

## Little Brat's 291

Chapter 291: How Can She Be Related to the Lu Family?

It was the school holidays, so there were not many people at Capital First High. It was a little more lively today only because the students from the winter camp were leaving school.

However, these three luxury cars were really eye-catching.

Sun Qingyi did not recognize the first two, but the last one was quite familiar.

He took a closer look and saw a familiar side profile. 'Lu Huaiyu?'

Sun Qingyi froze. "Why are you here today?"

'Did he come back to visit his teacher? It didn't look like it...'

Lu Huaiyu glanced at him. "To pick someone up."

Sun Qingyi was even more surprised. "What kind of person would make you pick them up personally?"

He asked as he subconsciously tried looking into Lu Huaiyu's car.

However, besides Fang Qingyun and Lu Huaiyu, there was no one else inside.

Lu Huaiyu laughed lightly. "I didn't get to."

Sun Qingyi was dumbstruck.

There was too much information contained in these two sentences.

‘What kind of person in Capital First High is actually worthy of Lu Huaiyu picking them up personally...yet he didn’t even get to receive them?’

The corner of Lu Huaiyu’s lips curved slightly. He did not answer his question.

Since Sun Qingyi still had to send the students away, he did not delay further and left after a simple greeting.

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At the lobby of the dormitory building.

After Ning Li and the others had left, the girls took a while to recover their senses.

“Did Ning Li actually call Lu Huaiyu ‘Second Brother’? Didn’t you say that she’s from Yunzhou? How does she have such a relationship in the Capital?”

“I heard that she’s not from Yunzhou, but from Lincheng. Still...Lincheng can’t even compare with Yunzhou, let alone the Capital!”

“Wait, we were talking about Lu Huaiyu like nymphomaniacs before! Will Ning Li tell him? OMG... That’ll be so humiliating...”

“Honestly, I don’t think the handsome Lu Huaiyu will even care. At his level, there are too many people chasing him, so we’re nothing to him. He must be used to all this by now.”

“Right...but the point is...that man is absolutely amazing! That face! Those legs! He looks so cool in the photo, and he treats Ning Li so well...”

A few girls were still discussing the matter, but Cao Jingxuan did not say anything.

After the car had completely driven out of sight, she turned around without an expression on her face.

Zhou Meng and the other girls glanced at each other. They could sense that Cao Jingxuan was in a bad mood and quieted down.

For Cao Jingxuan, what had just happened was a little too awkward.

Earlier, she had told everyone that she met Lu Huaiyu before, which made many girls envy her.

In the end, Lu Huaiyu had not even remembered her at all. Instead, he had personally come to pick Ning Li up and had even helped her carry her suitcase.

From the looks of it, Ning Li and Lu Huaiyu were pretty close.

Cao Jingxuan's face stiffened. She then returned to her car.

The person driving was her father. "Jingxuan, was that guy Second Master Lu?"

Cao Jingxuan gave a faint "mm".

Her father looked a little excited.

"He's your senior, right? That classmate of yours seems to have a good relationship with him."

Cao Jingxuan was annoyed. "I'm not sure. She didn't mention..."

"You should get in touch with this classmate more often in the future!"

Her father admonished.

They had their own business and were considered a rich family, but they could not compare to the Lu family.

Countless people wanted to have a relationship with the Lu family.

“Second Young Master has always been reserved, but he seems to be very nice to that classmate of yours...”

Cao Jingxuan closed her eyes. When she recalled the scene earlier, she still felt a scorching pain on her face.

She said with some impatience, “It’s just a pickup and doesn’t mean anything. Ning Li’s family is from Lincheng. She’s from a single-parent family with very ordinary conditions. How could she be related to the Lu family?”

“Really?” Her father was dumbfounded.

‘That’s even weirder... I’ve never heard of Second Master Lu taking such good care of anyone...’

He was about to ask a few more questions, but seeing that his daughter was in a bad mood, he finally swallowed his words and drove away.

“Song.” The man sitting in the car called out to Pei Song. “It’s time for us to go.”

Pei Song withdrew his gaze and responded lightly.

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“Lili, how long do you plan to stay in the Capital this time?” Yu Pingchuan asked with concern in the car.

Ning Li thought about it for a moment. "I haven't decided yet."

"Since you don't have anything to do back there, why don't you stay in the Capital for the Chinese New Year?" Yu Pingchuan was careful with this question.

Ning Li's grandmother had passed away, so there was no one to spend Chinese New Year with her.

As for the Ye family, there was no need for Ning Li to go back to them.

On the contrary, it might be better to stay in the Capital.

Ning Li was stunned and quickly understood what he had in mind.

She actually did not think too much about Chinese New Year.

For her, she had lost her grandmother for many years and would not purposely celebrate these holidays by herself.

Chinese New Year was all about family reunions, which was meaningless to her now.

Thus, Ning Li was a bit surprised when Yu Pingchuan had brought this up all of a sudden.

Yu Pingchuan saw that Ning Li was silent and thought that she was saddened to recall the death of her grandmother, so he lightened his voice and said, "Don't worry... Take your time to decide. There's still some time before Chinese New Year, so you can think about it. You can also use this opportunity to go around the Capital."

Warmth filled Ning Li's heart. She smiled and said, "Alright."

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Shuiyuan Shijia.

This was a high-end neighborhood located on the third ring road in the south of the Capital, with one apartment per floor. Yu Pingchuan owned two adjacent floors here.

Yu Pingchuan took Ning Li upstairs.

"I'm staying in 1001, so you can stay in 901. If you need anything, just tell Lil Lin."

Ning Li nodded her head.

Yu Pingchuan asked, "By the way, did you get to go to Jinse Bay the last time you came to the Capital?"

Ning Li replied, "Yup."

Yu Pingchuan nodded. "That's good. Your painting is exhibited there now. Do you want to go and take a look with me some time?"

Ning Li chuckled. "Sure."

Chapter 292: Does She Not Like You?

Yu Pingchuan dropped Ning Li off without staying long.

Since he had come back in a hurry this time, Ning Li urged him to go back and rest.

After Yu Pingchuan and Lin Yaohui left, Ning Li sat down on the sofa in the living room.

This apartment was well-decorated with four bedrooms and two halls. It was also equipped with a special drawing room and study.

Ning Li sat on the sofa in the living room and took out her phone to send a message to Lu Huaiyu.

[Second Brother, I just got to the apartment.]

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At the same time, Lu Huaiyu had returned to the Lu mansion.

Old Master Lu was skulking around in the yard and peering out the gate from time to time.

When he saw Lu Huaiyu's car, the old man was immediately energized and straightened his back.

Lu Huaiyu got down from the car.

Old Master Lu swept a glance at him, then quickly looked behind him.

As a result, Lu Huaiyu closed the car door.

Fang Qingyun then drove the car towards the garage.

Old Master Lu's eyes widened slightly as he walked forward.

Lu Huaiyu saw his grandfather and raised his eyebrows. "Grandpa, what are you looking at?"

Old Master Lu looked around again and asked, "It's...just you?!"

Lu Huaiyu knew what his grandfather was referring to and looked in the direction of the garage.

He had not told his grandfather that he was going to pick Ning Li up today, which meant that this old man had pried this news from Fang Qingyun.

"Yeah...besides me, who else do you think should be here?"

"My granddaughter-in-law..." Old Master Lu accidentally blurted out, unable to hold himself back.

When he saw Lu Huaiyu's smiling face, he recovered himself and coughed hard.

"Ahem! Qingyun said that you have a friend who happens to be in the Capital... I thought you went out today to pick her up."

Fang Qingyun had not actually wanted to tell the Old Master about this, but the old man had noticed something weird about Lu Huaiyu's recent whereabouts.

How could he not guess it?

However, Fang Qingyun had not revealed Ning Li's identity.

The old man had been left here alone in anxiety.

'I thought I could finally meet her today! Who knew this fool wouldn't get to bring her back?!' Old Master Lu thought.

Lu Huaiyu did not deny it and said, "She has other places to go in the Capital."



The old man did not find this acceptable and looked at his grandson up and down.

‘Why is he so calm about this?!’ Old Master Lu thought.

“You’re in the Capital and personally went to pick her up, but didn’t even manage to bring her back?!”

Lu Huaiyu paused in his footsteps.

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When Old Master Lu saw Lu Huaiyu’s reaction, he knew that he had guessed correctly.

The old man flung his arms and sighed in disappointment. “Useless!”

Lu Huaiyu was speechless.

“Didn’t you have many girls who were interested in you? What’s going on with you now?!”

Old Master Lu had been incredibly excited when he heard that his grandson had personally gone to pick a girl up, thinking that Lu Huaiyu had finally gotten the hang of how to chase girls.

Who knew that he would come back alone...

“How long is your friend going to stay in the Capital? Why don’t you invite her over for a meal someday?”

Old Master Lu quickly suggested.

Lu Huaiyu said, "She's not sure yet."

As he said that, he looked down and saw Ning Li's message.

Old Master Lu looked up at Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu turned off his phone screen and said, "I'll ask her later. You don't need to worry about it."

Old Master Lu said, "Hmph! I don't have to worry? You went to pick her up but didn't even manage to bring her back! What else can I expect of you? I think she doesn't even like you that much...so it's hard to say if you can even win her heart."

Lu Huaiyu was about to enter the house when he heard these words. He stopped in his tracks.

After a while, his thin lips hooked up slightly. "Not necessarily."

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When Su Yuan and Ye Cheng arrived at Capital First High, it was already noon and most of the students had already gone.

As soon as Ye Ci saw them, all of the pent-up grievances and sadness during this period rushed to her heart. She rushed over and hugged Su Yuan. "Mom..."

Su Yuan looked at her and felt her heart break. "Lil Ci, why have you lost so much weight? Is it because you're too tired from studying here?"

It had only been two weeks, but Ye Ci had lost so much weight and she looked so haggard.

Ye Ci shook her head. "No, I just miss you, Mom."

Ye Cheng shouted from the side. "Sister, didn't you miss me?"

Ye Ci smiled. "Yeah, I missed you too. I haven't bought your gift yet, so we'll get it later, okay?"

Ye Cheng heard this and became excited.

"Okay! Mom promised to take me to the ski resort on the way here! Sister, let's go together!"

The boy had longed to visit the Capital. Now that he was finally here, all he could think about was having fun.

Su Yuan flicked his forehead.

"That's all you think about! Can't you see how hard your sister has been studying this time? She hasn't rested properly."

She looked at Ye Ci. "I already booked the hotel, so let's go there first. The driver's downstairs."

Su Yuan then looked around. "Where's Ning Li?"

"Sister Ning Li left in the morning."

Ye Ci seemed to be a little surprised.

"Mom, didn't she tell you?"

Ning Li and Su Yuan had not had much contact with each other, especially after coming to the winter camp. There had not even been a phone call or a text message between the two.

Thus, Su Yuan did not know about Ning Li's plans.

Sure enough, the moment she heard Ye Ci say this, Su Yuan paused momentarily and frowned.

"She left? Where did she go?"

Ning Li was alone with her big suitcase. She was unfamiliar with the Capital, so where could she have gone?

"I don't know..."

Ye Ci's lips were slightly pursed.

In fact, she had already heard that several people had come over to pick Ning Li up in the morning.

Those girls did not recognize Gu Siyang and Yu Pingchuan, so Ye Ci did not know that they had come to pick Ning Li up.

However, Ye Ci knew that Lu Huaiyu had also come.

When Su Yuan asked about this, inexplicably, Ye Ci did not want to tell her about it.

Ye Ci had heard that Ning Li had not gone with Lu Huaiyu in the end, so she really did not know where Ning Li was at the moment.

Thus, she was not lying.

Seeing that Su Yuan looked unhappy, Ye Ci said, "Mom, you don't need to worry. Sister Ning Li seems to have friends in the Capital who picked her up. She also came here on her own previously..."

At the mention of this, Su Yuan became even more agitated.

Su Yuan had always held a grudge since Ning Li had run away from home before.

“What kind of friends could she have in the Capital?!”

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They must be unreliable.

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Ye Cheng pouted and said, “That’s great! Who wants to see her anyway?”

Su Yuan said, “Forget it. Let’s go to the hotel first. We’ll talk about her later.”

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After Ning Li sent the message to Lu Huaiyu, she got up and went over to open her black suitcase.

Chapter 293: Planetarium

Besides some clothes, there was a laptop and two sealed files in Ning Li’s black suitcase.

She opened the laptop, and her slender, white fingers scratched on the control panel and tapped down another line.

Her phone vibrated.

She looked at it and saw that it was a call from George.

Ning Li answered the call. "Hello?"

George had not expected her to answer and looked at his phone suspiciously before he spoke flirtatiously, "Ning? So, I see that your phone is still working!"

Ning Li did not think much of it.

News of her winter camp ending today was information that could easily be acquired.

To the heir of G&S, this was a simple matter.

George had obviously waited until now to call her.

"If you want, my number can also be unreachable..."

George laughed. "That won't do. I'm still waiting for your draft."

"I'll send it to you tonight," Ning Li said.

"If you can't, then...wait...what did you just say?"

George froze when he heard her words. He was unable to hide the surprise in his voice. "You finally have the time?!"

However, he soon came to his senses. "Wait a sec... Don't tell me that you actually finished the drawing a long time ago and deliberately waited until now to give it to me?!"

This was not something that could have been completed in a day or two. Ning Li had been in intensive training for the past two weeks and had only just left school today, so it was obviously impossible that she would have had the time to do this.

That meant that she had already done it beforehand!

Ning Li did not deny it either. "Mm..."

She had quite a lot of completed drafts with her, but she did not intend to give them all out at once.

George was speechless when he heard her frank response.

'She kept saying she didn't have time when I asked her so many times before!'

"I'll hang up now if there's nothing else."

George hurriedly said, "Wait!"

Ning Li's lazy voice rang out, "Did you have something else to say?"

George did not know what to say.

He had received more coldness from Ning Li than he had from all his ex-girlfriends in the past two years.

George glanced suspiciously out the window.

Across the street was the G&S office building with a huge logo that was extremely conspicuous.

'I'm still the heir of G&S, right? G&S's profit this quarter was also very substantial... Why don't I have much of a presence with Ning Li?'

He shrugged his shoulders and said helplessly, “Darling, it’s rare that you’re in the Capital, so if you’re willing, why don’t you participate in the coming spring and summer show?”

The last launch had been a success, but to George, his only regret was that Ning Li had not been there.

It was actually necessary to constantly communicate with the designer about fabric selection, color selection, and even the creative concept of the whole show.

The previous launch had been held in the Capital, but Ning Li had needed to return to Yunzhou for class, so his only option was to let her go.

Ning Li had also been absent at the official launch of the “Flower and Moon” collection.

However, this time, if Ning Li could stay a little longer, it would be possible for her to be there.

Ning Li thought about it for a moment.

“Alright.”

George was stunned.

“So...you’ll come this time?”

Ning Li stared at her laptop. “Not necessarily, but I’ll try.”

Hearing the latter half of this sentence, George reluctantly agreed at last. “Okay.”

Ning Li hung up the phone.



...

In the afternoon, Ning Li went to the National Planetarium.

It was a Sunday, and since the primary and secondary schools had already started their winter holidays, there were quite a lot of people in the planetarium.

Many parents brought their children here, while some visitors were astronomy enthusiasts of all ages.

As Ning Li went into the lobby, a guide came over to her.

“Hello, how can I help you?”

The guide was a guy in his twenties that was tall and quite handsome.

A blue work tag was hanging around his neck.

Ning Li looked back and saw that he was a volunteer guide here.

The guy saw Ning Li’s face and froze. A flash of amazement crossed his eyes.

From time to time, the National Planetarium would recruit some volunteers from various colleges and universities in the Capital to guide visitors and explain the science in the exhibits.

This guy was clearly one of them.

Ning Li shook her head. “No, thanks.”

She then walked inside, looking as if this was not the first time she had come here before.

The guy reacted after a split second. "Oh, okay."

He nodded a little regretfully.

The girl seemed quite familiar with this place, but he had been volunteering here for half a year and had never seen her before.

He walked back and could not help but look at Ning Li's back.

Suddenly, he froze.

The direction that Ning Li was going in did not seem right...

He walked over to her again quickly.

"Miss? Excuse me, Miss! Wait!"

Ning Li stood in place and turned back. "What's wrong?"

The boy smiled and pointed to the front.

"Sorry, but this is the office area. It's not open to the public."

Ning Li looked calm.

He continued, "Where do you want to go? You can tell me and I'll take you there."

From the outside, the entire planetarium was a spherical arena, but it was actually huge inside and was divided into many small sub-areas.

It did not look like this was this girl's first visit, so why had she headed straight to the office area?

"I know." Ning Li spoke. "I'm going there."

The boy froze.

He looked at Ning Li carefully again.

She was very pretty, but she looked like a high school student of about 17 or 18 years in age.

The planetarium had not been recruiting any new volunteers lately.

The guy spoke with some hesitation. "You need a work pass to get in and out of here..."

Ning Li frowned slightly.

She did not have a work tag on her right now.

The guy also saw this and smiled helplessly. "I'm really sorry, but if you don't have a work pass, we can't let you in."

Chapter 294: If I Say I Miss You

Just then, a middle-aged man hurriedly walked out of the elevator nearby.

Ning Li saw the man and shouted, "Deputy Director Shen!"

Shen Kang Yuan heard her voice and looked over.

When he saw Ning Li, a trace of consternation flashed across his face. He spoke slowly. "Are you...Ning Li?"

Ning Li nodded.

The surprise in Shen Kangyuan's eyes intensified.

The Director had told him to come over to pick someone up but had not said that Ning Li was actually a young girl.

She looked to be around 17 or 18 years old...

The guy standing next to Ning Li was also bewildered.

'This girl actually knows Deputy Director Shen? It looks like this is the first time Mr. Shen has seen her, too...'

Shen Kangyuan quickly readjusted his expression and smiled. "I apologize. I was calibrating some equipment just now, so I came down late."

He said and glanced to the side. He asked, "Since you're here, why don't you go in?"

Ning Li explained. "I don't have a work pass for this site."

Shen Kangyuan understood and looked at the guy next to her. He knew that Ning Li had been stopped by the guide.

He laughed and said, "Oh, dear...I forgot about this. It's okay. I'll give you one later."

Shen Kangyuan looked to the guy next to Ning Li.

“Shu Hang, I’ll take over from here. You may go about your business.”

Shu Hang subconsciously answered, “Huh? Oh, okay...”

Shen Kangyuan looked at Ning Li and led her inside. As he was walking, he said, “This way, please. Director Xu has been waiting for you for some time...”

Their figures gradually disappeared.

Shu Hang stood in place for a while, still not quite understanding what was going on.

‘Ning Li? Is that her name? It doesn’t look like she came to apply to be a volunteer guide. There’s no shortage of people in the planetarium now and Deputy Director Shen was so polite to her.... Just now, he even mentioned that Director Xu has been waiting for her?’

“Shu Hang?” A staff member next to the guy called out to him.

“There’s a problem over at the 4D pavilion. Why don’t you go take a look?”

Shu Hang came back to his senses.

“Okay, coming!”

He turned around and headed for the 4D pavilion. After taking a few steps, he could not help but look back.

Although he could no longer see Ning Li, he was still impressed.

“Is she Director Xu’s relative...?” He murmured as he turned around and walked away.

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Ning Li followed Shen Kangyuan and walked inside.

This site was the office area, so there were very few people.

The duo eventually arrived at a door.

Shen Kangyuan unlocked the door with his fingerprint.

He pointed at the lock. “You should also register your fingerprints later so it’ll be easier to come in and out of this place in the future.”

Ning Li nodded and followed him in.

After the first door, there was a second one.

It was an iris recognition lock.

“There are only three people who can enter this place in the planetarium. Director Xu, myself, and another Deputy Director. You’ll be the fourth one.”

Shen Kangyuan’s tone became much more serious.

He took the first step inside, with Ning Li following just behind him.

Xu Yin was already waiting inside.

He was in his sixties this year and had devoted his life to dark matter research. He was the leading figure in the field of astrophysics in China.

After retiring from Xijing University, Xu Yin had taken up the position of Director of the National Planetarium.

There was a computer in front of him with two fluctuating lines on the screen.

When he heard the sound, he turned around and looked over.

A smile surfaced on his face. "Ning Li, long time no see!"

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By the time Ning Li came out of the planetarium, it was already 8:00 pm.

At this hour, the planetarium had long since closed, and only some staff members had been left to close up.

The whole venue was quiet and peaceful.

Shen Kangyuan handed Ning Li a badge.

"This is your work tag that has your identity in it. Your fingerprints and iris data have also been registered in our system, and the permissions to all the sub venues in the planetarium are open to you. It'll be much more convenient for you to come back in the future."

Ning Li took it over with both hands. "Thank you."

Shen Kangyuan looked at her, he secretly lamented in his heart.

When he had seen the first draft of the paper in Xu Yin's office, he had thought that Ning Li had to be a powerful figure from one of the top astrophysics institutes in China. He had not expected that she was actually a seventeen-year-old high school student.

No wonder Xu Yin thought so highly of her.

Ning Li said goodbye to him and turned to walk outside.

Just before she arrived at the main gate, she heard a somewhat familiar voice coming from the side.

"Ning Li?"

Ning Li turned her head sideways.

Shu Hang saw that it was really her and was surprised.

"Are you... only just leaving?"

There had been many people at the planetarium today, so he had been busy until now. He had not expected to bump into Ning Li again as soon as he came out.

"Mm." Ning Li's attitude was calm and distant.

Shu Hang glanced outside.

"It's very late. Is your family coming to pick you up?"



He thought that Ning Li was from the Capital.

Ning Li was not interested in talking to him and shook her head. She then headed outside.

Shu Hang did not mind and followed her.

“It’s very late, so it’s not very safe for you to leave by yourself. I can give you a ride...”

The National Planetarium was in quite a remote location.

There was no emotion on Ning Li’s face. “Thanks, but there’s no need.”

Shu Hang seemed to realize that what he had said might be a little too forward and hurriedly held up his hands and explained, “Don’t worry, I didn’t mean anything by it. I just think that it might not be safe for you to take a taxi back by yourself...”

Recently, there had been incidents of lone girls who had been harassed in cabs.

Ning Li was young and very beautiful, so Shu Hang thought that it would be quite dangerous for her to go back alone.

As he said that, he took out a card from his pocket.

“If you don’t trust me, this is my student ID. I’m a student of Xijing University.”

Ning Li did not look.

She could tell that Shu Hang meant well, but she did not need his help.

“The car I called for is already here.”

Shu Hang followed her line of sight and saw a car parked by the side of the road.

Knowing that Ning Li was still insisting on leaving alone, he did not say anything else.

“Then...okay then... Take care!”

Shu Hang looked at the license plate of the car a few more times.

Ning Li got in and the car quickly drove away.

Shu Hang felt a little disappointed.

Another boy came up behind him and patted him on the shoulder.

“Bro! She’s already gone, so what are you still looking at? Did you lose your soul?”

Shu Hang returned to his senses.

“Don’t talk nonsense! I just didn’t think it was safe for her to leave alone.”

“Tsk ts... It’s rare to see the most popular guy in our school falling for a girl, but you got rejected so bluntly!”

The boy gloated.

“If the girls in our school find out about this, they’ll all be very heartbroken...”

Shu Hang slapped the boy’s hand away.

“Let’s go back to school.”

...

Shuiyuan Shijia.

By the time Ning Li got back, it was already after 9:00 pm.

She went to take a bath, changed into her pajamas, sent her drawing to George, and closed her laptop.

Ning Li then nestled on the sofa and reached for her phone.

George quickly sent a series of messages.

Ning Li blocked him out.

The Capital was still bustling at this time of day.

There was only the sound of her own breathing in this overly spacious room.

Ning Li clicked into her photo album.

Chapter 295: That Artist’s Painting

Ning Li did not have many photos in her phone, so she quickly scrolled to Lu Huaiyu’s photo.

She recalled the time when Zhou Meng, Cao Jingxuan, and the other girls had been talking about this particular photo and all those confessions on the wall of the classroom.

Ning Li had not seen the sixteen-year-old Lu Huaiyu.

Although only five or six years had passed since his graduation, Lu Huaiyu's resume and experience were so plentiful that they gave the impression that a long time had passed.

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She could see that his looks and face had not really changed much, but his temperament was really different.

Suddenly, her phone rang.

The caller ID showed that it was Lu Huaiyu.

Ning Li was in deep thought when the phone rang, so when she saw his name, her heart skipped a beat.

Her hand slipped and she clicked on the "End Call" button.

Ning Li helplessly held her forehead. After some thought, she called him back.

Lu Huaiyu quickly picked up. "Lili?"

His voice trailed off a little, obviously asking about what had just happened. "Are you busy?"

Ning Li remembered what she had been thinking about. She had not even had the time to close that photo of him.

Her cheeks felt a little hot.

“No, I accidentally pressed the wrong button.”

For some reason, Ning Li felt that she had been caught doing something wrong even though Lu Huaiyu was not in front of her at the moment.

Lu Huaiyu could hear it in her voice.

He raised his eyebrows slightly but did not probe further.

“Are you used to Shuiyuan Shijia?”

“Mhmm...it’s nice.” Ning Li replied.

Although it felt a bit too big to stay here alone, it was not a problem.

Lu Huaiyu was silent for a moment.

Ning Li felt a little strange. “Second Brother?”

Lu Huaiyu smiled. “That’s good.”

Ning Li felt that there was something off about his tone, but she could not pinpoint it.

“Are you free tomorrow?” Lu Huaiyu changed the subject. “You’ve finished reading the books you borrowed previously, right? There are a few books that are related to those topics at home. If you want, I can send them to you.”

They had actually been sent to Yunzhou, but Lu Huaiyu had brought them back to the Capital.

At that time, Ning Li had been busy with training, so he had never mentioned it.

Ning Li froze, having not expected Lu Huaiyu to be so concerned about this matter.

Lu Huaiyu read out the names of two of the books.

Ning Li blinked.

If she remembered correctly, both of these books had not been released in the country this year because of copyright reasons.

‘Lu Huaiyu actually has them?’

He had clearly gotten them through other channels, yet he mentioned them so casually.

“Lili?”

Lu Huaiyu noticed that she was quiet and called out to her.

Ning Li came back to her senses and said softly, “Thanks, Second Brother.”

Lu Huaiyu heard her obedient voice and smiled slightly.

“Are you staying in the apartment below Master Yu?”

“Yeah, Building 3, 901.”

“Okay. I’ll send them to you tomorrow morning.”

"In the morning?" Ning Li was a little surprised.

Lu Huaiyu explained.

"There's a morning meeting at the office and there are some things I have to take care of."

He had put off most of his work and social engagements during his year of recuperation in Yunzhou.

The senior directors at the Headquarters in the Capital were hoping that Lu Huaiyu would come back, and he had finally done so.

Ning Li understood and asked, "Second Brother, are you preparing to move back to the Capital?"

It was not just for a few days, but a real long-term move.

Since Lu Huaiyu was going to the Headquarters and had started to handle work matters, it was obvious that he was ready to make the shift.

Lu Huaiyu laughed.

'She's very clever... She figured it out with only a small hint...'

He barely said anything but she immediately guessed it.

"Mm." He answered.

Ning Li did not say anything.

‘Yeah, it’s about time for him to move back to the Capital from Yunzhou...’

In her past life, he had actually returned to the Capital a few months earlier, but this time, it had been delayed for some reason.

His home was here, and the Headquarters of the Lu Corporation was also here, so of course, he would have to return sooner or later.

‘So...did this mean that he’s almost recovered from his illness?’

Ning Li’s mind flashed through countless thoughts. She was quiet for a while.

Lu Huaiyu sensed something.

He paused and said flirtatiously, “What’s wrong?”

Ning Li hesitated and asked, “Second Brother, are you still going back to Yunzhou after Chinese New Year?”

If he was preparing to return to the Capital, he would probably not go back to Yunzhou too often.

Lu Huaiyu raised his eyebrows. “Yeah, I still have some things that need to be brought back to the Capital.”

Ning Li let out an “oh” and inexplicably felt a bit lost.

‘That means he’ll move back to the Capital for good afterward...’

Lu Huaiyu looked at the time.



“It’s very late, so you should go to bed early.”

Ning Li’s lips moved slightly as if she wanted to say something, but she eventually swallowed it back.

“Okay. Goodnight, Second Brother.”

“Goodnight.”

....

Ning Li hung up the phone. Lu Huaiyu’s deep and lazy voice seemed to be echoing in her ears.

She gently rubbed her ears, put the phone down, and walked over to her suitcase.

Ning Li took out a sealed file from the bottom.

After staring at it for a while, she was about to open it, but she suddenly stopped.

In the end, she put it back.

She went to the drawing room.

This was Yu Pingchuan’s house. Although he lived upstairs, this apartment’s decor and the apartment upstairs were very similar.

He had put in a lot of effort to build this drawing room.

This time, he had especially cleaned the place for Ning Li to stay in, so it was equipped with all kinds of paints, brushes, and other painting materials.

Ning Li set up the drawing board.

....

Lu Huaiyu put away the books that had been sent from abroad.

Suddenly, he received a message on his phone.

[Second Young Master, I saw a painting in Jinse Bay today that looked like that artist's work....but there's no signature on it. Do you want to go and take a look?]

Chapter 296: Why Are You Wearing So Little?

Lu Huaiyu's eyes squinted a little as he stared at the line of words.

Jinse Bay.

Most of the paintings that he had previously bought had come from the Yunzhou Painting Association. This would be the first appearance outside of Yunzhou, or more precisely, the first appearance in Jincheng.

On top of that, this painting was appearing at Jinse Bay, the place where both Xijing Art School and the biggest art exhibition hall were located.

The National Exhibition Committee's headquarters was also there.

Jinse Bay was considered the peak of all art exhibitions throughout the country. This place was the very embodiment of art itself, and it was the dream of all painters and artists to have their work displayed there.

Now, this particular painting had appeared in Jinse Bay.

After thinking for a while, Lu Huaiyu replied to the message.

[The day after tomorrow. 10 a.m.]

...

Ning Li stayed in the studio until 1 a.m. in the morning before she tidied up and went to bed.

It was her first night here. She had thought that she would have a hard time sleeping in a new environment. However, maybe because of the sheer amount of things that she had dealt with throughout the day, she had fallen asleep quickly.

She had a long but chaotic dream. Chaotic memory fragments had flashed in her head throughout her sleep.

When she woke up in the morning, her head felt heavy.

After quickly rubbing her eyes, she glanced at her phone beside her bed.

8:45 a.m.

There was also a message and a missed call from Lu Huaiyu, from an hour ago.

[I've arrived.]

The message forced Ning Li to widen her eyes in shock.

It was now almost 9 a.m.!

She had promised Lu Huaiyu yesterday that she would meet him so that he could deliver the book he mentioned.

Now...

Ning Li gasped anxiously. She leapt out of bed and rushed out of the room as she dialled Lu Huaiyu's number.

...

At the same time, Lu Huaiyu was chatting with Yu Pingchuan on the upper floor.

"So, are you saying that you will be spending the New Year in Jincheng?" Yu Pingchuan said with a smile, after a quick sip of his tea.

"You can't imagine how happy your grandfather will be when he hears this."

Lu Zhishan was known for pampering his grandchildren.

In the past year, Lu Huaiyu had spent most of his time in Yunzhou and had barely come back to Jincheng.

Lu Zhishan was unhappy about his grandchild's absence and it had turned him into a naggy parent.

Lu Huaiyu answered with a chuckle. "I plan to use this opportunity to spend more time with him."

Yu Pingchuan nodded sentimentally. "That's great. Your brother is always busy and he's never around. You are all your grandfather has now and he's definitely going to be clingy with you."

...

Yi Bin stood beside Lu Huaiyu anxiously. His heart was pounding as he heard the conversation.

Today was one of the few times Lu Huaiyu had come back to the Lu Corporation since his return to the capital.

The meeting with the board had been scheduled for 8.30 a.m. but it was now almost 9.00 a.m.

Lu Huaiyu had said that he wanted to visit Shuiyuan Shijia when Yi Bin had picked him up earlier. Yi Bin had not been overly concerned, especially when Lu Huaiyu had gone up to the 9th floor and had not gotten an answer after knocking on the door.

He had thought that the Second Master would leave for the meeting then, but the Second Master had gone up to the 10th floor instead. At the same time, he had pushed the meeting back to 10.00 a.m.

Yi Bin knew who Yu Pingchuan was. However, the Second Master could visit the elderly anytime he wanted, so why now? Why today?

Was it because of the books?

He could have left the books to Yu Pingchuan and asked the elderly man to deliver the books to the 9th floor later.

Yi Bin glanced at his phone when he went to the washroom.

The chat group of the company was being bombarded with messages, asking him what was happening.

Everyone was already nervous when they heard that the Second Master had finally come back to the Lu Corporation after so long, and now, the man had pushed the meeting back.

All it did was leave everyone to make unnecessary guesses.

Fortunately, as Lu Huaiyu's assistant, Yi Bin had a high EQ and knew how to act professionally.

He cleared all the messages and went back after taking a deep breath.

He put on his calm look as he walked back, void of all anxiety.

...

Lu Huaiyu paused for a moment before unintentionally asking, "Oh, I heard that there's an exhibition happening at Jinse Bay tomorrow. I was wondering if you were going."

Yu Pingchuan shook his head.

"The exhibition has been prepared by the teachers of the art school for their students. There's nothing there that catches my attention."

The elderly man made it clear that he was not going.

Lu Huaiyu rephrased his words and said, "I heard that there is going to be a painting—"

Buzz!

Lu Huaiyu's phone buzzed.

He had a glance before standing up.

"Sir, matters at the company require my attention, I'll be leaving now."

Yi Bin heaved a long sigh of relief.

Yu Pingchuan stood up as well.

“I’ll see you guys out.”

Lu Huayu courteously rejected the offer.

“I apologize for visiting without giving you prior notice today. I don’t want to trouble you any further. We can see ourselves out.”

Yu Pingchuan insisted on seeing them out. He only went back once the two gentlemen disappeared behind the elevator.

Lu Huaiyu pressed the button to the 9th floor.

Yi Bin knew just what the Second Master was thinking, based on a single glance.

...

Ning Li had been calling Lu Huaiyu but for some reason, the man did not pick up.

Was he busy? Or had he missed the call?

Ning Li strode to the door.

An hour had already passed, so he should have left, right?

With that in mind, she reached the door and heard a set of familiar footsteps.

Ning Li widened her eyes. Lu Huaiyu was still outside!

Shocked, she looked through the peephole and saw a handsome figure.

She opened the door. "Second Brother?"

Lu Huaiyu had been just about to knock on the door before it was opened from the inside.

Ning Li stood in front of the door, looking at him in awe.

Lu Huaiyu wanted to speak but as he got a clearer look at the girl, his eyes looked more intently.

Ning Li felt anxious. She had not even changed out of her nightgown and her hair messily draped around her shoulders. The fair and delicate features of her face still looked sleepy.

She stood there with one hand on the door. The nightgown hung loosely on her body. The hem barely reached her knees, which exposed her fair long legs.

Lu Huaiyu took a step forward. His towering figure dwarfed the girl easily.

He furrowed his brows slightly and said disapprovingly, "Why are you wearing so little? What if you catch a cold?!"

Chapter 297: Who Wants to Be a Child

Ning Li looked down at her nightgown after Lu Huaiyu pointed it out.

She blushed after realizing just how thinly dressed she was.

Jincheng was a cold city but the room's heater had been turned up to the maximum. The warmth had made her forget that she only had a thin nightgown on.



When she had woken up and realized that she had missed Lu Huaiyu's call and message, she had gotten nervous. The only thought in her mind at the time had been to explain the situation to him. Thus, she had forgotten that she was not properly dressed.

Lu Huaiyu grabbed her wrist and turned to Yi Bin who was behind him.

"Wait here."

Yi Bin looked away, concealing the shock in his eyes.

"Yes, sir."

Only then did Ning Li realize that someone else was with Lu Huaiyu.

'Right, he's supposed to be going to a meeting at Lu Corporation's HQ today...'

With that in mind, she swiftly sized up Lu Huaiyu from top to bottom.

The man was wearing a fitted black suit with a white shirt inside, paired with a black tie.

The outfit gave him a cold and ascetic bearing .

Lu Huaiyu shut the door.

Ning Li said, "Second Brother, I'll go and get changed."

Only then did Lu Huaiyu let go of her hand.

Ning Li headed quickly to her room.

She moved fast, which made the hem of her loose nightgown sway, complementing her fair long legs and slender figure.

Lu Huaiyu swiftly looked away after a glance at her. He did not follow her into the room.

...

Outside the room, Yi Bin was questioning his life as he stared at the shut door.

‘What did I just see? What did I just hear?’

‘The Second Master, who was known for his chaste character and cold bearing, coaxing a girl like that?!’

Yi Bin had not gotten a clear look at the girl because Lu Huaiyu’s towering figure had blocked him. However, he had heard the girl calling Lu Huaiyu ‘Second Brother’.

It was well known that the Second Master only had an elder brother and no younger siblings.

‘So, who is this girl...’

Yi Bin quickly combed through all the details that he had.

‘Second Master came over early in the morning because he had wanted to give the girl the books.’

‘He waited for an hour just because he did not want to wake the girl up.’

‘After he met the girl, the Second Master did not say a word about his wait. Instead, the first thing that he said to the girl was that she wore too little.’

This was not Yi Bin's first day on the job.

All the socialites in Jincheng fawned over Lu Huaiyu and constantly came up with all kinds of methods just to win his attention. However, Lu Huaiyu never spared a glance at any of them.

His cold attitude had even spawned rumours that he might be gay, but now...

Yi Bin took a deep breath and gave himself a stern warning in his head.

'I am the Second Master's assistant and I should act like a professional! I should not be shocked over this. This is just... just...'

His shaking hands tapped on the group chat on his phone, which Lu Huaiyu was not a part of.

The other people in the group chat were still pushing him for an update on Lu Huaiyu.

[Assistant Yi, when will Mr. Lu be coming back?]

[Assistant Yi, can you please tell us where you are now?]

[Assistant Yi, how's Mr. Lu feeling today? Please, at least give us a hint!]

[Assistant Yi, is the meeting still going on at 10? Are there any new instructions from Mr. Lu?]

...

Yi Bin shook his head over the questions. He read through the questions with contempt.

‘Naive. Too naive. Childish, too childish. What time will the Second Master reach the office? Where are we now? Is the meeting still going on? None of that matters! The Second Master might have a girlfriend now! In fact, it looks like he is madly in love with the girl! This is huge!’

Yi Bin turned off his phone and took a deep breath.

The Second Master had been away from Jincheng for a year now, which had caused his workload to be greatly reduced.

Yi Bin had not expected that on the first day of the Second Master’s return, his boss would provide him with such a huge challenge.

The Second Master had kept this a secret the whole time. As his assistant, Yi Bin knew he had to observe the situation carefully.

With a heavy heart, he put his phone into his pocket.

‘Sigh. I really do have a lot on my plate.’

...

Ning Li got dressed as fast as possible before she came back out.

Lu Huaiyu was standing in the living room.

He turned to the girl when he heard the door opening.

Ning Li had changed into slim-fit pants and a white turtleneck, her smooth hair was still loosely falling over her shoulders.

Lu Huaiyu’s eyes paused at her long slender legs for a moment.

“Second Brother.” Ning Li said as she reluctantly walked over.

“I’m sorry. I slept late yesterday and forgot to set my alarm, so I missed your call earlier.”

Lu Huaiyu had already had a hunch about what had happened earlier.

His eyes subtly moved away from her legs to her face.

Her face was showing a rare sense of anxiety.

He smiled. “It’s okay. I didn’t wait long. I went up to visit Mr. Yu just now.”

“Oh...” Ning Li felt better but the guilt in her heart remained.

“I’m sorry, I must have slept a little too soundly. I didn’t even hear the doorbell...”

“I didn’t press the doorbell,” Lu Huaiyu said.

“What?” Ning Li was slightly stunned.

Lu Huaiyu looked at her. He instinctively raised his hand over her head and stroked her hair as his lips curved up slightly.

“Staying in bed is a little girl’s privilege.”

If he had wanted to, he could have found a way to let himself in, but it had been unnecessary and he had not wanted to do so.

Ning Li pursed her lips.

Lu Huaiyu then handed her the bag that he had in his hand.

“The books are inside here. You can have a look at them when you are free.”

Ning Li took the bag. There were a few books in the bag, which made it rather heavy.

“Thank you, Second Brother.” She then frowned.

“Second Brother, did I keep you from your morning meeting?”

Lu Huaiyu looked at his watch.

“It’s fine. The meeting is at 10. I still can make it.”

Lu Huaiyu then put his hands in his pockets. “I ordered breakfast for you. Please remember to eat it.”

Ning Li nodded. “Let me see you out—”

“It’s fine. You can go back to sleep if you want.”

Lu Huaiyu then grinned. “Did you know that a child grows taller as they sleep?”

Ning Li felt as if something had stabbed her in the heart.

She blurted out, “Second Brother, I’m 169 cm tall!”

Chapter 298: Pampering

The girl's voice was pleasant, albeit with a subtle sense of persistence.

Lu Huaiyu raised his brow at her, looking into her crystal clear, alluring eyes.

The girl wore a serious expression, as if her height was something that she held dear to her heart.

Lu Huaiyu curved his thin lips into a lazy smile. He softly pinched her cheek and said, "Really? I didn't know Lili was this tall."

It looked like Ning Li had been growing healthily in the past few months.

Ning Li was slightly caught off guard. She felt like a balloon deflating after Lu Huaiyu had pinched her cheek. The strange agitated feeling disappeared without a trace.

However, a strange feeling started to fill her heart, disrupting her thoughts from within. A feeling that she did not know how to express.

As her mind filled with these thoughts, Lu Huaiyu retracted his hand from her cheek.

"Okay, I'll be going now. Call me if there's anything."

Ning Li mumbled. "Mhmm."

The door closed after the towering figure disappeared beyond it.

Ning Li could even hear his footsteps outside as he walked away.

She turned around and leaned against the door.

'A child? Who wants to be a child?!'

...

Yi Bin drove his boss back to the Lu Corporation HQ.

The atmosphere inside the car was quiet.

Yi Bin took a glance into the rear mirror and saw Lu Huaiyu leaning back lazily, as he stared out the window with a deep gaze.

For a moment, Lu Huaiyu even suddenly chuckled, as if he had thought of something amusing.

Yi Bing quickly came to a conclusion.

‘It looks like the Second Master is in a good mood today.’

Lu Huaiyu came from a family of dignitaries and he himself was also an elite businessman. His achievements and background had boosted his confidence and arrogance. It was well known that he had an unpredictable temper.

Yi Bin had been with the Lu Corporation long enough to know how his boss felt.

No one on earth would dare to make Lu Huaiyu wait even a while, let alone a full hour.

To Yi Bin’s surprise, his boss was not angry even though the girl at Shuiyuan Shijia had made him wait. Not only that, he even seemed to be happy after leaving the place.

Yi Bin was deeply impressed. It seemed like his boss really cared about the girl.



He started to picture the faces of his female colleagues and the socialites in Jincheng when they learned of this.

Many women chased after him like a flock of birds, most of them like beautiful swans with influential backgrounds.

Many bets had been made about who would eventually win his heart.

Who would have thought that the arrogant and aloof Second Master would be willing to wait for an hour just to pamper a girl?

...

After breakfast, Ning Li was completely awake, so she went to the studio instead of jumping back into bed.

Looking at the vibrant colors on the canvas, she realized she still had George's number blocked.

She unblocked him and opened up the chat window.

George had sent her a lot of messages but all the messages meant more or less the same thing: G&S's design team would be working quickly on her designs which would be the main theme for the spring/summer collection later this year.

Judging from the message, the spring/summer collection would be even grander than the autumn/winter collection.

More importantly, Ning Li would be the main and only designer of the show.

The show that had happened at Jincheng International Longhai Exhibition Center a while ago had originally focused on Edmond and his team's design, with the intention of promoting that theme alone.

The awards ceremony for the G&S's global competition that Ning Li had participated in had only been meant to be a small part of that show, the icing on top of the already grand event.

The 'Flower and Moon' theme had been added at the last minute at George's insistence.

It turned out that George's decision had been the right one.

G&S had been able to have a great start in the Chinese market by using that show as a starter.

This time, after George had gone through the drafts that Ning Li had provided, he decided to reject all previous designs. He made the decision to spend all the time and effort to promote Ning Li's designs instead.

George really hoped that Ning Li could spare some time to visit G&S's HQ in Jincheng to discuss the details and finalize the concept.

Ning Li pondered the invite but before she could answer, she got a call.

It was from her mother, Su Yuan.

She nonchalantly answered the phone.

Su Yuan's questioning tone came from the other side.

"Ning Li, why didn't you pick up the phone last night? Where have you been?"

The night before, after Su Yuan had brought Ye Ci to the hotel, she had thought that Ning Li would contact her, so she had simply put it out of her mind.

However, even after midnight, she had still not gotten anything from Ning Li, not even a message.

Su Yuan had tried calling, but she had received no answer.

However, this was not the first time that Ning Li had rejected her calls.

She was not actually worried about Ning Li's safety. She was worried that Ning Li would be mixing with the wrong people in the wrong places, so she was mad.

Ning Li replied with a soft "Oh."

"I silenced my phone but when I saw your missed calls, it was already late. I thought you guys were asleep, so I didn't bother to call back."

When she had found out that Su Yuan had brought Ye Cheng to Jincheng just to pick Ye Ci up, she had blocked Su Yuan's number.

After all, she had been through quite a lot recently and did not wish to be disturbed.

Earlier when she had unblocked George's phone, she unblocked Su Yuan's number as well out of courtesy.

Su Yuan was agitated because it was clear that Ning Li's words were merely perfunctory.

This was not the kind of attitude that a daughter should be showing to her mother.

She raised her voice over the phone and said, "You're staying in Jincheng alone, a place that you're unfamiliar with. You don't even give any advanced notice about wherever you are going. What if something happens to you?"

"Ning Li, you are so naive, you—"

Ning Li calmly interrupted Su Yuan by saying, "I'm used to being alone and I don't like to tell other people my whereabouts."

Su Yuan's words felt like they were stuck in her throat, almost choking her. She had never really asked Ning Li about her life in the past.

To her, her understanding of Ning Li and the past 10 years of her life was limited to a piece of paper.

She had skipped school, gotten into fights, caused trouble, etc.

She was a loner, had an arrogant attitude, and disliked being controlled.

Ning Li knew why Su Yuan had called, and it was not because Su Yuan was a 'caring' mother.

Su Yuan was still living within the Ye family, so if Ning Li, her own blood and flesh, got involved in something serious, everyone would assume that Su Yuan had failed her responsibility as a mother.

Ning Li said, "I'm busy, so let's cut it short. I don't need you to call me just to ask where I am, so let's just stop it now."

Then, before Su Yuan could say another word, Ning Li hung up the phone.

Su Yuan did not call back.

Ning Li thought for a while and sent a message to George.

[Sure.]

...

In the evening, Yu Pingchuan invited Ning Li upstairs to have dinner.

Lin Yaohui was also there and he was the chef for the night.

Ning Li was finally able to sit at the dining table and relax.

“Mr. Yu, Uncle Lin said that you went for a medical checkup today. How was it?”

Lin Yaohui happily answered, “Lili, don’t you worry. Mr. Yu aced his medical checkup this time. He’s a lot better than the previous tests.”

Yu Pingchuan sighed. Back at Yunzhou, Lin Yaohui and Ning Li had watched over him closely and strictly controlled his snacking habits. It would have been strange if his health had not gotten better.

After some thought, he said, “Lili, look. I’m getting better already, so I think I’ll be able to have an apple or a pineapple—”

Ning Li looked back at him with a penetrating gaze. Then she smiled and said, “Mr. Yu, it’s almost New Year and you still have to go to Jinse Bay soon. Try to hold on for a little while longer.”

The mention of Jinse Bay instantly suppressed Yu Pingchuan’s rising anticipation. He struggled with his thoughts for a while before reluctantly saying, “Okay...”

Chapter 299: Giving Away

“Speaking of Jinse Bay, your painting is still there. Would you like to go there tomorrow?” Yu Pingchuan asked.

Ning Li pondered his question for a moment. Then she said, "If I remember correctly, there's an art exhibition at Xijing Art School going on. Aren't you busy? Will it be appropriate for us to go there tomorrow?"

Yu Pingchuan was a tenured professor at Xijing Art School.

He shook his head, saying, "They should be able to handle the exhibition themselves. I barely handle anything anyway."

It was just a small exhibition for the graduates. The other teachers would be able to handle the exhibition by themselves.

Ning Li was relieved as she smiled. "Great, then I'll tag along tomorrow."

Yu Pingchuan softly shook his head with a smile.

"I'm a regular at Jinse Bay, so there's nothing new to me there. But you, you will be the rare visitor, so it is me who will be tagging along tomorrow."

Ning Li blinked. "Thank you, Mr. Yu."

Yu Pingchuan took a bite of broccoli before giving her a meaningful gaze.

"It's nothing. But if you really want to thank me, just buy me some fruits—you know which kind of fruits I'm talking about, don't you?"

Ning Li nodded. Yu Pingchuan was delighted.

Then, Ning Li said, "It depends."

Yu Pingchuan was silenced. 'I knew it!'

...

Early on the second day, Ning Li and Yu Pingchuan headed to Jinse Bay by car.

As she came out of the parking lot, she saw a unique dome in front of her eyes.

Yu Pingchuan pointed at it and said, "That's the exhibition center, where the art exhibition is being held today. To the left, one street block away is the Xijing Art School.

See that red building behind it? That's the HQ of the National Exhibition Committee."

Ning Li followed Yu Pingchuan, listening to every word he said.

He thought it was the girl's first visit but actually, it was not.

Ning Li had come here many times in her past life, but Yu Pingchuan did not know about that.

The car accident that had happened as she travelled back from Lincheng to Yunzhou had taken away a part of her right hand's functionality. It had caused permanent damage to her hand.

After the accident, she had stepped away from the canvas.

When she had been discharged from the hospital, she had called Yu Pingchuan and told the man that she did not want to paint anymore.

Horried, Yu Pingchuan had asked her why.

Ning Li already knew that the car that she had been in had been tampered with by someone, causing the car accident that had robbed her of her future.

She had been afraid that she would drag Yu Pingchuan into the mess. Due to the addition of other problems, she had decided to lie and said that she had simply lost interest.

Yu Pingchuan had thrown a big fit and lashed out at her. He had been very angry because he cared a lot about the girl's future as an artist. The issue had caused a break in their relationship.

Yu Pingchuan then stopped talking to Ning Li.

After that, Ning Li had visited the exhibition center many times alone, to visit the art exhibition and also to see different people.

Unfortunately, none of those had anything to do with her anymore.

That was until that fateful day, when she had been granted the opportunity to restart her life.

Now, her painting was hanging there.

"If you have the time, you can come back here and have a look for yourself," Yu Pingchuan said.

The art exhibition and the art school were not where they were going today.

Ning Li nodded. "Okay."

Then, they turned the corner.

Yu Pingchuan said, "The door in front there is the place. Let's—"

Lin Yaohui's phone rang. He answered.



“Mr. Su?”

Yu Pingchuan and Ning Li turned around.

Lin Yaohui nodded as he answered the phone.

“...Okay, I understand. I’ll talk to Mr. Yu and get back to you later.”

He then hung up the phone and said helplessly, “Mr. Yu, Mr. Su learned of your return and wants you to visit the art exhibition. Today is the first day of the graduates’ art exhibition, so...”

Yu Pingchuan was stunned. “Didn’t you tell him that I have something else to do today?”

“I did, but Mr. Su said that it won’t take too much of your time. All he wants is for you to show your face there and maybe say a few words. It would be great if you could even make a few comments as well.”

Lin Yaohui intentionally lowered his voice as he spoke.

It was rare to find Yu Pingchuan in Jingcheng and Mr. Su would never let this opportunity slip.

Yu Pingchuan frowned frustratedly.

“These graduates are really troublesome. Those paintings... Fine, let’s just go have a look.”

Fortunately, it was still early, so they should still have time.

“Lili, since you are here, you should come along to have a look as well.”

Ning Li had no preference and said, “Sure.”

...

The small group then turned around and headed to the art exhibition center.

Lin Yaohui had already notified the other party of their arrival. When Yu Pingchuan arrived, a staff member was already there, ready to welcome him.

Yu Pingchuan had wanted to take Ning Li upstairs with him, but was afraid that she might not be interested.

He said, "Lili, go have a look around. I'll be back when I'm done."

"Okay."

Ning Li simply nodded in agreement since it seemed to be a good way to kill time as she waited.

Yu Pingchuang left with Lin Yaohui.

Ning Li wandered around the exhibition. It had been a while since she had been to one.

Xijing Art School was the best art school in the country and only the students of the prestigious school had the privilege of having an exhibition in this place.

Of course, other than painting, there were also sculptures and other art pieces, which would be released to the public for viewing in stages.

Today was the first day of the exhibition, so the atmosphere was quite lively.

The students of Xijing Art School were the best of the best and the artwork that they produced was considered to be of a high standard.

Ning Li stood in front of an oil painting.

“Ning Li?” A distant voice came from behind.

Ning Li turned around and was shocked by who she saw.

“Pei Song?”

...

The black Bentley sprinted along the highway.

Yi Bin looked out the window and asked, “Second Master, did you want to go to the art exhibition center?”

Lu Huaiyu said, “No.”

The painting that he liked was not being displayed there anyway.

“So, are we going to Elder Mei’s house?”

Lu Huaiyu nodded. “Mhmm.”

A moment later, Yi Bin said after some careful thought, “Sir, when I was there before, I noticed that Elder Mei was very fond of that painting. I think... he won’t be willing to part with it.”

The corners of Lu Huaiyu’s lips curved slightly, yet he remained silent.

## Chapter 300: Imitation

Ning Li had not expected to run into Pei Song at the art exhibition center. After all, Jingcheng was a large city.

Similarly, Pei Song was also surprised.

Today, Ning Li was wearing a white turtleneck sweater under a short down jacket that had been paired with a pair of black, slim fit jeans that complemented her long, slender legs. Her hair had been casually tied into a simple bun.

Her appearance was quite different from her usual look at school.

He looked at the painting that she was looking at.

“Are you here for the exhibition as well?”

Ning Li hesitated for a moment before she reluctantly nodded.

“You too?”

As far as she knew, Pei Song had not shown any interest in artsy stuff before. She had never heard him mention anything about it.

“My cousin is a teacher in Xijing Art School. He’s one of the teachers in charge of the exhibition this time,” he said.

“I’m just here because he invited me.”

Pei Song had been living abroad before high school, and had only returned recently.

Due to the nature of his parents' work, they only came back for a handful of days a year.

Pei Song spent most of his time in Yunzhou, only returning to Jincheng during festive seasons or special occasions.

He was considered both an outsider and a local to Jincheng, due to his unusual situation.

Because of his introverted and quiet nature, Pei Zhang, his cousin, was worried that he might be bored. Thus, he had invited him to the exhibition.

Little did he know he would run into Ning Li here.

"Do you like this painting as well?" Pei Song asked.

All the artworks on display here were the work of the graduates of the Xijing Art School. Even though it was a graduation exhibition, any of the visitors could make an offer to purchase it if they had any interest in any of the artworks.

"It's okay. The composition is a little off," Ning Li said.

Pei Song took a second look at the painting after Ning Li had pointed out the problem.

He had limited knowledge in this field. However, since his cousin was an art teacher, he did have a little knowledge about it.

In his opinion, whether for the meaning behind it or in its use of color, this painting could be considered as above average. It was safe to say that this painting was definitely one of the best artworks in this entire exhibition.

He had not expected Ning Li to be so critical of it.

“Excuse me, are you talking about my painting?” A voice came from the side.

Ning Li turned to the side and saw a tall and slim young man in his early 20s. He was fair with mid-length hair.

Other than that, he had the look and bearing of an artist.

When he pointed at the painting, Ning Li understood.

It looked like he was the painter who was responsible for the painting.

It was common for students to stand beside their painting, waiting for comments from the visitors.

She nodded, but the young man frowned slightly.

“It’s fine if you criticize the colors or the strokes, but the composition is perfect. What makes you think that something is wrong with the composition?”

He seemed unhappy about her critique, but that was normal. No one would be happy about criticism of their hard work.

Ning Li said, “Indeed, it is slightly problematic. The focus here is somewhat scattered, due to the painter wanting to express too many things at once. That makes it a little confusing and difficult for the viewer to understand it at first glance.”

The young man was stunned. He had not expected Ning Li to be so frank with her criticism.

Ning Li pointed at the painting. “Besides that, the hue difference is too strong. It would be better if you could brighten this part.”

Pei Song looked at the part that Ning Li pointed at and re-evaluated the painting with her comments in mind. He then realized that there was indeed something wrong with the painting.

The young man had been silenced by Ning Li's comments and his brows furrowed even more tightly.

Unhappily, he said, "Miss, I don't think you get the point of this painting. Do you know who the original painter is? It's 'Tree's Shadow'!"

Ning Li remained quiet.

A look of admiration appeared on the young man's face as he mentioned the name.

"This is the first artwork that he put out for open bidding and it managed to secure 600,000!"

No other famous painter in the past had been able to get such a high price on their first painting, so it was considered an astronomical figure.

When the painting had first been revealed, it had caught a lot of attention.

The audience had taken notice, appreciating the spirit and talent of the painter behind the painting.

The young man had accidentally seen the painting online and it had caught his attention. That little encounter had been able to turn the young man into a fan.

After that, more artworks from Tree's Shadow had been released but before he could even get a glimpse, all the paintings had been bought by rich private collectors at high prices.

It was regrettable, but there was nothing he could do about it.

"I tried to recreate the painting myself. Maybe I'm not as skillful, but there is nothing wrong with the composition."

The young man was obviously a fervent fan of Tree's Shadow and could not bear to hear someone criticize his idol.

Ning Li stayed silent.

Pei Song looked at the young man coldly and said in a detached and indifferent voice, "When a painting is drawn, it is bound to receive compliments as well as criticism. If you can't take the criticism, then there's no point for you to put it out on display."

The young man was quite obstinate.

"I can take criticism, but you cannot criticize this painting!"

Ning Li paused for a moment before she said, "This should be an early work of Tree's Shadow, so it's normal for the painting to have some flaws..."

"Do you know him?!" The young man reacted strongly.

"If you know him, why would you criticize it?"

Ning Li realized that it would be impossible to communicate with this young man.

She shook her head before taking another look at the painting again.

The young man stepped forward and blocked her view.

Ning Li rubbed her temples helplessly.

"Fine, just forget it..." She turned and left.



Pei Song followed her as she walked away. He tried to walk side by side with her, but intentionally stayed one step behind.

After a little pause, he said, "I think what you said made sense. You don't need to care about what that man said."

Ning Li smiled. "It's okay."

She had not meant to point out the flaw. She had unintentionally spotted it and had stayed a little longer to try and figure out if it was merely a coincidence. She had not expected the painter to...

Pei Song noticed her calm demeanor. It did not look as if the young man's words had affected her at all.

"Lili."

Lin Yaohui came down and called her.

"Mr. Yu is almost done. We can leave soon."

It was then that he noticed Pei Song beside Ning Li, which startled him.

"This is..."

"My classmate, Pei Song."

Lin Yaohui knew that she had just completed the winter camp and the boy had to be one of her classmates who had attended the same camp.

He smiled and nodded at Pei Song.

“Mr. Yu, are you sure you don’t want to stay?”

Further away, Pei Zhang was accompanying Yu Pingchuan as he walked over.

“Sir, you are a rare guest at this school. The students want to learn from you, but they’ve never gotten the opportunity to do so. This is a rare opportunity for the students. Are you sure you don’t want to offer them some guidance?”

Yu Pingchuan had other things to attend to, but now that Pei Zhang had mentioned it...

From his peripheral vision, he noticed Ning Li and the painting that she had just walked away from.

He pointed at the painting and said, “That painting, it’s an imitation. Who was the student who painted it?”

The boy had not expected Yu Pingchuan to call him out. He stepped forward excitedly and said, “Mr. Yu, it was me!”

Yu Pingchuan sighed. “There’s something wrong with the composition of this painting. You should copy another one.”