

Little Brat's 231

Chapter 231: Embrace

Cheng Xiyue hurriedly said, "What's wrong?"

Lu Huaiyu did not reply and walked towards the inside of the alley in large strides.

Cheng Xiyue remembered seeing Lu Huaiyu's cold side profile earlier and instantly became worried. Without a word, he also got out of the car and followed him.

Lu Huaiyu was a striking man. As soon as he appeared, it immediately attracted the attention of several people in the alley.

After all, a man of such appearance and bearing was very rare here.

A middle-aged woman took the initiative and shouted, "Young man, who are you looking for?"

Lu Huaiyu did not reply. His expression was cold as he walked forward and quickly swept a glance at the building.

He had not been here before, but he had a very detailed profile of Ning Li in his hands.

Lu Huaiyu knew which building she lived in and in which household.

Cheng Xiyue followed close behind. "Lu, is something wrong with Little Ning Li?"

'This is her house though! We also watched her walk inside earlier. What could have happened in such a short span of time?'

Lu Huaiyu did not answer his question and stopped in front of the innermost building.

He identified the building number and stepped inside.

Just then, there was a loud crash that came from upstairs.

It sounded like someone was smashing the door!

Cheng Xiyue was caught off guard and shocked by this sound.

He subconsciously raised his head and wondered.

“What’s that sound?!”

The commotion was coming from upstairs.

Lu Huaiyu was already flying up the stairs.

Cheng Xiyue’s eyelids twitched fiercely.

‘Oh no! A few people had come over earlier, and they seemed to be looking for something. Until now, those people haven’t left. Could it be...that they came to cause trouble for Little Ning Li?!’

Cheng Xiyue forgot about anything else and immediately followed Lu Huaiyu.

...

Bam! Bam!

The wooden club struck heavily on the door, making a dull sound.

It was accompanied by the sound of a few men cursing.

“Ning Li! Come out!”

“Your father killed someone, so why don’t you go to jail with him?! How can you still continue living?!”

“Your father broke someone’s family to pieces! Your family should have all died together! Go to hell!”

“I heard that you went to Yunzhou with your mother, right? She got close to a rich man and now she wants you to follow her? Why didn’t you continue to hide in the rich man’s villa? Why did you run back here? What, were you abandoned by your mother again?”

“Your father is a murderer, so you’re a little murderer! People like you deserve to be tortured for the rest of your lives!”

Ear-piercing and shrill curses came from outside.

Ning Li locked the door from the inside and stood in the living room.

This was not the first time something like this had happened.

When Ning Haizhou had caused the accident under the influence and killed someone, he had quickly been arrested.

Ning Li’s grandmother had taken out all of her family’s savings and even borrowed a lot of money to compensate the victim’s family.

It had not been so they could plead for a lighter sentence for Ning Haizhou, but it had been out of guilt and self-blame.

Her grandmother had blamed herself for not teaching her son well. Her son had killed someone's family, so she was apologetic and regretful.

She was just an ordinary old woman. All her life, she had lived peacefully with other people and had not argued with anyone.

Her grandmother had not expected her only son to make such a grave mistake.

Later, she had even gone to the victim's home to apologize in person but had been kicked out.

That time, Ning Li had not gone with her, but she knew that her grandmother had come back that day and cried for a long time. Her clothes had also been covered with a lot of dust.

Ning Li could only make a vague guess about it.

Her guess had soon been confirmed because that family started coming to the house to make trouble.

Once, twice.

Three times, four times.

Grandma was ashamed, so each time, she silently endured it. She would only ask them not to hurt Ning Li and would meet most of their demands to let them smash and bash whatever they wanted.

After Ning Haizhou had been sentenced, Ning Li had thought that the situation would get better, but it had not.

That was because he had not been sentenced to death.

The family was very unhappy with the verdict and had chosen to appeal.

However, the court had upheld the original verdict.

Thus, they took out all their discontent and resentment on Ning Li and her grandmother.

At one time, her grandmother had wanted to sell the house and take Ning Li away with her.

However, they had lived their whole life in Lincheng, so where could an old woman with a child hide?

At first, they came every week, but then it became once a month.

As time went on, the frequency of their visits gradually decreased, but they would still come.

Sometimes, it was a holiday, and sometimes it was just an ordinary day.

There was no reasoning. As long as they felt like it, they would come over and make a mess.

For this reason, Ning Li and her grandmother's life had become very uncomfortable. Their neighbours had turned their eyes away and criticized them.

Having a murderer in the family had been enough to get them shunned. Not to mention, they also brought a lot of trouble for the neighbors.

Clang!

Clang!

It seemed like someone was smashing the door lock with a hammer.

Ning Li hung her head slightly. Her eyes were distant.

She had not expected that these people would come again when she was only back for one day after three months.

Her fists loosened and tightened until her knuckles turned white.

She looked up at the photo frame on the cabinet next to her and took a deep breath.

‘Forget it. They’ll go away.’

Ning Li closed her eyes.

‘I’ll just wait a little longer.’

Suddenly, a man’s alarmed voice came from outside.

“Who the hell are you people?!”

Suddenly, there was an unbelievably chaotic commotion outside.

Ning Li was startled and looked in the direction of the door.

Through the door, she could hear the muffled sound of a blunt instrument hitting someone.

Just then, Cheng Xiyue said in a somewhat tense voice, “Lu! That’s enough!”

Ning Li’s heart tightened and she immediately turned the doorknob.

“Second Brother!”

Once the door was open and before she could see anything, a man stood in front of her, blocking her line of sight.

In the next second, she was wrapped in a slightly cool and solid embrace.

Chapter 232: Lili, Don't Listen to This

Ning Li was embraced by Lu Huaiyu, and the familiar scent of cedar of his filled her nose. It was such a reassuring smell.

She could even hear his heart thumping loudly.

It was a strong rhythm that pounded in her eardrum and reverberated in her heart.

Ning Li was frozen in place.

Lu Huaiyu held the back of her head and pressed it tightly on his broad and solid chest with a force that was self-restrained yet palpable.

“Lili.” Lu Huaiyu’s stern voice came from above her head.

“Go in first.” As he said this, he led Ning Li inside the house.

Ning Li then heard a painful groan full of resentment coming from outside the door.

“You! Who the h*ll are you?! You broke my arm! I-I’m going to sue you!”

Cheng Xiyue looked at the small group of people with bloodied faces in front of him. They were still loudly making a fuss, full of bloodlust.

It had taken him a lot of effort to pull Lu Huaiyu away.

If not for Ning Li being there, they would not be left with only a few broken bones!

Cheng Xiyue had known Lu Huaiyu for so many years, but he had never seen him in such a rage.

They had come up as fast as they could when they heard the commotion. The scene that greeted them was of these people standing in front of a door, frantically smashing it with clubs and hammers, trying to break in as they screamed and cursed. All the words coming out of their mouths were unpleasant to the ears.

As soon as he had seen this situation, Cheng Xiyue knew that it would end badly. However, before he could react, Lu Huaiyu had already started fighting them.

Although these people were armed, Lu Huaiyu had quite a reputation in the army and the Capital as a fighter. How could they even qualify as his opponent?

A few rounds later, all these people were defeated.

Cheng Xiyue watched on the side with trepidation.

Lu Huaiyu did not hold back. Every punch or kick had landed on the most painful and vital parts of the body.

He had been determined to kill.

When Lu Huaiyu heard the man talking, he paused in his footsteps and looked back.

Cheng Xiyue's heart jumped. He then quickly approached and kicked the man.

“You guys were trying to break into someone’s home and threatened a minor with violence! I think you’re the ones who should be sued!”

After that, Cheng Xiyue turned to Lu Huaiyu and urged him. “Lu, take Little Ning Li inside first. Don’t taint her eyes with these scumbags.”

Lu Huaiyu held Ning Li a little tighter, completely blocking her view.

However, before they could go inside, these people were clamoring again.

“Are you guys with the Ning family? Do you know that her father ran over my brother with his car and killed him? Her father’s in jail now. Don’t expect her to have an easy time either!”

“It’s only right for them to die! This is what her family owes us!”

“Ning Li! Do you think you can hide? Don’t you feel guilty? Aren’t you afraid that my brother’s spirit will haunt you in the middle of the night? My brother is dead! You and your father should live in remorse and pain for the rest of your life!”

The spiteful and sharp voice was incomparably clear.

Ning Li’s petite body was encircled by Lu Huaiyu. Her forehead rested lightly against his chest so that the only thing in her view was his black shirt.

Aside from that, there was nothing else to see.

Ning Li opened her eyes. She breathed lightly without moving a muscle.

All these years, she had heard these kinds of words so many times.

Ning Li thought that she had gotten used to it and could calmly sweep it under the rug when they said these unpleasant words.

However, she now suddenly felt a trace of panic and fear.

It was not because of their curses, but because Lu Huaiyu was here.

‘He...heard it all, right? What my father did, that accident, the pain and hatred of another family that I have to carry forever...’

In fact, Lu Huaiyu should have known about it long ago.

Everyone knew about it. Even if no-one enquired about it, these events would certainly be mentioned along with her name.

However, Ning Li had never thought that Lu Huaiyu would encounter such a scene.

‘It’s so embarrassing...’

Suddenly, a pair of hands covered her ears.

She froze.

Those were...Lu Huaihe’s hands.

His warm, strong palms covered her ears gently but firmly.

The abusive and harsh voices suddenly seemed far away.

Lu Huaiyu bent down slightly and said in her ear with a low voice, “Lili, don’t listen to this.”

‘Don’t listen to it. There’s no need to entertain these people.’

Ning Li was leaning in his arms, unable to see anything, but she could hear his voice clearly.

The warmth and assurance that his hands brought her were so easily etched in her heart. It was indelible.

Lu Huaiyu took a step forward.

“Wait for me here.” He urged.

After that, he turned around and looked at those people.

Cheng Xiyue saw his gaze and felt like the whole situation would go awry.

“L-Lu... I think we should call the police..”

Lu Huaiyu’s hand was on the door handle as he said in a calm voice, “Go in and stay with Lili.”

Cheng Xiyue refused to enter the door and only moved half a step.

He was not sympathetic to these people, but he worried that if something really happened here, he would not be able to explain this to Old Master Lu!

When Lu Huaiyu had come to Yunzhou, Old Master Lu had set a military order that Cheng Xiyue had to keep an eye on Lu Huaiyu, no matter what.

Lu Huaiyu had been good all year. This time, how could he lose his cool...

Those people also seemed to realize that something was wrong and finally shut up.

Lu Huaiyu looked at those people condescendingly before finally settling his gaze on the guy in the middle. His eyes were terrifyingly calm.

“Was it you who cursed her just now?”

The man wanted to speak, but looking at Lu Huaiyu at this moment, he inexplicably felt scared.

Earlier, they had been too agitated and had not had time to think it through. Only now did they notice that this young man was certainly not from an ordinary background. They had also been beaten up by him earlier. Facing Lu Huaiyu now, this thug could not spit out a word.

Lu Huaiyu did not seem to care about his answer.

“If I remember correctly, you kicked the door with your foot?”

The man instantly winced.

‘W-What does he mean by this...This man has already broken my arm. Does he want to break my leg now? Just because I kicked the door a few times?’

Cheng Xiyue’s heart was beating very fast.

“Lu, calm down. I’ll call Chief Dou.”

Dou Lifeng was the Chief of the Lincheng Police Department and had a good relationship with the Cheng family.

This was something that Lu Huaiyu also knew, but he obviously did not want to take the high road now.

'How many times has my girl experienced such insults and threats?!'

Cheng Xiyue saw that he could not be persuaded, so he could only try to turn to Ning Li.

"Ning Li, I'll handle this matter, can you take Huaiyu..."

Ning Li herself noticed that something was off with Lu Huaiyu.

Currently, he looked even more cold and stern than when he had beaten up Dai Li at Old Master Cheng's birthday banquet.

Lu Huaiyu had already taken the wooden club that he had set aside earlier and took one step out the door.

Seeing this, Ning Li's heart jumped. She immediately lunged forward and held his hand.

"Second Brother!"

Chapter 233: She Said It Hurt

Ning Li's soft and delicate hand landed on the back of Lu Huaiyu's hand.

Lu Huaiyu stopped in his tracks but did not turn back.

"Go back in and wait for me. I'll be there soon."

He kept his voice nonchalant as usual as he spoke to her, but it was not difficult to hear the iciness and suppressed threat in his voice.

Cheng Xiyue was about to go crazy.

'Even Ning Li's pleas aren't working?!'

Ning Li frowned slightly and grabbed Lu Huaiyu's hand tightly.

"Second Brother, my hand hurts."

After a short silence, Lu Huaiyu closed his eyes to cover the surging waves underneath.

When he opened his eyes again, the madness that had been about to break free from its cage silently vanished.

He returned to his usual calm demeanor as he tossed aside the wooden club in his hand and finally turned around.

"Where does it hurt?"

Lu Huaiyu looked at Ning Li's hand and saw that there was a small gash on the back of her hand.

It was about a centimeter in length and had blood marks.

She had gotten this mark when she had dodged the people who had tried to harm her earlier.

Ning Li had not fought with them. She just quickly went inside and locked the door behind her.

'This wound doesn't look serious and will recover on its own in a few days, but she said it hurt.'

Lu Huaiyu held her hand.

“Do you have iodine and cotton swabs at home?”

Ning Li nodded her head.

Lu Huaiyu then looked at Cheng Xiyue.

“I’ll leave this to you.”

Cheng Xiyue quickly answered, “Alright.”

Only then did Lu Huaiyu lead Ning Li back into the house.

Once the front door was finally closed, Cheng Xiyue breathed a long sigh of relief.

‘Almost... It was such a close call...’

Cheng Xiyue glanced at the people and took out his phone in annoyance.

“Hello? Chief Dou? Where are you now? I would like to ask you for a favor. Is it convenient for you now?”

At this time, those thugs also seemed to finally realize the seriousness of the problem.

These two men were not easy to mess with...but they were wounded, so they could not leave even if they wanted to.

Finally, one person had the guts to shout at Cheng Xiyue.

“You! Don’t think that this is over! If something happens to us, you won’t be able to get away with it!”

Cheng Xiyue was so exasperated that he laughed.

He looked down at the hooligans in front of him and waved his phone.

“Don’t worry, I’ve already called the police for you. It won’t be so easy for you to die.”

Lu Huaiyu was not done venting his anger, so how could they try to run?

Dream on!

Those thugs had not expected Cheng Xiyue to do this. They did not know why he was so confident either.

They watched as he made several phone calls. He called the doctor and the police as if he really wanted to fight to the end with them. The man in the middle who was their leader finally said, “Her father hit and killed my brother! She owes us! She deserves it!”

“Shut the f*ck up!”

Cheng Xiyue impatiently interrupted him and laughed again.

“This isn’t the first time, right?”

He looked back at the bash marks on the door.

The old and the new marks were superimposed, so it was not difficult to imagine how Ning Li and her grandmother had survived all these years.

“Great!”

Lu Huaiyu had definitely seen these, but he could still endure it...

Cheng Xiyue silently sighed in his heart and thought, 'Luckily Ning Li was here. If not, I really can't imagine what would've happened today...'

"Wait till you get to the police station to say whatever you want to!"

...

Lu Huaiyu led Ning Li inside, looked around, then looked at her.

"Where's the first aid kit?"

Ning Li pointed to her bedroom.

"It's in the first drawer on the left side of the desk."

This was just a small cut, so she could easily get it herself and put a band-aid on it.

In a moment of haste, she had made this excuse. However, now that they were in the house and the surroundings were quiet, Ning Li realized that her excuse was really lame.

However, Lu Huaiyu did not seem to feel that way. He held her hand gently and walked towards her bedroom.

The room was not big and contained a single bed, a desk, a chair, and a closet.

Other than that, there was no other furniture.

Despite this, these few items almost occupied the entire room.

Lu Huaiyu went to her desk and pulled open the left drawer.

When he saw what was inside, his eyes narrowed slightly.

There were indeed iodine and cotton swabs here.

Besides that, there was also disinfectant alcohol, bruising ointment, and some other topical medications.

Ning Li saw his expression and glanced over, then instantly regretted it.

She had gotten so anxious that she had forgotten that there were all the other things in there.

Ning Li used to get into fights quite frequently, so these had come in handy.

More often than not, she would win the fight, so she rarely used these.

However, she had not thrown them away, and just kept them here. She had forgotten about it till Lu Huaiyu had seen it.

“Second Brother...”

She spoke hesitantly, not knowing whether she should explain.

If she told him, it would be too presumptive of her because Lu Huaiyu had not asked her anything.

If she kept quiet, then he might have a skewed impression of her.

Lu Huaiyu took out the iodine bottle and the cotton swab, before closing the drawer again.

“Sit.”

His voice was calm, as if he did not care about the other medication in the drawer.

Ning Li sat on the edge of the bed and swallowed back the words in her throat.

Well, since he had already seen such a violent and unpleasant scene earlier, these did not seem like much in comparison.

She hung her head slightly.

Lu Huaiyu grabbed the chair and sat down opposite her.

The room was really small, so the distance between the chair and the bed was less than half a meter.

Lu Huaiyu was also very tall, so when he sat facing her, the room suddenly seemed even more cramped.

His long legs brushed past her knees.

Lu Huaiyu frowned slightly.

Ning Li withdrew her legs.

Lu Huaiyu sat with his legs apart and pulled her hand over, then leaned down slightly.

His knees were resting on the edge of the bed.

Her slender legs were only a hair's breadth away from him.

Chapter 234: I Don't Owe Them Anything

Lu Huaiyu dipped a cotton swab in iodine and gently pressed it over the cut on Ning Li's hand.

This wound was not a big deal, but he leaned down and moved carefully as if it was the most important thing.

Ning Li raised her eyes and saw that his dark hair had fallen over his forehead, covering his eyebrows slightly.

The bridge of his nose was high and his thin lips were slightly pursed. She could not see any emotions on his face.

The room was quiet with only the sound of their intertwined breathing.

Ning Li felt that their distance was a bit close, but aside from this one chair, there was no other convenient place for him to sit.

He was dressing her wound, so it was inappropriate for her to move.

Thinking about the situation earlier, she did not really know how to face Lu Huaiyu at the moment.

After a while, she finally broke the silence.

"Second Brother, why did you and Brother Xiyue come over?"

'Didn't I tell him that I'd take the high-speed train back in the afternoon?'

They had come so quickly, which meant that they had probably arrived earlier.

“Cheng Xiyue was about to head back to Yunzhou after finishing his business. Your house was on the way, so we came over to see if you’d already left.”

Lu Huaiyu’s head was lowered and his voice was calm.

Ning Li let out a soft “oh”.

‘This is just too much of a coincidence...’

“I saw those people coming over earlier, but I didn’t know they were looking for you. I sent a message to you, but you didn’t reply.”

Ning Li took out her phone from her pocket and saw Lu Huaiyu’s message.

As soon as she had entered the building, she noticed that something was wrong and had not even bothered to look at her phone.

Lu Huaiyu paused for a moment before asking, “Why didn’t you call the police?”

He was asking about the people outside.

Ning Li’s eyes drooped slightly as she said, “It’s useless.”

These thugs had a lot of tactics. They came over to smash her door, throw paint, poured glue into the door locks to trap them inside, and harassed them endlessly.

It had occurred too many times until the police from the nearby police station knew all about them.

As long as those thugs did not cause harm that was too serious or substantial to them, the police would just do a mediation.

Moreover, Ning Haizhou was guilty of hitting and killing the other party's brother.

When the police came to the door, they would often let this slide when they took that fact into account.

At most, the police would just detain those thugs for a few days and release them quickly.

Lu Huaiyu did not have to ask to guess the situation.

"So you just put up with it and suffered?"

His voice was flat.

Ning Li paused and said, "Actually, they don't come very often now."

Lu Huaiyu finished treating her wound, threw away the cotton swab, and looked up.

"Lili."

He looked into her eyes.

"Your father made a mistake and he's paid the price for it. You're not at fault, so you shouldn't have to suffer and endure these. Got it?"

The one who had been drunk driving was Ning Haizhou. He was indeed at fault, but what did this have to do with Ning Li?

She had only been seven years old back then.

If the other party were considered to have lost his family and suffered a great deal of pain and suffering, then what about Ning Li?

Ning Li had lost both her father and mother from that day on.

Were these ten years of loneliness and poverty not tormenting and painful enough for a child?

She had suffered through countless humiliations, accusations, and abuses.

She had been isolated and bullied.

Everyone had their own pain. Did it mean that her pain was not worth mentioning compared to others?

Ning Li looked at him woodenly.

"But..."

"No buts."

Lu Huaiyu gently patted her head.

"You didn't do anything wrong, so there's no need for you to atone for anyone's sins and suffer all this."

'You're not wrong. You don't have to atone for anyone's sins. You shouldn't have to suffer from this in the first place.'

No one had ever said these words to her before.

Everyone, including Grandma, had thought that it was just something that they should endure because they were a family and had an inseparable blood relation.

Thus, when these people had come to make trouble, they would always choose to hold back and give in.

Ning Li had thought about this when she was mocked, abused, poked, prodded, isolated, and ridiculed.

The shrill shouting and cursing, mixed with the sound of those people banging on the door would torment her while she could only hide in her room and cover her ears as she waited for this long ordeal to pass.

She remembered seeing her grandmother's eyes that were red and swollen from crying, and her face filled with guilt. Thus, she had finally endured it all.

Now, someone was telling her so firmly and persistently that she was not at fault.

This person was none other than Lu Huaiyu.

Ning Li was silent for a long time. Her throat felt dry.

She had envisioned many thoughts and reactions that Lu Huaiyu would have after seeing the scene just now, but not this one.

Lu Huaiyu looked at her.

He had always had the impression that Ning Li had always been very independent and strong-willed, but only in this matter had she shown such great tolerance.

Perhaps after all these years, she had long been brainwashed and felt that she was also the guilty one.

Lu Huaiyu said, "They won't bother you again in the future."

Ning Li froze slightly.

“Second Brother, what do you mean by this?”

These people were thugs, yet they remained on their moral high ground to cause trouble with their hooligan tactics.

It was only by accident that Lu Huaiyu had encountered such an embarrassing scene. If these people started to pester him as well...

“Literally what I said.”

Lu Huaiyu leaned back. His eyes were back to his usual cool and nonchalant look.

With his background and means, there were surely ways to make those people keep their mouths shut.

Ning Li subconsciously held his hand tightly.

“Second Brother, still... Don’t do it...”

Those people were indeed unbearable and had repeatedly pushed her to the edge over the years, but at the end of the day, it had indeed been Ning Haizhou’s fault.

‘I...’

Lu Huaiyu lowered his eyes and looked at her hand that was clutching his own.

“Your father owes them, so there’s nothing wrong with spending his lifetime in jail paying for his mistakes, but this shouldn’t be your whole life.”

He suddenly moved closer and gently pinched her cheek with one hand as he raised his eyebrows slightly.

“If you still feel indebted to them and still want to endure this, go ahead. But, I, Lu Huaiyu, don’t owe them anything. If they hurt you, I will retaliate tenfold. How’s that?”

Chapter 235: His Precious Girl Can’t Suffer

Lu Huaiyu had ways to return whatever pain and grievance that these thugs brought to Ning Li. He would get back at them a hundred times more.

The Second Young Master of the Lu family from the Capital was born to be proud, with an innate arrogance, and was certainly not easy to please.

He would not endure any irritation or suffering.

Ning Li looked at him blankly without any reaction.

The man in front of her had such a handsome face and deep eyes. He permeated class and self-restraint and was so unattainable.

His thin lips curved slightly with a hint of a smile as if what he had said earlier was simply a casual joke.

However, in the depth of his eyes seemed to lie a pool of ice that exuded bone-chilling coldness.

Ning Li knew that Lu Huaiyu was not joking.

Lu Huaiyu had already thought it through.

Ning Li’s heart was torn. When she faced these people, she would always choose patience, no matter how hard or torturous it was.

Lu Huaiyu did not know when she would be able to get over this mental block, but it did not matter.

If she could not take this step, he would step in. It was all the same anyway.

Although she could endure all the abuse and bullying, he could not.

His precious girl that he carefully held in the palm of his hand was being bullied like this. If he could endure this, then he was not Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu smiled nonchalantly, recklessly, and widely.

“Anyway, I’m known as a big bully, so bullying a few more won’t matter to me.”

Lu Huaiyu was adamant about protecting this girl.

Ning Li stared at him in a daze. Her mind was blank, but her heart was rapidly surging with emotions, filling her chest. It was sore and full.

She did not know how to describe this feeling and was just lost.

There seemed to be an invisible hand that was clutching her heart tightly, dragging it downward.

Something threw her into the vortex of the unknown.

There was silence all around, but it seemed like a gentle air was wrapped around her.

She could not escape, nor did she want to break free from it.

“Then...those people...”

“Cheng Xiyue will deal with it first. We can talk about it later, but you don’t need to worry about these things. However, there is something you still need to pay attention to. You left Lincheng three months ago and this is the first time you’ve come back since. It’s only been a day, yet they already knew about your arrival. This news spread a little too fast.”

Lu Huaiyu inclined his head and pondered.

“Looking at their appearance, they don’t seem to be resourceful, and they wouldn’t have that kind of time and energy to monitor this place 24/7, right?”

Ning Li faintly wrinkled her eyebrows.

At first, she had not thought too much about it, but on second thought, this matter was indeed fishy.

That family lived quite far away from here, yet they had been waiting here to ambush her, which only proved that they knew she was back in Lincheng.

This meant that someone had informed them, but it was not easy to tell who the informer was.

Many residents in the neighborhood had seen her return, or perhaps it was someone else.

After all, Ning Li had not deliberately concealed her whereabouts.

“We can ask them later.”

Anyway, they had already caught them, so it would be simple to check this.

Ning Li nodded her head.

“Thanks, Second Brother.”

‘I should’ve been more alert.’

Lu Huaiyu looked around, and for the first time, he examined her room.

This was his girl’s bedroom.

He was a little curious, but he had not expected to check out her bedroom in this situation.

Her single bed was covered with sky blue sheets, and the closet and desk were very simple in style.

Probably because she no longer lived here, there was nothing much.

She did not have any dolls and other things that girls liked either.

It was just extremely simple and clean.

“Have you finished packing?” Lu Huaiyu asked.

Ning Li froze and nodded a little hesitantly. “Yeah.”

Actually, she had come back to take a shower and get changed, but in this condition...it was not quite appropriate.

Noticing that Lu Huaiyu was looking at her room, Ning Li inexplicably felt embarrassed.

Although there was nothing to see in this room, this was indeed the first time after all these years that someone other than her grandma had come in.

“Second Brother, I’ll go get you a glass of water.”

As she said this, she was about to get up, but then realized that she was still holding Lu Huaiyu’s hand.

They were both sitting face to face, so when she suddenly stood up, she was just standing in between Lu Huaiyu’s long legs with no room to move.

She was only a few centimeters away from him.

Lu Huaiyu leaned back and looked up slightly with a smile.

“I’m not thirsty.”

Ning Li immediately let go of his hand as if she had been electrocuted. Her hand also felt like it was burning.

The heat spread quickly and made her whole body burn up.

‘Have I been holding his hand all this while?!’

Ning Li tried her best to make her voice sound calm.

“Excuse me, Second Brother. I’m thirsty.”

His long legs were right in front of her. How would she go over them?

Lu Huaiyu let out a faint “oh”, then turned slightly to the side to make some space for her so that she could pass.

When Ning Li walked out, her knee brushed against his inner thigh.

Although it was very cold, Lu Huaiyu was wearing thin pants.

The girl’s long legs were straight and slender. The place they touched was incredibly warm and soft.

Ning Li noticed that Lu Huaiyu’s body temperature always seemed to be higher than hers.

She hurriedly walked out.

Lu Huaiyu took a glance at her back before quickly withdrawing his gaze.

He tilted the chair, leaned back, and inclined his head as he crossed his long legs.

Ning Li turned back again and shouted, “Second Brother, do you really not want a drink?”

Lu Huaiyu closed his eyes.

This room was so small that the sweet and soft fragrance of her body was overwhelming and did not disperse.

The tip of his tongue was pressed against the roof of his mouth to suppress his restlessness. Only then did he speak.

“Ice water please.”

Ning Li was a little surprised. “Are you sure?”

There was no heating in this room, so it had gotten quite cold after some time.

Moreover, Lu Huaiyu seemed to have come over in a hurry because he was only wearing a shirt and had not brought a jacket.

He was dressed like this yet he still wanted ice water?

Lu Huaiyu assured her.

Ning Li saw that he insisted, so she did not ask again.

The kitchen was right next door, so he could hear her movements clearly.

Lu Huaiyu opened his eyes and looked around her room again trying to divert his attention.

He saw a desk, a closet, and a bed.

She had slept here last night, so the covers were a bit messy. There was also a set of pajamas on the bed.

Lu Huaiyu pressed his temples.

‘It’s better not to look.’

After waiting for a while, he got up and walked outside.

The sound of the kettle gurgling came from next door.

Ning Li was standing there waiting.

When she heard his footsteps, she turned her head and found Lu Huaiyu standing in the living room.

He did not fit into this ancient little house at all.

Seemingly sensing her line of sight, Lu Huaiyu also looked over.

Suddenly, his eyebrows furrowed.

He had not noticed it earlier, but on closer inspection, he could see that Ning Li's clothes were stained.

It looked like...

"Lili, what did you do this morning?"

Chapter 236: Where Will You Sleep Tonight?

"What?"

Lu Huaiyu lifted his chin. "Your clothes are dirty."

Ning Li looked down.

Sure enough, the stains on the edge of her sleeves and pants were quite obvious.

It was from the spray paint and grease earlier.

Lu Huaiyu had not noticed it before, but upon closer inspection, it was not hard to spot.

Ning Li hesitated for a moment, deliberating on the answer.

Lu Huaiyu had already walked over.

His eyesight was excellent and almost immediately saw what it was.

“Did you go racing?” He asked.

Ning Li immediately shook her head. “No.”

She used to be involved in underground racing in Lincheng, and Lu Huaiyu was well aware of it.

However, he still did not know about her helping Null with Second Garage.

Ning Li said, “There was a problem with my friend’s car from a race, so I went to take a look.”

Lu Huaiyu thought about it. “Really...”

Ning Li poured herself a cup of warm water. She then took another cup and poured ice water into it before handing it to Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu took it from her.

The cold water flowed down his throat.

He did not probe further, so Ning Li did not say anything.

Lu Huaiyu’s phone rang.

It was a call from Cheng Xiyue. "Hey, Lu. They've been sent to the hospital. Chief Dou and I are here."

Lu Huaiyu answered in a lazy voice.

Ning Li was standing next to him and could vaguely hear their conversation.

Cheng Xiyue asked, "By the way, they insist on doing injury identification, so should we..."

"Do it." The corners of Lu Huaiyu's lips were slightly curved, but there was no hint of a smile in his eyes and his tone was nonchalant.

He wanted to do the injury identification so as to judge the extent of his next move.

Cheng Xiyue knew him all too well. When he heard Lu Huaiyu's tone, he could already guess his intentions.

He turned and glanced into the ward.

Those thugs were inside with a few police officers standing guard.

They were shouting in frustration, saying that they wanted justice no matter what.

Cheng Xiyue scoffed. 'They still don't know the situation they're in...'

"Oh right. Ask them how they found out about Lili's return."

Lu Huaiyu was more concerned about this.

That was because there was someone in the dark who still wanted to harm Ning Li.

It was easy to dodge an open attack, but it was hard to prevent an ambush.

If Lu Huaiyu had not insisted on coming over this time, those people would have been persistent and Ning Li would have had to endure this longer.

Thinking about this, Lu Huaiyu's voice became a few degrees colder.

"Every bit counts."

Cheng Xiyue also realized the problem.

Ning Li had made such a trip back, but had immediately been noticed by those thugs. How could it be such a coincidence?

It was obvious that someone was trying to harm her.

Cheng Xiyue became even more serious. "Okay, got it. It may take a while, so I don't know if I can make it back to Yunzhou today."

This was very important to Lu Huaiyu, and those thugs who were injured were relentless.

Both sides were at a standoff, with none of them willing to compromise.

It was not a big problem, but just time-consuming.

Lu Huaiyu said in a light voice, "There's no hurry."

Cheng Xiyue thought about it and said, "If we can't make it home today, can you stay at The Caesar's first?"

The Caesar Hotel was a new luxury hotel built by the Cheng family in Lincheng's new district.

It was quite convenient for Lu Huaiyu to go there.

"Oh, bring Little Ning Li there too."

Cheng Xiyue recalled the scene today and sighed.

The door had been covered with paint and smashed badly.

Those thugs had caused such a commotion that Cheng Xiyue wondered how Ning Li was at the moment.

After all, she was still young, so this had to have bothered her.

"I'll get someone to clean up her house."

Lu Huaiyu turned the cup in his hand and looked at Ning Li. "I'll talk to you later after I ask her."

"Okay." Cheng Xiyue hung up the phone.

Ning Li had vaguely heard the word hotel. "Second Brother, you guys aren't leaving today?"

"Mm. It'll take some time to deal with those people."

Ning Li held her cup and felt somewhat apologetic.

Lu Huaiyu smiled. "Don't worry about it. He doesn't have much to do these days anyway, so it doesn't affect anything."

Ning Li was a bit skeptical.

Lu Huaiyu reminded her. "It's New Year's Day tomorrow."

Cheng Xiyue had always been very generous to himself. Everyone was on holiday, so of course, he would not be working either and had even given himself a week's vacation.

Ning Li finally understood. "Ah...I almost forgot."

She had come to Lincheng this time just for that car and she had not even remembered that today was already December 31st.

"What time is your high-speed train? Is it almost time? I'll send you there."

Lu Huaiyu asked.

Ning Li's eyelids twitched slightly.

There was still more than an hour before the departure time, so she could still rush over, but...Lu Huaiyu and Cheng Xiyue would be staying on to deal with those thugs for her. If she left by herself, it would be weird.

"Then when will you guys go back, Second Brother?"

Lu Huaiyu looked at her and pondered for a moment. "Tomorrow."

Cheng Xiyue was still quite efficient.

Ning Li hesitated and said, "Then...can I go back with you guys?"

Since it was a holiday tomorrow, it would be fine to stay here for another day.

Lu Huaiyu held the glass of water and took a sip before he spoke nonchalantly, “No... There’s nothing to do here, so you should go home first.”

Ning Li shook her head. “I want to go back with you guys.”

Lu Huaiyu smiled. “Alright then.”

Ning Li breathed a sigh of relief and asked another question.

“Second Brother, then where will you guys be sleeping tonight? Do you want to book a hotel?”

Lu Huaiyu put the cup down and tilted his head in thought. “Cheng Xiyue said that Caesar’s is fully booked.”

Chapter 237: I’ll Question Them Personally

The Caesar Hotel was a property owned by the Cheng family and was the highest-end hotel in the whole of Lincheng.

It was New Year’s Eve today, so it was not unusual that the hotel would be fully booked.

However, listening to Lu Huaiyu’s tone, he would not consider any other hotel other than Caesar’s.

It made sense because Second Master Lu was so picky. His food, clothing, and accommodation always had to be of the highest standard.

If he did not want to settle, then no one could persuade him otherwise.

Ning Li was in a pickle. "Then...what should we do?"

Cheng Xiyue had stayed back to handle things, and Lu Huaiyu was no exception.

After all, he was the one who had beaten up those thugs.

Thus, he had to stay in Lincheng for the night.

Lu Huaiyu did not seem bothered by it.

"You don't have to worry about it. I'll head over to the police station later, so I don't know when I'll be back. Stay here and call me if anything happens."

He was going to deal with this personally.

Ning Li was actually not worried about this. Those thugs had been at fault in the first place. Not to mention, Lu Huaiyu and Cheng Xiyue were not to be messed with.

This was not a big deal to them. They just had to go through the process, then find out who had leaked the news of Ning Li's return to those thugs. That was basically all they had to do.

'But...where will Lu Huaiyu sleep tonight?'

"Stay alert since you're home alone." Lu Huaiyu admonished.

Ning Li nodded.

Knock knock.

Someone was knocking on the door.

Ning Li frowned slightly.

Lu Huaiyu said, "I think it's the locksmith that Cheng Xiyue hired."

As he said that, he went to open the door.

Sure enough, there was a cleaner and a locksmith outside.

The two workers seemed to know each other. They cleaned up the traces on the door and installed a new lock.

It took them an hour to sort it out.

Although there were still some traces of the smashing, it looked much better than before.

Lu Huaiyu handed the new key to Ning Li.

"Take good care of this. Don't lose it."

Ning Li held the key in her palm and felt a little like it was burning.

She said softly, "Thank you, guys..."

"It's a small thing. Don't worry about it."

Lu Huaiyu looked at his phone. "I'll go over there first."

Ning Li sent him downstairs.

...

After sending Lu Huaiyu off, Ning Li saw that it was almost 4:00 pm.

She remembered that the refrigerator was empty, so she did not go back upstairs. She put on her hat and turned to walk in the direction of the supermarket.

Ning Li had only intended to stay for one night, so there was no food at home.

If she was by herself, she would just order takeaway. However, Lu Huaiyu and Cheng Xiyue were here for her, so she wanted to cook for them as a token of appreciation even though she did not know if they were free to come back in the evening.

Ning Li strolled around the supermarket and went back with a handful of groceries.

...

Lu Huaiyu first went to the hospital.

Cheng Xiyue was standing in the corridor. When he saw Lu Huaiyu, he immediately walked over.

“Two are in the operating room, and two are in the ward. Chief Dou and the officers are inside.”

Lu Huaiyu had been ruthless earlier. Four of the thugs had different degrees of fractures and other injuries.

Cheng Xiyue had already expected these, but when he saw the injury report, his eyelids still twitched. He was glad that he had managed to pull Lu Huaiyu away in time. He was even more thankful that Ning Li had been there at that time.

If not, these people would probably have been bedridden for life.

“Mm.” Lu Huaiyu nodded, before glancing at the door of the ward. “Did you manage to get an answer?”

“The situation’s a bit troublesome.” Cheng Xiyue frowned slightly.

“The gang leader is called Zhang Yang, and his younger brother Zhang He was the victim of the car accident back then. The remaining three are his relatives and friends who had been called over by him at the last-minute. Zhang Yang said that an unfamiliar number had sent him a text message yesterday saying that Ning Li was back in Lincheng, but he didn’t know who that sender was.”

Lu Huaiyu’s eyes narrowed slightly. “He doesn’t know?”

“Yeah. He deleted the text message and doesn’t remember the number. Chief Dou has asked the technical department to investigate, so we should have news soon.”

However, even if they had the phone number, they still might not be able to figure out the identity of the other party.

The other party was obviously prepared with multiple backup plans, so they would not be so easily exposed.

However, if that was the case, it proved that this incident had indeed been a premeditated plan by someone.

Lu Huaiyu pondered for a moment and asked, “Lili said that they had not bothered her very often these past few years, so why did they go there this time?”

Cheng Xiyue looked surprised. “You guessed right. Zhang Yang didn’t go to vent his grievances this time. He did it for money. He’s addicted to gambling and had lost almost all of his family’s money. When he heard that Su Yuan had taken Ning Li back to Yunzhou, he had come up with this idea. He could not afford to offend the Ye family, so he hadn’t made a move before. This time, as soon as he heard that Ning Li had come back by herself, he had immediately seized the opportunity to look for her.”

Unfortunately, Zhang Yang had run into Lu Huaiyu.

Not only did they not get the money, they had even landed up in the hospital.

“It’s obvious that the person who sent him that message knows a lot about both Ning Li’s and Zhang Yang’s situation.”

Lu Huaiyu was expressionless. “As long as they are willing to spend some money and effort, it’s not difficult to find out what happened.”

The main question was, who would go to such lengths?

Cheng Xiyue thought about it and felt an oncoming headache.

“Who did Ning Li offend over here?”

She was a seventeen-year-old girl, so who would spend so much effort to target her?

“Second Master Lu?” Dou Lifeng heard the commotion outside and walked out.

He had a good relationship with the Cheng family and had met Lu Huaiyu a few times before.

As far as he remembered, Second Master Lu from the Capital was noble and arrogant and did not care much about anything.

Dou Lifeng had not expected that this time...

He recalled the miserable state of the group of people earlier and silently sighed.

They had really hit the jackpot this time.

Out of all the people they could offend, they had offended this Young Master?

“Chief Dou.” Lu Huaiyu greeted him. “I have something that I want to ask. Is it convenient for me to go in?”

Dou Lifeng immediately understood that Lu Huaiyu was planning to question them personally.

He thought about it and quickly agreed.

Since Lu Huaiyu had already beaten them up, what else could he do?

Besides, this was a hospital, so Lu Huaiyu would probably not do anything out of place.

Of course, if Lu Huaiyu did do something out of place, there was nothing they could do either.

“Be my guest, Second Master Lu.”

Lu Huaiyu nodded to thank Chief Dou and pushed the door open.

Thud.

The door of the ward slammed shut.

Several police officers followed Dou Lifeng and came out.

Dou Lifeng was a little worried and held a cigarette.

Cheng Xiyue reminded him. "Chief Dou, this is a hospital."

"I know. I'm just holding it. I won't smoke."

Dou Lifeng was a little frustrated and let out a long sigh.

'This matter is really hard to deal with...'

...

Chapter 238: Two People

There were four beds in the ward, two of which were empty. The other two had people lying in them.

This room had been specially arranged by Cheng Xi Yue to accommodate these four thugs.

Two of them were in the operating room while the remaining two were resting.

When they saw Lu Huaiyu in the room, the two thugs were immediately stunned and had fear in their eyes.

'This man is really too frightening! He wants to beat us to death!'

At this point, they had also figured out that this man was indeed not from an ordinary background.

They could not afford to mess with this man!

Lu Huaiyu looked at them and asked.

"Where's Zhang Yang?"

One of the men swallowed his saliva and spoke with difficulty. "He...he's still in the operating room..."

Among these people, Zhang Yang was the most seriously injured, so his surgery would take quite a long time.

Lu Huaiyu let out a faint "oh" and pulled a chair from the side. "Then, I'll wait for him to come back and question him later."

The two men saw him in this position and suddenly felt more nervous.

They had not even felt this way when they had been interrogated by Chief Dou earlier.

Lu Huaiyu did not seem to notice their emotional fluctuation and said in a lazy voice, "Over the years, how many times has Zhang Yang gone to the Ning family to make trouble?"

The two men looked at each other with blank faces. "Uh...we're not sure..."

It had been a decade and they had gone to create trouble so many times. How could they possibly remember?

Lu Huaiyu leaned back in his chair and played with his phone with one hand.

"Then, tell me how many times you have followed him. You should know this, right?"

The two thugs were aware of the danger they were in.

"No...no..."

"It doesn't matter if you can't remember. I have plenty of time today for you guys to recall everything."

Lu Huaiyu's posture was relaxed, but the words he uttered were cold and stern.

"I want to know the specific date, how many people went, and what exactly you guys did to the Ning family. It's best if you come clean. I'm listening."

...

When Ning Li returned home, she stewed the pork ribs and prepped the other ingredients.

She looked at her phone. Since Lu Huaiyu had left, there had been no news from him.

'I guess he's busy.'

Ji Shu suddenly called. "Sister Li, are you on the high-speed train?"

Ning Li was snuggled up on the sofa. "No."

"You're not? Wasn't your ticket for this afternoon?"

"I was delayed." Ning Li answered very briefly.

Ji Shu was quite happy after the initial shock.

"Well, I'm heading back to Yunzhou now. Want a ride?"

Ning Li was a bit surprised.

"Today? Didn't you say that you would be staying here for two more days?"

Ji Shu was always a free spirit.

“Sigh... My dad keeps pushing me to come home.” Ji Shu helplessly sighed. “It’s New Year’s Day tomorrow, so he wants me to go home.”

Ji Shu was not into counting down for the New Year. However, he could not argue with his father, so he had to go home.

It was just that his father missed him and was only looking for an excuse.

They rarely controlled Ji Shu and would not usually demand anything from him.

Ji Shu also knew this, so he did not refuse. Thus, he agreed to go back.

“That’s good. You’re leaving for the capital soon for your training, right? Your parents are probably reluctant for you to leave. I won’t follow you back. I’m staying here tonight and will go back tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow? Sister Li, do you have something else to do?”

“Yes, it’s just a small matter. I’ll go back tomorrow after dealing with this.”

Hearing her say so, Ji Shu did not ask any more questions and quickly hung up the phone.

Ning Li stayed alone in the house.

It was getting dark outside.

Bang!

A firework suddenly burst into the sky.

Ning Li looked out of the window.

Yunzhou had strict fireworks regulations, where fireworks were not allowed during the holidays. Lincheng was not as strict, so there were already fireworks everywhere.

Ning Li could also hear children laughing and playing downstairs.

She watched quietly for a while and smelled the food from the kitchen.

Ning Li sent a message to Lu Huaiyu.

[Second Brother, are you coming back for dinner tonight?]

...

Hospital.

Zhang Yang had just come out of the operating room when he saw Lu Huaiyu waiting in the ward.

His arm and lower leg had been operated on, and he could still feel the effects of the anesthetics. He could not move his body and needed help to walk.

The nurse came over to hook him up to an IV drip, before quickly leaving the ward.

Anyone could tell that there was a problem brewing.

After walking around the operating room, Zhang Yang finally got scared and looked at Lu Huaiyu with his pale face.

"I...I already told you everything I know! What else do you want from me? I really don't know who that person is!"

Lu Huaiyu smirked slightly.

"It doesn't matter if you don't know. Let's talk about something else. Tell me as much as you can about each and every time that you bothered the Ning family."

Zhang Yang was dumbfounded.

How could he say it?

He did not remember much, and even if he did, there had just been too many times over the years.

Lu Huaiyu's phone suddenly lit up.

He looked at it, slightly stunned at the message. He then smiled slightly.

[I'm going back, but I may be a little late, so you can eat first.]

Lu Huaiyu lifted his gaze.

"I still have things to do, so...you'd better talk fast."

...

The hour hand pointed to 8:00 pm.

Knock knock.

There was a knock at the door.

Ning Li went over and asked, "Who is it?"

Lu Huaiyu's voice came from outside the door. "It's me."

Only then did Ning Li open the door.

Lu Huaiyu walked in.

Ning Li glanced behind him. "Where's Brother Xiyue?"

She thought that both of them would come.

"He's still a little busy over there, so he couldn't make it."

"Oh."

Ning Li pointed to the dining table. "I'll go warm up the food."

Lu Huaiyu glanced over. "You haven't eaten yet?"

Ning Li shook her head.

She had not felt hungry and wanted to wait for them so that they could eat together.

"Second Brother, have a seat first. It'll be ready soon."

Ning Li walked towards the kitchen.

Lu Huaiyu followed her.

“You made pork rib soup?”

Ning Li nodded.

The corn pork rib soup was clear and aromatic.

She had boiled it for quite a long time.

Once the soup and rice were heated, Ning Li gave Lu Huaiyu a bowl.

Lu Huaiyu raised his eyebrows slightly, then picked up his phone and took a picture.

A minute later, the reserved and noble Second Master Lu finally put up his first post on his usually blank WeChat Moments.

There was no caption, only a picture of a bowl of corn pork rib soup on a wooden table with two white porcelain spoons.

The edge of the picture included half of another bowl.

Anyone could see that this was a meal for two.

Chapter 239: Him Amongst Commoners

Lu Huaiyu turned off his phone screen after posting it and helped Ning Li to pull out a chair.

“Sit.”

He then sat opposite Ning Li.

“Didn’t I tell you to eat first? Why did you wait till it was so late?”

“It’s not that late.”

Ning Li was not very punctual with her meals. She cared even less now since she had been rather busy these past two days.

Lu Huaiyu looked at her and laughed. “Kids need to eat more to grow taller.”

Ning Li was speechless.

She was not sure why Lu Huaiyu was so obsessed with her height, or if he had some misunderstanding about her being a “kid”.

Ning Li retorted softly. “Adults who don’t eat on time are also prone to stomach problems.”

Lu Huaiyu paused for a moment and gave her a meaningful look.

He was just as she had described, especially this year when his biological clock had been reversed. He could not readjust his sleeping time, so his three meals a day were a little problematic.

After a while, he let out a low chuckle. “Got it.”

Ning Li froze.

'Got it? Got what?'

Lu Huaiyu had already started eating, so it seemed like just a casual remark.

Bang!

It was another burst of fireworks.

Lu Huaiyu looked outside.

The light of the fireworks seemed to be reflected in his eyes.

He looked at Ning Li with a gentle smile. "Lili, Happy New Year."

Ning Li held the small soup bowl that was warm and fragrant.

She had never imagined that she would one day sit face to face with Lu Huaiyu like this.

The bright fireworks outside the window greeted the new year as she held the warm bowl of soup in her hand.

Most importantly, Lu Huaiyu was here too.

It had been many years since she had celebrated New Year's because the new year and the old year made no difference to her.

There was nothing that she looked forward to, so she felt no anticipation and delight. So when she heard Lu Huaiyu's words, she was caught in a trance for a moment.

After a while, the corners of her lips curled up slightly.

“Second Brother, Happy New Year.”

...

It was peaceful where they were, but Lu Huaiyu’s WeChat Moments was now abuzz.

Cheng Xiyue sat at the dining table in the Presidential Suite of the Caesar Hotel and stared at the photo as he viciously cut a piece of red wine foie gras with expensive silverware.

‘No wonder Lu Huaiyu rejected my offer to bring Ning Li here to stay! So, this is what’s waiting for him at home! Look at this soup! Ning Li must have made it herself, right? This punk kept such a good thing all to himself?!’

When Cheng Xiyue thought about how busy he had been all day but was now left all alone in this boring suite, he felt extremely frustrated.

‘Are you rubbing it in my face that you have company?!’

Cheng Xiyue defiantly picked up his phone and took a dozen shots of the food in front of him from different angles.

He then retouched the pictures trying to find the most ambient filter.

After editing, he finally nodded in satisfaction.

‘Nice! Light, composition, color, saturation...just perfect!’

He edited the picture and posted it on his WeChat Moments.

Five seconds later, Gu Siyang gave him the first like and left the first comment.

[Brother Xiyue, this looks like so much food! Isn't it wasteful to eat this by yourself?]

Cheng Xiyue was rendered speechless.

A second later, he blocked Gu Siyang.

...

Gu Tinglan also saw Lu Huaiyu's post.

He clicked on the picture and contemplated it after seeing the obviously seasoned dining table and the very ordinary-looking porcelain bowl and spoon.

"Hey, Lil Uncle, did you see Lu Huaiyu's post? His soup looks really good! I wonder which restaurant it's from. Should I ask him?"

Gu Siyang was lying down casually on the sofa as he asked excitedly.

Gu Tinglan glanced at his nephew.

Anyone with eyes could tell that this had been taken at home.

Everyone in the Gu family was intelligent, but somehow, they had managed to get one bad seed.

Gu Tinglan sent a message to Ning Li.

[Are you back in Yunzhou?]

After a while, Ning Li replied.

[I'm staying here for one more night because I had something to do today. I'm going back tomorrow.]

Gu Tinglan came to his own conclusion and looked at Gu Siyang.

Gu Siyang was touching his chin as he studied Lu Huaiyu's picture.

"Lil Uncle, do you think the lamb soup we had yesterday is better, or this corn pork rib soup?"

Gu Tinglan opened his laptop.

"You can ask Lu Huaiyu yourself."

Gu Siyang was puzzled and scratched his head.

"Huh? But I don't think he tried the lamb soup. How can he compare it then?"

Gu Tinglan pinched the bridge of his nose and suddenly felt a rare trace of sympathy for his elder brother.

'How did Big Brother put up with this son of his for so many years? Luckily, Big Brother's still in peak health.'

"Gu Siyang."

"Hmm?"

“After the car is repaired, you should go back to the Capital.”

“Huh? Why?!”

Gu Siyang sat up looking nervous. “Lil Uncle, are you going to tell me to confess so that I’ll get a more lenient punishment?”

‘Is he asking me to go back and turn myself in? Will I even make it out of the Capital alive?’

Gu Tinglan’s fingers tapped away on the keyboard. When he heard this, he paused slightly, seemingly in contemplation.

“That’s one way.”

Gu Siyang’s expression sank.

“He’ll know about it sooner or later. If you confess to him, you might still get to live. However...it’s better to wait until after Chinese New Year.”

It was rare for them to spend Chinese New Year in the country, so Gu Tinglan did not want to ruin everyone’s mood because of this matter.

It would be bad if word got out that Young Master Gu had been thrown out of the house on Chinese New Year’s Eve.

Gu Siyang was teary-eyed. “I knew you’re the best, Lil Uncle!”

“Also, isn’t LY’s training starting soon? Although you’re not responsible for it, it’ll be good for you to go over there more.”

Gu Siyang thought he had misheard and looked at his uncle incredulously.

“Lil Uncle, you mean...you support me in this?”

His father had always been opposed to him racing. Out of everyone in the family, Gu Tinglan was the only one with a mild attitude, even though he was not very supportive.

‘What’s he saying now? Does he want me to train at LY?’

Gu Tinglan finally raised his head and gave him a pitiful look.

“You should go and check out what the professional racers are like. It’ll be a bonus if you can learn something. If not, at least it’ll be a wake-up call that you’re not cut out for racing.”

Gu Siyang was rendered speechless.

‘How is it that I still remain in this family?!’

...

The Capital.

Tonight was Capital TV’s New Year’s Eve party, which was being held at the Capital Stadium.

Many celebrities were attending the live event.

The audience below the stage was filled to the brim. The signs and glow sticks that the fans held created a sea of colorful lights.

Among them, a group of fans remained the most dominant, Xu Yini’s fanbase, “The Ripples”.

In the backstage dressing room, Xu Yini was having her makeup done as she casually scrolled through WeChat Moments and immediately froze.

She thought she saw Lu Huaiyu's name appear.

Xu Yini clicked on the profile picture and confirmed that it was the one and only Lu Huaiyu.

Chapter 240: Public

Xu Yini scrolled back up and zoomed in on the photo again.

It was a bowl of corn and pork rib soup.

Nothing special.

Even though there was not a single word in the caption, this was the first time Lu Huaiyu had posted in his WeChat Moments.

Xu Yini studied the picture and her first reaction was that it was not Lu Huaiyu's home.

Lu Huaiyu had not returned to the Capital for the New Year, which Old Master Lu had nagged about for a long time.

However, this was obviously not in his villa in Yunding Fenghua either.

The dining table, porcelain bowl, and the light reflected on the spoon were all so ordinary and plain.

'Whose home is this? How could Lu Huaiyu go to such a place? Moreover, it's already past 8:00 pm and only a few hours until New Year's Day.

Xu Yini was fixated on the photo.

Her focus was certainly not the bowl of soup that was featured, but the half-captured bowl next to it!

‘Two people... Who is he counting down the New Year with?’

Within a short time, quite a few likes had already accumulated on this picture.

All of them were their common friends.

Lu Huaiyu had made this post public.

“Nini, is this maple red lipstick okay for tonight?”

The makeup artist asked eagerly and pleasingly.

Although Xu Yini had debuted a year ago, she was already the hottest actress in the entertainment industry. None of the actresses that had debuted at the same time could compare to her, aside from Tang Wei who had recently soared to popularity because of G&S.

Moreover, she was from a prestigious family and had sizable resources. Several well-known producers and directors also had to gain favor with her, not to mention a makeup artist.

At this moment, Xu Yini was not in the mood and frowned impatiently.

“That wild strawberry color.”

The makeup artist immediately sensed that the superstar was in a bad mood and immediately nodded.

“Okay, then we’ll have to change your makeup slightly. Is this eyeshadow and blush okay with you?”

Xu Yini glanced coldly at the makeup artist.

“Are you the makeup artist or am I the makeup artist? If you ask me this kind of thing, what do I need you for?!”

The makeup artist had not expected her to burst into anger and froze momentarily. Her face turned pale from fear.

She was 31 this year, a few years older than Xu Yini, and was considered a senior makeup artist in the circle.

It was extremely humiliating to be reprimanded by Xu Yini in such an unforgiving manner.

Moreover, many other celebrities were attending the party, so they shared a common dressing room.

Besides Xu Yini, there were two other female artists and seven or eight staff members in that room.

The entire dressing room went quiet, and everyone looked over.

The air was stagnant.

No one spoke for a while.

The makeup artist was extremely embarrassed.

The two other female artists in the same room were an unknown newcomer and a 40-year-old singer.

In this kind of situation, the newcomer did not dare to come forward.

The singer just sat in her seat and looked at them unblinkingly.

Needless to say, the rest of the staff were also speechless as everyone in the circle knew that Xu Yini was not one to be messed with.

“Right... I’m sorry...”

After the makeup artist recovered herself, she lowered her head and apologized in a trembling voice.

Xu Yini kicked a chair, which fell and knocked the makeup artist’s leg.

The makeup artist took a step back and winced in pain.

Xu Yini sneered. “You’re not doing your job properly and this is the face you’re showing me instead?”

The makeup artist hurriedly waved her hands to explain.

“I didn’t! Yini, I didn’t mean that...”

“If you can’t do your job, get out now! There are plenty of others who can take your place!”

Xu Yini was in an extremely bad mood and behaving ruthlessly as she pointed to the dressing room door, signaling for the makeup artist to leave.

The atmosphere was tense and suffocating.

At that moment, Mei Li heard the commotion and hurriedly came over.

“What’s going on here?”

She had only stepped out to answer a phone call. How had Xu Yini gotten so angry in such a short time?

Mei Li looked at the superstar, in a complete pickle when she saw the actress's expression.

Xu Yini did not have a good temper, but she had always done a good job in maintaining her external image.

After all this time, Mei Li had rarely seen Xu Yini in such a rage.

There were also other artists and staff here, so why had Xu Yini not held back her outburst?

Mei Li quickly stepped forward and pulled Xu Yini back as she looked at the makeup artist. She said in a gentle voice, "I'm sorry. Nini has been tired from running too many trips recently. She's not feeling well, so her mood is not great. She didn't mean to be angry, so please don't take it to heart."

Xu Yini would usually bring her personal makeup artist with her everywhere, but her makeup artist had been sick these past two days. She had not come because she was afraid of infecting her.

She had then used the makeup artist hired by the event organizer, just like everyone else.

Who knew that such a scene would have happened.

Mei Li was a top manager in the entertainment industry. Her status and means were well-known. Since she said so, the makeup artist did not dare to say otherwise.

"It's okay. This is my fault. I should've prepared better. I'm not professional enough. I'm sorry!"

At this time, the middle-aged female singer who had been sitting silently next to them finally spoke up with a smile, "Yini, I've just finished my makeup, so you can use my makeup artist if you want."

The singer was nice enough to offer, so Mei Li accepted it.

“Sister Ling, thank you!”

“It’s a small matter. Don’t worry about it. Luckily, Yini’s performance is the grand finale at midnight, so it’s not too late.”

After clearing up, the makeup artist left with her stuff. Xu Yini sat down again and changed to another makeup artist.

Mei Li sat next to Xu Yini and looked at her hands.

Since the beginning, Xu Yini had been clutching her phone.

‘What’s going on...?’