happened that Dongyu was my only pillar of support in the whole wide world.

He had occupied almost all of my childhood memories.

Apart from him, who else could I rely on and who else could I cling on to.

If he hadn't occupied such a significant part of my life, I wouldn't have fallen into this doomed fate.

I stood there uneasily, trembling, my hands behind my back, staring down at my toes.

I bit my lip out of habit. This way, it wouldn't look like my lips were trembling.

I couldn't bring myself to face him as casually as I had faced Su Qi. I'd even thought of running away from here, and going back to my rental apartment in Los Angeles, like a turtle withdrawing into its shell.

However, Dongyu's gaze never left my face. It was as though he was frozen or time had frozen. He just looked at me silently, as if he was committing every detail that was me, to his memory, carving them into his bones.

After a long while, he finally spoke in that familiar tone, "Xiachun."

How many times in my dreams had I heard him call my name this way?

Chapter 3177: Innocence 92

How many times in my dreams had I heard him call my name this way?

Just like when we were young, I would run while he gave chase angrily, shouting my name.

Or after school, he would loiter at the gate, welcoming me with open arms and calling my name gently.

Or when I failed my exams in high school and brought my paper home, clasping my palms and begging him to fake my parents' signatures. He would call out my name in disappointment.

Or the countless nights when he would sneak into my room and caress my face when I was sleeping. I'd open my eyes a crack to hear him whisper my name.

Xiachun...

Xiachun...

That voice was like a tempest, a raging storm in my mind.

There were also countless nights when the going got tough, and the recollection of his voice felt like a silver needle that pierced and hurt my eardrums.

I'd warned myself time and again not to cry so easily no matter what, but the memory of his gentle voice would inevitably make my eyes sting.

I lowered my head in utter defeat. Taking advantage of the dark, I allowed my tears to fall onto the concrete floor at my feet. I secretly clenched my palms together so that my voice would not tremble.

"Uh huh..."

"Xiachun..."

"Uh huh."

"Xiachun..."

Maybe it had been too long since he'd called my name that he kept repeating it. It sounded restrained.

I gritted my teeth and forced a smile. "Brother, I heard you! How many times do you have to call out to me?"

I didn't dare look up, so I couldn't see his expression.

I only heard him saying in his deep and muted voice, "Stand there, don't move."

With that, I heard his footsteps as he strode towards me.

I subconsciously retreated until my back was against the wall and I had nowhere to retreat to. Then, a pair of lanky legs entered my sight. I clenched my fists, and felt the blood in my body rush into my head. My back instantly stiffened.

"Look up, let me take a good look at you."

"Brother, I'm tired. I want to rest early..."

"Xiachun..."

"It's your wedding tomorrow. Don't you need to rest early?"

"Xiachun."

Suddenly he reached out and drew me tightly to himself.

He said, "Xiachun, there's something I wish to say to you. It's eight years late and I don't know if you still want to hear it."

Then suddenly, a vision of Dongyu's eight-year-old face appeared before my eyes. He stood in front of me, waving with a smile. "Come here, Xiachun!" he said mysteriously. "I have a secret to tell you!"

Curious, I walked over, stood on tiptoe, and leaned over his shoulder.

He cupped his hand over my ear, his warm breath brushing against the tip of my ear. When he was whispering, the corners of his mouth curled up into a beautiful smile. It was pure and cute.

"Little Sister is my favorite person!"

I snapped out of that memory and smiled. And just like during my younger days, I stood on my tiptoes and placed my hand gently on his shoulder, bringing my ear closer to his lips.

He cupped his palm covered my ear and whispered, "Yin Xiachun, I love you."

I was stunned. Dongyu's childish yet grown-up voice echoed in my ear.

I turned to look at him through the tears in my eyes, I suddenly started to laugh. I looked at him and made every effort to smile, but my eyes were stinging, and then my vision blurred.

If this has been in my youth, I would have probably been overjoyed to hear it!

It would have been the sweetest thing and I would have smiled blissfully as I embraced him.

However, at this point, I was no longer that same ignorant young girl.

Eight years. So much had changed. Returning to this city, I felt like there was no longer a place for me. But Dongyu, thank you. At least...'

At least I still have a place in your heart.

I'd waited fifteen years for those three words. And then another eight years. Perhaps now, my youthful obsession had finally met with a semblance of completion.

All my life back then, I hankered after him, hoping that I'd hear these three words.

However, now that I'm grown up, hearing these words did not make me as ecstatic as I had expected.

At 15, I wished more than anything that my love would be returned, but that never happened.

At the age of 23, I had hoped that my love would bear fruit, but ultimately it did not.

When people grow up, their ambitions grow as well.

However, I gradually learned to bear with the pain and let go. In all probability, I had come back so that I could say a final goodbye to this relationship.

I laughed foolishly and rubbed away my tears. However, my tears kept flowing like a broken dam.

But even as I cried, I smiled. Somehow, it felt like I had waited forever to hear these words.

Dongyu took a deep breath and curled his lips as he looked at me with great tenderness.

The corners of his eyes crinkled as though he was smiling, but in his eyes I saw hopeless affection. They were slightly bloodshot, but clear and sparkling. However, as a grown-up 26-year-old now, he couldn't possibly just break down in tears so easily as he did when he was 18.

I clenched my hands tightly and nervously pinched the corner of my shirt. I pretended to be calm and said, "I saw it in the diary."

"Hmmm?"

"The notes you left in my diary, uh huh..."

I wiped the tears from my eyes and smiled. "I read them."

Then I remembered the pages in the diary, which I had left empty. Now they were covered with the words "I miss you", written in neat rows with a blue water-based pen.

Dongyu's face was now a little different from how I remembered it to look.

He looked tougher now.

In the past, his features had the softer and more feminine lines of a youth. They were delicate and fine-boned. Now, they bore a more masculine edge.

Especially his handsome eyebrows, which were shaped like the blade of a sword. They were straight and natural looking.

This man was once a young man I yearned for day and night, someone who never left my mind.

He was also once my nightmare. Every time I dreamed, I would wake up with tears streaming down my face.

I had so much to say to him, but those words could not escape me.

He seemed to have a lot to say to me too, but those words never came as well.

No girl I knew of would wish to see the man she loved walking down the aisle holding another woman's hand.

It was cruel punishment for the heart.

But could we, before he got married...

"Brother..."

I stretched out my open arms and smiled a little. "Can I hold you?"

Because of these words I said, Dongyu's smile, which had been a perfect cover, finally gave way.

He drew me into his arms and stroked my hair, tightening his hold on my waist. Suddenly he let out a sorrowful whimper and cried like a child.

I held him tightly, infected by his desperate and desolate cries, and cried helplessly as well.. I buried my face in his shoulders, wishing I could fuse myself into him and become one with him.

Chapter 3179: Innocence 94

When I was young, I would often climb trees with my bare hands and feet and pluck wild fruits to eat. After watching too many martial arts dramas, I felt that consuming these wild fruits could possibly confer the trait of immortality upon me.

The unripe green fruit tasted sour and bitter, without a hint of sweetness.

But such was my youth.

Some dreams are destined to remain dreams.

Some love are destined to be unattainable.

Some promises are like fragile bubbles that burst upon contact.

Some lies are so real that one could deceive oneself.

But Dongyu, the biggest failed lie in my life was telling myself that I didn't like you anymore.

I squeezed my eyes close and thought I could forget you, but the tears that rolled down my cheeks didn't fool me.

...

The church was decorated with fresh flowers and white chiffon for the wedding. It looked pure and beautiful.

I tidied up the flowers on the archway and looked back to see the bride hurrying to the assembly with the help of the flower girl.

Dongyu oversaw the visitors that turned up while the bride headed to the dressing room to touch up her makeup.

Carrying the fresh flowers, I walked towards the dressing room and stuck a bouquet of roses in the vase.

When the bride saw me, she smiled in a friendly manner and pointed at me. "You're Yin Xiachun, right?"

I looked over my shoulder and nodded silently.

"Dongyu often talks about you!"

The bride cocked her head to one side and added, "Sometimes, even in his dreams, he'll call out your name."

My back stiffened, but I tried to look nonchalant.

"My name is Anning."

"Yes, I know your name."

"However, you'll have to address me as 'sister-in-law' in the future."

I turned around and smiled at her. "Sister-in-law, how did you and Dongyu meet?"

She was surprised for a moment by how quickly I had accepted this new form of address. But she responded to my question almost immediately, "We were classmates in university!"

Indeed.

I supposed, given Dongyu's cold personality, his social circle would naturally be confined to small circles of classmates, colleagues and so on.

I carefully arranged the bouquet. "You must really love my brother, right?" I asked tentatively.

"Otherwise, I'm sure it would be hard to tolerate his stuffy personality."

"Is that how you'd describe your brother?" Anning scrutinized my actions and chuckled. "Haha! Marrying him feels like a dream. It's so surreal! I love him very much... I love him the way he loves you."

My hands froze as I stared at her in disbelief.

"Are you surprised that I know about this?"

Anning stood up and walked over to me.

We were alone in the dressing room.

She came up to me and suddenly bumped me lightly on the shoulder. "You know what? He has never forgotten you. I know you have a very special place in his heart, and you're irreplaceable."

“You...”

I found it unbelievable and couldn't help feeling puzzled. “Since you know this, why did you marry him?”

“Because I love him as much as you do. I have no regrets!”

Anning smiled, the expression in her eyes was extremely pure. “Loving someone is an extremely humbling experience. Even if his heart belongs to someone else, I'll accept it naturally. Just as long as I can be by his side.”

“Don't you feel indignant?”

I smiled in obvious objection to the idea. “If the man I love deeply doesn't love me, then I'd consider him to be disloyal in marriage.”

“I don't feel that way.”

Anning continued, “Feelings can be nurtured. However, I know that the only woman he loves can never be with him. Isn't this also the greatest loyalty?”

The stunned look on my face became more obvious.

Anning said with confidence and certainty, “I'll definitely work hard to make him fall in love with me. At the same time, I'll also be a good wife, a good daughter-in-law... and a good sister-in-law.”

I smiled calmly, but my eyes showed no emotions. “Well, I give you my blessings.”

I arranged my bouquet and put it aside before heading out the door.

She suddenly said, “I think I'm very lucky. At least I can marry the man I love.”

I kept walking on and didn't stop.

I knew there was absolutely no malice in her words. She was merely trying to prove her love and loyalty to Dongyu.

I had experienced torture a hundred times more cruel than the effect of her words.

...

I stood at the doorway outside the church and looked up into the blue sky dotted with floating pure white clouds.

I held a rose in my hand, my fingers toying with it as I plucked the petals off one by one, letting them fall to the ground to turn to dust.

Ultimately, I didn't have the courage to personally witness that scene.

I fled through the door like a deserter, just as the exchange of vows had officially begun.

In the church, the priest's solemn voice was heard. “Anning, do you take this man to be your wedded husband and be with him in illness and in health, for richer or poorer, will you love him, care for him, respect him, accept him, and be faithful to him until the end of your life?”

I lowered my head and took out a ring box from my pocket. I gently opened it. A one-carat ring lay quietly inside.

“Brother, Brother! When we grow up, will you buy me a diamond ring and put it on my finger, just like the male lead on television?”

When I was a child, I once made an innocent wish.

Every girl dreams of becoming a bride.

My dream was that one day I’d stand at the altar of a church watching him slip a diamond ring onto my ring finger and make a promise to me.

It didn’t really have to be a one-carat diamond ring and a church wedding. But the man standing across from me, holding my hand, had to be this man.

On the night before their wedding, he drew this exquisite gift box out from his pocket and opened it. In the moonlight, the brilliant one-carat diamond was mesmerizing.

He took to heart that one unintentional remark that I had made during our childhood.

Leaning back against him, I held this tiny but exquisite box as if it were a great treasure. With tears in my eyes, I smiled with satisfaction.

Among all the many fanciful dreams in my life, one had actually been realized.

I gently took out the ring and carefully slipped it onto my ring finger. I looked at the glittering diamond and couldn’t help but smile as I kissed it.

My lips parted slightly, almost in sync with that voice in the church—“I do.”

Dongyu’s voice echoed in my ears:

If we are destined to never be together even though we love each other, then let’s just spend the rest of our lives being entangled.

Chapter 3180: Journey Of A Father (7)

Lu Jinyu quickly passed the cuddly little bundle to Yun Shishi. In her arms, the baby continued crying, but was noticeably more restrained now compared to when Jiang Shen and Lu Jinyu carried her. As Yun Shishi coaxed her, the storm passed and the corners of her lips curled upwards in a smile!

When she smiled, there was still dampness in those eyes!

The tears were like starlight held within the bloodshot rims, and her dark irises were shiny black jade agates that tugged at one’s heartstrings!

Her damp eyes seemed to be shrouded by a layer of mist. Their corners tilted upwards, and were beautifully outlined to make her look like an otherworldly angel!

Lu Jinyu and Jiang Shen almost drooled at the sight of her!

They were considerably knowledgeable people with broad exposures. Many of their friends and relatives were of age and had found their own love!

And among all these, little Yueyao must be the most adorable!

In fact, when the news of Yun Shishi's pregnancy spread, they had already prepared that with contributing genes from Mu Yazhe and Yun Shishi, their child would doubtlessly be full of life and vigor. However, even that did not fully prepare them for when they finally came face to face with the baby!

Even Jiang Shen was fascinated!

He started to feel a tinge of regret that when he was younger, he was playful and never in a hurry to find a partner. If he had a wife and a son by now, he'd definitely try his best to be in-laws with his boss!

She was such a cute little princess at only a few months. One could just imagine how enchanting she would be when she grew up!

Especially when she would suddenly stop crying and then smile with her eyes narrowed. It easily melted one's heart!

Lu Jinyu, however, was much more clear-headed and knew that it was not easy to become their boss' in-laws!

It was obvious to everyone that Chief doted on his daughter. How would he even get close to being in-laws with the man?

"You're so young, yet you recognize people?"

Jiang Shen found this amusing and said, "My sister's child was one year old before he could tell that a stranger was carrying him, and started crying only then!"

Youyou remarked, "Little Sister is very discerning and won't allow most people to carry her! Even if we carry her, she seems to keep tabs on the time! She'll get upset when we carry her for too long!"

Little Yichen added, "Little Sister likes me more and allows me to carry her for a longer time! This shows that I'm the brother she likes more!"

Youyou was not pleased to hear this and chided, "What nonsense are you spouting? You self-righteous fellow. Our sister clearly likes me more. She has the happiest smile on her face whenever I carry her!"

After Yun Shishi coaxed the baby, she placed her back into the crib. Little Yueyao, who was probably a little excited to see so many people, waved her little hands and laughed happily!

Jiang Shen was surprised and quickly took out his phone to snap a photograph of this loving scene!

"She looks so good when she smiles! Little guy, you're truly charming!"

As soon as he finished speaking, he saw her face turn red as if she was about to do something earth-shattering. Then, he saw her raising her limbs towards the sky. After making a fuss for a while, she actually rolled to the side and then with a sudden twist of her tiny legs, she flipped herself over entirely!

"Wow!"

Youyou and Little Yichen exclaimed in unison, "Sister knows how to roll over!"