

Little Brat's 211

Chapter 211: Apple and Milk Candy

It was completely dark when Ning Li got back to the Ye family home.

When she entered the house, the Ye family was just about to start dinner.

Su Yuan had cooked this dinner herself. It was very sumptuous and was all of Ye Ming and Ye Ci's favorites.

Ye Ming's face was still glum, but perhaps taking into account the fact that Ye Ci and Ye Cheng were there, he did not say anything to Su Yuan.

This was why Su Yuan was secretly relieved.

However, when she saw Ning Li, the anger that she had suppressed all day surged again.

As usual, Ning Li simply greeted them and went upstairs by herself.

Su Yuan's hand that was holding her chopsticks trembled slightly.

After finally finishing the meal, Su Yuan immediately went up to look for Ning Li.

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Ning Li's room door was always locked, so Su Yuan knocked on the door for a long time before Ning Li came out.

Su Yuan looked at her with exasperation.

“Ning Li, shouldn’t you explain what happened yesterday?”

After the initial shock, Su Yuan had carefully thought back on the incident. The more she thought about it, the more she felt that Ning Li had done it on purpose.

This girl just wanted to openly go against the Ye family and embarrass them!

Ning Li looked at her dully. “What do you want me to say?”

“Yesterday’s celebration banquet had been organized by your Uncle Ye specifically for you and Lil Ci, but look what you did! Ning Li, even if you didn’t like it, you could have just told us. Why did you have to do this?”

Su Yuan felt incredulous. “Are you satisfied now that it’s come to this?”

Ning Li raised her eyebrows slightly.

‘I have to say...I am quite satisfied.’

Lu Huaiyu always did things smoothly and ruthlessly without giving others room to maneuver.

This way, not only had he openly slapped the Ye family in the face, he had indirectly told everyone that he did not get along with the Ye family.

Everyone would have to consider this whenever they dealt with the Ye family in the future.

Thus, Ning Li knew very well that she did not just owe Lu Huaiyu a meal for all that he had done.

“Isn’t everyone quite happy?” Ning Li said.

“You were the one who asked me to tutor her before, so aren’t you satisfied with her grades now?”

Su Yuan was rendered speechless.

Right, Su Yuan was the one who had asked Ning Li to do that, and it was indeed because of Ning Li’s help that Ye Ci could get into fifth place in the province.

If not, they would not have held the celebration banquet last night.

“I congratulated her when she did well, so is it wrong for others to congratulate me when I did well in the exams?” Ning Li asked in a light voice.

Su Yuan opened her mouth, but she did not know how to refute this.

After a long time, Su Yuan said, “But you...”

“Don’t worry. I’ll move out and won’t be in your way in a few months,” Ning Li said, “So, you’d better have more patience to hold out until then.”

Su Yuan’s expression changed slightly.

There were still about seven months left until Ning Li’s eighteenth birthday.

At that time, Ning Li would have finished her college entrance exams as well.

What Su Yuan had originally thought was that once Ning Li went to college, they would no longer have the obligation to continue raising Ning Li.

Once Ning Li was gone, she would no longer be connected to the Ye family and Su Yuan.

However, when Ning Li had exposed her thoughts so directly, Su Yuan felt embarrassed, as if someone had slapped her in the face fiercely. It was burning and painful.

Ning Li turned around and closed the door behind her.

This time, Su Yuan did not pester her again and only stood in front of the door for a while. She then turned to leave.

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Ning Li pulled over a chair and began to unpack her backpack.

A piece of candy fell onto the table.

It was the same one that Lu Huaiyu had stuffed into her hand last night.

She had taken it to Yunding Fenghua and brought it back here.

Ning Li peeled off the candy wrapper.

The rich chocolate filled her mouth, and the hazelnut filling in the middle was very sweet and flavorful.

Ning Li looked at the candy jar on the table.

Lu Huaiyu had given her candy several times, but she did not always eat it.

The ones that were left behind were put in that jar with a small paper boat at the bottom of it.

Ning Li sat on the chair with her hands on her knees as she stared at it quietly.

The room was very quiet, and the light from the lamp reflected onto the colorful glass jar.

After a long time, she murmured, “Lu Huaiyu...”

...

Monday.

Ning Li went to her seat and was about to stuff her backpack in the drawer when she found that there was something inside.

She pulled it out and saw a bunch of gift boxes.

‘What’s this...’

Looking at the red and green colors, Ning Li suddenly realized something.

Today was Christmas Eve.

Most of these boxes were filled with apples.

Of course, there were also some love letters interspersed in between them.

Although Ning Li only focused on her studies and usually threw out all the love letters she received, on such a special day, everyone was in high spirits and had sent her more gifts.

“Whoa, Ning Li! Did you plant an apple tree here?”

He Xiaochen walked in and was blown away when she saw the pile of gifts.

She then looked at the small box in her hand with some regret.

“This makes mine look so ugly!”

Ning Li understood something. “Is that for me?”

“Yeah...” He Xiaochen handed over the small gift box in shame.

“I took half an hour to choose it yesterday and I still lost! D*mn it!”

Ning Li smiled slightly as she took the box and placed it on top of the bookshelf.

“Thank you...but I didn’t prepare a gift for you yet...”

“No, it’s alright!”

He Xiaochen was happy to see that her gift had won the goddess’s favor.

“I’m glad you like it!”

Being able to see Ning Li’s stunning beauty up close every day was already a gift for her.

“But...what are you gonna do with so many apples? It’s too wasteful to throw them away, right?”

Ning Li looked around. “Then let’s distribute it to everyone.”

Lin Zhouyang was the first to rush over. "You're too kind, Ning Li!"

With his help, the boxes were quickly distributed.

Pei Song happened to walk in and seemed to have just arrived.

Ning Li casually handed one to him.

Pei Song was stunned when he saw all the boxes that had been distributed.

Lin Zhouyang suddenly said, "Hey, Ning Li. Besides apples, why is there milk candy in here too?"

Chapter 212: Sneaky

Ning Li turned over and saw that Lin Zhouyang was holding a box with an apple and a milk candy inside.

He Xiaochen was surprised. "Huh, who sent this? They actually know that Ning Li likes milk candy?"

"Ning Li, you like milk candy? Who's the person who is so attentive?"

Lin Zhouyang smiled, then turned the box over but found that there was nothing else besides these.

"Eh? There's no love letter?"

Everyone else sent apples, but only this one contained a piece of milk candy as well, so this person must have known Ning Li's preferences.

There was not even a note inside, not to mention a love letter.

Lin Zhouyang handed it over. "Ning Li, I guess you'd better keep this then?"

This one was quite special, so he would not distribute it.

Ning Li shook her head. "It's alright, you can take it."

Lin Zhouyang scratched his head in confusion. "Really? But, don't you like milk candy?"

Ning Li cleaned up her drawer and made sure that everything had been taken care of before shaking her head.

"I'm fine with it."

Pei Song put his bag down.

There were also a lot of small gifts piled up inside his drawer.

Most of them were apples, with some chocolates and other snacks.

There were also a lot of delicate love letters.

Pei Song took out the gifts with a cold and indifferent expression.

This kind of situation was something Pei Song would encounter during the few holidays every year.

Lin Zhouyang was also used to this and said, "Brother Pei, should I take care of these?"

Pei Song nodded.

Lin Zhouyang took the pile of gifts and distributed them to everyone.

A bunch of people gathered around, the whole classroom atmosphere was very lively.

“Tsk! Is this the benefit of being in the same class as the most popular people in school? I love it!”

“I’m so jealous! The Class President and Ning Li could start a wholesale market with these goods, right?”

“Sob... I didn’t even receive a single gift today. The only things I got were two apples from the Class President and Ning Li... Sob... Sob... But I must say that these apples are quite delicious...”

There were too many gifts, so Lin Zhouyang went around twice.

Pei Song took Ning Li’s box with the apple and placed it into his bag.

Everyone was busy doing their own thing, so no one noticed Pei Song.

Lin Zhouyang finally came out from the crowd and held the milk candy.

“Ning Li, do you really not want it? I’ll take it then!”

Pei Song swept a glance at Lin Zhouyang’s hand and quickly withdrew his gaze. His eyes were distant.

Ning Li nodded casually.

She had never been interested in these things. Besides, there was no name on the box, so it was impossible to return it to that person.

Lin Zhouyang was very happy because he really liked this brand of milk candy.

“Thanks, Ning Li!”

He then peeled off the candy wrapper and ate it as his eyes squinted in satisfaction.

“Delicious!”

Pei Song flipped open the book.

He Xiaochen came up next to Ning Li and asked in a whisper, “Ning Li, didn’t you say that you liked milk candy before?”

Ning Li thought about it and said, “I don’t like it that much lately.”

“Okay.”

He Xiaochen was not bothered about it and changed the topic.

Pei Song was looking down, seemingly reading the question.

Lin Zhouyang took a sideways glance and hurriedly said, “Hey, Brother Pei. I didn’t do this question yesterday. I was planning to ask you how to solve it.”

He leaned his head over to Pei Song, and the rich and sweet smell of milk candy flooded Pei Song’s nostrils.

Pei Song put down his pen with a cold expression on his face.

“I haven’t gotten to it either.”

Lin Zhouyang looked shocked.

“No way! Are there questions that you can’t solve, Brother Pei?!”

He had been friends with Pei Song for so many years, but this was the first time he had heard Pei Song say this!

Pei Song gave a light “mm”.

Lin Zhouyang urged him.

“Then, you should look at it more. I’m sure you’ll get the answer soon!”

Lin Zhouyang was ready to sit and wait for Pei Song.

Pei Song paused for a moment, before standing up. He then took his water bottle, and went outside.

“I’m getting water. Read it yourself first.”

Lin Zhouyang murmured strangely. “Brother Pei, don’t you come to school every morning with a full water bottle? How did you forget today?”

Ren Qian happened to come by. “What are you guys talking about?”

“Qianzi, catch!” Lin Zhouyang turned and casually took a leftover apple from the table, then threw it over.

Ren Qian caught it with one hand and gave Lin Zhouyang a suspicious look.

“When did you get so good at cheesy quotes?”

Lin Zhouyang wanted to punch him.

“Nonsense! These are gifts from our Class President and Ning Li!”

Ren Qian suddenly understood. ‘I thought so.’

He took a bite of the apple and went back to his seat.

“By the way, did you see Brother Pei when you came in?”

Lin Zhouyang mysteriously lowered his voice.

“I don’t know what’s wrong, but Brother Pei doesn’t seem to be in a good mood today.”

“Oh?”

Ren Qian looked at Pei Song’s already cleaned-out drawer and rubbed his chin.

‘Is it because he got too many gifts and love letters?’

After all, this was not the first time he had received so many.

Lin Zhouyang was also puzzled.

“Yeah! Is it because he couldn’t solve that question?”

Ren Qian thought about it for a moment.

That was more likely based on Pei Song's character.

'But...was there really a question that Pei Song couldn't solve?'

"Which question is it that Brother Pei can't solve?" Ren Qian asked casually.

Lin Zhouyang raised his hand and pointed at a question. "Just this function problem."

Ren Qian glanced at it. "Hm? Isn't this..."

'Isn't this the one I discussed with Pei Song yesterday?'

At that time, Pei Song had even given two solutions.

Ren Qian stopped abruptly.

Lin Zhouyang was confused. "Isn't this what?"

Ren Qian looked at him with a vague hint of sympathy.

"Isn't this the one that I can't solve either? Let's wait for the solution later in class."

'Wow, it must be really difficult if these two math gods don't know the solution.'

"Alright." Lin Zhouyang was not someone who would get hung up on a problem and quickly put this matter behind him.

Ren Qian sat down in his seat and looked at Ning Li.

She was reading an English book.

It seemed that all this hustle and bustle had nothing to do with her.

The apples that had been gifted to her had all been distributed, and only one was left on her bookshelf.

On second look, he saw big gold letters on the wrapper that read: From Ning Li's one and only designated deskmate, He Xiaochen.

It was as if He Xiaochen was afraid that other people would not know that her gift was the one that Ning Li had accepted.

Ren Qian rubbed his eyebrows and skimmed the remaining questions as he sighed silently.

...

As soon as Ye Ci came to the class, she noticed that the atmosphere was very lively.

She was not surprised.

Second High was known for its serious discipline, but during the holidays, adolescent teenage girls would become quite excited.

The teachers also turned a blind eye to the situation and did not care much since it was the festive season.

Ye Ci went to her desk and found that she had received fewer gifts than before.

Lin Zhouyang's voice came from the back.

“There’s still a bunch of apples left from Ning Li! Who else hasn’t received them? Hurry up and come get it! It’s not something you can get every day!”

Ye Ci’s expression became stiff.

Chapter 213: Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Ever since Ning Li had transferred to Second High school, she had become the most popular girl in school, taking over Ye Ci’s crown.

Although Ning Li had never responded to these confessions and pursuits, she still could not stop the enthusiasm of these people.

Ye Ci had just put her things in order when Cheng Xiangxiang glanced back and muttered in a low voice, “What is there to be proud of? People who like her might even be forced to kneel and kowtow to her!”

Ning Li had transferred to Second High less than three months ago, but she had already gained a huge reputation.

She was very beautiful with excellent grades and a temper that no one would dare to mess with.

Sun Huihui was a lesson from the past.

Those who wanted to bully and teach Ning Li a lesson had never succeeded. Instead, they had shot themselves in the foot.

Ning Li protected herself while those people suffered losses.

How could anyone still like such a terrifying person?

Cheng Xiangxiang looked at Ye Ci.

She and Ye Ci had always been good friends, so of course, she could tell that the gifts Ye Ci had received this time were much less than before.

Cheng Xiangxiang already knew what was going on without having to think about it.

“Lil Ci, don’t be mad. People who like her are blind!”

Ye Ci laughed.

“It’s fine. The important thing about gifts is not the quantity, but who it’s from.”

“That’s true.”

Cheng Xiangxiang nodded approvingly and suddenly realized something. She widened her eyes.

“Huh? What do you mean by that... Do you have a crush?!”

Ye Ci had always been very popular in Second High, and countless people had pursued her.

She had seen all kinds of generous and romantic gestures, but her attitude had always been cold.

Cheng Xiangxiang knew that Ye Ci did not like any of them, so what was happening?

Lin Zhouyang also heard it and looked over.

Ye Ci was blushing slightly as she said, “Shh... Keep your voice down.”

She did not deny it, so it was true.

Cheng Xiangxiang was curious and could not contain her excitement.

“Who is it? How do I not know about this! Is he from our class? Or another class?”

While saying that, Cheng Xiangxiang looked around the classroom.

She was with Ye Ci most of the time and had not noticed Ye Ci looking at anyone.

Ye Ci sat down and sorted out her papers. She said softly, “He’s not from our class. Stop guessing.”

Lin Zhouyang was stunned for a moment.

Cheng Xiangxiang inadvertently looked at him, so he looked down.

“Not from our class?”

Cheng Xiangxiang did not care about Lin Zhouyang. When she heard what Ye Ci said, she moved her chair closer to her.

“Then which class is he from? Why don’t I know anything about it?”

Ye Ci was tight-lipped.

Cheng Xiangxiang was curious as hell.

“Then...then did you...”

“No,” Ye Ci suddenly said, “He...doesn’t know.”

“What? He still doesn’t know that you like him? It’s a crush?!”

Cheng Xiangxiang was in awe.

In her opinion, with Ye Ci’s status, it was really rare that she would have a crush.

“Who is it that our Lil Ci has a crush on? If you tell him, he’ll be delighted!”

Ye Ci pursed her lips.

“Now’s not the right time. Maybe a little while longer.”

“Wait until after the college entrance exams?”

“Mm.”

Cheng Xiangxiang put one hand on her cheek.

“That’s still a long time away! I don’t think we have to wait till then. Isn’t the national physics competition held in March? When the results come out, you’ll get into Xijing University, then there will be no need to take the college entrance examination, right? When the time comes, you’ll be free to do whatever you want.”

Cheng Xiangxiang was envious as she spoke of this and did not notice the stiff smile on Ye Ci’s face that had started to fade.

Ye Ci looked at the physics papers on her desk.

She had only done well in the provincial physics competition because she had seen those questions in Ning Li’s notebook.

However, the syllabus that was involved in the competition was very extensive.

Ye Ci had only done well in the questions that she had seen in Ning Li's notebook, but in other topics that were tested, she felt overwhelmed.

Now that she was preparing for the national competition, she did not even know where to start.

Ye Ci searched for a few copies of past year papers for the national finals and felt her head spinning.

There were too many topics and questions, so she could not guess which ones would be tested in the end.

The doubts in Second High about Ye Ci winning an award had never completely disappeared.

The mental pressure she had also increased.

Ye Ci forced an extremely faint smile. "I hope so."

...

HG Mall.

Cheng Xiyue looked at the wide mall entrance in front of him and felt speechless.

"Bro, you want to buy things from your own mall? Then why did you ask me to be your slave?!"

'Why didn't he just look for Feng Yao or any of his staff?!'

Lu Huaiyu ignored his question. His gaze lingered on the huge Christmas tree in the middle of the square.

All kinds of ornaments, ribbons and colorful lights were hanging from the tree. There were also a lot of nicely wrapped gift boxes piled up underneath.

Tomorrow was Christmas Day, so the mall had an ongoing raffle program. The atmosphere was very lively.

“It’s Christmas Eve today?” Lu Huaiyu asked.

Cheng Xiyue froze for a moment before he said, “Yeah, but I thought you never celebrated this kind of holiday?”

Lu Huaiyu withdrew his gaze and walked inside the mall.

“You can go shopping by yourself. Put it on my tab as your labor fees.”

Cheng Xiyue was shocked. “Really?!”

Although he was not short of money himself, it was rare for Lu Huaiyu to make such an offer, so he must seize the opportunity!

‘Why is Lu Huaiyu in such a good mood today that he’s being so generous?’

Lu Huaiyu ignored Cheng Xiyue and quickly went upstairs.

Cheng Xiyue was slow to react. ‘Wait a minute... Is he just trying to ditch me?!’

...

It was a Monday morning, so there were only a few people in the mall.

Lu Huaiyu looked at several storefronts and finally entered one of them.

Feng Yao and the others soon received news of their boss' arrival and hurriedly came over.

“Second Young Master, what brings you here today?”

Lu Huaiyu rarely came over, so this was very sudden.

The man was browsing the shelves as he said, “It’s nothing. I just came here today to buy some random things.”

Feng Yao and several other executives were nervous.

“Just tell us if you’re missing anything. You don’t have to personally make a trip here...”

Lu Huaiyu smiled. He wanted to personally pick a gift for Ning Li.

“It’s none of your business. Go back.”

Seeing that Lu Huaiyu was really just here to shop, Feng Yao and the others put their minds at ease.

However, just as they were about to leave, Lu Huaiyu suddenly said, “Wait.”

Feng Yao turned around, looking tentative. “Yes, Second Young Master?”

Lu Huaiyu tilted his head in thought and asked. "I don't think I've been shown this year's Christmas event planning..."

Feng Yao was dumbfounded.

"This... This... Isn't this too menial for your consideration?"

It was merely a mall activity plan for the holidays that was not qualified to be presented to Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu nodded and said, "Then, bring it to me now. I'll take a look at it."

Chapter 214: Small Christmas Gift

Lu Huaiyu had never celebrated Christmas, but he thought that Ning Li probably did.

Feng Yao was dumbfounded when he heard this sudden request from his boss.

The mall's program had been decided long ago. It was already Christmas Eve and tomorrow was Christmas Day, so all the activities had already been implemented.

'Isn't too late to take a look at the program now?'

However, he only dared to think about it secretly and did not dare to voice it.

Since this was his boss' order, Feng Yao had no choice but to comply.

"Yes, sir. Please wait a moment."

Lu Huaiyu thought about it for a moment. "Take it to the conference room. I'll head up later."

‘Why does he seem so serious...’

Feng Yao and the other executives did not know what was going on, but they did as they were told.

“Yes, sir.”

...

Conference room.

Lu Huaiyu looked over the proposal.

Feng Yao and the others were sitting on both sides of the table looking apprehensive, especially the few activity leaders, who were incredibly nervous and kept glancing at Feng Yao.

‘Mr. Feng, what’s going on?’

‘Why did the Second Young Master ask to see the Christmas activity plan so suddenly? Was there something they didn’t do well?’

Feng Yao also had a terrible headache. ‘I don’t know!’

This was now the only HG Mall in the country, but since Lu Huaiyu had been staying in Yunzhou for a year, they had the opportunity to come into contact with him.

The senior management at HG Yunzhou was already very flattered when Lu Huaiyu went over occasionally for a meeting, so they dared not bother the boss about minor things.

Feng Yao was regretful.

When the executives had presented the program previously, Feng Yao had only skimmed it casually and given them full authority to handle the event themselves.

If he had known that Lu Huaiyu would care about this, Feng Yao would have read it more diligently.

“Is that all?” Lu Huaiyu finished reading the document and asked.

The people in the meeting room straightened their backs in unison.

Feng Yao cautiously said, “Second Young Master... Is the program...not good enough?”

Lu Huaiyu looked deep in thought. “Bracelets, ties, bags... That’s all?”

Several people were bewildered.

One of the managers in charge of the event gathered enough courage and asked, “Second Young Master, are you referring to the raffle event?”

Lu Huaiyu nodded. “Do kids like these?”

The crowd was silent.

“Second Young Master, HG’s target consumer is generally the upper middle class, so the gifts for this raffle are carefully curated after we’ve done sufficient research. These are classic models of major luxury brands. As for children...they’re not our target group, so...”

HG was a luxury shopping mall, so why did Second Master Lu suddenly ask about what kids liked?

Lu Huaiyu did not speak and only tapped his fingers on the table.

Of course, he knew about these.

However, he figured that Ning Li would not be interested in these.

She had her allowance, so if she really liked these things, she would have bought them herself, but she did not.

Ning Li only wore her school uniform and carried that one black backpack.

Her new clothes were also bought by him.

Feng Yao looked at Lu Huaiyu and suddenly had an epiphany.

“Second Young Master, besides these programs, HG’s Public Relations Department has a plan mainly for the VIP customers who spend more than one million a year in HG. We have prepared special Christmas gifts just for these customers. For those who have children under the age of eighteen, there’s an additional small gift.”

Lu Huaiyu raised his eyebrows at him. “Oh?”

Feng Yao looked serious as he explained, “The small gift box would include toys, desserts, fragrances, and so on.”

Lu Huaiyu asked, “No movie tickets?”

Feng Yao paused for a moment and nodded, “Yes, there will also be a set of tickets for the family.”

Lu Huaiyu looked quite satisfied. “That’s not bad.”

He then got up from his seat.

Feng Yao and the others also immediately stood up.

Lu Huaiyu walked outside and said casually, "Tomorrow's Christmas, so it'll be better to implement these as soon as possible."

Feng Yao immediately responded. "Yes, Second Young Master."

Lu Huaiyu looked back. "No need to follow me. Go ahead with your tasks."

"Please take care, Second Young Master."

Several executives sent Lu Huaiyu to the elevator.

Only when Lu Huaiyu had left did the managers in charge look at Feng Yao.

"Mr. Feng, why aren't we aware of that activity that you just mentioned?"

Feng Yao coughed. "Well...now you do!"

The others were baffled.

'Did he just make this up?'

"Mr. Feng, I'm afraid we won't have time. How are we going to prepare these things now? Besides, it'll take time to send these items."

Feng Yao pressed his brow.

“Just get the list of VIP customers from the system. I’m sure there aren’t many who meet this condition. Also, move some people from logistics and security to the warehouse and pack these gifts as soon as possible. Use the city express and it must be done within twelve hours! It’s 11:00am now, so we still have time.”

Since he said this, the rest of the executives did as they were told.

“Even if there’s still time, this is too sudden...”

“Is the Second Young Master expecting a lot from us? He even came over to check on customer relations. I doubt that even HG headquarters gets this treatment.”

“Why do I feel like there’s something weird about this... Mr. Feng, what do you think?”

Feng Yao did not care to explain and said, “Prepare another set and send it to Second High for Ms. Ning.”

“Ms. Ning?”

This name already held a special place within HG.

“Ms. Ning? Ning Li?”

Feng Yao was impatient. “Other than Ning Li, who else could it be?”

A few of the executives then understood immediately.

One of them hesitantly asked.

“Then...this small Christmas gift for Ms. Ning... Should we put it under Mrs. Ye’s name? Or...”

Feng Yao threw a sidelong glance at the person who spoke and said, "Do you think Second Master Lu didn't spend more than one million in our mall this year?!"

The man who asked the question immediately made an "okay" gesture.

The remaining few people were very impressed.

"Mr. Feng, you really have a bright future ahead of you!"

How many of them could have guessed this?!

Feng Yao finally settled his nervous heart and could not help but smile. "Alright everyone, let's get back to work. If you do a good job, we might even get double the bonus!"

"Okay!"

...

Ning Li received a text message at 6:00pm regarding an express delivery.

They were done with classes, so she had just eaten dinner and went to the mailroom to receive her package.

The box was not very big or heavy.

When she returned to class with the package, He Xiaochen saw it at a glance and was curious.

"Ning Li, did someone send you a package? Could it be someone from another school?"

After all, Ning Li's name was well known in all high schools in Yunzhou.

Ning Li shook her head. "No, it's from HG."

"HG? The mall where everything is insanely expensive?" He Xiaochen was shocked. "Did you buy something from them?"

"No, but this looks like a small Christmas gift specifically for customers."

Ning Li had already received a text message from them beforehand.

"Quite a few people should've received it."

However, she had not expected them to actually send it to her school.

"Wow, aren't they so thoughtful?"

Ning Li took a box cutter to open the packaging.

There was a greeting card, a rabbit plushie, a reed diffuser, a slice of crepe cheesecake, and two movie tickets.

Chapter 215: Watch a Movie

The items were not expensive, but they were thoughtful and nice.

Ning Li picked up the rabbit plushie, which was soft and fluffy. She had a feeling that she had seen it somewhere before.

The reed diffuser's fragrance was sea salt and lemongrass, which was light and refreshing.

The cheesecake was freshly made. When Ning Li opened the lid, the sweet aroma instantly filled the tip of her nose.

Although she had already eaten dinner, she still felt tempted by the smell of the cake.

As for the movie tickets...

“They gave you two tickets!” He Xiaochen sighed in admiration. “It’s so great to be rich...”

Even though HG’s things were ridiculously expensive, their service was amazing.

“Ning Li, why did they give you this?”

Ning Li thought of the text message she received.

“I think it’s because of my second brother.”

“Eh? Oh, right. Your second brother seems to be very rich.”

He Xiaochen did not know much about Lu Huaiyu’s family background and only heard a little about it from Ning Li.

“Several blockbusters are showing lately, so you can go and see them!”

HG’s top floor had an IMAX theater, and these tickets would be valid for any one of the movies showing tomorrow.

This small Christmas gift was really faultless.

“Ning Li, who do you want to go with?”

Ning Li looked at the two tickets, and a handsome, noble face suddenly crossed her mind.

“I haven’t thought about it.”

Ning Li put away the plushie and fragrance.

He Xiaochen saw that Ning Li did not seem very interested in this matter and hurriedly said, “Don’t waste them!”

Ning Li folded the movie tickets and stuck them into her book.

“The final exams are coming up soon, so my schedule is quite tight.”

He Xiaochen rolled her eyes and looked speechless. “Ning Li, are you serious?! Are you afraid that if you watch this one movie, you won’t be able to get 704 marks in the finals?”

As Ning Li’s deskmate, He Xiaochen knew of Ning Li’s study habits.

Generally, Ning Li would attend classes, but she would not take notes and would pick and choose the questions she would do for their homework.

If it was anyone else, He Xiaochen would have believed them, but coming from Ning Li, it was incredulous.

“Hey, senior year is so stressful. You should relax a little for the holidays!”

He Xiaochen was a very diligent student, so if she said so, Ning Li felt that it was indeed reasonable.

“Why don’t you come with me then?”

He Xiaochen's eyes lit up but dimmed again. She covered her face in frustration.

"Ah! I really want to go with you, but I already have a dinner date with my parents tomorrow..."

It was a Tuesday tomorrow and they still had classes, so they only had time in the evening.

He Xiaochen put both hands on her cheeks and let out a long sigh. "Tomorrow is my parents' twentieth wedding anniversary. I'm so sorry, Ning Li, I can't go with you."

The corners of Ning Li's lips curved upwards slightly. "It's okay. It's such an important day, so you should be with your family."

He Xiaochen pouted. "I'm just a third wheel even if I go. When the two of them are together, they don't even sense my existence..."

Ning Li knew that He Xiaochen's parents had a good relationship and that she was the only daughter in the family, so she was also very pampered.

They were a happy family of three that got along extremely well, which Ning Li admired.

He Xiaochen suddenly said, "Hey, you can invite your second brother!"

Ning Li's eyelashes fluttered gently. "I think he'll be quite busy."

"Busy?" He Xiaochen was a little surprised. "Didn't you say that he's from the Capital and came to Yunzhou just for a vacation?"

Ning Li paused for a moment.

“He even came to school several times for you...”

‘It didn’t look like he was that busy...’

Ning Li did not say anything.

In fact, the first candidate that had come to Ning Li’s mind was Lu Huaiyu, but for some reason, she felt that it was a little odd to ask him to the movies...

“It’s settled then. Since the only reason you got this small Christmas gift is because of him, you should invite him to the movies. Wouldn’t that be normal?” He Xiaochen said with little concern.

Ning Li’s heart skipped a beat.

‘This sounds...reasonable, I guess?’

She closed the book. “Let’s see how it goes.”

...

Night self-learning.

The classroom was quiet.

Ning Li flipped through a math paper. Halfway through writing, she stopped and took her phone out.

She tapped on Lu Huaiyu’s name and hesitated.

Having learned her lesson from last time, Ning Li did not type and delete her message this time. She just frowned slightly and thought about it over and over again.

‘Should I ask Lu Huaiyu to watch a movie together? He doesn’t seem to be very interested in this. It’s also Christmas, so it doesn’t seem very appropriate if it’s just the two of us...’

However, this movie ticket was a gift, so not using it would indeed be a waste.

He Xiaochen also had a point. These tickets should have been his in the first place.

Ning Li thought about it for a long time and finally sent a message.

[Second Brother, Merry Christmas Eve!]

After sending it, she felt it was a bit inappropriate.

She did not have the impression that Lu Huaiyu celebrated Christmas.

‘Does it seem childish?’

Ning Li thought of this and quickly recalled the message.

However, Lu Huaiyu’s reply came right away.

[How can you recall a wish?]

Ning Li’s eyes widened slightly.

She had sent this message just five seconds ago, yet Lu Huaiyu had seen it?

Looking at this text, Ning Li could imagine the look on his face as he raised his eyebrows slightly with a smirk.

Ning Li knocked her forehead on the desk in frustration.

“Thud.” There was a faint sound from her actions.

Pei Song glanced at Ning Li and saw her holding her phone with her head down. He could not see her expression clearly.

Just when Ning Li was hesitating with her reply, Lu Huaiyu sent another message.

[Come downstairs.]

Chapter 216: First Meeting

‘Lu Huaiyu’s here?’

Ning Li was stunned. After a moment of hesitation, she got up.

First Class’s night self-learning sessions rarely had teachers, but they were all very disciplined anyway.

Ning Li also did not attract much attention.

He Xiaochen just whispered and asked, “Ning Li, are you going out?”

Ning Li nodded. “I’ll be back soon.”

Just as she was about to leave, she suddenly remembered something. She took the movie tickets out of the book and put them in her pocket.

...

At 8:00 pm, the sky was already completely dark.

The entire school building was lit up.

From the outside, one could vaguely see the students sitting at their desks in the classrooms.

Ning Li stood in the corridor and glanced downstairs.

A tall, upright figure stood under the streetlight.

Most of the students were currently in the classrooms, so Lu Huaiyu's arrival did not cause as much of a commotion as before.

Seeming to sense Ning Li's gaze, Lu Huaiyu looked up.

The streetlight reflected his prominent features and deep eyes.

He looked like he had just stepped out of a deep and serene painting.

Ning Li walked towards the stairs.

...

"Second Brother, why are you here?"

Ning Li stood in front of Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu handed over a bag. "Merry Christmas Eve."

Ning Li took it and saw a delicate little box inside.

It was a semi-circular transparent glass box with an apple inside.

It looked so vibrant, and the light from the streetlamp lit it beautifully.

"What's this..." Ning Li spoke hesitantly.

"Candy." Lu Huaiyu's thin lips moved slightly. "Molecular gastronomy."

Ning Li understood.

'No wonder this apple doesn't look like a normal one... But...molecular cuisine is very time and energy-consuming. Did he come over just to deliver this to me?'

"Thanks, Second Brother, but this is really too much trouble."

Ning Li felt a little embarrassed.

Lu Huaiyu lowered his eyes to look at her.

Her small face was fair and smooth, and her thick, curly eyelashes fluttered gently like a small fan. It made his heart tremble.

"It's no trouble at all."

His tone was nonchalant, and he had a flirtatious smile. "It's better than sending a wish and recalling the message..."

Ning Li's ears flushed red. "I...I just thought that you don't celebrate Christmas..."

"But you do." Lu Huaiyu lifted his hand and flicked her forehead gently.

'This girl thinks too much.'

He already knew that this girl would have received plenty of gifts today.

Naturally, he had to be one of them.

"Go back."

Ning Li froze.

"Second Brother, you're leaving now?"

Lu Huaiyu laughed. "What? Did you want me to go to class with you?"

Ning Li was embarrassed.

She had not expected Lu Huaiyu to come all the way over here just to give her this gift and leave after only a few words.

Her question made it sound like she missed him...

Ning Li held the bag with one hand and placed her other hand in her school uniform pocket.

She held the two movie tickets in her pocket and her heart was pounding inexplicably.

Lu Huaiyu raised his eyebrows slightly. "Hmm?"

Ning Li asked. "Second Brother, are you free tomorrow night?"

Lu Huaiyu's gaze swept past her pocket. "I should be available. Why?"

Ning Li took out the movie tickets and handed them over.

"HG sent me two movie tickets. It seems to be attached to your account, so would you...like to watch a movie with me?"

Lu Huaiyu took it.

"Is it only for tomorrow?"

"Mm."

Ning Li also felt that it was a little awkward to watch a movie together on Christmas Day. When she heard Lu Huaiyu's question, she added, "Second Brother, if it's not convenient, then just..."

"I'll pick you up tomorrow at 7:00 pm then."

Lu Huaiyu kept the tickets.

Ning Li raised her head to look at him.

His expression was as indifferent and relaxed as ever. It seemed as if he did not think that there was anything weird about watching a movie together on Christmas Day.

It seemed as if he had just agreed to an ordinary invitation.

Ning Li felt relieved, yet inexplicably stifled.

“What movie do you want to watch?” Lu Huaiyu asked.

Ning Li shook her head.

“Second Brother, you decide.”

It did not make much of a difference to her anyway.

Lu Huaiyu nodded his head. “It’s settled then. Go back in.”

“See you tomorrow!”

Lu Huaiyu lifted his chin. “I’ll watch you go upstairs before I leave.”

Ning Li turned around and walked back.

She could feel his eyes watching her as she walked up the stairs one step at a time.

Only when she came to the back door of her classroom did she glance downstairs again.

Lu Huaiyu tilted his head slightly and looked at her with a smile as he waved his hand.

The movie tickets swayed with the wind.

Ning Li turned around and went back into the classroom.

After she returned to her seat, she let out a soft sigh.

The wind outside was chilly, but even after standing outside for a while, her face felt a little hot.

She flipped open her book and started to read it again.

...

That night, Ning Li returned to her bedroom and took out the apple that Lu Huaiyu had given her.

She stared at it for a while before taking a picture of it with her phone.

It came with a special small spoon and fork.

She used the spoon to tap on the apple. The shell cracked open and revealed an ice cream filling.

The red crunchy shell mixed with the creamy filling smelled sweet and delicious.

She tasted it.

The ice cream had an apple flavor, which was light and refreshing.

It was indeed like candy, a very sweet candy.

...

The next day at 7:00 pm.

Lu Huaiyu went to the entrance of Second High on time.

After a few minutes, Ning Li walked out.

The streetlights began to light up.

At a glance, Ning Li saw Lu Huaiyu standing on the opposite side of the road.

He was wearing a black turtleneck, which made his jawline look even sharper. His black hair covered his brow bones slightly and his phoenix eyes were deep like the ocean.

Their surroundings were bustling. Even though he was standing amidst the crowd, his presence easily made the surroundings fade away.

Ning Li could hear her heart beat a little faster.

The way he looked seemed to be like the first time she met him.

Chapter 217: He Likes Her

That seemed to be such a long time ago.

Lu Huaiyu saw Ning Li and walked towards her.

Ning Li held her backpack straps tightly and walked forward as well.

“Second Brother!” She shouted.

Lu Huaiyu reached out and carried her bag for her.

Ning Li was planning to go back to the Ye family home after the movie, so she took her backpack along with her.

The backpack really did not match his ascetic and reserved appearance, but he did not seem to mind.

Lu Huaiyu glanced at Ning Li.

“Why are you wearing so little? Aren’t you cold?”

The temperature in December was quite low in Yunzhou.

Second High had three sets of school uniforms, one each for spring and fall, another for summer, and one for winter.

At this time, many students had already changed into their winter uniforms.

Ning Li was still wearing the single-layered coat for spring, a loose white sweater, and a black baseball cap.

It did not look like an early winter outfit.

She shook her head. “I’m fine.”

The Ye family driver would usually send her to and from school, and the classroom was warm, so she did not feel cold.

Lu Huaiyu nodded.

“Let’s go then. The movie starts at 7:40 pm.”

The two of them took a taxi to HG.

...

The car drove towards HG.

On Christmas night, the streets were very lively.

The buildings on both sides of the road were lit up with colorful, Christmas-themed lights.

There were Christmas trees, garlands, lights, and ribbons everywhere.

Ning Li looked out of the car window for a while.

When she was at school, the feeling of Christmas was already quite strong, but it still could not compare to the atmosphere outside.

Lu Huaiyu leaned back on the seat and looked at her. "Is it nice?"

Ning Li nodded. "Yeah, it's so festive!"

In her past life, she had been in the sanatorium for a long time.

During that time, she was stuck looking at the same ward day after day.

There was nothing different between the days.

The white walls and sheets, and the pungent smell of disinfectant became a nightmare that she could not dispel from her mind.

It had been such a long time since she had seen such a festive season.

The people on the road were laughing and colorful lights reflected off of the glass windows.

‘It’s been such a long time...’

Ning Li looked out the window at the lively scene with her clear, bright eyes that seemed to reflect the radiant light, her whole person quiet and well-behaved.

Lu Huaiyu nodded gently and smiled.

“It’s very nice to look at.”

...

Twenty minutes later, they arrived at HG.

A huge Christmas tree stood in the middle of the square. There were all kinds of exquisite gift boxes piled up around it.

Lights were flashing as people were coming and going.

Ning Li followed Lu Huaiyu inside.

Since there were a lot of people, Ning Li followed closely.

Suddenly, a little girl of about ten years old ran next to her holding a handful of roses.

“Mister! Please buy a flower for your girlfriend!”

The little girl tilted her head and looked at Lu Huaiyu expectantly.

‘This guy is so handsome, and the lady next to him is so pretty too!’

Lu Huaiyu stood in place. Ning Li was surprised by the little girl’s words and accidentally walked into Lu Huaiyu’s back. She grabbed Lu Huaiyu’s arm to stabilize herself.

The man looked at her and raised his eyebrows.

Ning Li hurriedly let go of him. When she saw the roses in the little girl’s arms, she was dumbfounded.

‘Is this little girl confused? I’m still wearing my school uniform! How did I become Lu Huaiyu’s girlfriend all of a sudden?’

“Umm... Little girl, you’re mistaken. I’m not his girlfriend.” Ning Li hurriedly went forward to explain.

The little girl instantly froze and blinked innocently. She looked at Lu Huaiyu, then at Ning Li.

‘No? How could it be? I always have a very good eye for this kind of thing!’

She looked at Lu Huaiyu again in disbelief.

“Mister, haven’t you asked her yet? Then, it’s all the more reason for you to buy it!”

Ning Li never expected to hear this and froze in place for a while.

Behind her, Lu Huaiyu suddenly laughed.

Ning Li did not even dare to turn back for a moment.

She fished out her phone from her pocket. “Little girl, I’ll buy all these flowers from you, but I can’t take them with me, so I’ll just give them to you and you can take them home.”

The weather was quite cold, and this little girl was standing here selling flowers. Her cheeks and nose were red from the cold wind.

Hearing Ning Li, the little girl was instantly delighted.

“Thank you, pretty lady!”

She held up a QR code, and Ning Li transferred the money, before urging the little girl to hurry home.

The little girl thanked her several times. Only then did she leave happily.

Ning Li was inexplicably relieved and turned around.

“Second Brother, let’s...”

Once she turned around, she realized that Lu Huaiyu had disappeared.

She panicked. “Second Brother?”

There were people all around, and everyone’s face was filled with joyful smiles.

However, they were all unfamiliar faces.

None of them were Lu Huaiyu.

Her brows knitted slightly as she walked forward aimlessly.

Suddenly, her wrist was pulled from behind.

“I’m right here. Where are you going?”

Hearing this familiar deep, lazy voice, Ning Li’s panicked heart suddenly settled down.

She turned around and saw that it was Lu Huaiyu.

Her throat tightened. “Second Brother...”

Lu Huaiyu keenly noticed that Ning Li’s expression seemed to be a bit off.

She seemed...extraordinarily nervous.

Although she hid it very well, her eyes still had some panic the moment she looked over.

Lu Huaiyu’s eyes flickered.

It was the same look as that day when she was drunk.

However, Ning Li quickly regained composure. When he looked at her again, he could not see anything unusual.

Lu Huaiyu did not probe her and handed something to her. “This is for you.”

Only then did Ning Li notice that he was holding a balloon.

It was a small cake-shaped balloon.

Ning Li was speechless.

‘Isn’t this for coaxing children?’

‘Did Lu Huaiyu leave just to buy this?’

Ning Li felt as if Lu Huaiyu had some kind of misunderstanding about her.

“The children were selling it and chose this.”

When she heard this, Ning Li looked in the direction he had just come from and saw a little boy who had sold off his last balloon and was ready to leave.

That little boy looked to be the same age as the little girl just now.

Ning Li held the balloon a little hesitantly. “Second Brother... It’s not good to bring this into the theater, right?”

Lu Huaiyu did not seem to think that it was a problem.

“It’s not very big. Just tie it to your school bag and bring it home later.”

He had deliberately chosen one of a suitable size.

Since he said so, Ning Li had no choice but to accept it. “Okay then.”

Lu Huaiyu looked at the time. "Let's go, the movie's about to start."

He then led Ning Li towards the mall elevator.

Only then did Ning Li realize that he had not let go of her wrist.

'It's probably because there are too many people around...' Ning Li thought and followed him.

When they reached the elevator, Lu Huaiyu let go of Ning Li's hand.

Ning Li held the balloon and followed him into the elevator.

...

At the same time, the two kids from earlier met up.

The little boy was smiling and showing off. "I heard that you made a wrong judgment just now!"

The little girl grunted in defiance. "I wasn't mistaken! That guy really likes that pretty lady!"

Chapter 218: Too Curious

The little boy scratched his head.

"If that's the case, then why didn't he buy your flowers but bought a balloon from me instead?"

The little girl pondered the question as she walked, still holding the flowers in her arms.

However, she could not think of a reason either, so she said, “How would I know? Anyway, he was carrying the pretty lady’s bag for her, so why would he do that if he doesn’t like her? And...and...”

The little girl did not know how to describe that feeling.

This was not the first time she had been selling flowers on the streets, and she had always been very accurate at telling who was a couple.

She even saw that the guy had been laughing with the pretty lady just now.

After a while, the little girl concluded. “Hmph! Anyway, with their progress, he still has a chance to be with the pretty lady!”

...

The cinema was on the top floor of HG.

The elevator went straight up.

When Ning Li got out of the elevator, she realized that there were more people than she had initially expected.

Christmas was truly lively.

At a glance, most of the people there were in pairs.

There were two colleges nearby, so it was no wonder that so many people came...

Ning Li immediately felt that she and Lu Huaiyu did not fit in with the demographic.

Lu Huaiyu was very tall, so he easily attracted attention. With his handsome and noble face, he immediately became the focus of attention as soon as he entered the cinema hall.

Many girls kept looking their way.

The ones who were with their boyfriends were fine, but those who had come with their friends were much more liberal. They glanced at Lu Huaiyu while whispering in excitement.

As for Ning Li...

She was wearing a school uniform, so she also stood out there.

Ning Li pulled her baseball cap a little lower.

“Second Brother, which one are we watching?”

Lu Huaiyu pointed to the posters hung around the theater.

Ning Li looked over and saw that it was an animation.

This movie had been in theaters for two or three days, and it had a high rating and ranking.

The other movies that were showing at the same time were a romantic film and a comedy film.

All things considered, it was normal for Lu Huaiyu to choose this.

It would have been better if Ning Li did not hold this balloon.

“Wait for me here. I’m going to buy something.”

Ning Li watched him and saw that Lu Huaiyu was going to buy popcorn and drinks.

She said, "Second Brother, there's no need!"

Ning Li had already eaten dinner and did not have a craving for these.

Lu Huaiyu looked at her and smiled. "Don't they all have these?"

Ning Li was speechless for a moment.

The so-called "they" were the young couples who were waiting for the theater hall to open up.

The couples had these because it was part of the couple package. Very few people bought these just for eating.

However, this did not seem like the right thing to say.

Before Ning Li could say anything, Lu Huaiyu made his way over to the queue.

Lu Huaiyu had an outstanding figure, but his aura was cold and noble.

He was the type that could only be admired from afar, but was untouchable.

Thus, although many people were looking at him, almost none of them dared to talk to him.

Everyone could tell that although this man was young, he was different from the other guys there.

Lu Huaiyu's phone vibrated. He took it out and looked at it. It was a message from Cheng Xiyue.

[Bro, are you free? Qin has a party tonight. Do you want to come?]

Lu Huaiyu replied very simply.

[Nope.]

Cheng Xiyue was surprised.

[Do you have something to do?]

Usually, Lu Huaiyu would still join these events, so why had he refused so quickly this time?

“Hello sir, what would you like?”

When the cashier saw Lu Huaiyu, her smile was a bit more sincere.

Lu Huaiyu glanced up and pointed to one of the menu items casually. “That one.”

“Couple Package A? That’ll be 199 yuan, please.”

Lu Huaiyu suddenly looked towards the side. Ning Li was sitting alone and did not hear the cashier because she was quite far away.

He nodded faintly, paid the bill, and replied to Cheng Xiyue’s message.

[Watching a movie. It’s starting soon.]

[Don’t you have a private theater that was installed less than six months ago?]

[It broke.]

[Broke?! What kind of sh*tty quality is that?! Wait... I thought you don't like going to the theaters. What film is so good that you have to go?]

Lu Huaiyu did not bother to reply. He put his phone away, and walked towards Ning Li with the popcorn and drinks.

He handed the popcorn to Ning Li, so she accepted.

After the ticket check, the both of them then lined up to enter the hall.

...

Lu Huaiyu chose their seats, which were in the middle of the last row.

The attendance rate was quite high, and when they went in, there were already many people sitting in front of them.

Lu Huaiyu walked in front, put away the two drinks, and put her backpack next to him where no one was sitting.

Ning Li followed him and sat down. She took off her hat and placed it next to her.

This animation was in 3D, so Ning Li put on the glasses provided.

The black lenses covered almost half of her face.

Lu Huaiyu looked at her and put them on as well.

His features were prominent. His brow bone to the bridge of his nose was so smooth and perfect like a sculpture. From the side, it added to his cool asceticism.

Ning Li offered him some popcorn. "Second Brother?"

Lu Huaiyu smiled and said, "I don't eat this. You can have it."

He then helped Ning Li to put the straw into her drink.

Ning Li was not at all surprised and took the popcorn back, before munching on it slowly.

The lights suddenly dimmed and the hall went dark.

A beam of light shone onto the large screen.

The music started and the movie began.

...

Ning Li had already seen this movie in her previous life, but it was nice to rewatch it.

Her initially complicated mood gradually settled as the movie played.

She had been busy during this period and it was rare that she could relax like this.

In fact, before this, she had never thought that one day, she would be close enough to Lu Huaiyu that they could watch a movie together.

Ning Li leaned back in her chair and watched with great concentration, occasionally stuffing some popcorn into her mouth.

The screen constantly changed and the light reflected on her face, giving off a serene and dreamy look.

After about half an hour or so, a small movement came from the seat in front of Ning Li.

It seemed to be a young couple.

The guy put away the armrest in the middle and put his arm over the girl's shoulders.

Ning Li was not really bothered by it.

However, Ning Li soon realized that things seemed to be getting heated.

The young couple's attention was not on the movie at all.

The girl's head tilted as the guy wrapped her in his arms and lowered his head.

At that moment, Ning Li's vision suddenly went dark.

Lu Huaiyu had taken her baseball cap and put it on her head. He had pulled it down to the brim to cover her vision.

Ning Li was stunned for a moment and subconsciously twisted her head.

She could not see anything, but she still "looked" in Lu Huaiyu's direction.

Lu Huaiyu was also looking at her.

Most of her face was covered by the hat. Her confused face was slightly tilted and only revealed her sharp chin and full soft lips.

“Second Brother?” She said extremely softly.

An alluring voice came from the front.

In the darkness, it sounded extraordinarily clear.

Ning Li was dumbstruck.

‘This was...’

In the next moment, she could smell his refreshing cedar scent that seemed to get stronger.

His voice was deep and slightly muted. It was so compelling and had a lightness that made her ears tickle.

“Are you that curious?”

Chapter 219: He’s Just Within Reach

Ning Li instantly understood what he was laughing at.

Her cheeks felt warm and she immediately said, “I wasn’t...”

Ning Li had not expected the couple in front of her to be so bold and immersed in their own world...

Lu Huaiyu looked at her moving lips and nervous face with dark eyes.

Luckily, she was wearing a baseball cap and he was wearing the 3D glasses, so she could not see the thirst and desire in the depths of his eyes.

He looked forward and saw that the young couple was still embracing each other.

Thus, he did not move.

Somehow, Ning Li also maintained her posture.

This scene seemed to be frozen.

The air seemed to be stagnant.

The movie and music seemed so distant at this point.

Ning Li could not see anything, but could only hear the faint sounds coming from the front as well as Lu Huaiyu's gentle breathing.

His cedar scent was getting stronger and enveloped her so tightly that it was difficult to break free.

Seemingly sensing her embarrassment, Lu Huaiyu let out a low chuckle.

"This view is not suitable for kids."

The tips of her ears flushed red.

After what seemed like a long time, the couple in front of them finally stopped making out and started watching the movie again.

Only then did Lu Huaiyu lift the baseball cap from her head.

In that instant, Lu Huaiyu readjusted his expression.

When Ning Li looked at him, he looked as indifferent and nonchalant as usual.

It was as if this little episode had not affected him in any way.

Ning Li quickly withdrew her gaze and munched on the popcorn to cover her embarrassment.

Lu Huaiyu suddenly turned to her.

“Is it honey butter?”

Ning Li froze for a moment before realizing that he was talking about the popcorn.

“Mhmm.” She nodded and handed over the bucket.

“Do you want some?”

Lu Huaiyu did not take it from her. He just bent his head slightly, held her hand, and ate the one that she was just about to stuff in her mouth.

His slightly cool and soft thin lips lightly brushed past her fingertips.

Ning Li held her breath.

Lu Huaiyu had already leaned back on his seat.

After a while, he said casually, "It's a little too sweet for me."

Ning Li answered softly.

She subconsciously took another one and popped it into her mouth. When her lips touched her fingertips, she remembered the subtle touch of that moment earlier.

Ning Li lowered her eyes and swallowed the popcorn but did not eat the rest of it.

She concentrated on the second half of this movie.

An hour seemed very long, but it also seemed to fly by.

Ning Li looked at the curtain that was drawn in front of her, but some scenes intermittently emerged in her mind.

Lu Huaiyu was sitting next to her quietly, seemingly very absorbed in the movie.

However, his presence was just too strong.

Even if Ning Li did not think or look at him, she could still feel Lu Huaiyu right next to her, just within reach.

After a while, the movie's cheerful end credits song played.

The lights came back on.

Ning Li looked up and felt like she had just woken up from a dream.

“Let’s go, Lili,” Lu Huaiyu said.

Ning Li looked up at him before taking off her 3D glasses and followed him out.

...

It was almost 10:00 pm when they came out.

HG mall was still very lively.

Ning Li looked around but felt that something was not quite the same.

“I’ll send you home,” Lu Huaiyu said.

Ning Li nodded.

...

On the way back, the both of them sat together in the backseat.

After the car had driven some distance, Lu Huaiyu asked, “Was the movie good?”

Ning Li had been looking out the window. When she heard this, she gently nodded her head. “It was good.”

The corners of Lu Huaiyu’s lips curled up slightly.

“You seemed to like it a lot since you were so focused.”

“Mhmm.” Ning Li was quite fond of this movie.

However, she had not expected the couple’s makeout session in front of her.

She did not mention this though.

The car was silent again.

Half an hour later, the car arrived at the Ye family home.

Ning Li held her backpack, which had a balloon tied to it.

She then said goodbye to Lu Huaiyu.

“Goodnight, Second Brother! Take care!”

“Wait.” Lu Huaiyu suddenly called out to her and handed something over.

It was the ticket stub of the movie ticket that Ning Li gave him.

Ning Li was a bit puzzled. “Second Brother, this...”

“Since you invited me to the movies, I naturally have to return the favor. Keep this ticket stub and exchange anything you want from me later. I’ll give you whatever you want.”

Ning Li subconsciously refused. "Second Brother, that's not necessary. It's just a movie, so it's not worth it..."

It was very difficult to exchange something cheaper than a movie ticket from Lu Huaiyu.

Moreover, this movie ticket was a gift from HG.

If Ning Li accepted it, she would seem greedy.

Lu Huaiyu raised his eyebrows.

"This was my first time watching a movie with someone, so of course it's worth it."

His tone was nonchalant and carried his innate pride and elegance.

Ning Li blinked.

'Lu Huaiyu had never been to the movies with anyone else?'

After a moment, Ning Li took the ticket stub from him. "Then...I'll get going..."

Lu Huaiyu nodded his head.

Ning Li pushed the door open and got out of the car.

After she got out, Lu Huaiyu suddenly called out to her again. "Lili!"

Ning Li turned around and saw him roll down the car window. He looked over with a deep and clear gaze that was like a vortex, pulling her in as if he could easily swallow her.

He smiled charmingly. "Merry Christmas."

Ning Li's eyes curved into little arcs. "Merry Christmas, Second Brother."

...

Ning Li went upstairs.

It was already very late, but Ye Ci's room was still lit.

Ning Li did not pay much attention to it and went back to her room.

She put down her backpack, untied the balloon, deep in thought for a while. She then tied it to the small stool in the corner.

The balloon was not big, so it was not very noticeable.

Ning Li then put the ticket stub given by Lu Huaiyu on the table before taking hers out from her pocket and laying it out side by side.

There was not much use for these after the movie, so she would usually throw them away.

However, this time she folded up the two ticket stubs and put them into the candy jar.

Just then, her phone lit up.

It was a message from He Xiaochen.

[Ning Li, I think I saw you in HG today! Were you with your second brother?]

Ning Li's eyebrows lifted slightly.

Before she could reply, He Xiaochen sent a photo.

[Is this you guys?]

The photo looked like it had been taken in a hurry from a distance away.

From that perspective, the person who took the picture would have been at the main entrance of HG.

There was a crowd outside, and the Christmas tree was bright and gorgeous with glimmering lights everywhere.

A little farther away from the camera, was Ning Li and Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu was holding Ning Li's wrist as he handed her a balloon.

They had been mostly blocked by the crowd, but their faces were clear and it was not difficult for those familiar with them to recognize them.

Ning Li was tilting her head slightly as she looked at Lu Huaiyu.

It was not captured in the photo, but Ning Li could remember what had been going through her mind at that exact moment.

Ning Li stared at the picture for a while before saving it.

[Yes.]

Chapter 220: Little Lili

[It really was you guys! I knew it!]

Having received an affirmation, He Xiaochen was instantly excited.

[My parents and I went to HG for dinner and I happened to see you!]

He Xiaochen had been about to go over to say hello, but since it was time for their dinner reservation, her mom had rushed her to leave and said that she was probably mistaken because it could not be such a coincidence.

However, how could He Xiaochen be mistaken about this striking couple?

Thus, He Xiaochen had hurriedly snapped this picture and followed her parents to the restaurant.

When she had come back out, He Xiaochen looked around again, but she did not meet them.

[Ning Li, did you go to the movies with your second brother?]

Ning Li replied with a “yes” and told her what movie they had watched.

He Xiaochen was the one who had suggested that Ning Li should bring her second brother along, so it was not surprising to hear her say so.

‘But...’

[Hahaha! Did your second brother buy you a balloon? What was he thinking?]

The couples around them all had flowers and gifts, which were so lame.

He Xiaochen laid on the bed and clicked on the photo. She had a doting smile on her face.

The photo turned Goddess Ning Li into Little Lili! It was just too adorable!

Her second brother was also so handsome, unattainable, and noble, creating a huge contrast with this balloon. He looked especially cute as he handed over the balloon to Ning Li.

[He only bought it because he saw some children selling it. By the way, the movie's pretty good!]

He Xiaochen was already interested in this film, so when she heard Ning Li say so, she quickly started talking about the movie.

The two girls talked for a while and discussed their reading comprehension before they hung up.

...

Towards the end of the school year, the atmosphere in Second High seemed a lot more tense than before.

This was especially true for the senior class.

Students would hold books and study them in the corners of the corridors and staircases. During after-school hours, the playground was also much less crowded than before.

In the classroom, most of the students were burying their heads in their books, constantly doing papers and questions.

In comparison, Ning Li did not seem that much different from before.

She had finished reading one of the books that she had borrowed from Lu Huaiyu and was now reading the second one.

However, this one did not have his handwriting on it.

The small writing, "8.17", was etched into the depths of Ning Li's heart.

...

In the blink of an eye, Saturday quickly arrived.

That morning, Ning Li took the earliest high-speed train to Lincheng.

It was only an hour's drive between Yunzhou and Lincheng, and the high-speed train got her there in twenty minutes.

After getting out of the train station, Ning Li saw a familiar SUV.

She walked over to it.

Ji Shu poked his head out of the car window and smiled at her.

"Sister Li!"

Ning Li paused in her footsteps.

"Why are you here?"

'Shouldn't Ji Shu be in Yunzhou now?'

Ji Shu laughed and said, “Null showed me the photo of that car and told me that you’re taking on this case. How can I miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity?”

That silver-gray supercar was a classic limited edition from many years ago. There were no more than a hundred units worldwide. Not to mention, this was a custom model, so it was all the more precious.

He had long wanted to see it, but unfortunately, he had never gotten the chance.

Thus, he was determined to make this trip no matter what.

Moreover, Ning Li herself had promised to repair it personally.

That was all the more reason to come over.

Ning Li got into the passenger seat. “Let’s go to Second Garage.”

Ji Shu whistled and started the car engine.

Ning Li looked out the window, and the scenery on both sides of the road continued to recede.

This was a newly developed area. The high-speed railway station had opened less than two years ago, and the surrounding area was also being developed slowly.

There were many tall buildings, and it looked quite prosperous and lively.

The old city where Ning Li and her grandmother had lived seemed like a different world compared to this new area.

Since she had left Lincheng, this was the first time she had come back in almost three months.

“Hey, if you didn’t have to attend classes yesterday, I would’ve brought you here with me yesterday.”

As soon as Ji Shu saw Ning Li, he could not help but say, “I wanted to see that car first, but Null wouldn’t allow it and said that I would have to wait for you to come.”

‘Such bias...’

Ning Li recovered from her musings, not feeling surprised. “You don’t even know how to fix it, so what’s the use of you seeing it first?”

Ji Shu was rendered speechless.

He knew how to repair cars. After all, he had been in the game for a long time.

However, in front of Ning Li, he could not refute that statement.

“I just wanted to take a look. Sister Li, do you know what the selling price of that car was back then?”

Ji Shu did a quick mental calculation and snorted. “Anyway, the point is that it’s not something that can be bought with money. By now, the price of that car has gone up again.”

The Ji family was considered one of the richest families in Yunzhou. If even Ji Shu felt that it was expensive, then it must be very expensive.

A collector’s car was always on a different level.

If it were not so rare, he would not have made this trip.

“By the way, I remember that this car was discontinued some years ago. Are all the related parts used in this repair from the original factory?”

Ning Li nodded her head.

This was the reason she had agreed to fix it.

Ji Shu gave her a thumbs up.

“Having this car is already awesome, yet they are still able to get so many of the original parts?!”

Ning Li said, “That car belongs to Gu Siyang.”

Ji Shu had been oblivious to this and was stunned.

“It’s his?! The Gu family!”

‘No wonder!’

After all, Gu Siyang was the Young Master of the Gu family.

It made a lot of sense now that he considered this.

Ji Shu suddenly thought of something.

“Then, does he know that you’re fixing it this time?”

“Nope.”

Ning Li leaned back and pulled her baseball cap down further.

“There’s no need to tell him.”

...

At the same time, Gu Siyang and Gu Tinglan were also driving towards Lincheng.