

## Little Brat's 61

### Chapter 61: A Boat

Ning Li had to slightly lift her head up to look at him. "I'll take it."

Lu Huaiyu moved his ear closer to her. "Tell me."

She blinked in slight surprise when his handsome side face came closer. Softly, she asked, "Second Brother, may I take a raincheck on this wish first?"

As her quiet voice entered his ears with her warm breath, Lu Huaiyu turned to her.

They were already rather close, so when he turned to her, they were only an inch away. He could feel her breath while she could see herself in his abysmal eyes.

The girl was greedy. She was practically asking for a blank cheque that she could use anytime.

At that very moment, the tension was broken as Cheng Xiyue brought the car over. He honked at them to signal them to get in.

Lu Huaiyu straightened his body and curved his lips.

"Okay."

...

It was already 10:00 p.m. when Ning Li returned to the Ye family.

Ye Ci and Su Yuan were sitting on the couch in the living room when she came back.

Ye Ci looked at Ning Li when she walked in. Her eyes were reddish as if she had just cried. She stood up nervously and said, "Sister Ning Li, you're back!"

Su Yuan looked like she had something to say though no words escaped her parted lips.

Ning Li paused. "Yes?"

Ye Ci took a deep breath. "I-I was waiting for you to come back because...because I want to apologize..." she said while biting her lips. She then glanced at Su Yuan and added, "I should not have called Mom today before I found out about the truth. I'm sorry, Sister Ning Li."

Ye Ci realized what her mistake was the moment she came back. After asking her mother, she found out that the teacher told Ning Li to call her mother because someone had copied her answers during the monthly test, not because she had cheated.

Ning Li had achieved first place with her own merit.

In addition to that, Su Yuan had also embarrassed herself in front of the teachers and parents, hence her bitter mood.

Even though her mother did not lash out at her, Ye Ci sharply sensed that something was not right, so she stayed up and waited for Ning Li.

Ning Li raised a brow. "I didn't lose anything, thus you don't have to apologize to me. You should apologize to someone else though."

Ye Ci gulped nervously.

Su Yuan also reacted differently to her words. She stood up with slightly furrowed brows.

She already felt bad and guilty for having wrongly assumed that Ning Li cheated in the monthly test, so when Ye Ci insisted on waiting for Ning Li and apologizing to her, she decided to stay up and accompany her.

Who would have expected Ning Li's words to be this harsh though?

Ning Li's words were like a reminder to Su Yuan, reminding her how embarrassingly she had behaved in the teacher's office.

"Ning Li, Ye Ci did something wrong this time, but she did it because she was worried about you. If she had not called me, I wouldn't have even known that the teacher wanted you to call your parents. Plus, she's apologizing to you sincerely—"

Ning Li reacted with a cold expression. "This is not the first time I was told to call my parents. You should know that better than anyone."

Su Yuan's heart skipped a beat as she started to feel like she was suffocating.

"Moreover, she can apologize, but it's up to me whether to forgive her or not. Should I forget about everything just because she says she's sorry?"

It would be a little too easy for Ye Ci if Ning Li just forgave her in a snap.

While Ye Ci tightened her lips, Ning Li glanced at her. "If you have the time to make the call, why don't you take the time to learn new vocabulary? Getting 17th place in the entire third year is a little tough to make the cut to Xijing University, don't you think?"

Ye Ci tightened her fists.

By then, Ning Li probably viewed her as a hoke.

She simply left the mother and daughter and went back to her room.

...

Ning Li took her books out after she returned to her room.

Suddenly, a piece of paper fell out from her bag. She picked it up and noticed that it was the answer that Lu Huaiyu had written earlier.

His handwriting was neat and rigid and was beautiful to look at.

The paper reminded her of the little moment they had shared before she left Lu Huaiyu's mansion. The question that he had asked and the way he had gone close to her left a strong impression on her.

'Do you want to make a wish?'

The words echoed in her head even now.

Ning Li picked up her pen and pondered for a long while before she wrote in the lower empty space of the paper.

Then, she folded the paper into a paper boat and grabbed a glass jar that she had placed on her table.

There was a picture on the glass jar. Maybe because both the jar and the picture were old, the color on the picture had faded.

This jar was one of the few items that she had brought to the Ye residence.

She liked eating candies when she was younger, but she had been poor back then. Furthermore, her grandmother was worried about her getting cavities, so she barely got a chance to savor the sweetness.

After Ning Haizhou's incident, her grandmother had bought her a full jar of candies and said that her parents would be back after she finished them at the rate of one candy per week.

One week went by after another, and when she was down to her last candy, all she was left with was an empty jar.

She put the paper boat into the empty candy jar.

...

Duan Xu's disciplinary punishment was announced the next day.

His copying Ning Li's answer during the test and getting a perfect score in certain sections became the topic of the day. The news spread among the students like wildfire.

There were rumors about Ning Li cheating on the test because her mother had been called to the school, but after Duan Xu's punishment was announced, the rumor dissolved instantly.

The first period in the afternoon was gym class. After a short training session, the students were allowed to move freely.

Ning Li was jogging on the track.

A while later, someone caught up to her.

"Hey, genius!"

She turned around and saw Duan Xu whose legs seemed to go on for miles. He was running backward in a childish way as he apologized to Ning Li, "I'm sorry, genius! I really dragged you down this time!"

He should be fully responsible for this little incident.

Because Ning Li left too quickly yesterday, he did not get to officially apologize to her, thus he felt bad.

"It's nothing," Ning Li simply said.

Duan Xu was actually on the losing end. He did not get an ideal score for copying her answers and even got punished.

Ning Li had no idea how he could have copied her answers and ended up in this current situation.

Duan Xu scratched his head awkwardly. The genius seemed to be a cold person, but she was not mad even after he dragged her down! He was impressed by her patience and generosity.

He smiled widely, flashing his snow-white teeth. "I owe you one this time, genius! If you need me for anything, just call me and I'll be there!"

Ning Li really could not think of anything that Duan Xu could do for her.

"I don't need anything from you."

Others would have left when she gave them the cold shoulder but not Duan Xu. For some reason, he had a feeling that the genius was overflowing with generosity and patience.

...

"Is that Ning Li and Duan Xu?"

Ren Qian and the others came back from the basketball court and were resting. They coincidentally caught sight of Duan Xu and Ning Li jogging together.

The guys watched the scene curiously.

“Does our class belle know Duan Xu?”

“Have you not heard? Duan Xu copied her answers during the test!”

“It has nothing to do with Ning Li. Duan Xu is an idiot! He should have modified the answers he copied from her!”

“However, they do look rather close, don’t you think? Hmm, doesn’t this reek of conspiracy? Our class belle is an ice queen, yet Duan Xu is able to chat with her for so long!”

Ren Qian frowned. “What are you talking about? Duan Xu is an enthusiastic idiot. He can yap to anyone for three days and three nights straight.”

One of the guys roared in laughter. “I’m so sure about that! The better a girl is, the higher the chances of her falling for Duan Xu. Duan Xu has never shown such enthusiasm towards any girls in the past!”

Duan Xu might not have excelled in his studies, but his character made him quite popular with the girls.

“Maybe—”

Bang!

Before the guy could finish, a basketball flew towards him and knocked him in the chest.

Pei Song came over, devoid of emotions. “Go on.”

Chapter 62: Fight

The guys glanced at each other for a second as Pei Song turned around and walked to the center of the court.

The guy who got hit by the ball looked at Ren Qian while asking softly, “Qianzi, is it me or does Brother Pei look pretty sour?”

Ren Qian’s eyes sparkled. He said with a smile, “Really? I thought Brother Pei has always been like that.”

He then reached out to the ball and snatched it from the guy.

“Hey! You ambushed me! Go after him!”

The guys got up and joined the game.

The little interval was tossed out of their minds like a basketball.

...

Ye Ci and Cheng Xiangxiang were sitting at the spectators’ seats beside the field.

“I’m sorry, Lil Ci. I should have investigated more before I told you about it.” Cheng Xiangxiang felt bad for her friend.

Ye Ci shook her head. “It’s fine. I’ve apologized to Sister Ning Li and Mom. Anyway, I really did do something wrong this time.”

Her words filled Cheng Xiangxiang’s heart with guilt.

Ye Ci had always been the perfect daughter since she was young. This might be the first time that she had to apologize to her family.



Cheng Xiangxiang stomped her foot angrily. "Who would have thought that Ning Li actually got first place by herself?! I thought her results were below average when she was still in Lincheng. What made her a genius after she came to Second High? Lil Ci, do you think she had the answers to the questions?"

Ye Ci squinted slightly. "The papers were distributed by different teachers, and the answers were kept in a separate place. No matter how good she is, she could not have gotten the answers for all four papers, right?"

Ye Ci had seen Ning Li's paper before. It was easy to tell whether she had copied the answers or if she had written them herself.

Cheng Xiangxiang grunted, refusing to accept the fact. "She must've been pretending before this! She pretended to have an average score in Lincheng, and when she finally transferred to Second High, she went all out just to overshadow you so that she can then win your mother's heart! What a scheming b\*tch!"

Ye Ci frowned slightly. "I don't think that's necessary, is it?"

"Not necessary? Lil Ci, you must not forget that she didn't have parents by her side throughout her childhood, and now with your family taking her in, she ought to seize the chance and get a slice of your mother's love! You and Lil Cheng have to be careful!"

Ye Ci paused for a moment. "I don't think—"

"Ye Ci?"

A surprised voice came from beside Ye Ci.

The two girls looked up and saw a tall man in a jersey and shorts.

"Are you here to watch us train?"

Ding Xi was also a third-year student, but he was in a different class. He was the school's football team captain and a seed candidate receiving priority training from the Teenage Football Team.

He had just finished his warm-up when he noticed Ye Ci was sitting in the spectators' seat, so he came over to say hi.

Before Ye Ci could say a word, Cheng Xiangxiang said, "What's so interesting about your training? Can't you see that Lil Ci is in a bad mood? Shoo, leave us alone!"

Ding Xi shot a glance at Ye Ci. He had been worried about her since the monthly test results were out, and it seemed like his concern was valid.

"Ye Ci, are you alright?" he asked carefully.

"She's being bullied on her own turf, so how could she be alright? That Ning Li—"

"Xiangxiang." Ye Ci stopped Cheng Xiangxiang with a glare and shook her head in disapproval. Then, she got up and looked at Ding Xi. "I'm fine. Go back to your training."

Ding Xi wanted to find out more, but Ye Ci dragged Cheng Xiangxiang away. He rubbed his neck awkwardly before returning to the field.

"Cap!"

One of his members passed the ball to him.

Ding Xi caught the ball with his foot. It was then that he noticed Ning Li running on the track beside the field.

He tightened his lips and kicked the ball away.

...

Ning Li continued jogging even though Duan Xu was nagging her beside her like a fly. She simply gave him the cold shoulder.

Seconds turned into minutes. Even Duan Xu had a feeling he was talking too much.

“O-okay, genius! That’s it for me today. I’ll leave you alone now!”

Duan Xu wanted to leave, but as soon as he turned his head around, he saw a football flying towards Ning Li! Shocked, he grabbed her arm and pulled her away.

“Watch out!”

At the same time, another basketball flew over from another direction and precisely collided with the football.

Bang!

The clashing balls caused a heavy thud upon impact and grazed Ning Li’s face by an inch!

Ning Li had actually sensed danger when the football was flying toward her. She tried to dodge it, but Duan Xu had reacted even faster than her and pulled her away from the ball.

Duan Xu sighed a breath of relief as he looked at Ning Li nervously and asked, “Genius, are you hurt?”

Ning Li shook her head. “I’m fine. Thank you.”

He let go of her arm and patted his chest with a sigh. “Phew! Thank goodness.”

He had just said that he wanted to make it up to Ning Li, and if she had gotten hurt by the flying ball right after that, he would have lost his reputation among his peers.

“Luckily, you dodged it because the football was hit by another basketball. Wait, whose basketball is this?” Duan Xu went to pick up the basketball.

Ning Li turned towards the basketball court and coincidentally locked eyes with Pei Song who was standing under the hoop. He must have been attempting a shot.

Ren Qian waved at Duan Xu.

“Duan Xu, throw the ball back to Brother Pei.”

Duan Xu threw the ball to Pei Song who caught it.

“Thanks!”

Ren Qian grinned and suddenly stopped playing. “Ning Li is from our class. Why are you thanking us?”

Duan Xu realized that Ren Qian was right. He then turned to the football field. “Which one of you kicked the ball over? Try to keep your eyes open next time.”

The field quietened down the moment Duan Xu questioned the players.

Ding Xi went up to him with a hostile look. “Duan Xu, what are you talking about?”

“Is this your lousy shot?” Duan Xu smirked.

Both Duan Xu and Ding Xi were the best players of their own teams. They might not have talked to each other a lot, but they disliked each other.

“I have to say, is this the best you can do? As captain of the Second High football team, Ding Xi, your aim at the goal sure is pathetic, but you are good at hitting people.”

Ding Xi’s kick was strong. If the ball had really hit Ning Li, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

Ding Xi told his teammate to retrieve the ball before he simply said, “It was a little mistake, and she happened to be there at the wrong place at the wrong time. Who can she blame? Besides, she’s fine.”

Duan Xu scoffed. “Are you trying to start a fight here? There are so many pairs of eyes watching you! You yourself know whether you did that on purpose or not.”

Ding Xi scoffed. He turned around and wanted to leave. “Let’s get back to training!”

“Hold on.”

A plain and cold voice rang out and held Ding Xi back.

Pei Song had also come over quietly, and he was glaring at Ding Xi coldly. “Apologize.”

Ren Qian and the other guys came over as well, and they subtly surrounded Ding Xi.

Ren Qian got one thing right: Ning Li was from their class. If someone from their class was bullied, the guys could not just sit back and turn a blind eye to it.

Ding Xi furrowed his brows. “What is the meaning of this?”

The football team gathered behind him quickly.

“Nothing. We are just curious how your ball flew so far over here.

Ren Qian sidled up to Ding Xi and said with a cold grin, “Why don’t you show us how you did it again?”

Ding Xi grinned. “Why? Are you trying to start a fight?”

### Chapter 63: Biased

“If you are asking for a beating, I guess we can give you one,” Duan Xu said.

Both the basketball team and the football team had always condemned each other. The team members from both sides had gotten into brawls and disagreements before.

If a fight were to break out, both sides were confident in winning. Meanwhile, the atmosphere was tense as if a fight would break out at any moment.

It was then that a calm and pleasant voice sounded.

“You said the ball flying over was an accident?”

It was Ning Li who had spoken.

Ding Xi reacted with an impatient look, “So what?”

Ning Li smiled. “Nothing. I just feel bad for you if you get punished and a demerit because of getting into a squabble. It’s not worth it.”

Ding Xi reacted strangely.

The province team was selecting a new batch of members, and he was one of the candidates under consideration for the assessment. If he was punished and got a demerit because of the fight, it would probably affect his final assessment. He really could not afford to get into a fight.

“Then, what are you suggesting?”

Ning Li raised her chin at the goal. “Simple. You will become the goalkeeper and I’ll try to score. If I score, you’ll apologize to me.”

Ding Xi thought he heard her wrongly. He almost burst into laughter. “What did you say?”

“What’s wrong? Feeling scared already?” Ning Li raised a brow, as though she did not see anything wrong with her suggestion.

“Me? Scared?” Ding Xi scoffed. “Okay, but if you can’t score—”

“If I can’t score, we will all forget about what happens today.”

Duan Xu was nervous when he heard Ning Li’s suggestion. He tried to dissuade her by saying, “Hey, genius, are you serious?”

Ding Xi might be a jerk, but he was good at playing football. Although he played as a striker, he was more than capable of being a goalkeeper just to block Ning Li’s shot.

Ning Li seemed determined.

Ding Xi got the ball from his teammate.

“It’s a deal then.”

...

A crowd was gathering outside the football field.

Ding Xi got a pair of goalkeeper's gloves and stood in front of the goal.

At the same time, Ning Li came over with the ball in her hand. She stood right in front of him and put the ball down.

Ding Xi scoffed. "Miss Role Model, I don't think you have ever touched a football before. Do you even know how to kick it?"

Ning Li straightened her body. She was not mad at the taunting and nodded seriously instead. "I really don't know how to kick."

Nevertheless, it was not a problem for her.

Ren Qian was worried as he watched from the side. He asked softly, "Brother Pei, are we just going to stay out of this?"

There was a 99.9% chance that Ning Li would miss the shot. Aside from losing face, a crowd was gathering and she might end up as the joke of the day.

Pei Song nodded in silence.

Duan Xu had started thinking about calling his friends over. If Ding Xi so much as did something rude, Duan Xu would jump in and start a fight.

For some reason, Ye Ci and Cheng Xiangxiang also came over.

Ye Ci frowned, seemingly a little annoyed. "Ding Xi, what are you doing?"



Ding Xi rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly as he looked at her. “Ye Ci, she asked for this. It’s not my fault. But if you want me to stop, I will. I can simply let this go. It’s nothing important.”

Everyone knew he was trying to ask Ye Ci out, so the onlookers glanced at each other curiously and subtly.

“I thought Ye Ci and Ning Li were enemies. I didn’t expect Ye Ci to defend Ning Li!”

“Ning Li always acts like an ice queen with an arrogant attitude, but Ye Ci still helps her from time to time. Their characters speak for themselves.”

“Say, I thought Ning Li was an outsider in the Ye family. What’s with her attitude? Why is she treating Ye Ci like that?”

“You don’t know about people’s family affairs, so just keep your mouth shut.”

...

Before Ye Ci could say a word, someone else beat her to it.

“No need for that.”

The field was silenced as everyone looked at Ning Li who flexed an ankle. “We will solve this with how it is supposed to be solved.”

Since Ning Li insisted, Ye Ci had nothing to say as well.

“You’re asking for this.” Ding Xi taunted Ning Xi with his fingers, “Come on. Bring it on!”

Ning Li looked at him, her beautiful and crystal clear eyes glaring coldly. A moment later, she curled her lips.

For some reason, Ding Xi's heart skipped a beat.

Before he could think any further, Ning Li had lifted her leg.

Ding Xi quickly jumped to the right, but the ball did not move as Ning Li just performed a seamless feint!

His left was wide open for the shoot, so she then kicked the ball with all her might.

However, everyone soon realized that the ball was not going for the goal but was heading for Ding Xi instead.

Ding Xi felt a chilly breeze in his face. He wanted to dodge but could not stop the momentum of his falling body.

Bang!

The force of the ball was huge as it was spinning rapidly.

Ding Xi managed to block a tiny bit with his arm before the ball hit half of his face.

He faltered backward before his vision went blurry and he felt pain explode in his nose. Immediately, he wiped his nose with the glove and realized that it was painted red by his blood.

"Captain!"

The football team was nervous and rushed over to Ding Xi nervously.

The audience did not expect Ning Li's shot to be this powerful as well. Everyone was silenced by the scene.

Ning Li shrugged, seemingly disappointed. "Ah, too bad. I missed."

Ding Xi was furious when he heard her statement. Rage almost burst out from his chest. "You did that on purpose!"

Even a blind man could tell that she had not been gunning for the goal. Instead, she was aiming for Ding Xi from the start.

Ning Li raised a brow at him. "I've never touched or played football before, and you said I did it on purpose? It's just a little mistake. Besides, it's football, so a nosebleed is nothing to you, right?"

"YOU!" Ding Xi was furious.

Ning Li just served him back the words he said earlier.

One of the football team members could not stand it anymore. "It's dangerous kicking like that! Why did you aim for his head?"

Duan Xu whistled loudly and said, "What did you say? Dangerous? Isn't that what Ding Xi did to Miss Genius here earlier? Wasn't he aiming for her head?"

The guy was silenced right away.

Duan Xu waved his foot frivolously. He smiled brightly and said, "Besides, Miss Genius here has a brain that scored 737 in the monthly test. Your captain doesn't come close to her even if he multiplied his scores together!"

Someone in the silent crowd failed to hold back his giggle. The giggle lasted for only a second before it was muffled out.

Having reached his boiling point, Ding Xi stepped up and kicked away the ball beside him.

“You freaking—”

Bang!

“Aaargh!”

A painful groan sounded.

The crowd was shocked. They looked in the direction of the groan and saw Ye Ci clutching her arm in pain.

Ding Xi’s frustrated kick accidentally launched the ball at the goal post, and it was reflected towards Ning Li.

The ball, unfortunately, hit her in the arm.

She had walked to that spot because she wanted to say something but was caught in the conflict.

“Ye Ci!”

Ding Xi’s face blanched and his heart stopped.

...

At the infirmary, Ning Li and the others were waiting outside.

Duan Xu looked through the window and spotted a woman with delicate makeup standing beside the sickbed with a worried expression. He could not help but grumble, “Genius, is that your mother? Why is she—”

Su Yuan had rushed to the school right after Ye Ci was struck by the ball. She did not even look at Ning Li and went straight into the infirmary for Ye Ci.

The last time she was there at school, it was because Ning Li had been suspected of cheating in her test. She had assumed that Ning Li cheated without even bothering to find out the truth.

Now...

Nevertheless, Ning Li was calm and did not say a word.

#### Chapter 64: Parent-Teacher Meeting

Duan Xu stroked his buzzcut. He had heard about the Ye family's situation. The woman was actually Ning Li's biological mother and shared no blood relation with Ye Ci.

However, if anyone who did not know about the situation saw the scene, they would have assumed that Ye Ci was her real daughter instead of Ning Li.

Duan Xu thought of his father. Even though his father was strict and never held back when beating him, his father never did this to him.

A while later, Su Yuan came out of the infirmary.

"Mrs. Ye, I'm sorry about this. We did not foresee this situation..." Geng Haifan and the school doctor came out together and apologized to Su Yuan.

Su Yuan might have been enraged, but it was not appropriate for her to lash out at the teacher.

"It's just an accident. Mr. Geng, you don't need to take the blame. I just have to take the day off for Lil Ci and bring her to the hospital for a detailed check-up.

Although the school doctor said that Ye Ci was fine, Su Yuan remained worried.

Geng Haifan nodded understandably. "Yes, I understand. If there's any problem, just give me a call, Mrs. Ye."

Su Yuan told Zhou Hua, the driver, to assist Ye Ci to the car while she walked to Ning Li and the others.

Ding Xi was also there with the group. He was worried about Ye Ci and actually wanted to go into the infirmary, but after knowing that Ye Ci had called her mother, he stayed outside nervously instead.

"Are you Ding Xi?"

Ding Xi lowered his head in guilt. "I'm sorry, ma'am."

Su Yuan looked rather cold. "I should have escalated this matter to the disciplinary teacher, but Lil Ci said that if you get punished for it, it will affect your future. Considering the circumstances, I have decided to let you go this time."

Ding Xi finally felt relieved. He looked at Su Yuan but what she said next turned his heart into a deserted island.

"But do remember one thing: from today onwards, you will stay away from Lil Ci. She's aiming for Xijing University and she can't afford to be distracted by the likes of you."

Ding Xi was appalled and embarrassed at the same time. "T-thank you, ma'am. I understand."

Su Yuan then walked over to Ning Li.

"Ning Li."

Ning Li looked at her mother with a cold glare.

“You have to learn how to tone down that temper of yours at school. I told you before, Lil Ci is younger than you, and you are her elder sister, so you should take care of her, but is this what you call taking care of your younger sibling?”

Duan Xu was confused when he heard that from the side. Ye Ci was hurt, but what did it have to do with Ning Li?

Ding Xi was the one who kicked the ball and Ye Ci had walked over in the crosshairs by herself. It was just an accident.

Why would she lecture Ning Li about taking care of Ye Ci?

Besides, if Ning Li had not dodged the ball in the first place, she would have been the one lying in the infirmary instead of Ye Ci.

Ning Li barely reacted to her mother’s words. She seemed unsurprised about what Su Yuan said.

“I’m used to being alone, and I don’t know how to take care of people. If you are still worried, why don’t you do it yourself? Since you’ve been doing it for 11 years now, I assume you are already an expert in the field.” Ning Li’s tone sounded flat, but her words had thorns about them, making Su Yuan really uncomfortable.

Su Yuan frowned. “I know you have a grudge against me, but let’s keep it between us. Don’t drag others into this.”

Ning Li stared into her eyes before she shook her head. “No, I don’t have a grudge against you. I’m just giving you a piece of advice. It is up to you to consider whether or not you want to accept it.”

Disappointment only transpired because of hope.

Loss only happened because of the desire to possess.

Now, none of those had anything to do with Ning Li.

Su Yuan furrowed her brows even harder. Ever since she brought Ning Li into the family, the two had not been able to get along.

Their relationship had fallen below the freezing point, and Ning Li treated her as if she was some outsider.

She stared at Ning Li for a moment and left without saying another word.

While the air felt heavy, Duan Xu cautiously stole a glance at Ning Li. He had never seen a mother and daughter talk to each other like that.

All of a sudden, Ning Li's phone buzzed. She took it out of her pocket and saw Lu Huaiyu's message.

[Got into a fight at school again?]

Ning Li was not surprised that Lu Huaiyu had gotten the news so quickly. It must have been Zhou Fei.

Even though the incident did not get to the disciplinary teacher, there was a crowd at the field, and the news had spread like wildfire among the teachers and students.

She simply replied with a short message. [No. Just practicing our football skills.]

...

In the master bedroom on the second floor at Yunding Fenghua, Lu Huaiyu sat against the headboard of the bed. His hair was a bit messy, and his eyes were still blurry and tired.



He slightly squinted when he saw Ning Li's reply.

At the same time, he also received a message from Gu Tinglan.

[How are you feeling today?]

As he lifted his head up to loosen up his collar, the feeling of suffocating eased up a little bit. He did not plan to reply.

He pulled his sheets away and got up. It was then that the corner of his eye caught sight of a new message from Ning Li.

He tapped on it.

[I won.]

Lu Huaiyu stared at the message for quite a while. The suffocation and frustration in his head faded subtly.

He chuckled.

[Wow.]

A slight pause later, he returned to the chat window with Gu Tinglan.

Ever since Gu Tinglan went to Lincheng, the doctor would talk to him about random topics from time to time and also ask about his condition.

Lu Huaiyu barely replied, especially about his condition. He thought about it for a while before he typed a rare reply.

[Great.]

Great. He felt really great.

...

The football incident came to an abrupt end.

On the next afternoon, all the third-year classes held their respective parent-teacher meetings. The parents came to the school to meet the teachers in the respective classrooms.

In the first class, Geng Haifan was standing at the rostrum, preparing for a speech.

Most of the parents had already arrived and were sitting in their child's seat. Almost all of the students had gone to the self-learning room or the field, except for Ning Li.

Ning Li was in her own seat.

It was almost time for the meeting. Geng Haifan noticed that Ning Li was still in the class, so he walked over to her.

"Ning Li, where's your mother? Is she stuck in traffic?"

Ning Li shook her head. "She's not coming today."

Geng Haifan frowned. "Not coming? Why? I thought all the parents were informed via the group announcement yesterday—"

“Ye Ci is going to the hospital for a check-up later today,” Ning Li said succinctly. “Mr. Geng, I can handle the meeting myself.”

Back when she was young, her grandmother had attended all her parent-teacher meetings. Ever since her grandmother’s condition worsened, Ning Li did not want her to worry about her studies anymore, so she participated in the parent-teacher meeting herself.

However, Geng Haifan believed it was inappropriate.

“But this is the first parent-teacher meeting for you since you transferred here, thus it’s better to have a parent here with you.”

He then turned around and gave Su Yuan a call. Ning Li was able to listen to part of the conversation.

“Mrs. Ye, the parent-teacher meeting is starting soon. Can you make it?”

“Yes, I understand your child’s health is the priority, but the parent-teacher meeting today is important, especially to Ning Li. I think you should free up some of your time to attend it.

“If you really can’t make it, how about your husband? Is Mr. Ye free—

“Okay, I understand.”

Finally, Geng Haifan hung up the phone.

At that point, Zhou Fei passed by the classroom. “Hey, Mr. Geng, who are you calling?”

Geng Haifang sighed. “It’s nothing. I was planning to talk to Ning Li’s parents about her results and discuss her competition and entrance exam further, but neither of them is free.”

Zhou Fei looked into the classroom that was full of parents with a little girl sitting in the corner. She did not fit in the picture at all.

Then, Ning Li took out a piece of paper and started writing.

Geng Haifan looked at his watch. "I have to go back inside now. Excuse me, Mr. Zhou."

Zhou Fei took his phone out to make a call.

Chapter 65: Your Sister, Ning Li, Is Really Great

"I believe every parent here has received news about the results of the recent monthly test. The objective of this parent-teacher meeting is for everyone to know about your child and how they are doing in their studies a little better."

Geng Haifan was behind the rostrum with the class results in his hand.

"There are less than 8 months away from the entrance exam and this period is key. The students cannot afford to slack off anymore."

The parents in the classroom nodded in agreement.

While Ning Li heard the speech from her own seat, she reacted calmly. She had experienced the entrance exam in her past life, therefore it granted her a different perspective of the exam compared to the other students.

Geng Haifan further explained the school's upcoming arrangements for the students, and he analyzed the monthly test results in detail for the parents.

"To all the third-year students, having a stable mindset is very important in this critical period. Ning Li, who has just transferred to Second High a month ago, did exceptionally well when it came to this particular point."

Geng Haifan switched his attention to Ning Li and flashed her a smile full of praise.

“She was able to adapt to Second High’s environment and got first place in the recent monthly test.”

All the parents turned to Ning Li when they heard the astonishing news.

Pei Song had always been the first, but he now lost to a girl who had just transferred to the school a month ago. Everyone was deeply impressed by Ning Li’s achievement

“That’s Ning Li? The girl who got 737 in the monthly test? Impressive! I heard there were only four students in all of the third-year who got 700 marks and above.”

“But...why aren’t her parents here with her? She did so well in the test, but her parents can’t even spare a day to attend the meeting?”

“I heard she comes from a complicated background...”

The parents were talking about Ning Li softly as they looked at her with a complicated gaze.

Nevertheless, Ning Li simply turned a blind eye to their prying gazes.

Geng Haifan said, “Ning Li, can you—”

Rat-a-tat.

Knocks came from the door before it was opened.

A towering figure appeared at the entrance. It was a stylish young man.

His suave-looking black shirt made his shoulders look wide and his waist slim while his black slim-cut pants fit his long legs well. He also had a black coat hanging from his hand. It seemed like he just came from some formal event.

His eyes were deep and clear, and regality seemed to overflow from his head to his toes.

“Excuse me.”

His voice sounded rich and charming.

“Is this the first class of the third year?”

The spacious classroom was silenced by his question.

First of all, the man arrived unannounced. Secondly, his gentlemanly bearing was breathtaking at first glance.

Surprised, Geng Haifan nodded. “Yes, this is the first class. And you are...”

Although he had not met the young man before, he could tell based on his looks that the young man was something else.

“I’m Lu Huaiyu.” Lu Huaiyu then looked at the lonely figure sitting in the corner of the classroom. “I am here for the parent-teacher meeting in Ning Li’s place. I got held up by some business halfway. Sorry, I’m late.”

Geng Haifan was stunned for a moment before he realized who the young man was.

Lu Huaiyu was the person who had applied for leave on Ning Li’s behalf the other day. He seemed to be her second brother. He smiled and said, “It’s totally okay. We were just talking about Ning Li. Please come in, Mr. Lu.”

Geng Haifan had called Su Yuan earlier, but no matter how much he tried to persuade her, Su Yuan refused to attend the meeting.

He was slightly angry because of it. Of course, he knew how the mother treated both her daughters differently.

The Ye family had both a big business and a large family. The mother could have simply called someone to accompany Ye Ci to the hospital for a quick check-up.

The parent-teacher meeting was important to Ning Li, and as the girl's parent, Su Yuan should be there for her, at least this one time, but...

No one from the Ye family came for Ning Li, but there was Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu nodded and thanked Geng Haifan before he walked over to Ning Li.

Some of the parents knew Lu Huaiyu or had at least heard of his name. Therefore, when they saw the young man in the classroom and learned that he was there for Ning Li, they were astonished as their jaws fell to the ground.

Lu Huaiyu did not seem to notice the unusual reaction. His long legs seemed to saunter to Ning Li's side.

Ning Li had yet to recover from the astonishment. Why would Lu Huaiyu come for the parent-teacher meeting on her behalf?

Ning Li did not have anyone sitting beside her, hence the empty seat. Then, Lu Huaiyu pulled the chair out and sat down. His cold and refreshing scent contained a hint of alcohol, and it filled Ning Li's nose, enveloping her whole.

Did Lu Huaiyu just drink?

Ning Li looked at him carefully.

The man rarely wore such formal wear. Maybe he just came back from a drink. His black hair was slightly disheveled and there were sweat beads at the tip of his nose. He seemed to have come over in a hurry.

He loosened his tie and unbuttoned his first button, showing off his distinctive collarbones.

Ning Li could clearly feel the heat from the man since she was just sitting beside him.

Meanwhile, Geng Haifan continued talking about the results.

She could not help but ask the man softly, "Second Brother, why are you here?"

Lu Huaiyu leaned back. He was extremely tall, and the tiny seat seemed absurd for him. Any slight movement and his legs would hit the desk. He said with a bright smile, "I just told your teacher why I'm here."

Ning Li was speechless.

Other than the few times when her grandmother had attended the parent-teacher meeting, Ning Li had attended all the meetings herself.

Therefore, when Lu Huaiyu said he was there for her, an unfamiliar feeling welled up within her. She wanted to talk about it but could not find the right words.

"Ning Li's result..." Geng Haifan mentioned her name.

Instantly, Lu Huaiyu looked at the rostrum with a serious expression.

Ning Li's heart was racing, as though something inside her was expanding. It was an extremely strange feeling, but she did not hate it. She even felt...



She lowered her head unconsciously and pinched the edge of the paper on her table.

...

The meeting went on for a full 40 minutes.

After that, the parents surrounded Geng Haifan as they tried to find out more about their children.

The quiet classroom became lively again.

Ning Li then looked at Lu Huaiyu.

As though he saw through her mind, he seized the moment and said, "I was having a meal around the area, and Zhou Fei told me that you are having a parent-teacher meeting, so I decided to drop by."

Ning Li already had a hunch that Zhou Fei had sold her out. Little did she know, Zhou Fei had simply complained to Lu Huaiyu about how heartless the Ye family was.

Who would have thought that Lu Huaiyu would come over himself?

"Then...did I interrupt any of your business?"

While Lu Huaiyu was away in Yunzhou to treat his condition, he had rejected a lot of his work and meetings.

For as long as she could remember, Ning Li had only seen him in formal wear during Old Master Cheng's birthday dinner. There must have been something important today for him to wear a formal suit.

When Lu Huaiyu heard her question, he looked at her and smiled. "No."

“Are you Ning Li’s brother?” one of the parents came over and asked.

The parent was a woman in her mid-40s with a slightly bloated physique and a forgettable face. She did not seem to know who Lu Huaiyu was.

Lu Huaiyu thought for a moment before he answered, “Yes, I am.”

The woman looked envious. She attentively asked, “Your sister, Ning Li, is really great! I heard that she achieved a score of 737 on the monthly test! What’s her education like at home? Can you share some tips with me?”

## Chapter 66: She Is His Desire

The woman posed the question enthusiastically and did not notice Lu Huaiyu’s furrowed brows.

Ning Li sensed something was wrong, so she wanted to explain, but before she could, Lu Huaiyu beat her to it.

“Tips? I don’t know any tips that I can give you based on my experience. Everyone in the family is busy, so it’s entirely up to Lili to study on her own.”

Ning Li widened her eyes at Lu Huaiyu. His answer was as smooth as butter.

The woman was evidently jealous. “My, my, your family must be happy for her! Unlike my child, he doesn’t even study hard and has to rely on me to oversee his studies!”

Lu Huaiyu chuckled. “It’s normal for a child to like to play. All you have to do is guide him properly. There is still time before the entrance exam, so your child can still make it.”

“Yes, I think so myself! I wonder what kind of study materials Ning Li uses to help her study. I’m wondering if I should get my son some of those as well.”

Ning Li wanted to stop the woman from chattering on further, but Lu Huaiyu mentioned a few titles swiftly.

Deep down, Ning Li felt bad for her classmate.

“I guess that’s all. But you should really think about what is suitable for your son. The books might be suitable for Ning Li but not for others.”

The woman nodded repeatedly and thanked Lu Huaiyu for his advice.

“I didn’t expect you to know this much, Mr. Lu. You look so young, yet you know what papers Ning Li is working on.”

“Because I chose them for her.”

“I see! I can tell now. Mr. Lu, you really care about Ning Li. Both of you must be close, being brother and sister.”

Lu Huaiyu widened his eyes slightly at the second part of the woman’s words. Nevertheless, he simply stayed quiet.

On the other hand, Ning Li was slightly surprised. She looked at him and instantly knew what he was thinking.

‘He admits to it? Brother and sister? But we are not...’

Ning Li felt a strange discomfort inside her, but she could not determine why or how it happened.

“Mr. Lu.” Geng Haifan finally had some time at hand after handling the other parents. “Mr. Lu, if it is okay for you, why don’t we talk about Ning Li’s result and the competition.”

Lu Huaiyu nodded. "Please do, Mr. Geng."

"Here is how it's going to be: given Ning Li's current results, if she can keep this up, she won't have a problem applying for the best universities in the country. I heard about her performance in the competitive Physics class from Mr. Zhou, and he praises her a lot. However, I believe that maintaining her results while attending the competitive Physics class demands a lot of her attention and time. I am trying to find out which path she prefers to focus on."

If Ning Li could get a prize in the competition, she would have a shot at a guaranteed spot at university and would not have to wait until the entrance exam in June.

However, given her outstanding results, she might achieve even more if she focused on her studies.

The school was rather conflicted about it, so they wanted to explore Ning Li's thoughts.

Lu Huaiyu looked at Ning Li. "Lili, what do you think?"

Ning Li seemed to have figured out the problem a long time ago. She answered almost instantly, "I'll continue the competitive Physics class and also join the entrance exam in June."

Both had been her regrets in her past life, so she did not want to give them up now.

Geng Haifan was a little surprised. "You will be tired if you choose to take both on. It's physically and mentally demanding."

Ning Li replied with a calm and determined gaze, "I know but I've decided."

"Um..." Geng Haifan looked at Lu Huaiyu, intent on listening to the man's opinion. "What do you think Mr. Lu?"

Lu Huaiyu smiled. "My thoughts are her thoughts exactly."

...

The other parents left one after another.

Among them was Cheng Xiangxiang's mother. She came over to say hello to Lu Huaiyu, but the man did not seem interested in talking, so she left after an awkward introduction.

Right before Ning Li asked Lu Huaiyu about how he was going back, she received a message from Cheng Xiyue.

[Little Ning Li, is Second Master with you?]

Ning Li felt peculiar. Why would Cheng Xiyue ask her about Lu Huaiyu's whereabouts? He could ask the man directly instead of texting her, after all.

[Yes.]

Cheng Xiyue tugged at his hair anxiously. He looked at the time as he sweated nervously.

[I got caught up with something here. He just had some alcohol, so can you accompany him back to Yunding Fenghua?"]

Ning Li looked at the man who was talking to Geng Haifan in the corridor.

The side of his face was rigid while the gaze in his eyes seemed clear. He did not seem intoxicated.

However, since Cheng Xiyue texted her because of this, he must be worried about something.

Ning Li replied. [Okay.]

Lu Huaiyu came over and saw her texting. “Who are you texting?”

“Brother Xiyue said he got caught up with something and can’t come over. He told me to accompany you back.”

Lu Huaiyu’s brows furrowed for a moment before they eased. “You don’t need to. Just stay in class.”

“It’s self-learning class in the afternoon.” Ning Li lifted her head up defiantly and stared at him with her charming eyes. “Besides, your place is near. I’ll send you back and come back to school later.”

Lu Huaiyu complied since she insisted. He patted her head and said, “Okay.”

...

The two went out of the school and hailed a taxi to head towards Yunding Fenghua.

Inside the confined space of the taxi, the smell of the alcohol on Lu Huaiyu seemed stronger.

“Second Brother, did you drink a lot?”

Lu Huaiyu shook his head as he rolled down the window. “Not a lot. I met some friends. We talked and I drank a little.”

Ning Li simply grunted as a reply.

Lu Huaiyu crossed his legs as he tapped his fingers on his knees.

“Mr. Geng said...”

Geng Haifan had gone further into the discussion about Ning Li when he was talking to Lu Huaiyu in the corridor.

So, Lu Huaiyu selected a few points and talked to her about them. His original voice was already rich and pleasant, and now with the addition of his insobriety, he seemed to have a drawl.

However, he was patient as he talked about Ning Li's studies in detail.

Ning Li nodded in reply to his words at first, but as she listened to more, she simply kept quiet.

Soon, Lu Huaiyu noticed her mood. He paused and asked, "What's—"

Bang!

The driver stepped on the brakes all of a sudden.

Ning Li's head plunged forward uncontrollably, but before her face could hit the front seat, a strong force pulled her to the side, and she landed on a strong chest instead.

Lu Huaiyu hugged her tightly with one arm and wrapped her head with his other hand. He looked at the driver with a cold glare.

"Watch how you drive!"

"There seems to be a crash in front," the driver explained.

Ning Li freed herself from his chest after hearing what happened.

Two cars were involved in a crash ahead of them, so the driver was forced to step on the brakes to avoid a collision.

She tugged Lu Huaiyu's sleeve because his strong tug at her hand just now made her forearm feel a little painful.

"Second Brother—"

She paused before she could finish her sentence because she noticed something wrong with Lu Huaiyu.

Lu Huaiyu shut his eyes and moved his hand away from her. He said with a hoarse voice, "Just go around them."

...

Fifteen minutes later at Yunding Fenghua, Lu Huaiyu alighted from the car and told the driver to send Ning Li back to school.

Ning Li turned around to the mansion as the taxi drove off.

Lu Huaiyu had already gone inside the yard.

However, when she thought about his strange reaction earlier, she was a little worried. Moments later, she said, "Driver, please go back."

...

The mansion's door was not locked.

With a frown, Ning Li quickly went up to the second floor.



Lu Huaiyu's master bedroom door was left open and his jacket was carelessly tossed in front of the entrance.

She walked closer and knocked on the ajar door.

"Second Brother?"

There was no reply.

She tightened her lips and went in.

The curtains blocked the sunlight, making the room dark.

However, she was able to spot a person on the bed. He seemed asleep though it did not feel like it.

Ning Li walked over to the bed.

"Second Brother?"

Lu Huaiyu frowned and slowly opened his eyes when he heard her voice.

Ning Li bent over to feel his forehead.

"You are having a fever..."

Lu Huaiyu suddenly grabbed her wrist and pulled her closer.

Abruptly, Ning Li fell onto the bed and her back accidentally hit the head of the bed. She looked up and accidentally locked eyes with Lu Huaiyu.

His gaze appeared cold and ferocious, and she had never seen him like this before. The man was as cautious as a beast watching an invader of his territory.

Ning Li looked appalled.

“Second Brother!”

Lu Huaiyu paused for a moment for a better look at her. Moments later, the icy cold feeling in his gaze melted.

Ning Li sighed a breath of relief.

In the next moment, Lu Huaiyu took advantage of her smaller physique and held her face in his palms. He stared at her. His finger that had a thin layer of callus caressed her soft and pinkish lips. Besides enjoying the sensation, he also desired what he saw.

In the end, he decided to move closer.

Chapter 67: Behave

His warm breath had a hint of alcohol that scattered across her face like sparks that set a field ablaze.

Ning Li was pinned to the spot while her heart raced so fast that it felt like it was going to burst out of her chest.

Lu Huaiyu got closer.

She instinctively shouted, “Lu Huaiyu!”

Her voice sounded extra clear in the spacious and empty room.

Lu Huaiyu froze, just inches away from her lips. He slightly squinted his eyes.

She stared into his eyes and saw a thin layer of red veins around the edges. He must be looking at her through a layer of mist.

‘He seems...unconscious of his action?!’

Complicated feelings washed over her, but all she did was stare at him.

Lu Huaiyu raised his hand and covered her eyes, so Ning Li fell into darkness right away. Then, she felt a gentle force pushing against her face.

She was stunned for a full second before she realized that Lu Huaiyu had kissed the back of his hand. Her face turned as red as an apple.

“Behave! Don’t make me mad!”

Lu Huaiyu’s voice was soft yet strict, but it also sounded like deadly temptation. Then, he backed away and fell on the bed beside her.

He did not move for quite some time after that.

Ning Li turned to him and realized that his eyes were tightly shut. He seemed to be asleep. She tightened her lips before she got up and draped the blanket over him.

The dark room returned to silence while Ning Li stood beside the bed for quite some time.

Then, she heard a set of hurried footsteps from downstairs.

Ning Li turned around and covered her blushing face with the back of her hands.

“Second Master?”

The door opened to reveal Cheng Xiyue.

Before he could walk into the room, he saw someone standing in front of him, much to his shock.

Ning Li quickly and nervously left the room.

“Little Ning Li? You are still here?” Cheng Xiyue was stunned. He thought she had returned to school after dropping Lu Huaiyu off.

He stole a glance into the room with dismay. “Is Second Master in there?”

Ning Li nodded. “He just fell asleep.”

Cheng Xiyue’s eyes twitched helplessly before he cautiously asked, “Then, then...you are here with him? Did he...do something bad?”

Lu Huaiyu had more than a glass of drink at this timing. Cheng Xiyue had come all the way here in a hurry because he was worried about him.

The intimate scene in the dark kept replaying in Ning Li’s head.

The corridor was decorated with bright lights, looking nothing like the dark and quiet atmosphere in the room.

The door felt like a gateway between two different worlds. What happened in the dark felt like a dream.

She shook her head. "No, but he seems drunk and tired."

Cheng Xiyue sighed a breath of relief. "Thank goodness."

He did not hear a sound in the room, so he assumed that Lu Huaiyu was fast asleep. After some thoughts, he decided to stay outside.

"He doesn't sleep well, so his biological clock is a little messed up.'

It was considered the most reasonable explanation because no normal man would sleep at this hour.

After that, Cheng Xiyue had a glance at Ning Li. Since he got the confirmation from the girl, he decided to not press the topic.

The concerns in his heart were put to rest.

"Then...Little Ning Li, why don't I give you a ride back to school?"

Ning Li rejected the ride, and since she insisted, Cheng Xiyue complied. "Be careful on the way back. Text me when you get back to school."

"Okay. I got it. I have to go now. Bye, Brother Xiyue."

Cheng Xiyue walked Ning Li out of the mansion and saw her get into a taxi before he returned inside.

...

It was already dark when Ning Li returned to school.

The last period was over, and it was dinner time. Half of the class were eating at the cafeteria.

“Ning Li!” He Xiaochen saw her and came over excitedly with a stack of papers. “Ning Li! Can you help me to analyze this electromagnetic resistance?”

Ning Li took the pen and had a glance at the question.

When she was halfway done with the explanation, He Xiaochen suddenly understood the question.

“Ah, I get it now!”

He Xiaochen was a smart student herself, and her results were one of the better ones. Ning Li usually just needed to give her hints on solving the problem, and she could understand the theory behind it.

“This isn’t that hard. The theory is actually all the same.”

He Xiaochen looked at her deeply and said in a heavy tone, “Ning Li, promise me. Don’t say that anymore in front of anyone.”

She was worried that others might get hurt because of Ning Li’s words. Even she herself was a little shaken when she heard it.

“I’ll try my best,” Ning Li said with a smile.

Her charming eyes were curved slightly when she smiled, but it did not dampen the glittering reflection of her crystal-clear gaze.

‘Ugh! Right! You are right! Everything you said is right! You will be right even if it is not because you are so beautiful! This little critical hit is nothing!’

All sorts of crazy thoughts clouded He Xiaochen’s mind for a moment.

She then quickly tidied up the papers.

“Ning Li, have you eaten? Why don’t we go have dinner together? I heard there’s a newly opened bibimbap stall on the third floor of the cafeteria and it’s good!”

Ning Li nodded. “Sure.”

...

The girls went to the third floor of the cafeteria and chose a quiet seat.

Many other students were looking at them.

Ning Li had transferred to Second High for almost a month now, but her beauty was eye-catching. She would turn heads no matter where she went.

Aside from her beauty, her background, her fierce attitude, and her getting first place in the monthly test, everything that happened around her did not pull her out of the spotlight. Instead, she remained the hottest topic in school.

Everyone in Second High knew her, or at least, had heard of her name. While Ning Li had gotten used to this, she did not mind the attention.

The moment she sat down, a boy from the opposite table came over.

“Is the place beside you taken?”

Ning Li looked at the boy. He looked delicate and somewhat pretty despite his height of 180 cm. He even blushed when Ning Li looked at him.

Behind him was another group of boys, looking at him curiously

"Yes, it is," Ning Li said.

The boy did not expect such a direct rejection and things became awkward instantly.

"Excuse me, mate! This is my place. Do you mind?" He Xiaochen came back and spoke to the boy with the least courtesy.

The boy excused himself and apologized for interrupting before he left in a hurry. He returned to the group of boys that burst into laughter. The others even jokingly punched his arm.

"I told you our school beauty is an ice queen! And you just had to try her! You had it coming, you knucklehead."

"I heard she got a few bags of love letters almost every day. Some even came from outside the school but all the letters were like stones thrown into the sea. Not a single reply from her."

"She got first place in the entire third year, so I guess studying is her priority now. Why would she care about relationships now?"

"I guess you're right...Huh, I thought Duan Xu and our school beauty were quite close."

"Stop listening to that idiot's boasting. If Duan Xu had something to do with our school beauty, he wouldn't have been punished in public for cheating on the test."

"D\*mn, you're right! Hahaha!" The group of boys left as they joked.

Meanwhile, Ning Li did not care as He Xiaochen showed them a sympathetic glance.

Ning Li had a lot of pursuers, but up until now, none of them could get her attention at all.



“Hmph! Peasants. No peasants are worthy of a deity like Ning Li!”

Ning Li could not help but chuckle. “You are exaggerating.”

“Am I?” He Xiaochen looked at her in shock.

“You are always with your second brother. The guy is practically a living painting or the God of Looks! So, why would those guys think they are worthy of your attention?”

Ning Li suddenly choked on her words and coughed.

Chapter 68: Forgot

“Ahem...W-what are you talking about?”

Ning Li choked strongly, tears filling her eyes.

He Xiaochen gave her a piece of tissue and said, “My, my, look at you. I simply mentioned your second brother. Why are you getting so riled up?”

Ning Li was finally able to calm down and adjust her breath, but when she heard He Xiaochen say that once more, she was at a loss about what to answer.

It took her quite a while to react. “We don’t see each other every day.”

In fact, the two of them had only known each other for a month, but no one would have probably believed it even if she tried to argue.

Nevertheless, her excuse did not deter He Xiaochen at all.

“That’s not important!”

He Xiaochen believed that Ning Li should only see her handsome second brother once every few days, or else she would suffer from a nosebleed to death.

He Xiaochen mysteriously looked around before leaning forward to Ning Li and asked softly, "The news of your second brother coming to the parent-teacher meeting has gotten out. Everyone knows him now! The guy who picked you up the other day after self-learning, that was him, too, right?"

Ning Li could only nod.

It would be difficult for Lu Huaiyu's unrivaled looks to stay under the radar. His first appearance in the school had already caused quite the commotion.

Even until now, Ning Li frequently heard discussions about Lu Huaiyu.

It was normal for He Xiaochen to find out about this quickly. As a matter of fact, He Xiaochen unexpectedly saw Lu Huaiyu after the parent-teacher meeting and was so in awe of his handsomeness that she almost got down on her knees in front of him.

From his looks to his chivalry, every single aspect of that man was out of this world!

He Xiaochen used to believe that Pei Song, the class monitor, was the most handsome guy in the school, but now...

She had to admit that she was still too young and naive. There were always better-looking people out there.

"Your second brother is really kind to you!" He Xiaochen was jealous. "The country owes me a brother like that!"

Everyone more or less knew about Ning Li's situation and background.

Ye Ci had gone to the hospital for a check-up because she was hit by a football yesterday, but no one expected her absence to result in her mother skipping Ning Li's parent-teacher meeting.

He Xiaochen was a smart girl. She could connect the dots on her own even if she did not ask for the details.

Therefore, Lu Huaiyu coming to school for Ning Li meant a lot.

He Xiaochen stuffed a big spoon of rice into her mouth, but it did not stop her from talking in a muffled voice, "If I had such a handsome brother who is that good to me, I wouldn't even care about the peasants in school!"

Comparison was the cause of all despair!

Ning Li rubbed the center of her brows. She felt helpless but amused at the same time.

For a moment, He Xiaochen continued eating before she suddenly sighed. "Ning Li, I'm telling you. Your second brother has boosted your standards to a ridiculous height. It will be difficult for you to get a boyfriend in the future."

He Xiaochen assumed that Ning Li had no interest in common-looking guys anymore.

Ning Li's hands froze. She suddenly remembered Lu Huaiyu's intimate yet threatening words, and they started to echo in her ears.

"Behave and don't make me mad."

He had sounded drowsy when he said that. Ning Li had no idea what he meant, but she was in no position to ask him about it anyway.

Lu Huaiyu was not fully conscious when he said that, so she should take his words and actions seriously.

“That’s a concept that is very distant to me.”

...

After Ning Li left, Cheng Xiyue stayed behind in the mansion. He waited on the first floor and ordered takeaway for two servings of soup that could help cure a hangover: one for him, and one for Lu Huaiyu.

The two of them actually attended the same event earlier with many influential figures from the business world.

Lu Huaiyu came to Yunzhou to treat his condition, but there were times when he had to attend social meetings like this, especially when he was invited by those who had a better relationship with him.

The event went well at first, but when Lu Huaiyu got a message from Zhou Fei, he left halfway. He had quite a bit of alcohol, but fortunately, he was a decent drinker. While he was not drunk, his head felt slightly heavy. As much of a decent drinker he might have been, he had barely consumed any alcohol in the past year.

Cheng Xiyue had no idea how Lu Huaiyu was feeling now. Only when the sky turned dark and the soup was cold, Cheng Xiyue finally heard some noises upstairs, so he looked up at the second floor.

At that point, Lu Huaiyu came out of the room and walked down the stairs. He squinted his eyes when he saw Cheng Xiyue.

“Why are you here?”

Cheng Xiyue glanced at his watch. “Mr. Second Master Lu, I’ve been waiting for you to wake up for an hour now, and you ask me why am I here?”

Pinching the bridge of his nose, Lu Huaiyu looked tired and annoyed at the same time. “Okay, okay, you can go now.”

Cheng Xiyue was speechless though he kind of expected Lu Huaiyu to say such heartless words. He scoffed and said, "If Little Ning Li was here, I don't think you would say the same thing! Second Master Lu, it's not good to have double standards."

Lu Huaiyu trudged down the stairs. His black shirt was wrinkled after his nap and his eyes remained tired. He walked to the table beside the kitchen for a glass of cold water.

"She's not here."

The light above his head outlined his towering contour beautifully as he drained the glass of cold water to its last drop. His jawline looked pronounced and his Adam's apple bobbed as he drank the water.

The icy cold water flowed down his throat and refreshed his mind a little. The heaviness he had experienced earlier had faded substantially.

Cheng Xiyue leaned back on the couch and mocked him, "Little Ning Li went through hell to bring you back. Do you think your lazy bum will delay her studies?"

Lu Huaiyu put the glass down. He thought for a moment and said, "She left when I walked through the door, so I don't think it will affect her class."

"You said she left right after she sent you back?" Cheng Xiyue asked in shock.

"Mmm-hmm." Lu Huaiyu then poured himself a second glass of water. His frustration had eased off a lot.

Cheng Xiyue slowly got up and sent a message to Ning Li with his phone.

[Little Ning Li, did anything happen when you sent Second Master Lu back?]

...

Ning Li was in Zhou Fei's class when she received the message. She stared at the message for a while and had a hunch something was not right.

After all, Cheng Xiyue had asked her the question before, so why would he ask it a second time?

Besides, while the question might seem harmless she could still feel the unease and worry in between the lines.

Other than that, what Lu Huaiyu did in the room...

She tried her best to recall the details.

[Nothing special. It's just that the taxi that we were taking almost got into a car accident.]

[A car accident? The taxi you were taking?]

[Yeah, but we are fine. Two cars in front of us crashed. We simply went around it.]

Cheng Xiyue's eyes twitched as he read the message.

When Lu Huaiyu came over and sat opposite him, Cheng Xiyue put his phone face down on the table.

Lu Huaiyu did not notice the message. The soup on the table caught his attention instead, but Cheng Xiyue cleared his throat. "It's already cold. Do you want me to heat it up?"

Lu Huaiyu shook his head. "Never mind. I barely drink soup at all."

Cheng Xiyue simply grunted in agreement. "As you wish."

A moment later, he said, "If you are alright, I'll be on my way now."

Lu Huaiyu nodded. He did not seem interested in sending Cheng Xiyue out, so the latter left.

The Cheng family's driver, Gao Min, was waiting outside. He greeted Cheng Xiyue when the man got into the car but soon noticed his long face. He asked curiously, "Master, what's wrong?"

Cheng Xiyue shook his head. After some serious thought, he decided to call Ning Li.

Chapter 69: Second Master Lu Went Out Cold In A Single Glass

Two long beeps later, a mechanical voice sounded from the other end of the call.

"Sorry. The number you have dialed is not available—"

Cheng Xiyue frowned. "She rejected the call?"

However, soon enough, he received a message from Ning Li.

[Brother Xiyue, I'm in class and can't answer your call. Is there anything urgent?]

Cheng Xiyue pondered for a long time as he stared at the message.

[Nothing in particular. Concentrate on your studies.]

Gao Min had a glance at Cheng Xiyue through the rearview mirror.

Cheng Xiyue barely showed a bitter face, and coincidentally, he just emerged from Lu Huaiyu's place. Judging from the long face, Gao Min knew that his master was in a poor mood, so he simply turned a blind eye to it and focused on driving.

Cheng Xiyue's phone went dark after a moment while his fingers were tapping on it mindlessly. He looked outside the window though he was not focusing on anything particular as thoughts were running wild in his mind.

Half an hour later, the car arrived at the Cheng family's mansion.

Cheng Xiyue got out and returned to his room. He locked the door, took off his coat, and went out to the balcony.

He lit a cigarette before he called Gu Tinglan.

The call finally got through after a while. It seemed like the doctor was rather busy.

"Master Cheng? Why are you calling me at this hour? To what do I owe the call?"

Cheng Xiyue flicked the ashes into the ashtray. He remained quiet for a few good seconds before he said heavily, "Lu Huaiyu's condition acted up today."

...

In the Competitive Physics class, Zhou Fei was writing on the board. He had almost filled every corner with his writing.

The class was quiet except for the rustling of chalk on the board.

Right after the last stroke, Zhou Fei tapped on the writing board. "Got it all down? If you have, I'll wipe it and continue."

One of the boys wailed aggrievedly, "Mr. Zhou, there's more?"



“What do you mean ‘there’s more’? You should be asking, ‘that’s it?’” Zhou Fei urged his students to finish taking down the notes while lecturing them.

A few of the boys grumbled softly.

“What’s wrong with Mr. Zhou today? He taught us twice as much as he did two days ago!”

“I don’t know. He was fine before this.”

“I’m already crying. I didn’t even understand what he wrote the other day, and he still wants to move forward now.”

The boy who first complained turned around and looked at Ning Li.

“Hey, Ning Li, do you understand any of that?”

When Ning Li nodded, the guy almost broke down in tears.

“You missed the previous class, yet you understand all of it?”

The boy just witnessed the gap between peasant and genius with his own eyes.

Ning Li had a glance at Zhou Fei.

The lecture that Zhou Fei gave today felt oddly similar to the lecture Lu Huaiyu delivered the other day. For some reason, Ning Li had a feeling that he was trying to compete with an invisible force.

Then, Zhou Fei started to wipe the writing board.

A new round of lecture began and the class quieted down. Everyone scribbled their notes as fast as they could.

Two hours of torture finally went by.

Zhou Fei sighed in satisfaction when he saw his students tormented by his lecture. His confidence, which had been shattered by Lu Huaiyu, returned.

“That’s all for today. Go home and revise this. If you don’t understand anything, don’t hesitate to ask me. That’s it, class dismissed.”

He left nonchalantly, leaving the students in painful groans.

Then, Ning Li packed her bag and walked out. She took a glance at her phone but saw that she did not receive any updates from Cheng Xiyue.

...

“Well, that’s about it.”

Cheng Xiyue told Gu Tinglan what he saw earlier that day.

“When I reached the place, Little Ning Li came out from the master bedroom. I saw her off in a taxi, but when Second Master Lu woke up, he claimed that he did not see her inside the mansion.”

Gu Tinglan paused for a while before asking, “Did Ning Li act unusual when she came out of the room? Or was there something strange about her?”

“Not a thing.” Cheng Xiyue was having a headache. He had gone to Yunding Fenghua because he was worried about Lu Huaiyu’s condition, especially after a few drinks. He kept his eyes peeled for details, especially when he saw Ning Li come out.

The girl looked normal as if nothing happened which also eased his concerns.

However, when Lu Huaiyu came down and saw him, he realized that something must have happened without his knowledge.

With that in mind, he asked, “Whenever his condition acted up in the past, he would get extremely aggressive and has never recovered within such a short time. However, when Little Ning Li came out, everything was fine.”

Lu Huaiyu had been going through rehabilitation for almost a year and his condition had been rather stable throughout the process, especially recently. He was as good as his normal self at times.

Cheng Xiyue had a feeling that Lu Huaiyu was a step shy from full recovery.

Who would have expected this to happen today?

Gu Tinglan said, “Let’s not jump to conclusions so fast. You’d better ask Ning Li for details and find out what really happened. As Lu Huaiyu, let’s keep him in the dark for now. I’ll be back in Yunzhou the day after tomorrow, so we’ll discuss further when we meet.”

“Okay.”

Cheng Xiyue suddenly remembered that Gu Tinglan came back to the country because he had matters to attend to in Lincheng.

He asked, “How’s your side doing?”

Gu Tinglan sighed and chuckled bitterly, “Not as well as I expected.”

He might have been chuckling, but the disappointment and grief in between the lines were obvious. Cheng Xiyue decided to leave him be.

Cheng Xiyue then received a notification about an incoming call. He had a glance and saw Ning Li's name.

"It's Little Ning Li. I'll talk to you soon."

"Okay."

Cheng Xiyue switched the call to Ning Li's line.

"Hey, Little Ning Li, class is over?"

Ning Li was walking towards the campus gate.

"Yeah. I want to know why you called me earlier, Brother Xiyue."

Cheng Xiyue hesitated. Ning Li was a third-year student and Lu Huaiyu's condition was an unusual one. He really hoped that he could keep the condition under control.

A moment later, he said, "It's nothing. I just want to ask if you accompanied Lu Huaiyu into his room."

"No. He went up by himself at first, but I was worried that he might have had a little too much alcohol, and sleeping face down wouldn't be good for him, so I went back."

Cheng Xiyue was surprised. "Are you saying that he doesn't know you went back?"

Ning Li hesitated for a moment.

Lu Huaiyu had not exactly been asleep at that time, so he should have been conscious. However, Ning Li believed he might not have been aware of his surroundings.

"I don't think he knew. He seemed drunk and fell asleep pretty quickly," Ning Li said.

Cheng Xiyue sighed. "Okay, I got it. He is a lousy drinker. Thank you for your trouble today."

Ning Li blinked awkwardly. Had he really been drunk?

"Brother Xiyue, you don't need to thank me for that. You and Second Brother have helped me a lot. So, how is he now?"

"I checked on him earlier. He seems fine," Cheng Xiyue lied without even skipping a beat. "He always passes out after a few drinks though, and that's why we don't like to drink with him. Fortunately, he metabolizes all the alcohol away in just one sleep cycle. He should feel better tomorrow.

'Passes out? Does it mean he will forget what he did?' Ning Li was in deep thought.

"If there's nothing else, I'll be going now, Little Ning Li."

"Mm-hmm. Bye, Brother Xiyue," Ning Li said.

...

Cheng Xiyue then called Gu Tinglan a second time.

"I don't know what happened now. Maybe he fell asleep and was not aware of Little Ning Li's return, but just in case, I've prepared her for it. If we have to break it to her in the future, we have an excuse to do so," Cheng Xiyue said.

Chapter 70: She Doesn't Take Notes?

Cheng Xiyue's sounded rather optimistic, so Gu Tinglan did not further comment on the matter although he had other thoughts deep down.

If Ning Li and Lu Huaiyu's taxi had not narrowly escaped a car crash and Lu Huaiyu had not seen the crash, Gu Tinglan might have agreed with Cheng Xiyue.

But...

Gu Tinglan stared at the news article that he had pulled up on his laptop. The article was about the crash that Ning Li and Lu Huaiyu had seen earlier. He had searched online for it after hearing Cheng Xiyue's description.

The collision of the two cars resulted in chaos erupting.

Even though the pictures had mosaics over them, the heavily injured driver and passenger were still visible. Needless to say, it was a very gory scene.

If one saw it with his own eyes, it might have had an even bigger impact on him.

Lu Huaiyu had been in the rear seat of the taxi that time, so he must have gotten a good look.

Moreover, even if he had been truly asleep, he would have noticed something when someone entered his mansion.

The only hope that Cheng Xiyue had for Lu Huaiyu's condition to stay dormant was Ning Li. However, that was exactly what Gu Tinglan was worried about.

He closed his laptop with a heavy expression.

...

On the next day, Ye Ci finally returned to school.

Su Yuan tried to persuade her to take a few more days to rest, but Ye Ci insisted on returning to school. The third-year curriculum was packed, and she had already missed two classes of competitive Physics.

The moment she appeared in class, Lin Zhouyang came up to her.

“Ye Ci, how are you feeling?”

“I’m fine. My mother is so paranoid that she insisted on me getting a full-body check-up.”

“You should, to be honest. Those internal injuries are difficult to spot at first. Having a full-body check-up will ease everyone’s mind, am I right?”

Lin Zhouyang suddenly got frustrated. “If it was not for that b\*stard Ding Xi...”

He never liked Ding Xi from the start, and now after what the guy had done to Ning Li, the hatred only grew stronger.

“It’s not entirely his fault as well. It was just an accident.” Ye Ci seemed to keep an open mind towards the incident, even appearing to have forgiven Ding Li.

With a frown, Ling Zhouyang felt rather uncomfortable.

If it was not for Ding Xi trying to bully Ning Li, everything that came after that would not have happened. No matter how sour Ning Li and Ye Ci’s relationship were, they were still family living under one roof, after all.

Ding Xi did not think about the trouble he would have caused Ye Ci when he tried to start a fight with Ning Li.

At that point, Pei Song came into the class. He slung his bag on one side of his shoulder, and his uniform was buttoned to the highest. His eyes were as cold and indifferent as ever.

Lin Zhouyang curiously went up to him. “Hey, Brother Pei, did you get lectured by your parents after the parent-teacher meeting yesterday?”

Pei Song had ranked first for two years in a row, but Ning Li’s arrival pushed him down from his throne, which was quite a rare occurrence. Any normal person would have felt angry or even slightly jealous about it.

However, Pei Song looked at Lin Zhouyang nonchalantly. His eyes were practically saying, “Please don’t waste my time with this kind of meaningless question.”

Ren Qian then entered the classroom. He could not help but laugh when he heard Lin Zhouyang’s question.

“Brother Pei has fallen from his divine throne after losing first place to Ning Li. You are a lot better than him, do you know that? You scored 3 extra points in English compared to the last test! Did your family commemorate it with a flag or something?”

The other students burst out in laughter.

Lin Zhouyang clicked his tongue in annoyance. “D\*mn it!”

He had never won an argument with anyone else. Blushing, he said, “What’s wrong with 3 points? I got 3 points higher than before, and I believe I can at least get 130 in the entrance exam!”

He Xiaochen pushed her glasses up her nose and reminded him calmly, “The average English result of our class is 3.5 points higher than the last time, didn’t you hear?”

Lin Zhouyang was stunned. He had a feeling that he no longer fit into the class of mutants anymore!

Just when Pei Song walked past Ye Ci’s table, she called out to him, “Monitor, can you lend me the notes from yesterday and the day before for a quick look?”



The busybody Lin Zhouyang joined the conversation, “Ye Ci, I thought you can just borrow Ning Li’s notes at home. You stayed at home for two day, didn’t you?”

Ye Ci froze for a moment. A slight awkwardness appeared on her face. “No.”

“It seems like someone is afraid that others might surpass her in the next exam,” Cheng Xiangxiang mocked in disdain.

The other students looked at each other curiously.

Ning Li had gotten first place in the monthly test and she was Ye Ci’s older sister by name. Would she be so stingy that she would not want to lend Ye Ci her notes?

“I...I don’t think Ning Li is like that...” Lin Zhouyang hesitated for a long while before he spewed the words. “The last time I asked her a question about grammar, she helped me solve it just like that.”

Ye Ci supposedly had a better relationship with Ning Li compared to an outsider like Lin Zhouyang, so what could have caused such a conflict?

Moreover, Ning Li’s insane score was because of her uncanny intelligence. Other people might not even get close to her score if they ate the book.

Cheng Xiangxiang glared at him. “Lin Zhouyang, what do you mean?”

Lin Zhouyang sensed the awkwardness in Ye Ci’s nonchalant expression. He realized that he had said something wrong and quickly shut up.

The entire class also fell into silence.

Ning Li then entered the class, seeming fine. She walked to her seat nonchalantly and turned a blind eye to all the gossip and whispers in class.

Pei Song took a notebook out from his bag and gave it to Ye Ci. "These are my notes from competitive Physics. You can take a look at them."

Ye Ci smiled and accepted it. "Thank you."

However, when she opened the notebook, she was stunned by what she saw.

The notebook barely contained anything. Every page only had one question, and even though the questions were answered, the steps seemed to be a lot shorter, especially the calculations which Pei Song had skipped almost all of. There were also some special symbols on the side.

Ye Ci got lost after reading a few lines.

Ren Qian looked at her with a sympathetic gaze. "Ah, I forgot to tell you that Brother Pei's notes are exclusively deciphered by himself. No one knows what he writes."

The lectures in competitive Physics class were a lot harder than normal classes. Ren Qian had jokingly read the notebook before but could not understand a thing. He almost had to ask Pei Song to explain them to him line by line.

As for Ye Ci, her Physics standard was not as good as Ren Qian's, so it might be even more difficult for her.

Why would she join the competitive Physics class? For fun?

Sun Huihui had a glance at the notebook in Ye Ci's hand. Slightly jealous, when she heard Ren Qian, she said, "At least, it's better than nothing. Our class monitor is willing to lend others his notes, unlike someone else who keeps things to herself only."

Quite a number of students looked at Ning Li as everyone knew who Sun Huihui was referring to.

Although she sounded harsh, everyone despised a stingy person who did not like to share knowledge just because she was scared that others would overtake her.

He Xiaochen glared at Sun Huihui. "Are you referring to Ning Li? Isn't that normal of her to do so?"

Sun Huihui was confused. He Xiaochen and Ning Li were rather close, especially recently. However, she sounded like she was joining Sun Huihui in bashing Ning Li.

He Xiaochen had a glance at Ye Ci.

"It seems like other than Ye Ci, someone has also been shunned..."

He Xiaochen looked away. She unlidded the pen by biting the cover off and then wrote an answer in her book. She said nonchalantly, "Of course, she doesn't lend others her notes because she doesn't have any. So, how is she going to do that?"

The entire class plunged into silence when they heard He Xiaochen.