

Little Brat's 221

Chapter 221: Meet

Gu Tinglan was the one who drove.

Gu Siyang sat in the passenger seat and was on his best behavior.

He looked at the scenery outside the window. "So, this is what Lincheng looks like..."

Gu Siyang had wanted to visit Lincheng before, but had never had a chance to.

He had only come because of the accident, when he had personally sent the car over. However, at that time, all his thoughts had been on the car, with no room to think of other matters.

This time, he felt a little more relaxed and began to pay attention to the surroundings.

Gu Tinglan only let out a faint "mm".

He did not come here much but was more familiar with Lincheng compared to his nephew. That was because he had done some research on the place before he had returned from abroad.

Gu Siyang looked around and sighed.

"It's...kind of different here."

This was a euphemistic way to put it.

Most of the Gu family's businesses were abroad, so they spent most of their time abroad.

In recent years, the Gu family had gradually begun to expand their business domestically, so Gu Tingfeng had brought Gu Siyang back to stay for some time.

However, Gu Siyang mostly stayed in places like the Capital.

He had never had an opportunity to visit small townships like Lincheng.

Gu Tinglan said, "The scenery is quite nice."

Gu Siyang turned to look at him. After a moment's hesitation, he said, "Lil Uncle, are you really sure it's Lincheng?"

Gu Tinglan shook his head.

He had not found anything the last time he had come over.

This made him waver a bit.

However, this did not affect his impression of Lincheng.

Gu Tinglan did feel that this was a nice place.

"My original plan was to come back after I found some more clues, but thanks to you, it's ahead of schedule."

Gu Siyang shut up in defeat.

He also knew that he had made a big mistake this time, and he was now like a dog with his tail between his legs.

The only thing he wanted at the moment was for the car to be repaired as soon as possible so that if his father found out, he could still live to see another day.

He pointed ahead. "Lil Uncle, turn right at this intersection. We'll be there in another half an hour."

...

Ji Shu drove towards the west of the city.

The further west they were, the more historical the city looked.

Finally, they went to an abandoned repair shop in the suburbs.

This area was quite large. There were seven or eight cars parked in the yard that looked so dusty, as if they had been shelved for a long time.

There were two dilapidated metal garages further in.

Ji Shu parked the car in the yard.

Ning Li jumped out and walked towards the back of the garage.

The door was locked.

Ji Shu followed behind her.

"Null said that he's in the first garage and won't be back for another hour. Let's wait for..."

Ning Li fished out a key from her pocket to open the door.

Click.

The lock opened.

The rest of Ji Shu's words were stuck in his throat and he coughed violently.

"Sister Li, you have a key?!"

'Isn't this Null's place? Then this key...'

Ning Li nodded and pushed the door open. "I asked him for it when I left Lincheng."

Ji Shu was speechless.

'Great... I just wanted to come and take a look. I even begged Null, but he still didn't budge. But now, Ning Li has a key?! She can come whenever she likes?!'

It felt like a huge blow to Ji Shu.

"Sister Li, I'm so jealous!"

Ning Li headed inside. "You could ask him for one too."

Ji Shu replied, "Thanks for the suggestion, but I don't want to make a fool of myself."

If he actually dared to make such a request, Null would show him what it meant to be treated differently.

As he said that, he followed Ning Li inside.

This place looked like a simple and dilapidated garage from the outside, but it was completely different on the inside.

At a glance, there were more than ten vehicles placed here.

Some looked like ordinary vans, while others were top-of-the-line race cars.

Next to them were various tools, instruments, and parts.

Suddenly, Ji Shu's eyes lit up.

“Sister Li! It's that one!”

Ning Li had already seen it.

The silver-gray supercar was parked in the innermost area of the garage.

Although she had already seen the photos, it was still quite a shock to see the car in person.

Even though the front body of the car had been distorted from the crash, the smooth and perfect curvature of the body was still breathtaking at first glance.

Ning Li walked over.

Ji Shu followed behind and stared at it. His eyes were glued to it.

“It's really stunning... Just imagine driving this car...”

Ning Li's gaze fell onto the car window.

There was a line of very small markings on the inside.

She raised her eyebrows slightly.

Top-grade reinforced bulletproof glass.

‘The owner of this car is...quite interesting.’

Although Gu Siyang had sent this car here, it was somewhat old and obviously not his.

She put her backpack down.

...

Gu Siyang pointed to the dilapidated factory in front of him and said, “Lil Uncle, we’re here! Let’s park right here.”

Gu Tinglan looked at it.

The young man hurriedly said, “Lil Uncle, this place may look a little run-down, but it’s very proper!”

Gu Tinglan laughed.

How could a private garage specializing in car modification and repair be proper?

However, he did not bother to get into it with his nephew.

“Let’s go down and take a look.”

Gu Siyang agreed and immediately got out of the car, before walking towards the garage.

...

Ji Shu was standing on the side observing seriously when he heard movement in the yard, which made him feel a little strange.

He looked at his phone.

“Is Null back already? I thought he would be longer?”

Ji Shu glanced out the door.

There was another garage in front, so he did not see anything.

“Sister Li, I’ll go and check it out.”

Having said that, Ji Shu went outside.

Just as he went out, he came face-to-face with Gu Siyang.

“Gu Siyang?”

Ji Shu’s voice came from the outside.

Ning Li stopped in her tracks.

Chapter 222: Do You Know Ning Li?

Gu Siyang was also surprised to see Ji Shu.

“Ji Shu, you’re here too?”

He then glanced behind Ji Shu.

The door was half-closed, so it was not possible to see the situation inside.

Ji Shu smiled and walked over.

“Well...I heard that a top-range collector’s item had been sent over, so I purposely rushed over from Yunzhou to see it. Young Master Gu, I thought we were friends! How could you hide such a beauty from me?”

Ji Shu’s words were thick with admiration and envy, but Gu Siyang felt like crying.

‘Can you shut up? My uncle’s just behind me!’

“That’s not his car.” Gu Tinglan’s voice came from behind.

When he got out of the car, he casually swept a glance at the cars parked in the front yard and finally saw the two garages in front.

When Ji Shu saw him, he immediately became more serious.

“Dr. Gu?”

As Ji Shu greeted Gu Tinglan, he gave Gu Siyang a look.

‘Why is he here as well? I thought Gu Tinglan never bothered with the Gu family’s affairs. Why had he followed Gu Siyang here this time?’

Gu Siyang did not know what to say.

He had not wanted Gu Tinglan to come over, but he had no choice.

“Yeah, it’s not my car.” Gu Siyang said honestly. “I accidentally crashed it, so I sent it over to be repaired.”

When Ji Shu thought about it, this car was indeed not of the same era or style that Gu Siyang would like.

No wonder he was so nervous.

Ji Shu patted his shoulder.

“I told you before. With your skills, you really have to be careful on the road.”

Gu Siyang’s eyes widened, feeling a little bitter.

“That was just an accident...”

“Everyone says so. Siyang, you should reflect on yourself.”

Gu Tinglan spoke without mercy.

Gu Siyang was rendered speechless.

He would never admit it in front of Ji Shu, but it was different with his uncle.

Ji Shu was smug because it was rare to see the always proud and dashing Young Master Gu in defeat.

“Don’t worry, since you sent it here, it’ll definitely be fixed!”

Gu Siyang looked at him suspiciously. “Don’t tell me that you’re the one responsible for repairing the car...?”

He and Ji Shu had known each other for a while and even raced together a few times.

Although Ji Shu was talented in racing, his car repair level was really mediocre.

Ji Shu was rendered speechless by Gu Siyang’s doubtful eyes.

‘Am I really that substandard?!’

“Don’t worry, it’s not me!”

Besides, that car was so expensive. If he accidentally messed something up, he really could not afford to pay for it.

Gu Siyang breathed a sigh of relief. “Are they repairing it inside? Shall we go over and take a look?”

At the mention of this, Ji Shu paused in his footsteps and casually stopped him. He smiled and said, “It’s a little busy inside, maybe later?”

Gu Siyang froze. “Are you not allowing us to take a look?”

Null was very famous in this underground racing circle, so it was normal that Ji Shu would know him.

Knowing Ji Shu’s personality, he would indeed make a trip just to see that car.

Actually, Gu Siyang was not that interested in seeing the repair process, but this car was different. Not to mention, he had purposely brought Gu Tinglan over this time.

“No, it’s just messy...”

Ji Shu moved to the side. “I guess it’s fine if you really want to see it...”

Just then, another car drove over.

A man who looked to be in his thirties got out of the car.

The morning was still quite cold in the suburbs of Lincheng, but the man was only wearing a T-shirt and a black jacket.

He had a crew cut and prominent features, a very manly hunk.

The man walked over with a smile.

“What are you guys chatting about?”

Ji Shu saw who it was and felt more relaxed. “Null!”

Gu Siyang had met Null before, but this was the first time Gu Tinglan was meeting him.

They greeted each other in turn.

Gu Siyang then asked if he could go in to check it out.

Null simply refused.

"I'm really sorry, but the person responsible for repairing your car this time doesn't like to be disturbed. If you really want to see it, you can wait until they're done."

He had a smile on his face, but his tone was firm and his attitude was very resolute.

Gu Siyang looked at Gu Tinglan.

They had made this trip for only one purpose.

Gu Tinglan smiled gently. "Don't get me wrong. We wanted to take a look because that car is customized and many parts will need some extra attention. I thought it might be more efficient to communicate this in person."

Null's smile remained unchanged.

"That's simple. You can talk to me directly. It's the same thing."

Since Null said so, Gu Tinglan did not continue to insist.

Gu Tinglan glanced at the garage at the back.

"Okay then. So, how long will it take to fix this car?"

Null narrowed his eyes and pondered for a while. "Three days."

"That fast?" Gu Siyang was a little surprised.

"Since you provided all the original parts that are needed, it'll be a lot easier to handle."

Null was frank.

In fact, it should be done in a day because Ning Li was always very efficient in this regard.

However, that would make it seem like it was not worth so much money, so it was better to say that it would take longer.

Gu Tinglan nodded his head. "Then we'll stay in Lincheng for three days."

This time, it was Null's turn to be surprised.

He knew the Gu family's status.

That car was valuable, but for the Gu family, it should not be valued to such an extent.

Unless...that car had some sort of special meaning to them.

When Gu Siyang had come to deliver the car previously, Null had already gotten a vague sense of this. Now that he heard Gu Tinglan say this, he was even more certain.

Gu Siyang asked, "Lil Uncle, then should we explore the place during these three days?"

He was actually quite curious about Lincheng.

Gu Tinglan nodded his head.

He had the same intention as well.

Suddenly, Gu Tinglan remembered something and looked at Null. "By the way, you're probably acquainted with Ning Li, right?"

Ji Shu was stunned.

Null's hands were in his pockets as he leaned on his car door in a casual posture.

"Yeah, she's a good racer. Why do you ask?"

Ji Shu and Ning Li were close with each other. Since Ji Shu knew Null, Ning Li would be no exception, especially since Ning Li was from Lincheng.

Gu Tinglan said, "Nothing, I'm just curious about something."

Chapter 223: The Kid at Home Likes It

The few of them went to the garage in front.

There was an office inside.

The overall setup was very simple with three conspicuous desktops on the table.

However, the screen was black at the moment.

Gu Tinglan glanced at it once before withdrawing his gaze.

Null casually sat down on a chair.

"You're asking how she got involved with racing?"

Gu Tinglan sat across from him and nodded.

On the way to the garage, Gu Tinglan had already heard from his nephew that Null was a very significant person in the underground racing circle around here.

Since Ning Li also used to race, Null would certainly know something about it.

Null narrowed his eyes.

“I guess it’s been a long time. She used to like driving around our garage when she was young. I saw that she was quite talented in it, so I took her along. It also allowed her to earn some pocket money. Why? Is there a problem?”

Gu Tinglan looked at him.

He could tell that Null was being frank.

However, he was more concerned about something else.

“I heard that Ning Li’s father was imprisoned because of a car accident?”

When Gu Tinglan mentioned this, Null frowned.

This was Ning Li’s scar.

She rarely ever mentioned it, so even more so they did not either.

‘Why did Gu Tinglan suddenly ask about this?’

Looking at Null’s reaction, Gu Tinglan knew what he was thinking.

Gu Tinglan smiled, in a gentle and polite manner. "Don't take it the wrong way. I don't mean anything else. It's just that I've been doing some research and studies recently. Generally speaking, this kind of situation would bring great psychological distress and trauma, which would make people subconsciously ignore and avoid the trigger. However, Ning Li's situation is somewhat special, so..."

He had come into contact with many children from families with similar backgrounds.

They usually shunned and hated objects that caused their misfortune.

For example, cars, alcohol, and so on.

When Ning Haizhou had gotten into the accident, Ning Li had only been seven years old, an age where she had already started to understand and remember things.

However, she was clearly not like most people.

She did not avoid cars and had even gotten involved in underground racing.

Gu Tinglan had seen Ning Li's racing video on Xiaosong Hill.

She was determined, persistent, and fearless.

Null stroked his chin and pondered.

He roughly understood why Gu Tinglan was asking this, but...

"Everyone's different, so it's better if you ask her yourself."

Gu Tinglan pondered for a moment and smiled. "You're right."

...

Gu Tinglan and Gu Siyang quickly left.

Seeing their car gradually disappear, Ji Shu leaned against the door feeling a little strange.

“They already know that Sister Li can race, so why is it necessary to hide that she’s repairing their car?”

Null turned on the computer without raising his head.

“If you hadn’t bumped into her back then and pestered her while shouting her name, do you think she would’ve told you?”

Ji Shu was speechless.

Back when his car had broken down, he had sent it here to be repaired and run into Ning Li.

It had been pure coincidence.

“Fine. Anyway, Sister Li is now so focused on school. I guess it’ll be a lot less trouble this way.”

As he said this, Ji Shu walked to the back garage.

“I’d better go and learn from her... Sister Li, why are you out here?”

Before he could finish his sentence, he saw that Ning Li had already walked to the door.

She had taken off her jacket and her sleeves were pulled up. Her face and hands were also stained.

Ji Shu was dumbfounded. "Sister Li, did you just come up from under the chassis?"

Ning Li ignored him and walked straight to NULL. "Have you seen it?"

Null was staring at the screen, looking a bit serious.

Ji Shu looked at the two and felt a little puzzled.

"Uh... What's wrong? Is something wrong with that car?"

Null leaned back in her chair.

The screen showed the car in three different orientations.

One of them showed very clearly that there was an extremely clear bullet mark on the inside of the driver's door where the handle was.

From the looks of it, a gun had been fired inside the car before.

However, it had been some years ago, and it had not been repaired.

Null suddenly recalled some of the details Gu Tinglan had mentioned to him earlier and looked up at Ning Li.

"Don't bother with this."

Ning Li walked to the side and opened a bottle of water.

"Alright."

This car belonged to the Gu family, and it was clear that it was very important to them.

It probably had something to do with this bullet mark.

Or rather, it was perhaps related to the owner of this car and the event that had happened.

However, this was none of her business. She was only responsible for repairing the car, so there was no need to ask too much.

Ji Shu was tormented by this tacit exchange between the two of them and walked over.

“What the hell is it? Let me see...”

Null shut down the computer immediately and the screen blacked out.

Ji Shu was baffled.

Null propped his legs on the table.

“It’s none of your business. Go learn from Ning Li.”

Ji Shu was speechless and looked at Ning Li for help.

Ning Li thought about it for a moment. “Come over here and pass me the tools.”

Ji Shu thought, ‘Thanks for the humiliation...’

Although Ji Shu wanted to know what was going on, these two people obviously had no intention of telling him.

Ning Li took a short rest before getting up to start work again.

When she walked to the door, she looked back at Ji Shu. "Are you not coming?"

Ji Shu immediately followed. "Coming!"

It did not matter if he was kept in the dark about this. What was more important was this rare learning opportunity!

...

Yunding Fenghua.

The large study was on the second floor.

Lu Huaiyu was standing in front of the bookshelf picking out books.

Estimating the time, he figured that Ning Li would probably have finished reading the books that she had borrowed the last time.

She would probably come over and return them soon.

Lu Huaiyu thought about the books that she had borrowed and could already guess her preferences and progression.

After searching his bookshelves for a while, he dialed a phone number.

The person on the other side quickly picked up and sounded surprised. "Huaiyu, why are you so free to call me today?"

The corners of Lu Huaiyu's lips curved slightly.

"I want to borrow some books from you." He spoke fluent German.

He then listed a few book titles.

The other party listened for a moment, feeling puzzled.

"Haven't you read these before?"

Lu Huaiyu let out a faint "mm".

"The kid at home likes these, so I wanted to borrow them for her."

The other party laughed. "It's rare to get you to ask for a favor personally. I'll have my assistant sort it out and send it to you later. Oh, by the way, one of the books was borrowed by the doctor next door, so I guess it'll take some time before I can give it to you."

Lu Huaiyu did not mind.

"Then, thank you very much."

After hanging up the phone, Lu Huaiyu did not get to put his phone away before someone called again.

He looked at it and saw that it was a call from his grandfather.

After hesitating for a moment, Lu Huaiyu answered the call.

“Hey, Grandpa.”

Old Master Lu was angry.

“Who were you talking to on the phone for so long?”

Lu Huaiyu looked at the time. That call duration had been less than three minutes.

However, the old man’s concept of time had always been like this, so Lu Huaiyu was used to it.

“Why are you in such a hurry to call me? Is there something wrong?”

Old Master Lu grunted.

“It’s the New Year soon, are you not coming home?”

Chapter 224: The Body Is Honest

Lu Huaiyu laughed.

“So you’re asking me to pack my bags and go back now?”

It was almost New Year’s Day, so his grandfather’s call was a little late.

Old Master Lu had expected this answer, but he was still very displeased.

“You do the math... How many times have you been home in the past few months? Your big brother doesn’t come back because he’s on a mission, but you’re just staying in Yunzhou and refuse to come home. What are you trying to do?!”

The last time they had met, the old man had resorted to pretending to be sick to lure his grandson home.

Otherwise, he would not have gotten to see Lu Huaiyu.

If not for the fact that Gu Tinglan had told Old Master Lu that Lu Huaiyu’s time in Yunzhou had aided in his recovery, the old man would have already forced his grandson to go back to the Capital.

This time, Old Master Lu had taken advantage of New Year’s Day to make this call.

“If you’re not returning on New Year’s Day, then are you not planning on coming home during the Spring Festival as well?!”

The more Old Master Lu spoke, the angrier he became.

“I’ll go home,” Lu Huaiyu said.

“Everyone celebrates Chinese New Year together, but...wait...what did you just say?”

Old Master Lu was shocked.

“Really?!”

Lu Huaiyu’s thin lips curved slightly.

“Yeah, I’m going back in another two weeks until after Chinese New Year.”

This news was such a surprise that Old Master Lu was momentarily confused.

However, since Lu Huaiyu had said so, it was obvious that he was serious with his intention.

The old man was instantly in a good mood.

“Great! You’ve been in Yunzhou all year. If you don’t even come back for Chinese New Year, people will think that you have a secret family there!”

The old man thought, ‘It’s great that this child is coming back to the Capital!’

Lu Huaiyu raised his eyebrows slightly but did not refute this statement.

He had decided to go home for Chinese New Year because, on the one hand, he wanted to spend some time with his grandfather, but on the other hand...

“Don’t worry, Grandpa. I’ll be going home soon.”

After finally getting a satisfactory answer from his grandson, the old man hung up the phone feeling contented.

Lu Huaiyu’s eyes casually swept to the bookshelf and saw two books placed side by side on it.

Those were the books that Ning Li had borrowed the first time. It was a Chinese translation and the original German version.

He thought about it and sent another message to the person he had called before.

[Besides the Chinese version, please send the original version as well.]

The other party seemed to be surprised.

[You want both? Didn't you say it was for a kid?]

Would a kid understand the original German version?

[The original version is more accurate.]

The other party quickly agreed.

[Makes sense. Since you're around, the kid can always ask for help if she doesn't understand something.]

Lu Huaiyu looked at the message and thought, 'That's true...'

...

Lincheng.

By the time Ning Li came out of the garage, it was already dark outside.

Ji Shu followed behind.

"Sister Li, it's basically almost done. Will it be fixed by tomorrow?"

"Mm."

The rest of the work was all external, such as paint and so on, which would not take much effort.

“Sister Li, where will you be sleeping tonight?”

Ning Li put on her baseball cap.

“Home.”

Ji Shu froze. Only then did he react to what she meant.

She was not going back to the Ye family home, but back to the house she lived in when she was in Lincheng.

Ji Shu was a little hesitant.

“But Sister Li, you haven’t been back for quite a long time. Now...”

‘Is it still livable there?’

Ning Li smiled and did not explain much. She just got into the passenger side of the SUV that Ji Shu had been driving before.

Null had something to do in the afternoon and had already left.

Ji Shu intended to help her book a hotel, but seeing that Ning Li had already made a decision, he got into the car.

“Then I’ll send you home.”

...

Ji Shu drove towards the old city and eventually stopped at a familiar intersection.

Ning Li got out with her backpack.

Ji Shu said, "I'll pick you up tomorrow morning then!"

Ning Li waved her hand without looking back and walked straight into the alley.

It was a Saturday evening, and the place was very lively.

A few children were running around happily, and the aroma of home-cooked food was coming from the building.

Ning Li went upstairs and stood in front of a door.

It looked very old and had some markings from being bashed.

These marks were from a long time ago.

At that time, Ning Haizhou had just gotten into an accident and gone to prison. The family of the victim who had died in the car accident had come to make a fuss many times.

Ning Li took out the key to open the door.

Snap.

The lights came on.

It was a very small house with old and simple furnishings, but it was clean.

After Ning Li had left Lincheng, she had specially hired someone who would come over regularly every month to clean and tidy up.

She put her backpack on the sofa and walked to one side.

There was a photo frame on the table and the old woman in the photo had a warm and kind smile.

“Grandma, I’m home.” Ning Li whispered. “Did you miss me?”

There was no answer.

Those gentle eyes in the photo just looked back at her quietly.

Ning Li wiped the picture frame carefully and held it for a long time before putting it down.

Everything in the house was still exactly the same as when she had left.

She went to her room and pulled out a change of clothes.

When she had first gone to Yunzhou, she had only taken some of her things with her and left some here.

After working all day in the garage, she was very grimy and greasy.

She took her clothes and went to the bathroom.

...

Half an hour later, Ning Li came out of the bathroom, took a new towel, and lightly dried her hair.

The sky outside was already completely dark, and looking out, she could see a lit-up window across the street.

She casually picked up her phone, and only then did she see that there was a missed call from Lu Huaiyu.

It was from an hour ago.

Ning Li thought back. That should have been around the time that she had just left the garage.

She had been busy all day and felt tired as she sat in the car, so she had muted her phone and put it away.

That was why she had missed his call.

Ning Li thought about it and sent him a message.

[Sorry, Second Brother. My phone was on silent mode and I was busy, so I missed your call.]

Soon, Lu Huaiyu called her back.

She was the only one at home, so she had simply ordered takeout, sat cross-legged on the sofa, and continued to rub her hair.

“Lili?” Lu Huaiyu’s voice came through.

Ning Li answered, “Second Brother, is there a reason you are looking for me?”

Lu Huaiyu chuckled. “Can’t I call you if there’s nothing?”

Ning Li paused for a moment as she wiped her hair.

Since the day she had watched a movie with Lu Huaiyu, she vaguely felt that something was not quite the same, but she could not pinpoint it.

Lu Huaiyu seemed to be unconcerned and nonchalant. "So busy? I seem to remember that you guys are having your final exams soon, right?"

"Yes, next week."

Lu Huaiyu thought that she had missed the call because she had been busy studying earlier.

However, she had been busy because of the car, not because of the exams.

Lu Huaiyu let out a faint "mm", then there was a short silence.

It was a little awkward.

Ning Li took the initiative to speak.

"Second Brother, have you eaten yet?"

"Yes, how about you?"

Ning Li had not actually eaten, but she still obediently replied, "Yes, I've eaten."

Growl.

Ning Li's stomach growled in response.

Then there was a dead silence again.

Chapter 225: Coaxing

Ning Li never could have imagined that she would be so humiliated in front of Lu Huaiyu.

Her stomach growled in the empty and quiet room, so it was very, very clear.

After a momentary silence, Lu Huaiyu let out a low laugh.

“You’ve eaten?”

Ning Li covered her face with the towel in despair and wished that she had never received this call.

Or she could just hang up. Why had she even asked that question in the first place?

There was no more sound from Lu Huaiyu’s end, but Ning Li knew very well that he was still listening and waiting for her answer.

She spoke sullenly, “No...”

Ning Li had been busy repairing the car all day, only having had a simple lunch at noon. In the evening, Ji Shu had wanted to take her to dinner, but she had not had much of an appetite at that time, so she had refused.

After a bath and settling down, she finally felt hungry.

As a result, such a situation occurred.

Lu Huaiyu asked, "What do you want to eat?"

Ning Li froze slightly and thought, 'Does he want to take me to dinner?'

"Second Brother, I'll just order takeout later. Don't trouble yourself."

"It's no trouble. I'm out now, so I can order takeaway for you. What do you want to eat?"

'He's outside?'

Before Ning Li could speak, she heard Cheng Xiyue's voice in the background.

"Bro, they're already here and waiting for you. Eh? Who are you talking to on the phone?"

Ning Li said, "Second Brother, if you have something to do, go ahead."

Cheng Xiyue heard her voice. "Little Ning Li?"

"Brother Xiyue." Ning Li greeted him.

Cheng Xiyue heard their conversation.

"Little Ning Li hasn't eaten yet? Then why don't we..."

Lu Huaiyu raised his eyes and gave him a silent warning.

Cheng Xiyue had the sense to shut his mouth and took a step back.

'Fine... She's all yours... It's not my place to be concerned for her.' Cheng Xiyue thought.

Lu Huaiyu continued to say, "We're in the city center. There are a few nice restaurants nearby. Do you want something lighter or something else? Xiyue's driving now, so we can send it to you on the way."

Cheng Xiyue was speechless. 'Am I just your handy driver, huh?'

Ning Li felt a little headache coming on. "It's really fine, Second Brother. Don't you still have an appointment?"

Lu Huaiyu seemed to have heard something.

"You're not at the Ye family house right now."

It was not a question, but a definite declarative statement.

"We're not far from Heyuan district."

Besides, he had the key, so it would not be much trouble.

Ning Li knew that she could not avoid this, so she took a deep breath and said honestly, "Second Brother, I'm not in Yunzhou...I'm back home in Lincheng."

Lu Huaiyu's phoenix eyes narrowed slightly.

The final exams were coming up. Why had Ning Li chosen to go back to Lincheng at this time?

"You're alone?"

“Mm.”

Ning Li’s hair was almost dry by then. She felt that Lu Huaiyu’s question was a bit strange.

She had always been dependent on her grandmother in Lincheng, and he knew it.

Now that her grandmother was not there, she was all alone.

“When will you be back?” Lu Huaiyu asked.

“Tomorrow.”

Lu Huaiyu paused for a while.

If Ning Li had gone somewhere else, he would definitely have asked more questions, but Lincheng was her home after all.

Hearing Ning Li’s normal tone, Lu Huaiyu did not continue to probe further and only said, “Then, remember to eat something and stay safe.”

Ning Li nodded, then realized that he could not see her and said, “Okay, Second Brother.”

Her sweet and soft voice sounded so close to his ear that it tickled his heart.

Cheng Xiyue stood next to him and answered the call.

“Yeah, yeah... We’re on the way. You guys go ahead first and put it on Huaiyu’s tab. Yes, yes... It’s all on him.”

Cheng Xiyue turned to look at Lu Huaiyu and lowered his voice slightly. "He's been in a pretty good mood lately, so this is a rare opportunity!"

Second Master Lu was loaded, so he was always generous, but taking the initiative to throw money at them and being passively coerced was a different matter.

"Alright, he's here, so I'll hang up first!"

Seeing Lu Huaiyu walking towards him, Cheng Xiyue quickly hung up the phone.

"So, are we delivering food to Little Ning Li?"

Lu Huaiyu said, "She's in Lincheng."

"Lincheng?" Cheng Xiyue was a little surprised.

'Why had Little Ning Li gone there without mentioning it to them?'

"Then..."

Cheng Xiyue looked at Lu Huaiyu and found that he did not seem to be disappointed. Instead, he looked relaxed and seemed to be in a good mood.

'Tsk tsk...' Cheng Xiyue silently gave Ning Li a thumbs up in his heart.

Knowing Lu Huaiyu, this would not have been his normal reaction if he had found out that Little Ning Li had gone back to Lincheng by herself without telling him.

Chen Xiyue did not know how Ning Li had managed to coax this Second Master Lu so well.

'It's really...a miracle...'

"Let's go." Lu Huaiyu walked towards the parking lot.

...

Ning Li had planned to order a takeaway, but after thinking about it, she put on a jacket and went out.

It was a rare trip back here after all.

She went downstairs, walked across a street, turned a corner, and finally chose a familiar shop on the street.

Just as she was about to go in, a car suddenly pulled up behind her.

A familiar voice came from the car. "Ning Li?"

Ning Li was stunned and turned back.

Gu Siyang was waving at her from the car window.

Next to him was Gu Tinglan.

Chapter 226: Wanna Compete?

Earlier in the daytime, Ning Li and both Gu men had only been a wall apart from each other and almost met up.

Ning Li thought that she had managed to avoid them and had not expected to run into them at this hour.

She quickly adjusted her expression and looked surprised. “Dr. Gu? Why are you here?”

Gu Siyang also found it coincidental to see Ning Li here.

He got out of the car immediately. “Lil Uncle and I came over to run some errands. What about you?”

Ning Li lifted a finger and pointed. “My home is over there. I came back to check on it.”

She was originally from Lincheng anyway.

“Such a coincidence!”

Gu Siyang glanced in the direction she pointed at.

“Lil Uncle and I were just casually strolling around here. We didn’t expect to run into you!”

He admired Ning Li very much, so every time he looked at her, his eyes were glowing.

Since they had met coincidentally, Gu Siyang wanted to show his good character as LY’s boss so that Ning Li would have a better impression of him.

“Did you come out for dinner?”

His gaze fell on the restaurant signboard behind Ning Li.

“It just so happens that Lil Uncle and I haven’t eaten yet either. Shall we eat together?”

Ning Li was speechless.

She gave Gu Siyang a once over.

Young Master Gu came from an extremely good background and was really out of place here.

“This place is too simple...”

Before she could finish her sentence, Gu Tinglan got down from the car as well.

“Let’s eat here.”

He had a gentle and elegant smile on his face.

“Siyang and I are not familiar with this place, so we don’t know which restaurants are nice. Since you chose this shop, it must be decent.”

Ning Li had no reason to refuse them since he said so.

She nodded. “Let’s eat together then.”

....

The store was not large, but it was very packed.

A middle-aged woman behind the counter looked up and saw Ning Li, and immediately revealed a look of surprise.

“Lili, you’re back?”

Ning Li smiled lightly. “Aunt Xu.”

Aunt Xu hurriedly greeted her. "Come sit quickly! When did you come back?"

"I came back this afternoon."

Ning Li led Gu Tinglan and Gu Siyang inside.

Only then did Aunt Xu see the two young men behind her.

"Oh! Lili, are they your friends?"

Ning Li nodded her head.

When Aunt Xu saw this, she immediately became more enthusiastic.

She could tell at first glance that these two people were not ordinary, so it was good for Ning Li to have such friends.

Aunt Xu handed over the menu.

"Take a look, what do you want to eat?"

Ning Li handed the menu to Gu Tinglan.

"I'll get my usual. Dr. Gu, what would you like to eat?"

Gu Tinglan smiled. "I'll get whatever you're having."

Gu Siyang also hurriedly said, "Me too!"

Ning Li turned back and said, "Aunt Xu, three servings of lamb soup please."

Winter in Lincheng was still quite cold, so it was good to drink this to warm their stomachs.

"Okay!"

Aunt Xu shouted at the kitchen. "Old Xu! Lili brought her friends over. Three lamb soups!"

She said a few more words to Ning Li before she went back to her work.

"Looks like the boss lady here likes you a lot." Gu Tinglan laughed.

Ning Li nodded. "Uncle Xu and Aunt Xu are very nice."

The couple also lived in this neighborhood, and they had owned this small restaurant for years.

When Ning Haizhou had first been imprisoned, their family had taken out all their savings and owed a lot of debts in order to compensate the victim's family.

Ning Li and her grandmother did not have a fixed source of income and had been short of money.

Aunt Xu and her husband could not bear to see them that way, so they would help them out from time to time.

When they ate at the restaurant, Aunt Xu would always give them a larger portion.

Gu Tinglan nodded.

Even if Ning Li did not say it, he could already guess some of it.

“I intended on asking you to be our guide around Lincheng, but you have your final exams soon, so let’s forget it.”

Gu Tinglan changed the topic.

Of course, he was not referring to this trip.

His original plan had been to wait until Ning Li’s exams were over to ask her about this.

He had not expected that they would run into her here this time.

Ning Li smiled. “Mm, I made a last-minute decision to come back to get a few things.”

This was a reasonable explanation.

Gu Tinglan knew that Ning Li did not get along with the Ye family and was not happy living there.

Earlier when Ning Li had mentioned “her home”, that was the first time Gu Tinglan had ever heard the word coming from her mouth.

“I can’t show you around this time because I’m heading back to Yunzhou tomorrow.”

Gu Tinglan did not mind.

It was a Sunday tomorrow and Ning Li had to be at school the day after tomorrow, so of course, she had to go back.

Besides, they had only come over for that car this time, and it really was not very convenient to bring Ning Li with them.

“Next time then, it’s all the same.”

As they were talking, Aunt Xu served the lamb soup.

The soup base was rich, creamy, aromatic, and steaming hot.

Gu Siyang’s eyes lit up.

“It smells so good!”

Ning Li’s phone vibrated. It was a message from Lu Huaiyu asking her what she had eaten.

She then pointed the camera at her bowl and sent him a picture.

...

Lu Huaiyu and Cheng Xiyue walked towards the shooting gallery.

There were already several young men standing there, all of which were friends with Cheng Xiyue and Lu Huaiyu.

It was rare to gather like this today.

Cheng Xiyue walked in front.

Lu Huaiyu lagged behind a few steps as he looked at the photo Ning Li had just sent him. He raised his eyebrows slightly.

It seemed that the girl was quite happy with her meal.

“Lu!”

Several people greeted him.

Lu Huaiyu answered and casually scrolled through his social media.

He instantly stopped in his tracks.

Gu Siyang had posted something a minute ago.

[This soup is amazing!]

The caption was attached to a picture of three steaming bowls of lamb soup.

The soup looked familiar.

He had just seen it.

“Lu! Xiyue said that you have been practicing less recently. Want to compete?”

Someone shouted with an excited smile.

Lu Huaiyu put away his phone and strode over with his long legs.

He picked up a gun, spun it in his hand, and said in a nonchalant voice. “Sure.”

Chapter 227: Add You on WeChat

The moment Lu Huaiyu said this, he stood with his feet roughly shoulder-width apart, raised his arms, and aimed.

His jawline was smooth and sharp and his eyes seemed to have a layer of frost that made him look cool and ascetic.

Bang!

It was a crisp and clear shot, a bullseye!

The bang echoed throughout the shooting gallery.

His friends had not expected him to move so fast and were stunned for a while.

Lu Huaiyu was not just fast. He had only raised his hands and taken a casual shot, yet he could hit the bullseye.

Song Zihang, who was the one that had wanted to compete with Lu Huaiyu, saw this and smiled, before choosing a gun.

“Whoa! Lu, you’ve been out of the army for so long, yet you don’t seem to be rusty.”

Both of them had grown up in a military family and were similar in age, so they had a good relationship.

However, Song Zihang had been consistently crushed in every way by Lu Huaiyu since he was a child, so he had bitterly considered Lu Huaiyu his rival for many years.

When Old Master Lu had made Lu Huaiyu draft into the army, Song Zihang had gone as well, intending on beating Lu Huaiyu in at least one thing.

However, from the first military physical fitness test to every competition during their training, Song Zihang still lost to Lu Huaiyu over and over again.

After Lu Huaiyu left, Song Zihang had stayed back in the army.

This time, Song Zihang had just returned from a mission and was granted leave, so he came back to Yunzhou with a few brothers.

Lu Huaiyu was very talented, but the outside was not the same as the army, so Song Zihang had thought that Lu Huaiyu would have regressed in this area.

He had not expected Lu Huaiyu to be so stable and even seemed to be better than before.

Lu Huaiyu did not say anything and pulled the trigger again.

Bang!

Bullseye!

He did not stop there and kept shooting at one-second intervals, one after another.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

There was only one bullet hole in the target.

It was then that the group realized something was off.

“Song, why do I seem to feel a...murderous aura?” Someone asked in a whisper.

Song Zihang said, “Yeah.”

‘I f*cking felt it too!’

He then glanced at Cheng Xiyue.

“Didn’t you say that he was in a good mood?”

‘This idiot Cheng Xiyue! Which eye of his saw that Lu Huaiyu was in a good mood?!’

Cheng Xiyue was speechless and innocently raised his hands in surrender.

“I swear, before coming in here, he really was in a good mood! Why would I lie to you guys?”

Cheng Xiyue swept a sidelong glance at the group.

“Who knows which one of you is an eyesore to our Second Master Lu!”

Song Zihang almost pointed his gun at Cheng Xiyue.

If it was not for the fact that their families were friends, he really wanted to end Cheng Xiyue with a single shot at this moment.

Cheng Xiyue turned to look at Song Zihang and lowered his voice. “What’s wrong with you? Didn’t you say that you wanted to compete with Huaiyu before coming here? Are you chickening out?”

Before Song Zihang could respond, Lu Huaiyu emptied out the magazine.

Lu Huaiyu put the gun down, moved his shoulders, and turned to look at them.

“I’m done warming up. Shall we start?”

The crowd was speechless.

He had wrecked the target and said it was just a warm-up?

Song Zihang walked over with a stiff smile. “Coming!”

He stood in his lane as Lu Huaiyu was loading his gun.

Song Zihang held his breath, raised his gun, and aimed.

Bang!

A shot was fired.

Bullseye!

However, Song Zihang was confused.

He had not pulled the trigger yet his target was shot?

Song Zihang looked down and saw that his gun had not moved.

He suddenly realized something and turned to look at Lu Huaiyu, whose gun was pointing at his target.

Lu Huaiyu was the one who had hit his target!

“Lu, how could you...”

Bang!

Lu Huaiyu moved his gun and hit another bullseye on his target.

It was still a perfect score.

Song Zihang felt suffocated. “Lu, why did you grab my bullseye for no reason?!”

Lu Huaiyu said dully, “You can grab mine too.”

Just as he said this, Lu Huaiyu took another shot at Song Zihang’s target. Bullseye, again.

Until now, Song Zihang had not even fired a single shot.

Song Zihang held back his anger and aimed his gun.

Bang!

His shot was slightly skewed from the red center dot where there was an extra bullet hole.

It hit the ninth ring.

Song Zihang cursed.

A few people in the back watched the two compete with trepidation.

“Uh... Should we still go next?”

“Are you crazy? If you go up, you’re just gonna get wrecked by Lu!”

“Yeah... Just let Song take one for the team...”

Lu Huaiyu suddenly stopped, turned his head to the side, and looked over at the few others.

His handsome face was calm without the slightest bit of emotions.

“It’s on me today, right? Come join us.”

...

Lincheng.

Gu Siyang suddenly felt a chill at the back of his neck.

He looked around. The store was heated and there were many people, so it was very warm and lively around here.

Gu Siyang shrugged his shoulders and did not think much of it. He then lowered his head again and took a big spoonful of soup.

Delicious!

Gu Tinglan looked at Ning Li and asked. “How are you going to go back tomorrow? Do you want me to see you off?”

Gu Siyang hurriedly said, "I'll do it! I'll do it! Lil Uncle, leave this kind of thing to me..."

Gu Tinglan threw a sidelong glance at him.

Since Gu Siyang had crashed that car, he had not allowed Gu Siyang to touch a car again.

Gu Siyang shrank his neck and silently swallowed the rest of his words.

His uncle was strict and he did not know how long this ban on driving would last.

Gu Siyang was just itching to drive, but without a green light from his uncle, he dared not be rash.

If he pissed his uncle off, no one would help to defend him when his dad found out about the car.

'Sigh... My life sucks!'

Gu Siyang was annoyed.

"Boss! One more bowl please!"

Ning Li shook her head. "There's no need to trouble you guys. I'll just go back by high-speed train."

Gu Tinglan suddenly said, "High-speed rail is good, but it's more convenient to drive. By the way, did you know that Ji Shu's also in Lincheng now?"

Ning Li's eyes dropped slightly.

"Really? I didn't chat with him recently because I've been busy with my final exams."

Gu Tinglan nodded. "Yeah, exams are more important."

Of course, Ning Li would not let him send her back to Yunzhou.

She still had to make another trip to Second Garage tomorrow to settle the finishing touches.

"Dr. Gu, did you come to Lincheng this time for something important?"

Gu Tinglan smiled. "Mm."

Of course, he could hear what Ning Li meant, so he did not continue the topic and asked about Ning Li's studies instead.

Gu Siyang was also concerned about this.

"Oh, right! Ning Li, I heard that you guys are going to the Capital for intensive training during the winter break?"

Since Ning Li had promised to consider joining LY after her college entrance exams, Gu Siyang was very attentive to Ning Li's studies and even inquired about the physics competition.

"Yes, for two weeks."

Gu Siyang was very enthusiastic.

"Then, did you want to take some time off to check out our training grounds in the Capital when you're there?"

'Maybe if she sees it, she would be more willing?'

“Oh, right... Ji Shu will also be there by then!”

Ning Li thought about it and did not agree nor refuse.

“It’s a closed training. I’ll see if I have time after the training is over.”

Gu Siyang was a little disappointed, but getting this answer meant that there was still hope.

He scrolled through his phone.

“Oh, Ning Li, we haven’t added each other on WeChat, right? Can I add you?”

Chapter 228: Pick Someone Up

Ning Li nodded. “Sure.”

Gu Siyang was the Young Master of the Gu family and one of the bosses of LY, but he was down-to-earth and was very friendly.

Apart from occasionally being a little naive, Gu Siyang was indeed a good friend to have.

“Then I’ll add you!”

Gu Siyang reached over to scan her profile QR code and added Ning Li on WeChat.

Ning Li agreed to his friend request.

When she turned off her screen, Gu Siyang said, “Ning Li, I just posted something. Remember to like it!”

Ning Li replied, "Sure."

She then scrolled through Gu Siyang's WeChat Moments.

Ning Li stared at the photo of the three bowls of lamb soup for a while before she clicked 'like'.

After they were done with the meal, Ning Li got up and was about to get the bill, but was stopped by Gu Siyang.

"Since you took us to eat such a delicious meal, I ought to pay the bill as a token of appreciation!"

Ning Li still wanted to say something, but Gu Tinglan said, "Let him pay. After all, he had two bowls."

She did not say anything nor refute these two men and did not insist.

Gu Siyang got the check and came back happily.

'I'm one step closer to becoming Ning Li's boss! Today, I'll pay for her meal. In the future, I'll give her a salary and bonus!'

Ning Li was oblivious to Gu Siyang's thoughts. She only thought that this Young Master Gu liked to settle bills and was generous as always.

The boss lady said goodbye to them.

"Lili, come back often when you have time!"

Ning Li smiled and nodded before following Gu Tinglan and Gu Siyang out.

"Your home is over there, right? Should we send you back?" Gu Tinglan asked.

Ning Li looked at the car parked on the side of the road and politely refused.

“It’s just down the street, a few minutes away, so you don’t have to bother.”

This car driving past her neighborhood would be quite flashy.

Although Ning Li did not care too much about what other people thought of her, it was better this way so she could have peace of mind.

Hearing Ning Li say this, they did not insist.

Both sides said their goodbyes.

The car drove away, and Ning Li watched them leave before she slowly walked home.

....

The shooting gallery.

A few people sat exhausted in the rest area and looked at Lu Huaiyu at the front who did not seem the slightest bit tired. They now felt as if life had lost its meaning.

“My arms are about to fall off! Is Lu not even a bit tired?”

“It’s no wonder that Song was always so bitter when he talked about his time in the army with Lu. Who could compare to his stamina and precision?!”

“Damn it, Cheng Xiyue! Are you deliberately taking revenge on us or what?”

Cheng Xiyue was also worn out.

He waved his limp hand. "Shush... Let me get some rest..."

Cheng Xiyue had only arranged this game tonight because Lu Huaiyu had been in good spirits lately, which was very rare. He had then thought of taking advantage of this to get Lu Huaiyu to break the bank. This idea made him feel smug and happy.

In the end, although Lu Huaiyu had paid the bill, they were the ones who had suffered!

Only Song Zihang was left in front, still clenching his teeth in fortitude.

However, even so, there was little hope of turning the tide.

Finally, after Lu Huaiyu had robbed Song Zihang of his target again, Song Zihang called it quits.

"I'm done!"

'I didn't even get screwed over like this in the army!'

Bang!

Lu Huaiyu shot the last bullet, then finally stopped.

Song Zihang strode over to Cheng Xiyue in a huff and kicked him, before smiling sarcastically.

"Young Master Cheng, are you having fun watching?"

Even a fool could see that Lu Huaiyu was here to vent whatever anger was pent-up in him.

They had all been tricked by Cheng Xiyue!

Cheng Xiyue intuitively noticed the precarious situation he was in and pleaded his case.

“Didn’t I also go on the field?”

‘My arm’s still sore!’

Song Zihang snorted, not hiding his contempt.

“With your sh*tty skills, you were the first to come down.”

Among the small group, Cheng Xiyue’s shooting skills were utter trash, so he had just been there for the fun of it and to give moral support, and had not stayed in the game for long.

The rest of them had been left to suffer, especially Song Zihang.

He felt that he had taken on about 80% of Lu Huaiyu’s wrath and felt vexed.

Cheng Xiyue did not mind being scolded by Song Zihang for this and sympathetically patted him on the shoulder. “Well... Thanks for today, bro!”

Lu Huaiyu walked over and picked up his jacket.

It looked like he was ready to leave.

Cheng Xiyue asked joyfully.

“Lu, did you want to go home? Let me take you!”

Lu Huaiyu let out a faint “mm”, then picked up his phone.

Song Zihang and the rest were relieved.

‘We don’t want to play anymore! We need rest!’

Cheng Xiyue got up from his chair as fast as he could and made sure to send Second Master Lu home as quickly as possible.

However, just as he stood next to Lu Huaiyu, he saw that Lu Huaiyu suddenly stood still.

Cheng Xiyue subconsciously looked at his phone and could vaguely see that he was scrolling through Wechat Moments.

He shouted, “Yo, let’s go!”

Lu Huaiyu suddenly laughed.

He put away his phone, stuck one hand in his pocket, and turned back.

Song Zihang suddenly felt a chill down his spine.

Lu Huaiyu said nonchalantly, “It’s been a long time since we’ve all been together. The fighting gym’s right next door. Anyone up for a sparring session?”

...

An hour later, Song Zihang once again dropped on the ground of the fighting arena and cursed Cheng Xiyue in his heart.

Cheng Xiyue was outside the ring and saw Song Zihang's miserable state. He then looked at the few guys next to him who had been utterly defeated and could not help but feel secretly thankful.

'Luckily... Luckily I never learned these sports... If not, I'm afraid I wouldn't have escaped this today.'

Cheng Xiyue had a short moment of silence for his friends, before taking out his phone and scrolling through Wechat Moments.

'It's really strange. Before coming here, Lu Huaiyu had been in a good mood and even talked to Little Ning Li, right? Who's the idiot that posted something to provoke Second Master Lu?!'

When Lu Huaiyu got out from the ring, his clothes were half-drenched, outlining his perfect figure, from his shoulders to his abs.

A few strands of hair at the front of his forehead were drenched in sweat, and the look in his eyes was deep.

Lu Huaiyu looked at Cheng Xiyue.

In an instant, Cheng Xiyue shuddered.

'No, no, no... If Lu Huaiyu intends on hitting me too, I'll call Little Ning Li for help!'

Fortunately, Lu Huaiyu did not have this intention.

"Let's go back." Lu Huaiyu said as he looked at the time.

Cheng Xiyue let out a long sigh of relief in his heart.

“Yeah, it’s very late now. Let’s go home, everyone!”

Song Zihang gritted his teeth and stood up, then rushed to Cheng Xiyue and said word for word, “Sure. Xiyue, let’s have another get-together soon.”

He did not call out to Lu Huaiyu and only extended this invitation especially for Cheng Xiyue.

Cheng Xiyue cursed in his heart.

“Haha! We’ll see!”

...

Cheng Xiyue drove Lu Huaiyu back home.

Lu Huaiyu sat in the passenger seat and closed his eyes after he got in as if he was taking a nap.

After a while, Cheng Xiyue cautiously said, “I thought you were planning to change the venue again.”

Second Master Lu was really behaving too dangerously today.

Lu Huaiyu closed his eyes and said, “I want to go back and rest early.”

Cheng Xiyue hurriedly said, “Yes, yes... That’s most important...”

“We’re going to Lincheng tomorrow,” Lu Huaiyu said.

Cheng Xiyue froze.

“Go to Lincheng? What for?”

Lu Huaiyu’s voice was faint. “To pick someone up.”

Chapter 229: Still Going

If Lu Huaiyu wanted to pick someone up in Lincheng, that could only be Ning Li.

Cheng Xiyue glanced at Lu Huaiyu next to him.

‘Strange... He hadn’t mentioned this when he was on the phone with Little Ning Li earlier. Why so sudden?’

Besides, Lincheng and Yunzhou were not very far away, so it was very convenient to go back and forth.

‘Did Little Ning Li go back alone this time?’

Since Lu Huaiyu did not say anything else, Cheng Xiyue did not ask anything further, especially at a time when Lu Huaiyu was in such a state.

‘My arm is still sore!’

“Okay. What time?”

Lu Huaiyu took out his phone and sent a message to Ning Li.

Cheng Xiyue was speechless.

‘So... It’s a last-minute decision that even Little Ning Li doesn’t know about yet!’

...

[What time are you coming back tomorrow? I'll go to Lincheng to pick you up.]

When Ning Li received Lu Huaiyu's message, she had already gone home and had just washed up to prepare for bed.

She saw the message and was a little puzzled.

[Second Brother, you don't have to come. I'll just take the high-speed train tomorrow by myself.]

Originally, she had planned to let Ji Shu send her home. However, since she had bumped into Gu Tinglan and Gu Siyang, it was not ideal since she had rejected their offer.

Fortunately, this was also her intention, so it was not a problem.

[Cheng Xiyue's going back to Lincheng for a bit, so it's no trouble.]

Ning Li remembered that Cheng Xiyue had been to Lincheng quite a few times before.

The distance between the two cities was short, and the Cheng family also had businesses in the new area of Lincheng.

'But...isn't this still too much trouble?'

Ning Li started typing in the dialog box, but before she could send it, Lu Huaiyu called.

She inexplicably felt a hint of Lu Huaiyu's insistence.

Ning Li was lying on her bed at this moment and had nestled under the quilt.

This house was very old and had no heating, so it was quite cold now at night during the winter.

Seeing his incoming call, Ning Li hesitated before answering the phone.

“Hello, Second Brother?”

Her voice sounded a bit muffled.

Lu Huaiyu paused for a moment.

“Are you already asleep?”

“No.”

Ning Li pushed away the covers to expose her head.

“But almost.”

Lincheng was a laidback city. The roads were basically deserted before 10:00 pm.

Everyone was at home and rested early.

Ning Li knew the meaning of his call and spoke after some deliberation.

“Second Brother, I still have something to do tomorrow. I’ll probably leave in the afternoon, but I’m not sure when exactly, so I won’t bother you and Brother Xiyue.”

Lu Huaiyu looked out the window.

“Oh, right. Gu Siyang seems to have gone to Lincheng too. It’s all the same if you take his car back.”

Cheng Xiyue, who was driving, silently turned up the heating in the car.

‘It’s so cold...so very cold...’

Ning Li rubbed her nose.

“Gu Siyang? He and Dr. Gu seem to be busy with something over here, so it’s not very convenient for me to ride with them.”

‘Strange. I’m only returning to Yunzhou from Lincheng. Why did all these people want to send me home?’ She thought.

Lu Huaiyu raised his eyebrows slightly. “Oh really...”

Ning Li let out a faint “mm”.

“Second Brother, it’s better if I go back by myself.”

Lu Huaiyu responded, “Okay.”

Cheng Xiyue glanced at him and saw that he put away his phone before asking carefully, “Since Little Ning Li insists on coming back by herself tomorrow...”

“We’re still going.”

Lu Huaiyu closed his eyes.

Cheng Xiyue froze slightly, then shrugged his shoulders. "Alright."

Anyway, this was not the first time he had done this.

In the past year, Lu Huaiyu had gone to Lincheng once or twice a month. Each time he had gone, he would not do anything and had spent most of his time on the road.

He had only stopped going in the past two or three months. It was not that troublesome to take the time to pick Little Ning Li up anyway.

After all, this was much better than before.

...

After Ning Li had hung up the phone, she wrapped herself up tightly with the quilt and soon fell into a deep sleep.

...

The Ye family home.

"Where's Ning Li?"

Su Yuan had gone out shopping during the day. She had bought a lot of things for Ye Ming, Ye Ci, and Ye Cheng, so she had only returned in the evening. Only then had she found out that Ning Li was not home yet.

Ye Ci helped her mother with the bags and explained, "Mom, Ning Li went out in the morning. I think she went back to Lincheng."

Su Yuan did not like to hear the word “Lincheng”.

Moreover, Ning Li had lied to her once before about going back to Lincheng, so she was even more skeptical about it now.

Seeing her expression, Ye Ci knew that Su Yuan did not believe it and quickly said, “It’s true. When Ning Li left in the morning, I saw her taking out the high-speed train ticket to Lincheng.”

Su Yuan was still skeptical.

Ye Cheng saw his gifts and squealed with joy.

When he heard Ye Ci, he spoke as he looked at the gift box without raising his head. “Buying a ticket doesn’t necessarily mean she’ll go! Who knows what she’s up to again?”

Ye Cheng wished that Ning Li had really gone back to Lincheng for good because he did not welcome her in this house at all.

They used to be a happy family of four, but since Ning Li’s arrival, everything had been different. The whole house was a mess!

If she left and never came back, that would be the best.

Ye Ci wrinkled her eyebrows slightly and looked at Ye Cheng disapprovingly.

“Lil Cheng...”

Ye Cheng spat out his tongue.

“Sister, she’s not even nice to you, Mom, or me, so why do you always speak up for her? Also, this time Dad’s angry because...”

“Ye Cheng.”

Ye Ci darted a glance at Su Yuan, her voice containing a hint of warning.

Su Yuan did not say anything, but her face became a little darker.

The Ye family’s reputation had gone down the drain since that celebration banquet.

Although Ye Ming did not show his anger, he had been cold to Su Yuan for a solid period.

Every day, Ye Ming would leave early and return home late, and when he was at home, the atmosphere was always very tense.

Even Ye Cheng could see that something was wrong.

Thus, Su Yuan had been stepping on eggshells lately in an effort to pacify Ye Ming. However, this matter was too big. The entire upper-class circle of Yunzhou was abuzz, so how could Ye Ming calm down?

Ye Cheng also kept his mouth shut.

Ye Ci looked at Su Yuan and said softly, “Mom, Dad just called and said that he has a social gathering tonight and probably won’t come back. Why don’t you go upstairs and rest first?”

Su Yuan’s already bad mood was exacerbated.

Ye Ci smiled and said, “Mom, Sister Ning Li is very independent and has her own ideas. She can definitely take care of herself, so don’t worry too much.”

Su Yuan felt that Ye Ci’s words were reasonable.

For so many years, Ning Li had been with her grandmother. There had basically been no one to take care of her and nothing had ever happened.

Moreover, Ning Li should be more familiar with Lincheng than Yunzhou, so there was even less to worry about.

“Let her be! Lil Ci, you should also go to bed early.”

“Okay, Mom.”

....

Early the next morning, Ning Li got up and took a taxi to Second Garage.

The original plan had been for Ji Shu to pick her up, but Gu Tinglan and Gu Siyang were there now, so to avoid unnecessary trouble, Ning Li went over by herself.

Null was not there today, but Ji Shu had already been waiting since morning.

Ning Li walked straight to the back of the garage.

Chapter 230: A Life for a Life

It was close to noon when Ning Li came out of the garage.

While taking off her gloves, she said, “Ask them to pick up the car in a few days.”

Ji Shu nodded. “Okay.”

He could not help but look back again. “Hey, when do you think I can take it for a spin?”

Ning Li closed the door behind her, blocking his line of sight, before locking up the garage.

“Don’t even think about it.”

Gu Tinglan’s attitude was enough to explain everything.

The value and significance of this car to the Gu family were far more than outsiders could imagine.

This was the first time she saw Gu Siyang this nervous, and it was just for this car.

After going back, Gu Siyang would probably never be able to touch it again.

Ji Shu also saw the issue and only casually mentioned this.

Seeing that Ning Li had already locked the door, he pulled his hair in chagrin.

“Sister Li, are you going back now?”

Ning Li looked down at her body and saw some stains on her clothes. She was also sweaty.

“I’ll go back home and get changed first.”

“Shall I drive you?”

Ning Li picked up her backpack and waved her hand. “There’s no need.”

She did not want to run into Gu Tinglan and Gu Siyang again.

“I booked the high-speed train for this afternoon, so I’ll head to the station after packing.”

...

Cheng Xiyue drove his car and came to the old city. Finally, he stopped at an intersection.

There were dilapidated buildings on both sides.

He glanced to the alley on the right.

“Little Ning Li’s home is there, right?”

He had come once and had a vague memory of it.

However, since it had been at night and it had been raining then, he had not seen it very clearly.

Only now could he get a clearer look.

Cheng Xiyue’s car was low-profile enough. There were also a lot of cars parked haphazardly on the street nearby, so it did not attract too much attention.

The stone path was uneven, and the two sides of the building were crowded, with rusty metal bars over the windows. Some people were hanging their laundry outside.

A few women were gathered around for a chat. Someone opened the door and splashed soiled water on the ground outside. Some children were running about, laughing.

Cheng Xiyue looked at this chaotic scene with mixed feelings.

He had investigated Ning Li a long time ago and he knew quite a lot about her life growing up in Lincheng all these years.

However, when he saw this scene in person, he still felt indescribable emotions.

Little Ning Li had lived in such a place for the first seventeen years of her life.

He thought about the Ye family's villa, which was situated in one of the best neighborhoods in Yunzhou.

Every time he saw Su Yuan, she was always dressed exquisitely and nobly.

There was not one part of her body that was not well taken care of.

Anyone who saw Su Yuan could see that she had lived a life of respect and privilege.

Even though the Ye family had no relationship with Ning Li, Su Yuan was still her biological mother.

If Su Yuan had been willing, she could have reached out to Ning Li so that Ning Li would not have had to grow up in this situation.

Cheng Xiyue looked at Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu was sitting in the passenger seat as he looked over there. His face looked calm without showing any emotion.

Cheng Xiyue sighed silently.

Even he felt sad at seeing this scene, what more would Lu Huaiyu feel?

Around that time, several people crossed the road as they walked and talked.

“Is it confirmed? Did she really come back?”

“Yeah! Someone saw her yesterday. It’s really her! But she went out again in the morning. She should come back later, so let’s wait.”

It was some distance away, so Lu Huaiyu and Cheng Xiyue could not hear the conversation clearly.

Cheng Xiyue looked at them and frowned slightly.

Those people looked like trouble. They seemed like thugs.

It really was not safe for Little Ning Li to stay here by herself.

It was no wonder that Lu Huaiyu had insisted on coming over today to pick Ning Li up after knowing that she had come back alone.

Cheng Xiyue asked, “Is Little Ning Li at home now?”

“She went out in the morning and seems to be busy, so I don’t think she’s at home.”

Lu Huaiyu had already asked earlier.

Ning Li’s train was scheduled for 4:00 pm, so there was still time.

“Then...do you want to give her a call? Do you think she went straight to the station?”

Cheng Xiyue looked at the time. It was only 1:00 pm.

They did not know if Ning Li would still come back.

Lu Huaiyu shook his head. "She should be back soon. Let's wait a while."

Ning Li had just replied to his message saying that she was going home to pack her things.

She would be home soon.

...

Half an hour later, a cab stopped at the intersection.

Ning Li got out of the car and walked towards her house.

Across the street, she turned around without noticing Cheng Xiyue's car.

Cheng Xiyue was happy to see her.

"She's back! Let's go over there!"

Just as he said this, he changed his mind again.

"Um... Forget it. Let's wait a little longer. She still has to take some time to pack her things. Lu, you can just tell her that we're here."

Lu Huaiyu nodded, took out his phone, and sent a message to Ning Li.

...

As soon as Ning Li entered the building, she felt that something was wrong.

Although it was daytime, the building was very old. The city development did not enforce any standards of maintenance, so the hallways were very dark.

She slowed down her pace and held the phone in her pocket with one hand as she clutched her backpack with the other.

The hallway was very quiet. The only sound was of her footsteps as she walked up the stairs.

Finally, she came to her front door.

There were a few more markings of forceful entry on the door, and the doorknob seemed to have a cut on it.

There was also red paint on her door that read, "A life for a life!"

The pungent smell of spray paint stung her nose and stabbed her mind.

Suddenly, the door opened.

...

Lu Huaiyu waited for a while, but Ning Li still had not replied.

Even if her phone was on silent, she probably would have looked at her phone once she got home.

Cheng Xiyue wondered. "What's wrong with Little Ning Li? Has she still not responded?"

Suddenly, the figures Lu Huaiyu had seen earlier came to mind.

His eyes were stern and he immediately pushed the car door open to get out.