

Chapter 268 Pass the Buck

It was only when Li Ge opened the door did I remember that we would definitely meet Li Ge when looking for Li Liang.

Oh dear... Due to yesterday's incident, Li Ge was still going to be angry at me even if I said that I did not know Ma Dazhuang.

Chu Xiaoxiao and I stood there stunned as Li Ge glared at us with venom in his bloodshot eyes.

Since we were already here, I had no choice but to grit my teeth and go for it. "We're looking for your father. We have something to discuss with him."

Li Ge straight up laughed. "You still have the guts to show up at my house? Be glad that I'm not getting back at you for yesterday, Zhang Chao. Don't go too far! Did you know that the local forums have been all abuzz my being gay? This is all your fault!"

"Li Ge, Zhang Chao didn't do anything. Don't make false accusations," Chu Xiaoxiao spoke up for me.

Li Ge grew even more incensed. He stabbed his finger toward Chu Xiaoxiao's face. "Chu Xiaoxiao, you should be honored that I like you. Don't be shameless. I've always been good to you, yet you joined forces with an outsider to attack me. And such an uncultured loser like Zhang Chao."

I frowned and said, "Talk all you want but don't wave your finger about. You're going to scream if I break your finger."

Li Ge cried out, "How dare you threaten me while standing in my doorway? Get out! My father won't meet with you!"

Then, he slammed the gate shut in our faces.

"Now what?" Chu Xiaoxiao asked me.

I put my arm around her. "It's alright, we'll wait in the car for Mayor Li. He'll come home eventually."

"You're still going to wait? There's no point in waiting. You can tell from Li Ge's attitude that Mayor Li isn't going to help us."

"That's not necessarily true," I laughed, "Come on, wait with me. When Mayor Li comes home, we'll go in with him, and Li Ge's expression will be epic."

Even though Chu Xiaoxiao did not believe that Mayor Li would help me, she still sat by my side and waited.

We waited until dusk when the streetlights came on. Then, we saw a car approaching. Mayor Li spotted us too and stopped by our side.

"Zhang Chao, it's you?"

He did not look particularly happy to see me. I guessed that he must have heard from Li Ge about what had happened yesterday.

I glanced at his car. It was a very average Honda that probably cost less than a hundred thousand. It was low-profile and seemed out of place compared to the expensive villa behind us.

I had guessed right. This man was extremely aware of his image. He did not want to be seen as a corrupt official, so he chose to drive a cheap, locally-produced car to maintain his good image. The villa was another matter.

I smiled. "Mayor Li, I've been waiting for you. I didn't expect you to return home now. I saw you on the news on television. That reporter really didn't understand the situation. We were saved mainly because of the rescue efforts that you led. Otherwise, we would be feeding the fishes in the Pacific Ocean. It was quite shameless of her to use this to attack you."

In actual fact, the government had not organized any effective rescue efforts, and the rescue boat had not met with our cruise ship at all.

However, I had learned how to appease people while in the army. Just give the credit to the leader and accept the mistakes for yourself.

Li Liang's expression eased and he sighed. "If only everyone thought as you did. Unfortunately, most people aren't as reasonable as you are. Now that the media isn't managed well, our job is harder. But we are public servants and we work for the people. It's natural that we get blamed sometimes. Zhang Chao, you should go home soon. It's getting late."

Li Liang used his key fob to open the main gates, prompting Chu Xiaoxiao to rush to his car window and anxiously. "Uncle Li, Zhang Chao and I would like to ask for your help. Zhang Chao's company is being unfairly harassed by the fire brigade and the Administration for Industry and Commerce. Please help us with this."

Li Liang had no choice but to stop. He sighed deeply and said, "Xiaoxiao, I watched you grow up, and Zhang Chao is a good kid too. I heard about what's happening to Zhang Chao's company today. It looks like they are targeting you, but it's all above board. I've already reminded them today not to be such sticklers for the rules and to be more flexible. They need to work for businesses and be more people-focused. Don't worry, everyone is reasonable and they won't trouble you for no reason."

Perhaps Chu Xiaoxiao was inexperienced and could not tell that Li Liang was just passing the buck. She thought that there was hope since he spoke kindly to her.

"Uncle Li, can you help us put a good word in and stop them from troubling us? Why would our advertising company fail fire safety? That's under the building, not us."

Li Liang replied, "Well... Xiaoxiao, it's not that I don't want to help you. I'm a mayor, but I'm a father too. You don't have to like Li Ge, but did you have to find someone to humiliate him like that? If I make an exception and help you... One, I would be going against my own principles. Two, how can I face Li Ge? When the time comes, it won't just be Li Ge, but my wife who will argue with me too. Please don't make things difficult for me."

After he said that, he continued driving.

Chu Xiaoxiao turned to me helplessly. She had tried her best, but Li Liang was not budging.

I smiled and patted her on the shoulder, then wrapped my arm around her, while my other hand held Li Liang's window down.

"Mayor, don't mind Xiaoxiao. She was just worried. That's not actually what I'm here to talk about today," I said as I smiled.

Chu Xiaoxiao glanced at me in surprise, whispering, "Then what are you here for?"

Li Liang's reaction was about the same as hers.

"I'm here about the cruise ship incident," I told him, "I watched your interview. The current rumors will be easy to dispel as long as someone steps up and clears the air. They will have to mention how much energy the government put into the rescue efforts, and the doubts will be cleared. I might be the most suitable person to help you clear your name."

By the time I finished speaking, Li Liang had an interesting expression on his face. He bent his head and thought about it, and when he looked up again, he had an especially kind smile on his face. "Since you're here, do join us for dinner. It's already prepared. It's just a matter of adding more chopsticks."

Chu Xiaoxiao and I exchanged a smile and replied in unison, "That would be our pleasure."

Li Liang drove ahead and we followed behind. Chu Xiaoxiao gave me an admiring look and murmured, "Did you see how fast his expression changed?"

"This is a basic quality of being an official. You have much to learn, silly."

As we walked into the courtyard, we saw Li Ge come out and greet his father. When he saw us, he was furious.

"Who let you in? How shameless are the two of you? Get out!"

He picked up a nearby mop and swung it at us as he yelled. Chu Xiaoxiao ducked behind while shouting back at him, "What are you doing?"

I did not know whether to laugh or cry. I was not afraid he would hit me, but his antics were too funny.

"Li Ge, didn't you say that you're cultured and you've got good qualities, Mr. Master's Graduate? Why are you acting like a shrew?"