

Little Brat's 301

Chapter 301: He Doesn't Want To

The young man had not expected that the first piece of advice he would get from Yu Pingchuan would be the same criticism that he had received from Ning Li.

He looked over at Ning Li.

'It's the same...'

However, he had been a fan of Tree's Shadow for a long time and could not accept the criticism wholeheartedly, even if it was Yu Pingchuan who had given it.

He did not say a word but his expression said it all.

Yu Pingchuan glanced at him and knew what was going on in his mind.

"This is one of her old works, from two years ago. She was still an amateur back then. You can try to imitate her newer work."

The young man was shocked.

"Newer work? But, Mr. Yu, I thought that no new works have been produced in a long time."

He really wanted to see his idol's new work, so he had to seize the opportunity!

Yu Pingchuan had a quick glance at Ning Li and awkwardly cleared his throat.

“Er... She did paint something new recently, but it hasn’t been displayed anywhere yet. Wait a little longer, and maybe it will be displayed here as well.”

“Really?!”

The young man was over the moon upon hearing the news, and his eyes shone bright with excitement.

Yu Pingchuan was the president of Yunzhou’s Painting Association, and almost all the previous paintings produced by Tree’s Shadow had been sold and bid through the Yunzhou Painting Association.

Since the man had said so, the news had to be authentic.

“Mr. Yu, could you tell me when it will be on display? Will it only be for display or up for bidding?” The young man asked nervously.

It was difficult for fans to see paintings that Tree’s Shadow produced because whenever it was displayed, rich collectors would purchase it almost instantly.

“Uh...” Yu Pingchuan was a little nervous.

“I haven’t asked her yet. We’ll discuss it later.”

The young man was slightly disappointed but since it was not a total denial, there was still hope for him to see his idol’s work.

“Thank you Mr. Yu for your guidance.”

Pei Zhang noticed Yu Pingchuan’s delighted mood, so he seized the chance.

“Mr. Yu, it’s almost lunch time now. Why don’t you stay and have lunch with us?”

Yu Pingchuan waved.

“Thanks, but no thanks. I have an appointment and I’ll be late if I don’t go now.”

Pei Zhang finally had to let the matter go.

“Let me see you out then.”

Yu Pingchuan walked over to Ning Li.

“Let’s go, Lili.”

Pei Zhang took a good at the girl.

“Mr. Yu, I didn’t realize you brought a junior with you today.”

Judging from Yu Pingchuan’s attitude, the girl had to be someone close.

Was she one of his relatives?

Yu Pingchuan laughed. “She’s here in Jingcheng for a while, so I thought I would take her sightseeing. It’s okay, you don’t need to walk us out.”

Yu Pingchuan then left with Lin Yaohui and Ning Li.

Pei Zhang looked at Pei Song.

“Song, do you know that girl?”

As they were coming down, Pei Zhang had seen Pei Song talking to the girl who was standing beside him.

Pei Song nodded.

“She’s my classmate. She also attended the winter camp.”

“I see. So... that means that she’s from Yunzhou? What is her relationship to Mr. Yu then?”

Pei Song paused. “I am not too sure.”

Yu Pingchuan was famous enough for Pei Song to know who the man was.

Before this, he had no idea Ning Li that even knew Yu Pingchuan. It looked like they were close.

Pei Zhang smiled and said, “It’s rare to see Mr. Yu treat someone with so much care. Oh, by the way, what do you think about the exhibition? If you are not interested...”

“I like it,” Pei Song said.

“Really?” Pei Zhang was a little surprised.

He had been concerned that Pei Song would be bored by the paintings.

Pei Song nodded and turned to that particular painting again.

A moment later, he asked, “What do you know about Tree’s Shadow?”

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Yu Pingchuan and company left the exhibition center.

He recalled what had happened inside and shook his head with a laugh. "What a coincidence. The boy imitated your..."

Yu Pingchuan stopped before he could finish.

"Too bad it's an old painting. If it was a newer one, it might have helped him more."

The corners of Ning Li's lips curved upwards as she followed beside him.

"I did not expect that as well. It's been a long time since I've seen that painting."

It was difficult for the common public to see the original painting since it was already purchased. However, the young man had still been able to imitate it. He really was a true fan.

"Speaking of the new painting, what are you going to do about it? Is it up for bidding?"

Yu Pingchuan suddenly switched the topic and sized up Ning Li's expression, anticipating an answer.

Ning Li had been in need of money before this, so all her paintings had been sold. For this one however, Yu Pingchuan believed that the girl would not want to part with it.

Still, it was up to Ning Li to decide.

Ning Li shook her head. "It's not for sale."

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“Second Master, I knew it. Elder Mei doesn’t want to sell it.”

The black Bentley slowly drove out of Jinsa Manor.

Yi Bin was trying to initiate the conversation with caution, but Lu Huaiyu barely reacted.

He had taken a long time to negotiate with Elder Mei in the room, but was unable to move the man in the slightest.

Yi Bin knew that Lu Huaiyu was determined to get his hand on that painting. Now that they were leaving empty-handed, surely...

“It’s not that Elder Mei doesn’t want to sell it,” Lu Huaiyu said. “It’s the painter.”

“The painter? I thought all the painter’s works were for sale...”

The earlier paintings had been available for sale. As soon as they had hit the market, Lu Huaiyu had gotten his hands on all of them.

It seemed like the painter had been in need of money at that time.

To his knowledge, Lu Huaiyu had offered an astronomical figure for this particular painting but still, he could not acquire it.

He had no idea what the painter was thinking.

As Lu Huaiyu looked outside the window, something caught his attention.

“Stop.”

Yi Bin stopped the car.

“What’s wrong, sir?”

Lu Huaiyu did not say a word. He stared at the people walking across the street with narrowed eyes.

Then, he turned around to the entrance of the residence.

‘Jinsa Manor? Had Ning Li and Yu Pingchuan come to Jinsa Manor together?’

Chapter 302: Sketch

The residents of Jinsa Manor were all elites in the art industry and were considered the best of the best in their respective fields.

There were also a few famous oil painters and painters who specialized in traditional Chinese art that lived in the same area.

Yu Pingchuan also had a unit in the area, but it was more like a holiday home.

This time, he had returned to Jingcheng and moved into Shuiyuan Shijia because he had wanted to look after Ning Li.

So, why would he be at Jinsa Manor now?

As these thoughts ran through his mind, he took his phone out and sent a message to Ning Li.

[Lili, are you home? Would you like to have lunch with me?]

Ning Li replied almost instantly.

[Second Brother, I'm outside. I don't think I can make it.]

[Are you alone?]

[I'm with Mr. Yu and Uncle Lin.]

[Send me your location. I'm free later in the afternoon. Maybe I can drop by.]

Ning Li found herself in a rather awkward situation after reading Lu Huaiyu's message.

She gave it careful consideration before she replied.

[We're having lunch now. I'm afraid we'll have to take a rain check.]

Ning Li had just entered the neighborhood, but had to pause awhile in order to reply to the message.

From the car, Lu Huaiyu could see her typing on the phone with her head down. He tapped his slender fingers on his phone softly and chuckled.

'The little girl is all grown up now.'

The chuckle somehow sent chills down Yi Bin's neck.

His boss was obviously amused, but inexplicably, the aura around him felt slightly oppressive.

Yi Bin slowly looked outside the window. He tried to see what had amused his boss, but all he saw were people walking about.

‘What is the Second Master looking at?’

“Let’s go back to the company,” Lu Huaiyu said.

Startled, Yi Bin said, “The company? Second Master, I thought you were going back to the house later this afternoon.”

Lu Huaiyu had already spent a year in Yunzhou and had now finally decided to officially return to Lu Corporation. However, he had been drowned in work as soon as he had come back.

Fortunately, the man’s efficiency in work had allowed him to finish all his work that very same morning. He usually spent his afternoons at home, resting, which was similar to how he spent his days in Yunzhou.

However,...

“I’ve got some free time on my hands now,” Lu Huaiyu said.

The atmosphere in the car suddenly felt colder.

Yi Bin answered immediately, “Yes, sir.”

He swiftly turned the car around and drove off.

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The people of Lu Corporation had been feeling tired and stressed lately, especially as they waited for Lu Huaiyu’s return.

After a long wait, the Second Master had finally returned. To everyone's surprise, he had been in a great mood.

His great mood had spread throughout the company and boosted the morale of everyone, causing everyone to be in a celebratory mood.

However, the relaxed atmosphere did not last for long.

At noon, a board meeting had been held in the main meeting room that lasted for an hour.

It was said that several of the board of directors and executives had come out of the meeting with terrified looks on their faces.

Later that afternoon, upon the Second Master's orders, every department had gotten their respective tasks, which caused everyone's workload to surge.

More frighteningly, the Second Master had stayed back at the office!

The entire company was suffused in a tense and nervous atmosphere.

In the company chat group, almost everyone had tagged Yi Bin, requesting an answer.

[Assistant Yi, what happened to the Second Master today?!]

[Assistant Yi, I thought the Second Master was in a great mood! What caused the change?!]

[Assistant Yi, I thought the Second Master went to the exhibition this morning. What happened? Tell us!]

[Assistant Yi, you are the reason that I have to stay back to work today!]

Yi Bin was speechless because he had no answer either.

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In the office, Lu Huaiyu closed the document file in his hand. He glanced at his watch.

4.00 p.m.

He should be sleeping at this hour. He had gotten so busy earlier that he had lost track of time.

He closed his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose.

'I think... I should be fine.'

He was a lot better than he used to be. Moreover, he needed to take the initiative to tackle the problem so that he could recover faster.

Chaotic thoughts started to flood his mind, his ears even starting to ring.

The space around him felt as if it was imploding on him, trying to suffocate him.

He took a deep breath before opening his eyes and then calling Yi Bin through the desk phone.

"Second Master?"

Lu Huaiyu leaned back slightly and loosened up his tie, but the suffocating feeling remained.

His voice sounded tense as he said, "Go back to my house and bring me the book that's by my bedside, The History of Time."

Yi Bin was surprised. Why would the Second Master want to read 'The History of Time' now?

Besides, there was a bookstore in the area and it would be faster to buy a new one than to retrieve it at his house.

However, since his boss had given the order, Yi Bin had to obey.

"Okay, sir."

Lu Huaiyu hung up the phone and shut his eyes.

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Yi Bin was efficient.

40 minutes later, he brought the book back to the office.

He knocked on Lu Huaiyu's door. "Second Master?"

There was no reply from inside.

He knocked on the door again, stronger this time.

"Second master?"

A while later, Lu Huaiyu's cold voice came from inside.

“Come in.”

Yi Bin went in.

Lu Huaiyu’s back was to Yi Bin as he stood in front of the floor-to-ceiling window.

“Sir, here’s the book that you wanted.”

Lu Huaiyu turned around and walked to the book.

“Mhmm, you can go out now.”

Yi Bin went out as directed and closed the door softly.

After Yi Bin went out, Lu Huaiyu picked up the book and flipped to a particular page.

There was a sketch inside the book.

He took it out and stared at it for a long while.

He felt as if there was a pair of invisible hands soothing his frustration and anxiety.

He sighed. The rigid look on his face softened.

After Yi Bin left the room, he suddenly recalled the sight of his boss as he stood in front of the window. That somehow worried him, so he went back and knocked on the door.

“Second Master?”

Lu Huaiyu put the sketch back into the book.

“Come in.”

He looked at Yi Bin. “What’s wrong?”

Yi Bin asked, “Second Master, there’s a cocktail party at 8 p.m. later at the LeTuie Winery. Are you still keen on attending?”

If the Second Master was feeling unwell, it would be better for him to skip the party.

The cocktail party was expected to host the elite businessmen of the industry, and it would be the first social event for Lu Huaiyu since his return to Jingcheng.

Lu Huaiyu put the book away and said, “I’ll go.”

Chapter 303: You Guys Are Together?

The black Bentley stopped in front of LeTuie Winery’s gate.

The car jockey came over and opened the door for Lu Huaiyu.

He was in a black suit that complemented his broad shoulders, trim waist and tall figure.

The bright lights shone over his perfect face and highlighted his deep eyes.

The cool night air complemented his cool presence, which emphasized his noble bearing.

Knowing that he would be coming today, someone was already waiting for him at the entrance, eagerly welcoming him.

“Second Master, welcome! This way, please!”

Lu Huaiyu nodded before walking in. Yi Bin followed him closely.

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The sound of the clinking of glasses could be heard all over the hall.

The attendees of this cocktail party were all the most elite and influential people of Jingcheng. Everyone dressed in full glitz and glamour, each trying to stand out from the rest.

Xu Yini was standing beside a wine rack holding a glass of wine. Her eyes were focused on the entrance, as she sipped on her glass from time to time.

She had left her light brown, wavy hair loose to match with the long burgundy strapless dress that she was wearing. The combination gave her a look of innocence, which added to her charm.

She had the ability to turn heads just by standing there alone.

A young man went up to her with a smile.

“Yini, I heard that you have been busy with work lately. How did you manage to find the time to attend this party today?”

Before Xu Yini could speak, another woman spoke up teasingly, “The famous Ms. Xu would never attend any ordinary party. However, this party is different since Second Master Lu will be showing up tonight.”

The woman lowered her voice towards the end, but those around her could still hear her clearly.

“Second Master Lu? Lu Huaiyu?”

“I thought he was in Yunzhou. When did he come back?”

“You didn’t know? You are so outdated with your news! He’s been back for days. He even went back to Lu Corporation HQ yesterday.”

“Judging from what you just said, does that mean that he’s ending his long vacation and planning to make a comeback?”

“Of course! Who else could make our Ms. Xu wait and push all her work aside, just to attend the party with the slightest chance of him showing up?”

Those who were teasing Xu Yini were the rich offspring of renowned families. They knew her quite well, which was why they were so bold with their teasing.

It was no secret that Xu Yini liked Lu Huaiyu, at least not in this little social circle.

Many women had tried to win Lu Huaiyu’s heart. However, in terms of looks and background, Xu Yini was considered the best of the best.

The Lu family and the Xu family had been close friends for generations and everyone strongly believed that Xu Yini would be the best match for Lu Huaiyu.

Xu Yini took a sip of wine as she listened to her friends’ jokes. She said with a giggle, “What are you guys talking about? I came here because it’s been a while since I saw you guys. I thought it would be a great chance for us to catch up.”

The others exchanged a profound gaze before they burst out laughing.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ms. Xu Yini is famous now. It’s difficult for us to even see her in person now.”

Xu Yini gave a profound smile.

She then turned her eyes towards the entrance.

The girl beside her giggled and said, "Look, Second Master Lu is here."

The arrival of the man had silenced the hall momentarily.

Many of the guests knew Lu Huaiyu in person, but it had been a whole year since he had appeared in any of the social events in Jingcheng.

Moreover, with his handsome looks and his unique noble bearing, he was sure to turn heads wherever he went.

"That's Second Master Lu? He really is as handsome as rumoured..."

"Is he here alone?"

"Don't you know? Second Master Lu never brings a partner to social events."

"You guys should stop dreaming. He's not someone that any of us can approach. If anything, I think only that girl from the Xu family is qualified to do so."

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Xu Yini took the initiative and approached him with a sweet smile. Her lips curved into a gentle smile, perfectly showing off her innocent and soft side with a hint of maturity.

"Huaiyu."

Her approach attracted a lot of attention.

Lu Huaiyu nodded and acknowledged her coolly.

At such an occasion, he had to behave cordially in public, especially to someone from the Xu family.

Xu Yini's pounding heart relaxed a little.

Lu Huaiyu had always behaved coldly to her. When that picture of them in the parking lot had caused a big scandal, Lu Huaiyu's attitude towards her had dropped even further till it was below freezing point.

He had rejected her calls and never replied to any of her messages.

Even when she had flown to Yunzhou overnight just to apologize, it had not made things better.

That day, she had not even made it through the doors of Yunding Fenghua.

Thinking about it made her feel terrible.

Lu Huaiyu had always been cold to her, but he treated almost everyone else coldly as well, so she told herself that she still had a chance.

After all, she felt she had an advantageous edge.

However, after seeing Ning Li at Yunding Fenghua, she sensed danger from the girl.

The anxiety in her had risen when she found out that Lu Huaiyu had spent New Year's Eve in Lincheng.

Lincheng was Ning Li's home. It was just a tiny town. Why would Lu Huaiyu go there in the first place?

On top of that, the status that he had posted in his Friend Circle that day...

All the bits and pieces finally pieced together into a puzzle that increased her anxiety and nervousness. She had never felt like this before.

She had known Lu Huaiyu since she was young and she knew him better than most others.

The man carried himself in a lazy and nonchalant manner but deep down, he was actually a proud and egoistic person.

She was not afraid that he disliked her. She was afraid that he would fall for another girl, because that would mean that she would be out of the game.

Xu Yini had done some background search on Ning Li and tried to find out more about her rival. The results calmed her down a little.

Ning Li's background, family and results were nothing but an embarrassment. Even though she had done well in her recent exams, she would not be an obstacle.

The comparison between Ning Li's background and Lu Huaiyu was like heaven and earth.

That fact alone made it impossible for them to be together.

Still, it made Xu Yini nervous.

Therefore, when she had learned that Lu Huaiyu had come back to Jingcheng and would be attending the cocktail party, she had pushed aside all her work just to attend.

Xu Yini blinked at him. "Grandpa Lu must be happy with your return."

Lu Huaiyu took a glass of wine from the waiter beside him. He barely reacted to Xu Yini's question.

Of course the old man was happy, he seemed to be overflowing with energy even. He had even hinted at Lu Huaiyu to bring Ning Li back for dinner, or at least let him meet the girl.

"Thank you for your concern. My grandfather is doing great."

He sounded quite detached, but Xu Yini did not mind.

To her, being able to talk to him and receive a reply was good enough for her.

Although she knew that it was due to her family's reputation, she was still grateful for it.

"Huaiyu."

A middle-aged man came over with a smile.

Xi Lin, the owner of the winery and the host of the party came to greet him.

The Xi family was one of the richest families in Jingcheng and were close with both the Lu and the Xu families.

His gaze swept over Lu Huaiyu and Xu Yini before he jokingly said, "Did you not bring a partner? Well, Yini is here alone as well. You guys would make a perfect companion for each other tonight."

Chapter 304: The Paper Boy. Lu Huaiyu's Favourite

Xu Yini's heart pounded happily. Instinctively, she looked over at Lu Huaiyu and she saw a smile on his face.

"Uncle Xi, you know I never bring a partner to social events."

Although he was smiling, his tone remained nonchalant. It was clearly a blunt rejection.

Xu Yini was disappointed. It felt like a pail of cold water had just been dumped on her.

She remained smiling, but it now felt forced.

Xi Lin was their elder, so he could say such things. However, he had also suggested the idea with the intention of setting them up together.

After all, he was the owner of the winery and the host of the party. Lu Huaiyu should have at least respected him and his wishes, but he had not.

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Lu Huaiyu had straightforwardly rejected the idea.

Xi Lin had been caught off guard as he had not expected a blunt rejection either.

The other people around who had heard the rejection reacted strangely as well.

Xu Yini swiftly adjusted her expression.

"Uncle Xi, I still have to work later so I can't stay long either. I can't be Huaiyu's partner for the night anyway."

She managed to save her own self from further embarrassment.

Xi Lin looked a little disappointed.

“Ah, I see.”

They were all intelligent adults. They knew when to take a step forward or back away.

Xi Lin looked at Lu Huaiyu and said, “Huaiyu, you have been in Yunzhou for a year now. It’s been a while since we have had a drink together. What you’re having in that glass right now is part of my new collection, so you have to try it. There are also some new bottles in the cellar. Why don’t we go have a look later?”

Lu Huaiyu moved the glass closer to his mouth. The rich aroma of the wine filled his nose and inexplicably made him pause momentarily.

He smiled and said, “Thank you, Uncle Xi, for your hospitality.”

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Since Xu Yini was not interested in the wine cellar and she had already excused herself from Lu Huaiyu’s rejection, she did not follow the men down there. She simply went to a corner and sat down.

She looked moody, the expression on her face showing her frustration.

Many people were looking at her, as they whispered softly to each other.

“What happened? Did Second Master Lu reject Xu Yini?”

“This... Well, it’s true that he never brings a partner to social events anyway, so it’s not exactly a rejection.”

“How is that not a rejection? Xu Yini came here because of him. Why would she make arrangements to work after this event? That was just an excuse to save herself from embarrassment.”

“Sigh. I really have no idea what Second Master Lu is thinking. Who would reject such a beauty? Xu Yini is beautiful, smart and rich. More importantly, she’s loyal. How could anyone be able to resist being pursued by such a woman? Yet, the man is completely unmoved...”

“So what? He has what it takes to reject even her. Besides, do you think that Xu Yini is the only one who’s worthy? In the past few years, many women have tried to win his heart yet none of them made it. Let me be frank, Xu Yini is great but there are many others who are just as good. Still, no one has been able to win his attention yet. He rejected all of them without a second thought.”

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Xu Yini leaned back on the couch. The words that had entered her ears made her even more frustrated.

Many of them did not know it, but Xu Yini had seen Lu Huaiyu with a partner at a social event once before. The girl in question had been Ning Li.

In the end, it was up to Lu Huaiyu as to whether or not he wanted a partner at a social event.

If he did not want it, no one could force him to do otherwise. If he wanted it, then he would be the most caring and kind gentleman of the night.

Xu Yini drained her wine to the last drop.

The waiter refilled her glass swiftly.

Out of Xu Yini’s peripheral vision, she noticed Yi Bin, Lu Huaiyu’s assistant, being surrounded by several guests.

He may have been just an assistant, but he was Lu Huaiyu's personal assistant. Many people tried to find out more about Lu Huaiyu through Yi Bin and this was nothing new to the poor man.

Yi Bin gave a courteous smile and behaved politely to all the other guests, but he avoided the barrage of questions from them.

In the end, none of the guests got anything out of Yi Bin despite their best efforts.

After a while, the guests finally realized that it was almost impossible to find out more about Lu Huaiyu through Yi Bin, so they slowly discarded the thought.

One young lady decided to give it one last try, but decided to switch the topic.

"Assistant Yi, what do you have in your hand?"

Yi Bin looked at the bag that he was holding.

"It's a book belonging to the Second Master."

Lu Huaiyu had handed the book to Yi Bin when he left the office, telling him to safeguard it.

Yi Bin believed that after the cocktail party, Lu Huaiyu would go home and wanted to bring the book back together.

He had no idea what was so special about the book. However, he knew that Lu Huaiyu cherished it a lot, so he guarded it well.

"The Second Master Lu's book?"

Intrigued, the young lady tried to sneak a peek inside the bag.

“Can I see it?”

Yi Bin said, “I’m sorry, I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

The young lady was caught off guard by the rejection.

It was just a book, a rather thick book.

“Assistant Yi, don’t get me wrong. I’m just curious as to what kind of books Second Master Lu reads...”

In a strong tone, Yi Bin said, “You can ask the Second Master in person if you want to know.”

The young lady went silent. If she could ask Lu Huaiyu questions, she would not be wasting time with his assistant.

“What kind of book is that? Why does he hold it in such high regard that you are tasked with holding it wherever you go?”

A voice broke the awkward silence.

Xi Yini came closer. Her eyes were focused on the bag as she tried to take the book out.

“Let me have a look.”

Yi Bin was not deterred. “Ms. Xu, I’m sorry, this is one of the Second Master’s personal belongings.”

Xu Yini frowned and raised her voice, “It’s just a book. I’ve been to his study room before. Why can’t I even take a look at one of his books?”

She had always had a feisty temper, but she had always been able to control herself in front of Lu Huaiyu.

Now, with Lu Huaiyu in the cellar, she felt no need to be afraid of Yi Bin.

Lu Huaiyu had already rejected her earlier, and now even his assistant was trying to reject her.

Yi Bin frowned.

“Ms. Xu, you can wait—”

Before he could finish, Xu Yini snatched the bag away and tried to take the book out.

“I really want to see what kind of book it is—”

“Xu Yini.”

Suddenly, a cold voice rang out.

Lu Huaiyu had just come back from the cellar and witnessed the outrageous scene with his own eyes.

Xu Yini looked at him and saw the icy cold gaze that was aimed at her.

“What are you doing?”

Xu Yini quivered.

Everyone present could sense Lu Huaiyu’s anger.

The whole room fell dead silent, the silence making Xu Yini feel even worse.

The alcohol had amplified her negative emotions and the resentment that she had felt earlier got the best of her.

'It's just a book, a d*mn book! What is with this d*mn book? Why would he call me out in front of so many people!?'

She became impulsive and tried to take the book out.

When she tore the paper bag apart, the book fell out.

Thud!

The heavy 'History of Time' book fell on to the ground, followed by the sketch that had been placed within its pages.

The sketch was of a young man with bangs covering his eyes.. He looked lonely and desolate.

Chapter 305: An Eyesore

The lines on the sketch were clean and smooth. A few simple lines perfectly highlighted the contours of the boy's profile.

The loose blazer hung over his narrow shoulders with his sleeves rolled up, revealing his slender hands.

The boy's body was turned slightly to the side. He wore a baseball cap over his black hair, which hung down and concealed his eyes. The bridge of his nose was high and his lips were slightly pursed.

Even though it was just a side view, a strong sense of loneliness could be seen from within.

The sketch had been drawn with simple and delicate strokes. The meticulous details easily highlighted the charm and temperament of the young man.

It felt as if the artist had drawn this figure a million times before.

The sketch had been drawn on a thin piece of paper which had obviously aged, but it had been carefully preserved. There was not a single crease in it, which was evidence that the owner cherished it greatly.

It felt like the air in the hall had frozen as the hall went deadly silent. It was so quiet that one could hear a pin drop.

All the guests were stunned. They were so shocked by what had just happened that no one was able to react to the situation.

The seemingly chaste and cool gentleman, Second Master Lu, had a sketch of a boy in his precious book.

Since the book belonged to him, it was obvious who the artist was.

It was not the book that Lu Huaiyu cherished so much but the sketch that he had kept inside!

More precisely, it was the young man in the sketch!

Who would have thought that the famous Second Master Lu, who was sought after by many women, had such a huge secret?

Xu Yini's mind went blank.

The book fell onto the ground, the heavy thud pulling her back to her senses.

She looked at the fallen book and the sketch, and started to panic.

Instinctively, she looked at Lu Huaiyu.

“H-Huaiyu, I didn’t mean it. I—”

Lu Huaiyu looked at her quietly without any expression on his face. His dark eyes bored into her with a deep, icy cold stare.

Xu Yini’s heart sank as she felt as if she had just fallen into an icy abyss.

She had never seen Lu Huaiyu like this before.

She tried to pick up the piece of paper.

“Don’t touch it. Don’t contaminate my things with your filthy hands,” Lu Huaiyu said coldly.

Xu Yini froze. Her cheeks felt blazing hot as if she had been slapped on the face.

Everyone else who was present did not dare to react as well.

Lu Huaiyu walked over and leaned down to pick up the sketch. He then placed it back into the book.

Although his face was sharp with anger, exuding an oppressive and suffocating aura, his movements were gentle as if he was afraid to further damage his precious treasure.

Xu Yini’s lips shivered. “I-I’m sorry, H-Huaiyu, I just—”

“Starting from tomorrow, HG will release all working relationships with Huanxing Entertainment and any promotions for all the artists under that company must cease immediately.

“From now on, I do not wish to see the Lu Corporation being related to that company in any way.”

Lu Huaiyu said with an emotionless tone as he spoke to Yi Bin.

Yi Bin was startled for a moment before he suppressed his shock and said, “Yes, sir.”

Everyone else felt like they had been blindsided.

It was well known that Huanxing Entertainment was Xu Yini’s agency and that she was the most famous artist under that brand.

Huanxing Entertainment had invested a lot of resources into her just to boost her up to her current status.

Lu Huaiyu’s words basically meant that he wanted to cut all ties with Xu Yini.

Xu Yini’s face went pale. She had not expected Lu Huaiyu to be this resolute. He had not even given her a chance to explain or apologize.

This cocktail party had been attended by many celebrities from the Capital.

Now, Lu Huaiyu had completely humiliated her in front of them.

In her shock, Xu Yini became flustered and even thought that this situation was absurd.

How could this have happened?

Was it just because of that sketch?

She had not even touched it!

Lu Huaiyu had always been cold towards her, but it had never been like this.

His icy cold demeanor made her heart pound in nervousness.

“Huaiyu, I...”

“Uncle Xi.”

Lu Huaiyu ignored her and turned to Xi Lin.

“This is your party, so out of respect, I won’t hold anyone responsible for this. However, there’s someone here who I find to be an eyesore, so I’ll be taking my leave now.”

Xu Yini’s mind went blank.

An eyesore... I’m an eyesore!?

Even Xi Lin had not expected things to turn this bad.

This cocktail party was Lu Huaiyu’s first official social event since he had come back to Jingcheng. The last one he had attended had been a year ago.

In the end, alcohol had gotten the best of Xu Yini, causing her to step out of line. Not only had she snatched his book, but she had even exposed the sketch that had been inside it.

Xi Lin could already feel a headache coming when he had seen the sketch of the young man.

Without a doubt, this little incident would soon snowball into something serious.

Why couldn't Xu Yini just control herself and behave?

He walked up to Lu Huaiyu and said, "I'll see you out."

"Please stay. Please do not allow this little incident to ruin your mood and the party."

Xi Lin froze on the spot, the rest of his words stuck in his throat.

Everyone else was also silent.

A little incident? If it had only been a little incident, Lu Huaiyu would not have reacted so fiercely.

He had basically 'killed' Xu Yini's future with his words.

Immediately after he finished speaking, he turned around and left; with Yi Bin following behind him.

Even after they had both left the party, everyone else at the party still could not wrap their heads around the situation.

Some of them stared at Xu Yini, giving her strange looks and mocking stares.

Just a little while ago, some of the girls had claimed that Xu Yini was the most qualified to court Lu Huaiyu. Now, however, everyone could see the situation in a different light.

Lu Huaiyu had no feelings for her, not even a bit. It was safe to say that the man even resented her.

Xu Yini's eyes turned red, her fists tightly clenched.

The gazes on her felt like sharp blades, cutting through her skin with their disdain.

All she wanted was to bury herself in a hole, instead of standing there and allowing everyone else to ridicule her in her embarrassment.

She had become the biggest joke of the party and it would definitely make the headlines soon.

Xi Lin frowned and said in a deep voice, “Yini, you’ve had enough wine for today.”

Xi Lin had basically watched Xu Yini grow up. If not, he would never have held back his temper towards her.

“I’ll get someone to send you back.”

...

Yi Bin drove the car away from LaTuie Winery.

Lu Huaiyu crossed his legs in the rear seat. The book resting on his lap.

He concealed himself in the darkness, hiding his expression.

Yi Bin looked through the rear mirror. After some hesitation, he decided to swallow his intended words and simply asked instead, “Sir, are we going back to Lu’s mansion?”

A moment later, Lu Huaiyu shut his eyes. “No. To Rongyue Mansion.”

Lu Huaiyu had several houses in Jingcheng and Ronyue Mansion was the biggest terrace house in the center of the city.

He spent his nights there whenever he decided to not go back to Lu’s mansion.

“Yes, sir.”

...

After Lu Huaiyu and Xu Yini left, the party ended prematurely.

The guests no longer wanted to stay and quickly dispersed shortly after.

The little incident that had happened at the winery soon spread like wildfire among the upper social circles of Jingcheng.

At the same time, the incident gave birth to a rumour which took everyone by storm.

Chapter 306: Good, Again

It was no wonder that he had not been moved by all the beautiful women who tried to court him throughout all these years.

It was no wonder that he had never had a girlfriend since he was young. No one had even heard of him being close to any female.

It was no wonder that he never brought a female partner to any social events and pushed away all the girls who tried to approach him.

In his book was a sketch, a sketch that he cherished.

The famous Second Master Lu already had someone that he liked, but that someone was a boy.

...

When the news got out, the shock hit everyone like a thunderclap to the ground. No one had seen it coming.

The news had also broken the hearts of socialites' everywhere.

If they were not pretty enough, they could put on makeup or even undergo plastic surgery.

If they were not sexy enough, they could go on a diet or get some body-shaping course to make them look more attractive.

If their attitude or temper were the main problems, they could even change for him.

As long as he liked it, they would be willing to change themselves for him.

However, it appeared to be that Lu Huaiyu was gay! What could they possibly do about that!?

While the girls were heartbroken, there were others who celebrated the news.

Several high-end gay bars in Jingcheng celebrated the news like it was the New Year.

It was well-known that Lu Huaiyu was the second son of the Lu family. The proud and handsome man was unmatched in all aspects.

His charms did not just attract ladies. There were men who were also interested in him.

Although his heart belonged to the boy in the sketch, no one had ever seen that boy before, at least not in public.

Therefore, many felt that they still had a chance to win his heart.

Many of the men and women tried to find out more about the boy in the sketch. They wanted to know everything about the boy who had won Lu Huaiyu's heart.

Unfortunately, this news had come out of nowhere and no one even knew where to start looking.

The boy in the sketch had not even shown his full face, only part of his face could be seen from behind. Other than Lu Huaiyu, no one knew who the boy was.

...

It was a sleepless night for Xu Yini.

She held her phone as she sat in the corner of her apartment the entire night.

She lacked the courage to call Lu Huaiyu.

The tone of Lu Huaiyu's voice at the cocktail party had scared her. She did not want to hear it a second time or even have the slightest thought about it.

After some serious consideration, she had sent him a message. However, she had just found out that he had deleted her from his contact list.

The red exclamation mark beside the message had stunned her for a long time and it had broken her. Tears ran down her cheeks.

Her meticulous makeup had been ruined and turned into a mess by her tears, but that was the least of her concerns.

The sketch...

The boy...

Lu Huaiyu liked men?

Just as the thought appeared in her head, she denied it right away.

She had known Lu Huaiyu almost longer than anyone else. If he was really gay, surely she would have seen some signs early on.

However, the way Lu Huaiyu had picked up the sketch convinced her otherwise. She felt lost.

She had never thought that there would be a person on this earth who could earn Lu Huaiyu's love and care.

Who was the boy in the sketch?

Even though Xu Yini had studied abroad for a while, she had constantly updated herself on the latest news surrounding Lu Huaiyu.

If there really was someone special in Lu Huaiyu's life, she would surely have known about it.

When and how had Lu Huaiyu fallen for someone of the same gender?

...

Rongyue Manor.

The black Bentley slowly drove into the underground parking lot.

Yi Bin carefully asked, "Second Master, do you need me to walk you up?"

"It's okay," Lu Huaiyu said emotionlessly as he got out of the car with his book.

"Cancel everything on my schedule for tomorrow."

Yi Bin nodded. "Yes sir."

Lu Huaiyu then went into the elevator.

...

The mansion had 33 floors and Lu Huaiyu's unit was the penthouse.

His penthouse took up the entire floor, which meant that he was the only one who lived there.

Lu Huaiyu walked out of the elevator and stopped in front of his door.

He keyed in the password before going in.

In the entrance hallway, there were two pairs of slippers in the shoe cabinet; one black and one white.

He took a glance at them before changing into one of them.

The penthouse had been decorated in the same minimalistic design style of Yunding Fenghua.

As he walked in, his footsteps echoed in the spacious living room.

On the south side of the living room was a huge curved floor-to-ceiling window.

He collapsed onto the couch with a splitting headache.

He had already started having symptoms of his condition earlier that afternoon.

He thought he had gotten it under control when Yi Bin had brought him the book. However, things had gotten out of control after the little incident at the winery.

He flipped the book open, revealing the sketch that was nestled in between the pages.

He stared at it for a while, but his headache showed no signs of easing. In fact, he felt even worse now.

He shut his eyes, but all he could see were chaotic images.

The pungent smell of blood and ear-piercing screams tormented him.

Among the uncomfortable images was a lonely figure.

The buzzing in his ears got heavier. He started to feel as if he was being suffocated, which made it difficult to breathe.

He ripped his tie away, even pulling a button off his shirt.

He lowered his head slightly and propped one of his hands on the glass coffee table; his knuckles turning white.

His forehead was covered with sweat, his face swiftly turning pale.

It was then that the phone with his private number rang.

He opened his bloodshot eyes, staring at his phone with a deep gaze.

The caller ID showed two words—Lili.

He took a deep breath and answered it.

Ning Li's voice came from the other side.

"Second Brother?"

After the message in the afternoon, Ning Li had not heard from him again.

After some serious thought, Ning Li had decided to call him.

Lu Huaiyu did not speak.

In reply to his silence, Ning Li called out to him again. "Second Brother, are you there?"

Lu Huaiyu gulped.

She had no idea how sweet her voice sounded to his ears, especially in his current condition.

A moment later, Lu Huaiyu said in a hoarse voice, "Lili.. Good girl, please call me Second Brother again."

Chapter 307: Stopping Second Master

The man's voice sounded heavy, as if he was having a rough time.

Ning Li was stunned. She could tell from his voice that something was not right.

She carefully asked, "Second Brother, are you okay?"

Lu Huaiyu clenched his fist. He looked down at the sketch that was laying on his book. Suddenly, the suffocating feeling started to dissipate quickly and even the ringing in his ears faded.

It's her. It was her...

Without a reply from Lu Huaiyu, Ning Li was even more concerned.

"Second Brother, where are you now?"

A moment later, Lu Huaiyu said, "Rongyue Mansion."

He leaned back slowly. The redness in his eyes slowly faded as he started to calm down.

"I'm fine. I didn't sleep well earlier."

Ning Li knew his daily routine.

He had not gone back to the Lu family mansion but had headed to Rongyue Mansion instead.

At this hour, he had to be alone.

After some slight hesitation, Ning Li said, "Second Brother, should I come to see you?"

She had a feeling that Lu Huaiyu was not feeling well.

Lu Huaiyu squinted his deep eyes. A hint of insatiable greed flashed over his eyes.

The girl was too naive. She had no idea how tempting her idea sounded to him.

He softly licked his lips and said after a while, "There's no need."

Stunned, Ning Li had not expected such a straightforward rejection.

Even Lu Huaiyu realized he had been too blunt. He then softened his tone, closed his eyes and added, "It's okay. Be good."

If she came over, he was not sure if he could control himself.

His voice sounded as if he was right next to her ear, which caused her heart to skip a beat.

She softened her voice as well and said, "Mhmm, okay."

She thought about it and added, "Second Brother, you should go and rest now."

She still tended to behave like an obedient child whenever she was with him.

She listened to everything he said and believed every word that he uttered.

She lowered her guard completely in front of him, like a rabbit exposing its soft tummy and allowed him to toy with her as he pleased.

Lu Huaiyu took a deep breath. "Okay, good night."

“Good night, second brother.”

Lu Huaiyu continued to stare at his phone even after the call had ended.

He started tapping on the screen before a soft and meek voice sounded.

“Second Brother.”

The voice echoed in the spacious and quiet living room, filling his ears.

He got up. As he walked towards the bathroom, he unbuttoned his shirt.

His back was drenched in his own sweat, which caused the shirt to stick to his back and highlighted his perfect body.

His black hair was also wet. His messy bangs concealed his brows and eyes.

“Second Brother.”

The voice echoed repeatedly and every time he heard it, he felt as if he could almost see those crystal clear eyes looking at him.

He took his shirt off and tossed it aside.

The man had a perfect body, with a straight, broad back and a strong, lean waist.

He had well-defined abs which led to a perfect V line. Every aspect of his body was without flaw.

“Second Brother.”

Lu Huaiyu turned off the recording and sighed heavily.

He muttered, “Lili...”

...

Ning Li had a rough night.

When she woke up in the morning, she recalled her call to Lu Huaiyu last night. After a slight hesitation, she called him as soon as she woke up.

No one picked up.

15 minutes later, Ning Li called again but still, no one picked up.

She waited until it was 10.00 a.m. before calling again and still, Lu Huaiyu did not answer the call.

She stared at the phone quietly and frowned.

Lu Huaiyu should have woken up by now.

She had made a few calls and even sent him messages, but there was no reply.

After a while, she decided to go to Rongyue Mansion herself.

After quickly tidying up her things, she went out.

...

Meanwhile, in the penthouse's master bedroom, the curtains were tightly closed, preventing any light from coming in.

On the bed lay a large figure. The phone beside it lit up several times before going dark again.

After some time, the figure finally moved and got up.

Lu Huaiyu got out of bed and went to open the window.

The sunlight shone through the window, enveloping him with warmth.

He squinted his eyes at the light, which did nothing to alleviate the grogginess that he was feeling in any way.

He put his hand to his forehead, noting that it was hot to the touch.

There were some fever-reducing pills in the cabinet beside the bed. He took one out and had it with a glass of water.

His phone lit up again.

It was Cheng Xiyue this time.

Frustrated, he declined the call before noticing that it was a little past 10.00 a.m.

There were a ton of missed calls and messages from many different people.

Before he could even catch a breath to go through all the messages, Cheng Xiyue called him again.

This time, he answered it.

“What?”

Only then did he realize that his voice sounded hoarse as he spoke.

Cheng Xiyue did not seem to notice it because he had something else in mind.

“Second Master, what took you so long to pick up?!”

Lu Huaiyu massaged his temples.

“I stayed up late. What’s wrong?”

Cheng Xiyue almost passed out when he heard the nonchalance in Lu Huaiyu’s voice.

“Lu Huaiyu! Second Master Lu! Mr. Lu! Do you know what is going on? How is it that you are still so calm?! Did you know that everyone out there is talking about you being gay?!”

Lu Huaiyu froze. “What did you say?”

“Do you really not know? The incident last night at LaTuie, did you forget all about it?”

Even though Cheng Xiyue was far away in Yunzhou, yet even he knew about this, what more the folks in Jingcheng.

His entire social circle was talking about it.

“Everyone knows that you have a book with the sketch of a...a...boy!”

Cheng Xiyue felt like he was about to lose his mind.

“What is going on?!”

Everyone knew he was Lu Huaiyu’s best friend, and that Lu Huaiyu had spent a whole year in Yunzhou.

When the rumour had gotten out, Cheng Xiyue’s phone had been bombarded with calls and messages, asking him for authentication of the news.

But how would he know anything?

After a while, Lu Huaiyu just said, “It’s only a rumour. Don’t pay any attention to it.”

His headache was still tormenting him, so he really did not want to think about what other people were saying about him.

Cheng Xiyue did not know how to continue. Of course, he knew it was not true, but many others thought otherwise.

“You—”

“I’ll talk to you later.” Lu Huaiyu hung up the phone before Cheng Xiyue could finish speaking.

He then proceeded to start deleting all the messages that he had received without replying to them.

Suddenly, a name caught his attention.

It was Ning Li. Ning Li had called him three times, but he had not answered any of them.

On top of that, she had even sent him messages.

He had intended on replying, but his voice had become so hoarse that he could not speak. So, he discarded the thought and decided to send her a message instead.

[I just woke up. Don't worry, I'm fine.]

...

Ning Li had just arrived at the gate of Rongyue Mansion and gotten out of the cab when she received his message.

She heaved a sigh of relief. Just as she was about to reply, a man's voice came from beside her.

"So, Lu Huaiyu spent the night here? Are you sure?"

Surprised, Ning Li turned towards the owner of the voice.

Chapter 308: Of Course She Knew

The voice belonged to a young man in his 20s.

He was tall and slim, with brown short hair and handsome, clean-cut looks. He appeared to be from a privileged background.

Beside the young man were two other men; one was tall and thin, the other was stocky with a buzz cut .

The tall, thin man nodded at his words.

"I'm sure. After he left LaTuie yesterday, he did not go back to the Lu family mansion but came here instead. He still hasn't shown himself, so I'm sure he's still inside!"

The handsome young man glanced at the manor, as if hesitating slightly.

"I don't think... it's appropriate for us to do this. I think we should just go."

He wanted to turn around, but the stocky man with the buzz cut held him back.

"Come on, Jing! We're already here, what are you afraid of? Have you forgotten what you said before we came here?"

The young man, Jing, looked conflicted.

"But I still think..."

"I heard he had a few drinks yesterday and he's living alone here. Think about it, Jing! If you miss this opportunity, you won't get it again! I know you will regret it if you walk away now, and we won't do this with you anymore!"

The stocky man with the buzz cut took a pack of cigarettes out and put one in his mouth before handing his friends one each.

Jing shook his head, but the tall and thin one took one.

"He's right, you know. If you think you are not up for it, then we'll go back, but this will be it. There won't be a next time."

The buffed man scoffed. "He hasn't come back to Jingcheng for a long time. You are not the only one who misses him."

The words boosted Jing's confidence and he finally made up his mind.

"Okay, let's do it then."

The three men then walked inside.

Ning Li frowned.

'Are they here for Lu Huaiyu? They didn't look friendly and they seemed tipsy, or drunk...'

Before she could head over, her phone rang.

It was Xu Yin.

She walked to the side and answered her phone. "Hello, Mr. Xu?"

"Lili! You booked the lab for tomorrow, right?" Xu Yin's voice was as kind as always.

Ning Li nodded. "Yeah."

"I'll be tagging along."

Surprised, Ning Li answered, "Sure."

...

Ning Li discussed the lab appointment that had been planned for tomorrow with Xu Yin through the phone before hanging up.

When she turned around, the three men had already gone.

The thought of Lu Huaiyu's voice last night and the reply that she had gotten earlier made her worry, so she quickly entered the residential manor.

Located in the best location in the city, those who lived in Rongyue Manor had to be either rich or influential due to the pricing.

Naturally, that meant that the security in the area also had to be top-notch.

Ning Li was stopped at the entrance by the security guard.

"Who are you looking for?"

"Lu Huaiyu," Ning Li said.

The security sized her up with a sceptical gaze before a sudden realization hit him.

'Was this another one of the Second Master's fangirls? Hmph, she was definitely not the first one.'

Many people knew Lu Huaiyu owned a unit in Rongyue Manor. Often, his fangirls would wait for him in front of the gate or even try to sneak into the manor.

Fortunately, during the past year that he had been away, his fangirls had rarely shown up. That had lessened the burden on the security guards greatly.

The security guard had not expected that one of the Second Master's fangirls would make an appearance on the very first day that he had come back.

The security guard thought, 'She's definitely young and beautiful, but how dare she come here to disturb the Second Master?'

He waved his hand and said, "Go home, girl. The Second Master dislikes people that he doesn't know, coming directly to his door."

Surprised, Ning Li said after a pause, "I'm not just another fangirl, I know him personally."

The security guard sized her up from top to bottom before laughing.

The girl's face was unfamiliar. At least, the security guard had never seen her before. However, judging from her look, she was not from a wealthy background either.

"You know him? But, does he know you?"

Ning Li was speechless. "But, I just saw several men go in just now!"

The security scoffed.

"The young master from the Chen family? His uncle lives here. Of course he can go in."

No wonder...

"How about this? You give him a call and if he vouches for you, we'll let you in."

Ning Li nodded and called Lu Huaiyu, but no one answered.

She was slightly stunned. He had just replied to her message a moment earlier, but now he could not be reached?

As though he already knew this would happen, the security waved his hand.

“Ok, that’s it, girl. You should leave now.”

“Maybe he didn’t pick up because he’s unwell...”

“You’re a persistent one, I see.” The security guard scoffed.

“How about this? If you say you know him, show me proof, a picture or whatever.”

It was obvious that the security guard wanted to make things difficult for Ning Li.

Lu Huaiyu disliked taking pictures. Even the newspaper could barely get a proper picture of him in their headlines, let alone any private pictures.

‘Proof...’ Ning Li pursed her lips.

Just as the security guard was about to turn away, she said, “I know his address.”

Surprised, the security guard turned back towards her.

Ning Li clenched her fists slightly and said, “Building 6, 33rd floor.”

The security guard’s jaw dropped.

‘Normal fangirls could not possibly know the exact address of his unit. Who was this girl?’

...

After settling her registration, Ning Li managed to get in.

At this time of the day, not many people were walking around the neighbourhood.

She followed the route that she remembered, as the disbelieving voice of the security guard echoed in her ears.

“You really know it?”

The further she walked, chaotic images started to appear in her head.

The last time she had come, Lu Huaiyu had carried her in.

She had been on the brink of death that day, and she had felt so dizzy. She had barely been able to stay conscious, hence the blurry memories.

The only thing she remembered was his heartbeat in her ears, beating strongly.

She had also felt the grip of his hand around her waist, strongly holding her up.

“Lu Huaiyu.”

A slightly tipsy and arrogant voice could be heard from around the corner.

Chapter 309: I Shall Repay You With My Body

Ning Li tiptoed as she got closer.

The closer she got, the clearer the voice became.

It was the stocky man with the buzz head.

"I've said what I wanted to say, so it's up to you to decide now. What do you think?"

Around the corner, Ning Li spotted a tall figure.

It was Lu Huaiyu. He was dressed very thinly, with one hand in his pocket and the other hand holding a bag.

Even though Ning Li could only see his back, she could already feel the man's nonchalant air.

"Mhmm," Lu Huaiyu said emotionlessly.

"Are you done? Please leave if you are."

Ning Li was slightly stunned when she heard his voice.

His hoarse voice was a sign that he was sick.

The three men who had come in earlier were in his way, his response clearly not satisfying them.

The stocky man with the buzz cut took a puff of his cigarette.

"Lu Huaiyu, we came all the way here and that's all you have to say?"

Jing was beside the man, looking reluctant. He tightened his lips and tried to pull the man back.

"Brother, why don't we..."

"No! This can't end just like this!"

The man tossed his cigarette on the ground.

“You have to make this clear today! Us Chens are not weaklings for you to bully!”

His brother had held a crush on Lu Huaiyu for 4 years and the boy had barely spoken to the man, afraid that the man would be disgusted by him.

Now that the news about Lu Huaiyu being gay was out, why shouldn't his brother get the chance to pursue happiness?

If not because of the extra glass of liquor that Lu Huaiyu had imbibed last night at the winery, the man might not have even known about this.

Therefore, he had encouraged his brother to come forward with his confession, but that was all they were getting from the man?

Jing was anxious. He looked at Lu Huaiyu, afraid that the man would be angry.

“I-I'm okay, but it looks like he's not feeling well. Why don't we come back another day...”

Lu Huaiyu looked over at Jing.

“There's no need to come back. Have I not made myself clear enough?”

Jing felt terrible. He dared not even look into Lu Huaiyu's eyes.

The stocky man lost his patience and stepped forward.

He was determined to reason with Lu Huaiyu and he was determined to get some clarification for his brother today.

Lu Huaiyu frowned, a flash of annoyance appearing in his eyes.

He had not been bothered when Cheng Xiyue had warned him about the rumours earlier. He had not expected the public to act this fast, even catching him early in the morning at his own penthouse.

Right before the stocky man could speak, someone stepped out from behind Lu Huaiyu and blocked him.

“What are you trying to do?”

Ning Li’s intervention stunned everyone. Even Lu Huaiyu, who was rarely startled, was surprised at her appearance.

“Lili?”

Ning Li glanced at him with furrowed brows.

Lu Huaiyu’s pale face and hoarse voice were signs that he was very ill.

Ning Li recalled the conversation that she had overheard earlier.

The three men had stalked Lu Huaiyu since yesterday night, specifically picking a time when he would be alone and hungover.

Lu Huaiyu was not a drinker. Adding that to his current condition, the men had taken advantage of him.

“Please wait for me, Second Brother,” she said.

She then turned to the men, staring them down.

“May I have a word?”

The small group of men were stunned.

The stocky man frowned. “Where did you come from, little girl?”

“My Second Brother is not feeling well. If you have something to say, you can tell it to me first.”

Lu Huaiyu was slightly stunned before he realized what had happened and frowned.

Annoyed, the stocky man raised his hand to try and push Ning Li away.

“Mo—”

Before he could utter a word, Ning Li stepped forward to grab his wrist. She swiftly turned around and tossed him over her shoulder.

The man had been caught off guard from Ning Li’s throw and before he knew it, he had been slammed to the ground with a heavy thud.

“Brother!”

The other two were shocked by Ning Li’s aggressive reaction.

They had not expected such a beautiful and slender girl to be this violent.

On top of that, she seemed very skilled.

“Since you’re unwilling to have a proper discussion, we can do this here as well. It’s your choice,” Ning Li said.

The stocky man tried to argue but Ning Li twisted his arm to the back, causing him to swallow his words back with a gasp.

The tall man reacted to the situation. He stepped forward and tried to help his brother.

“What’s wrong with you?! Let go of him!”

He tried to remove Ning Li from his brother, but Ning Li dodged his grab by moving her body.

She landed a kick to his abdomen.

The man’s face turned pale as he staggered backwards painfully.

Ning Li then looked at Jing.

Jing wanted to say something, but his eyes suddenly met Lu Huaiyu’s gaze.

The man stood there, looking at the girl with his lips curved up slightly. Even his eyes looked like they were smiling.

Jing was stunned. As far as he remembered, Lu Huaiyu had always been the icy prince, someone unattainable. Never had he thought that Lu Huaiyu would be able to smile at someone so softly.

It felt like the early spring melting the snow away, or budding blossoms swaying in the wind. He suddenly felt more approachable.

Jing then looked at Ning Li and realized something.

The stocky man had finally caught his breath.

“What?! Where did you...you!”

“Brother, let’s go,” Jing said.

The stocky man and the tall man were both stunned.

Ning Li looked at Jing. ‘Thank goodness he knows his place.’

She released her hold on the man on the ground, straightened up, and clapped the dust off her hands.

“I won’t see you off then.”

The stocky man did not want to leave after being so humiliated, but when he met Ning Li’s gaze, his body shivered involuntarily.

‘T-This girl could really fight’

Jing blushed as he helped his brothers up.

“W-We’re sorry. I won’t come here to disturb you again.”

He then nervously dragged his brothers away.

The tall man wanted to say something, but Jing’s expression stopped him. There was nothing else he could do but follow his brother away.

The guy took one last glance at Ning Li and Lu Huaiyu, pondering what had just happened.

Jing had only come to confess his feelings for Lu Huaiyu, yet they had been beaten up by a girl without knowing why!

It was not a good feeling.

“Hey! You’re really...”

Lu Huaiyu immediately turned to stare intensely in his direction.

The tall man gulped and swallowed his words back.

Only when the three men had left, Lu Huaiyu turned around to Ning Li, staring at the girl with a raised eyebrow and a meaningful gaze.

Ning Li recovered herself and finally realized what she had just done.

She had slammed someone to the ground in front of Lu Huaiyu!

Her impulse had taken over and caused her to do something rash.

She cleared her throat awkwardly as her feeling of embarrassment started to overwhelm her.

She decided to put on a brave face and went to tap the dust off Lu Huaiyu’s shoulder, acting as if what had just happened was normal.

“You’re welcome.”

Lu Huaiyu turned his hand inwards, hiding the love letter that he had just received. He leaned over slightly and said with a light chuckle, "Thank you. I shall repay your kindness with my body."

Chapter 310: A Picture Together

They were so close that she could even feel his breath on her face as he spoke.

She could feel how hot it was.

Ning Li pursed her lips after hearing what Lu Huaiyu said.

"Second Brother, stop joking," she said.

Lu Huaiyu raised a brow and stared at her.

After a short pause, Ning Li explained, "As I was coming in, I overheard them talking about trailing you since yesterday night. They had purposely chosen today to do this."

"I see." Lu Huaiyu nodded softly.

'Is she worried about...me?'

Ning Li looked up. Her charming eyes were crystal clear and so bright that it felt as if they could leave a brand on his heart.

However, Ning Li swiftly moved away after only a brief glance.

"Does Second Brother think I'm... too impulsive?"

Lu Huaiyu straightened his body and stroked her soft hair.

“No. I’m just afraid that you might hurt your hands. Just let me handle situations like this in the future, okay?”

He then walked to the garbage dump that was off to the side and threw the bag away.

Ning Li walked closer to him and frowned slightly.

“Second Brother, I thought you were sick.”

She recalled how hot his breath was when he had spoken so close to her face.

“Are you having a fever?”

“Mhmm. I’ve taken some medicine,” Lu Huaiyu said.

“No wonder. Second Brother, have you eaten anything?”

Lu Huaiyu shook his head.

“Would you like to have breakfast with me?”

...

Ning Li followed Lu Huaiyu into the elevator.

After Lu Huaiyu tapped on the button to the highest floor, he suddenly thought of something and asked, “How did you get past the security?”

Chen Jing owned a unit in the place, so he naturally had access. However, Ning Li was not a resident.

As he asked his question, he turned to Ning Li.

Ning Li replied nonchalantly, "I told the security guard that I know you, so he let me in."

"Oh? That's all?"

Lu Huaiyu obviously did not believe that it had been that easy and smirked as he looked at her.

After a short pause, Ning Li added, "He said he wanted proof, like a picture with you or something, but I didn't have any. So in the end, I showed him my Wechat and your voice message."

Showing the security guard the voice message would of course have worked, but she had not done it then.

Most of the time, Lu Huaiyu communicated only through text messages, so she only had a few short voice messages.

Lu Huaiyu nodded with understanding. "I see."

Ding! The elevator door slowly opened.

Lu Huaiyu stepped out and headed to the door to key in the password.

Ning Li waited behind him. The door felt both familiar and strange at the same time.

As the door opened, Lu Huaiyu grabbed a pair of slippers for her from the front entrance.

She glanced at the pair of pink and white slippers which were clearly not his.

She was surprised. She clearly remembered that he lived alone, so why would he have a pair of female slippers?

Lu Huaiyu had already gone inside.

“What would you like to eat?”

Ning Li had actually taken her breakfast already.

“I’m not that hungry. Why don’t you rest a while, and I’ll cook some porridge for you.”

Because of his fever, Lu Huaiyu’s head still hurt and his body felt sore and weak. His handsome face remained pale as well.

He smiled. “Okay.”

Then, he pointed towards the kitchen. “The black refrigerator in the kitchen has all the things you will need.”

Ning Li nodded and went to the kitchen.

Lu Huaiyu’s penthouse was around 300 square meters, so the kitchen was very spacious.

Two refrigerators had been installed inside the wall; one black, one silver.

She opened the black one and found a ton of ingredients.

The number of ingredients surprised her.

Lu Huaiyu lived alone and he never really cooked anything. Why was the refrigerator filled with ingredients?

She turned around only to see him standing behind her, leaning against the door with his eyes focused on her.

“Second Brother, why are you still up? You should go and rest.”

Lu Huaiyu smiled. “I don’t think I can sleep now.”

He continued to look at her without budging.

Since the man had insisted, Ning Li let him be.

She brought out the ingredients that she needed and proceeded to wash the rice.

“Second Brother, did you take your temperature?” she asked.

“38 Celcius degrees. I’ll be better after a good sleep and some medication.”

Ning Li felt that his body temperature was a little high.

“If you are still feeling unwell, you should go to the hospital later.”

Lu Huaiyu grinned. “Okay.”

Ning Li started a small fire to boil the rice.

She suddenly recalled what had happened earlier and her hands froze.

“Second Brother, did you... drink again last night?”

Lu Huaiyu nodded. “There was a cocktail party at LaTuie, so I had a few glasses.”

A few glasses...

LaTuie was a high-end winery, so all the wine they had there was the best of the best. Given the man’s low tolerance for alcohol, he had likely been drunk yesterday.

‘He might not remember my phone call yesterday either...’ Ning Li thought.

She was too embarrassed to ask, but it was not something that she desperately needed to know either.

Lu Huaiyu continued to stare at her.

The girl lowered her head slightly, as if pondering something.

Her long, white sleeves and black jeans went well with her ponytail. Her soft hair fell gently around her fair neck as she moved.

Her innocent look caused his heart to skip a beat and for some reason, he felt relaxed.

After Ning Li had prepared everything, she washed her hands.

“The porridge should be done in half an hour’s time.”

“Mhmm.” Lu Huaiyu sounded a little distracted as he answered.

He then walked closer.

Ning Li heard his footsteps and turned around.

Lu Huaiyu stood in front of her. He looped his hand around her waist and propped it against the table.

Ning Li could feel his strong chest pressed against her back. The sudden intimacy surprised her.

Lu Huaiyu passed her something with his other hand.

It was his phone.

He raised a brow and said with a smile, "You want a picture with me, right? Let's take one. I was serious when I said I would repay you with my 'body'."