

Little Brat's 701

Chapter 701: VIP Guest

This blogger was a famous film critic with six million followers. He had always been known for his venomous tongue. However, this time, he had suddenly posted a Weibo post praising Ge which caused quite a stir.

The comment section was filled with sarcasm.

[Did Third Uncle receive money for this?]

[Aiya, you always have to eat properly. I understand, I understand!]

[I don't think that's what happened. Third Uncle criticized Ge's previous films very badly. I wonder what happened this time?]

[It can't be? There can't still be people who are looking forward to Ge's work, right? Isn't he the one who has run out of ideas? What kind of rubbish has he been filming for the past seven years? The blogger must just be sucking money. Isn't his stance a little too ugly?]

The blogger was also unyielding and directly retorted below.

[I'm just telling the truth. If it's bad, I'll say that it is. If it's good, of course, that's what I would say. If I were to receive any money for this, I wouldn't be able to receive any more promotions in the future! In any case, the film is about to be released soon. Whether it's good or not, it's up to everyone.]

However, even though he had said so, there were still many people who were skeptical.

After all, Ge's previous films had indeed been very bad. No one wanted to waste money buying movie tickets to a bad film.

“Ge is notorious for being box office poison. I wonder which investor had such a big heart that he still dared to offer this to him?”

“I think it’s some company called Shengguang Media. I’ve never heard of it. It’s a small company. This movie itself is also a small production. I don’t think there’s much to see.”

“The only highlight is the theme song, right? I heard that Lin Fengmian wrote the lyrics and composed the music himself?”

[If he were the male lead, this movie might still have a chance. Unfortunately, it’s not. The male and female leads are all newbies. At this time of the year, the competition among movies is very fierce. What were Ge and Shengguang Media thinking? Aren’t they just sending themselves to their own deaths? They probably won’t even last a week at the cinema.]

In short, the comments section was full of criticism.

However, everyone soon realized that something was wrong.

That was because, besides this blogger, one after another, other film critics also published reviews of “Hibiscus”.

What was shocking was that all of them were good reviews!

If only one or two of them had said so, perhaps it was because they had been bribed. However, if everyone had said so...

Wasn’t the investor of “Hibiscus” just a small company? Surely they did not have any money for this kind of promotion, right?

Originally, no one had any expectations for this movie. In fact, most people had never even heard the name of this movie.

After causing such a debate, it had become a trending topic instead.

Hibiscus

Hibiscus movie review

Ge

One after another, a few entries were squeezed onto the trending topic list, with a tail at the end.

Shen Li looked at it for a while before she eventually rested.

...

The next morning, Shen Li's class had just ended when she received a call from Gu Siyang.

"Cousin!"

As soon as she picked up the call, Gu Siyang's passionate voice came through the receiver.

/ please keep reading on MYBOXNOVEL(dot)COM.

Shen Li silently moved the phone a little further away from her ear before saying, "Gu Siyang, I have a name."

"I know!" Gu Siyang did not detect the disdain in her words at all and he remained full of enthusiasm. "But I was thinking that by calling you that, wouldn't it make our relationship even closer?"

Cousin!

This was a cousin!

Even after having lived for so many years, Gu Siyang had never thought that one day, he would actually have a cousin!

Most importantly, this person was Shen Li!

Of course, he had to address her as such even more!

“Cousin, are you free for lunch? Shall we have a meal together?”

Gu Siyang asked with a smile.

Shen Li raised her eyebrows.

“Is there something that you need me for?”

Gu Siyang was a free-spirited person who was good at fooling around all day long. Now that he had suddenly asked to have lunch with her, it was obvious that he had an ulterior motive.

“Hehe, not really. I really just want to have a meal with you!”

There was an earnestness in Gu Siyang’s tone of voice.

“It’s in Luye. How about it?”

“Luye?” Shen Li asked in return.

This was a high-end seafood restaurant. It was the only one in the Capital, and its per capita consumption was very high.

More importantly, this restaurant belonged to the Gu family.

To be precise, it belonged to the second master of the Gu family.

“So, there’s where you want to go—”

When Shen Li asked this question, she suddenly thought of something.

Gu Tingchuan had mentioned something to her before. He said that he would send some fresh seafood ingredients to the Capital for her soon.

Initially, she had thought that it would be too troublesome and had wanted to reject it, but then she remembered that it was a new gift from him after she had been acknowledged by the Gu family. She was afraid that it would not be appropriate for her to reject it.

In the end, she had accepted the offer.

“That’s right! Second Uncle said that the batch of ingredients will be sent to Luye by noon today and will be waiting just for you! There’s so much of it that you won’t be able to finish it all by yourself. Why don’t I come and help you finish it?”

It really was just for a meal.

Shen Li thought about it and nodded in agreement.

“Okay.”

Gu Siyang was also very happy when she agreed.

“Okay! Then I’ll pick you up at your school later!”

...

It was just past twelve o’clock when Gu Siyang’s car stopped outside the east gate of Xijing.

Because it had snowed yesterday and there was still some snow on the road, he had changed to a much more low-key car—

A black Porsche.

Many people around looked over.

Shen Li knew that keeping a low profile was more difficult than ascending to the heavens, so she simply ignored the looks and got straight into the passenger seat.

“Cousin, this car... what do you think about it?”

Gu Siyang asked excitedly.

Shen Li fastened her seatbelt and thought about it for a moment.

“It’s okay.”

A look of regret appeared on Gu Siyang’s face.

“It’s alright? It’s... It’s only just alright?”

Painfully, he pondered for a moment.

“Then I’ll change to another one next time! There will definitely be something that you like! Or, why don’t you go straight to my garage? Whichever one you like, I’ll get them to order the same for you later!”

Shen Li, “... Thank you, but I don’t think I’ll need it for the time being.”

Gu Siyang pursed his lips when his plan to give away a car did not succeed.

“Alright, then I’ll go search for more.”

He did not believe that with so many cars available, surely there was one that could please her?

Shen Li did not respond to him. She raised her chin and said, “Let’s just go to Luye.”

...

Half an hour later, the two of them arrived at Luye.

As soon as they entered the door, someone came up to welcome them and led them to a private room inside.

“The ingredients are ready. We’ve just been waiting for you two.”

Gu Siyang was obviously very happy and nodded.

Just then, an unhappy voice came from the front.

“No? I clearly saw a whole box of Veron oysters in your ingredients selection just now, but now you’re saying that you don’t have any? You’re just bullying your customers!”

Shen Li looked up and saw two young women talking to a man who appeared to be a chef.

The man who was wearing a golden armband was Luye’s head chef, Barkley.

Out of the two women, she did not know the one who was angrily questioning him.

However, the person standing next to her was...

Xu Yini.

She did not say anything, but it was not hard to see her displeasure.

Barkley said politely, “I’m sorry, but the box has been reserved for an honored guest. It’s not for sale.”

1

The woman who spoke sneered.

“An honored guest? Both me and Yini are the highest-ranking Black Card VIPs in your restaurant. What kind of honored guest is so bold as to monopolize a whole box by himself? Can they possibly finish it on their own?”

1

Chapter 702: Unwelcome

“Whether the person can finish eating it or not is that person’s business. Is it up to you to worry about that?”

Gu Siyang put one hand in his pocket as he spoke lazily.

His words were blunt and harsh, causing the woman who had spoken and Xu Yini to look over.

When they saw Gu Siyang, their expressions changed slightly.

So, the esteemed guest they were talking about was the young master of the Gu family?

Oh right, this restaurant seemed to be owned by the Gu family.

Barkley turned his head to look over.

“Young Master Siyang.”

His gaze passed Gu Siyang and landed on Shen Li, who was behind him. The smile on his face deepened.

“Miss Ah Li.”

He had never seen Shen Li before. He had only heard the name “Ah Li” from Gu Tingchuan. Now that he had seen that Gu Siyang had brought someone over, he surmised that this person must be her.

The woman who had spoken now looked embarrassed.

“So, it’s Young Master Gu. I... I didn’t mean to say that just now. I’m really sorry.”

Although she also had a very good family background, their status was still far behind the Gu family.

Even if this was the Capitol and not Hong Kong City, Gu Siyang was still not someone she could afford to offend.

Gu Siyang glanced at her without taking her apology to heart. Then he scoffed.

“Oh? Do you think I’m deaf?”

That woman did not expect that Gu Siyang would not let go of such a small matter even though she had already apologized.

Hadn’t it only been a few words of ridicule? Was there a need to be like this?

However, she did not dare to retort back. She felt aggrieved and could only look at Xu Yini for help.

In comparison, as the eldest daughter of the Xu family, Xu Yini’s status was higher than hers. She would not have no qualms facing Gu Siyang.

Moreover, with her temper, it was impossible that she would endure being talked to like that.

Even if that person was Gu Siyang.

However, after waiting for a while, Xu Yini still had not spoken. Instead, she was looking over at the other two with a cold and sullen expression.

The woman followed Xu Yini’s line of sight and realized that she was staring at the girl who was standing beside Gu Siyang.

“That’s... Ning Li?” She mumbled uncertainly.

Xu Yini suddenly laughed coldly.

To think that she would bump into Ning Li here. What a coincidence.

Ever since she had been exposed to a series of scandals some time back and had been forced to retire from the entertainment industry, her emotions had become very unstable.

She knew very well that those things had happened one after another because someone had planned it all out in order to completely destroy her reputation in the entertainment circles!

What she knew even more clearly was that the mastermind behind it was none other than Lu Huaiyu!

1

Only he would behave so recklessly with the Xu family, and only he was so ruthless and decisive in his way of doing things.

Once he made a move, he would not leave her any way out!

All of this had been just for Ning Li!

How could she not feel resentment and hatred?

After all, she had known Lu Huaiyu for many years and had pursued him for many years. She had never thought that he would treat her so ruthlessly.

It had all been because of Ning Li!

After the incident, she had been in a constant bad mood and had tried finding other diversions.

At first, Father Xu and Mother Xu had scolded her, but as time went on, they could not help but feel sorry for her when they saw her crying all the time.

After that, they had simply let her be.

She had planned to come out for a meal today, but she had never expected to bump into Ning Li again.

Her already unhappy mood became even worse.

She swept her gaze over Gu Siyang and the girl standing with him, and she stood up.

“I’m not going to eat anymore.”

She said.

The woman next to her was stunned for a moment before she subconsciously stood up as well. However, she still asked, “You’re not eating anymore? Yini, why are you suddenly not eating anymore?”

Although the head chef had always insisted that they did not have what they wanted, ultimately, it was not a big deal.

The seafood restaurant had extremely high requirements for the ingredients. It was not unusual for them to occasionally not have the corresponding ingredients to what was listed on the menu.

Moreover, that “VIP” was Gu Siyang.

Xu Yini looked at Shen Li, her gaze fixed on that clean and beautiful face, and she could not help but clench her hands.

It was this face, this person, that had compelled Lu Huaiyu to have done those things to her!

“I suddenly just don’t feel like eating anymore.” She stared into Shen Li’s eyes.

She appeared to be talking to the woman accompanying her, but in fact, every word had been directed at Shen Li.

She had been fine earlier, but just from the sight of Shen Li...

The woman also looked more closely at Shen Li, and only then did she remember that this was Lu Huaiyu’s girlfriend.

Thinking of this, she subconsciously looked at Xu Yini.

Throughout the entire Capital, who did not know that Xu Yini had been chasing Lu Huaiyu for many years? There had even been rumors in private that the two families had already made plans for them to marry.

However, before she could win Lu Huaiyu’s favor, Lu Huaiyu had already gotten a girlfriend.

Moreover, the publicity about the relationship had been very high-profile.

That could be considered as giving Xu Yini a few tight slaps on the face.

Xu Yini had become a topic of conversation for many people after dinner, becoming a joke in the entire Capital.

How could she not mind seeing Shen Li now?

“Disgusting.”

She raised her chin slightly, enunciating each word clearly.

Barkley frowned.

Gu Siyang's expression changed immediately. His smile disappeared in an instant, and his expression became dangerous.

"What did you just say?"

She dared to say such words against Shen Li in front of him. If they had met in private, who knew what would happen?

After a moment, he snorted.

"Fine, fine... Since being here is so unappetizing, you don't have to come here anymore."

He looked at the hotel manager who was accompanying him.

"Cancel all their cards. In the future, this restaurant will not be welcoming you in."

1

Chapter 703: See How You Like It

Xu Yini's expression turned cold.

She was the eldest daughter of the Xu family, one of the top socialites in the Capital. She had been pampered and received special treatment since she was young.

Other than Lu Huaiyu, she had never been wronged like this by anyone else.

How could she possibly accept this?

“Gu Siyang, aren’t you going too far by doing this?”

Xu Yini glanced at Shen Li with a mocking gaze.

“I know this restaurant belongs to the Gu family, but since it’s open for business, there’s no reason to drive the customers out, right? Are you sure you want to do this... just for her?”

Her tone was nothing short of contemptuous.

She had also heard of some of the things that had happened a while ago.

Ning Li was Ning, but she was also Tree’s Shadow.

She was a top designer that countless people in the fashion industry pursued, and she was also Mei Yanqing’s last disciple.

In the eyes of many people, this kind of identity was already quite amazing.

However, Xu Yini did not really think much of it.

To the people in the circle of the aristocratic families in the Capital, these things were not even as important as her being Lu Huaiyu’s girlfriend.

The Lu family, Lu Huaiyu, and the power behind them were the most powerful and unshakable.

However, so what if she was his girlfriend?

After all, there was no real security to that status. Once they broke up, she would be nothing.

1

Just because of this one person, Gu Siyang wanted to offend her and the Xu family?

Everyone knew that this action would not be worth it.

No matter what, Gu Siyang was the young master of the Gu family. How could he not see this clearly?

However, after she said these words, she did not see the hesitation on Gu Siyang's face as she had hoped.

On the contrary, he smiled, and it was a very bright smile.

"That's right!"

He nodded without hesitation,

"It's all for her!"

Xu Yini's expression froze.

After a while, she looked at Shen Li and sneered.

"It looks like I underestimated you in the past. You... are really capable."

To have the ability to make Lu Huaiyu make an exception for her, and to make Gu Siyang help her like this.

How could an ordinary person do this?

Shen Li looked at her calmly without any emotion in her eyes. It was as if she was not bothered by what she had said at all.

However, the more she behaved this way, the angrier Xu Yini became.

Her gaze swept over the two of them with a mocking gaze.

“Does Huaiyu know that Young Master Gu is standing up for you this way?”

When she said this, the surroundings fell silent for a moment.

Gu Siyang was momentarily stunned.

No, he was helping his cousin. Why did he need Lu Huaiyu’s permission for that?

Shen Li, however, calmly spoke up.

“Does Second Brother know that you still address him like that?”

The smile on Xu Yini’s face suddenly froze.

Shen Li’s tone was very calm, as if she was asking whether the weather was good today.

However, it was precisely because of this that Xu Yini was particularly embarrassed.

A strong sense of shame surged into her heart, causing Xu Yini’s face to turn pale.

Yes.

In the past, she had always addressed Lu Huaiyu like that because the Xu family and the Lu family had been family friends. She had done that to deliberately show off that she had a bit of closeness to others.

However, ever since Lu Huaiyu had decisively dealt with her the last time, she knew that she was no longer qualified to do so.

Now that these words had come out of Shen Li's mouth, it was even more condescending and sarcastic.

Xu Yini gritted her teeth and lifted her feet to walk out.

As she brushed past Shen Li, she suddenly thought of something and stopped in her tracks. She turned her head to look.

Her voice was extremely low.

"Do you really think that you're the one he likes the most?"

Shen Li met her gaze with an indifferent expression.

The corners of Xu Yini's lips curled up into a mocking smile.

"You're so pitiful."

Shen Li tilted her head, as if she did not understand what she was saying.

The very next moment, she asked, "Miss Xu, in what capacity are you saying this to me now?"

Xu Yini's lips turned pale.

After all, that was Lu Huaiyu's girlfriend, and she was nothing!

Xu Yini finally could not take it anymore and turned around to leave.

"Yini! Wait for me!"

The other woman quickly followed after her.

The two of them quickly disappeared out the door.

Gu Siyang turned around and looked at them in disbelief.

"What's wrong with this Xu Yini's brain?"

He looked at the manager who was accompanying him and frowned.

"From now on, please be more careful. Don't let her enter through this door again... It's bad luck."

The manager quickly bowed in response.

"Yes, sir."

Shen Li was too lazy to waste her time on such people and such matters.

"Let's just go in to eat. Haven't you been wanting to eat for a long time?"

At the mention of this, Gu Siyang was suddenly reenergized. He said to Barkley, "Yes, yes, send up all the things that Second Uncle sent over!"

...

In the private room, Shen Li and Gu Siyang sat facing each other.

One after another, top-notch seafood ingredients were sent over.

Veron oysters, rose prawns, caviar...

Shen Li looked at the table that was filled to the brim and fell silent for a moment.

“... Does Second Uncle have some misunderstanding about my appetite?”

There were six plates of raw oysters alone.

Not to mention the other things.

There were so many items. Even with Gu Siyang present, they would definitely not be able to finish everything.

Gu Siyang waved his hand.

“It’s alright. These were sent here for you to taste. You can eat as much as you like. If you don’t like it, then don’t eat it.”

As he spoke, he opened an oyster for Shen Li, squeezed some lemon juice over it, and handed it to her.

“Try this. It’s from Kuiyi Wharf. The meat is fat and delicious. I like it very much, but I don’t know if it suits your taste.”

Kuiyi Wharf was one of the most famous wharves in Hong Kong City. The seafood that was produced there was also very famous, especially the Veron oysters.

So, it had been sent from there.

Shen Li accepted it and thanked him.

The oysters melted immediately the moment they entered the mouth. The meat was smooth and tender. When mixed with the aroma of lemon, it became even more outstanding.

She nodded.

“It’s really delicious.”

Gu Siyang chuckled and opened the second plate of oysters.

“This was sent from the fishing port pier. It’s slightly less famous than the ones from Kuiyi Wharf, but it’s also very delicious. Grandma likes this more.”

Shen Li was stunned.

“These... aren’t from the same place?”

She thought that they must have been sent from the same place at the same time.

Gu Siyang picked up a green crab next to her and casually said, “Well, not really. Although they are all in the same sea area, they are quite far away from each other. The water quality, ecological environment, management, and so on are all different, so the taste is also different.”

As he spoke, he handled the green crab in his hand neatly and opened its shell.

“Unfortunately, this isn’t the right season now. This green crab is not fat enough. In a few months, the inside of the green crab will be full of yellow, which is when it will be the most delicious.”

He placed the green crab on Shen Li’s plate and raised his chin.

“This was farmed by the Star Ferry Pier. You can try it.”

Shen Li paused.

She put down the spoon and glanced at the table again.

There were all kinds of seafood.

She asked slowly, “Did these... all come from different places?”

Gu Siyang simply nodded.

“Yes, there are seventeen piers in Hong Kong City. These were selected from each one and sent it over.”

He raised his chin.

“Eat up and tell me what you like.”

Second Uncle was still waiting.

Chapter 704: Thank You, Cousin

There were seventeen docks in total. Even if they had only sent one serving of each kind, the portion was still quite large.

Shen Li picked up the green crab and tore off a piece of crab meat.

“Actually, I’m not picky about what I eat. It’s much too troublesome for Second Uncle.”

Gu Siyang chuckled.

“What’s so troublesome about it? Right now, you’re the only treasure in our family.”

1

The young miss of the Gu family was meant to be pampered a thousand times over.

Moreover, she had suffered so much in the past. No matter what the family said, they would find a way to make up for it.

This was just the beginning.

Our family...

Shen Li’s hands stopped moving.

His tone had been casual and insistent. The way he had said it could not have been more natural. It was filled with an undisguised closeness and partiality.

She blinked lightly, the corners of her lips pursing into a faint smile.

“Thank you, Cousin.”

Gu Siyang was in the middle of helping her peel the prawns. When he heard her address him in this way, he accidentally twisted the entire prawn's head off.

However, he could no longer care about these things. He raised his head to look at Shen Li and stammered excitedly, "W-w-what did you just call me?!"

This was the first time she had taken the initiative to address him as "Cousin"!

From now on, he could finally have some standing at home!!!

1

Shen Li, "..."

She looked sympathetically at the prawn in his hand and knew that she should not have called him that so casually.

"Hey, that prawn of yours—"

Gu Siyang lowered his head to take a look. Only then did he realize that as he had been peeling the prawn, the juice had accidentally splashed all over himself.

He waved his hand nonchalantly, full of excitement.

"It's fine! I'll just peel another one for you!"

As he said that, he actually took another one from the side and started peeling it seriously.

Shen Li, "..."

Alright.

She should just let him be.

When Gu Siyang had first said that he wanted to come over, he had acted as if he really wanted to eat the food. However, after coming over, she realized that what he wanted was actually just to come over to eat with her.

He peeled the prawns, opened crabs, cut sea urchins... He had done everything just to serve her.

It had to be said that although Gu Siyang had a carefree personality, he was still the young master of the Gu family. He knew a lot about eating good food. When he put his mind to doing something seriously, he was also neat and tidy. Everything had been done flawlessly.

Thanks to him, all Shen Li needed to do was just to pick the food that she liked.

The meal lasted for more than an hour. Once it was over, Gu Siyang asked her again which were the dishes she had liked the most.

Shen Li picked a few, and Gu Siyang heaved a sigh of relief. He then happily sent her back to school.

...

After lunch, Shen Li returned to the dormitory.

She found Xue Langlang reading alone in the room.

“Ah Li!”

Seeing her, Xue Langlang’s eyes immediately lit up.

“You came back just in time. I happen to have a question that I can’t solve. Could you help me take a look?”

Shen Li walked over.

“Which one is it?”

Xue Langlang pointed at the university physics book on the table.

“This one. It’s for the angular velocity. I’m a little stuck.”

Shen Li glanced sideways a few times and took a piece of paper from the side to write.

After a moment, she handed it over.

“Take a look. It should be like this.”

Xue Langlang took it and read it carefully. Very quickly, the understanding of the solution dawned on her.

“Ah! I understand!”

She quickly lowered her head and started to calculate. After solving a problem, she felt extremely relieved.

“That’s great! I’ve finally finished writing the answer!”

She looked at Shen Li.

“Sigh, I remember that your textbook is still brand new. Yet, you still know everything! It’s true that there is a divider between a god and us normal human beings!”

As she said this, she could not help but put her hands to her cheeks and let out a faint sigh.

“Or is this the mysterious power that comes from your genes?!”

The whole of Xijing University knew that Shen Li was Shen Zhijin’s biological daughter, and their dormitory was no exception.

After hearing this news, Xue Langlang had sat there in a daze for a long time.

Shen Zhijin was the physicist that she admired the most. She had already been very happy to be able to meet him at school and greet him.

Previously, when Shen Zhijin had given her father his email address, the whole family had been excited for a long time.

Who knew that Shen Li was actually Shen Zhijin’s daughter!

She was living in the same dormitory room as Dean Shen’s daughter!

At that time, Xue Langlang had been so excited that she had not slept well for several days.

1

Shen Li laughed.

“Probably.”

Xue Langlang chuckled.

“That’s what I said! Even from the beginning, Dean Shen treated you very well!”

At that time, everyone, including Shen Zhijin and Shen Li, had thought that it was just because he admired her greatly. However, after thinking about it, they felt that perhaps it was the instinct of a father and daughter.

Before they had understood their relationship, they had already been partial to each other and protective of each other without any reason.

“Blood ties are really amazing!”

Xue Langlang sighed.

Shen Li paused and thought for a moment before nodding seriously.

Suddenly, Xue Langlang asked with curiosity, “By the way, Shen Li, did you go to the premiere of “Hibiscus” two days ago?”

“Yes, I did. Why?”

“It’s nothing. I just wanted to ask if you liked it.”

Xue Langlang tapped on her book.

“Tomorrow is Christmas Day. I plan to go to the movies tomorrow after I finish studying this. I’m not interested in the more commercial film or the animated film that will be screened at the same time. I saw a few movie critics on Weibo saying that “Hibiscus” is very good, so I’m a little tempted.”

Shen Li thought about it.

“I think it’s okay.”

“Really? Then I’ll go for it!”

Since even Shen Li had said so, and the theme song was sung by Lin Fengmian, the first choice would definitely be this one!

As she spoke, she opened her mobile app to buy a ticket.

After looking for a while, she could not help but let out an “Eh” sound and muttered softly,

“How come all the good spots have been reserved...? I thought this movie was not very well-publicized?”

She pondered for a moment.

“Probably the wave of trending searches has increased interest in it?”

Actually, this movie was indeed quite controversial.

One was due to Ge, one was because of Lin Fengmian, and the other was due to the praise from the famous film critics on Weibo after the movie’s premiere.

In addition, there were even a few entertainment marketing bloggers who had expressed their love for the film without hesitation.

This was very different from what everyone had expected. With the conflict, its popularity had naturally increased.

Shen Li pondered for a moment and said, “There should be more films scheduled at the back.”

The box office earnings of a movie were largely determined by the cinemas.

If the sponsors had a good relationship with the cinemas, or if the director and the lead actor had a strong appeal at the box office, the cinemas would perform very well and thus increase the box office earnings.

Of course, other than that, there was also a determining factor, which was the quality of the movie itself.

The people who ran the cinemas were not stupid. The more films that were good, the more money they would earn.

Therefore, many cinemas would adjust the arrangement of the films according to the conditions of the movie's premiere and on-demand release.

Xue Langlang looked at his phone:

"Hey! That seems to be the case! I saw yesterday that these two cinemas had not been scheduled to screen "Hibiscus" yet! However, they have it today! Shen Li, do you think this movie will really explode this time?"

She clicked her tongue.

"Looking at the commotion in the cinemas, it's really possible! I heard that only 30 million had been invested in this movie. If it really becomes a dark horse at the box office, won't the investors make a huge profit?"

Shen Li drank a mouthful of water and tilted her head slightly.

"Yes, I guess so."

Chapter 705: You Accompany Me

As Shen Li spoke, she took two books from the table and put them into her backpack.

Xue Langlang took a look and realized that the books she had taken were for professional classes.

“Ah Li, are you going to start revising these?”

Shen Li nodded.

“Yes.”

The semester was almost over, and one after another, their classes had already begun ending for the semester. They were now only waiting for the final exam.

She had been busy with other things recently, so she really had not put too much thought into it.

“The god of learning actually wants to do revision work... How can us mortals still be allowed to live?”

The expression on Xue Langlang’s face was complicated.

The only class that Shen Li had full attendance for was the Advanced Mathematics class. She had more or less missed the other classes, especially the specialized classes at the Institute of Physics.

However, every time there was a question that she could not answer, she would ask Shen Li, and she would know all the answers.

Just like what had happened just now—

Thinking of this, Xue Langlang felt helpless.

She was so serious in her studies, yet she still could not compare to this person who did not attend classes regularly.

Many people secretly guessed that Shen Li rarely attended classes, but that she must have worked hard in private to maintain such results.

However, as Shen Li's roommate, Xue Langlang knew very well that Shen Li really did not spend much energy on this.

She had long recognized one thing— most people, including her, had not reached the level where they could even compete with Shen Li's hard work.

Just based on their IQ and talent alone, these things were enough for Shen Li to leave them far behind.

Sigh, being in the same dormitory as the god of learning was a truly painful yet happy experience.

After experiencing a series of blows, Xue Langlang had decided to just accept the circumstances and just enjoy the good parts of the situation.

Especially after finding out that Shen Li was Shen Zhijin's daughter, she felt even more at ease.

— Just like she had said, there was a difference between mortals and immortals!

Wasn't it the best feeling to follow behind the superior person and enjoy a good life?

Shen Li carried her bag.

"The results of the final exam this time are quite important. According to the rules of the academy, if the GPA meets the requirements, you can only apply for exemption next semester."

Xue Langlang was momentarily stunned.

“What?”

Applying for exemption... Was that what she was thinking?!

Shen Li nodded.

“Actually, things are quite easy here in the academy. It’s just that the courses from other departments will be a little more troublesome. However, if the GPA is good, they will also take it as a reference.”

Xue Langlang, “...”

She finally understood what Shen Li was talking about.

“You plan to finish the undergraduate course ahead of schedule?”

“Yes.”

Hearing Shen Li’s straightforward and simple answer, Xue Langlang choked for a moment.

After recovering from her shock, she thought about it carefully and felt that this matter seemed to be... Also within her expectations?

With Shen Li’s caliber, it was true that she did not need to waste four years on the undergraduate course.

“Sigh, what’s the trouble with that?”

On one hand, Shen Li was indeed outstanding. On the other hand, her father was Shen Zhijin.

Wasn't this just a small matter?

Xue Langlang's gaze swept across the stack of professional books on her desk and felt the tears silently well up in her heart.

It had already been difficult enough for her to deal with all this, yet in the end, someone else was already thinking about applying for a free course and graduating early.

"Say, Ah Li, is this your father's idea? I've never heard you mention it before."

Shen Li adjusted the strap on her backpack and shook her head.

"I had this idea before."

Of course, she had really made up her mind when Shen Zhijin had attended her Advanced Mathematics class.

His nonchalant question had successfully shaken her state of mind.

Xijing University at the age of sixteen?

When she thought of this, Shen Li did not want to say anything.

Although Xu Yin had actually brought up the matter of taking the Xijing University exam early, she had refused due to her special circumstances at that time.

In the end, like all her peers, she had completed her high school curriculum and taken the college entrance examination normally.

Many people had envied her for getting into Xijing University at the age of 18.

However, the truth was— her father had been 14 when he had been accepted, her boyfriend had been 16, and she was the latest, at the age of 18.

People were really afraid of comparisons, even her own father and boyfriend.

Lu Huaiyu was not the only one under pressure.

Thinking of this, Shen Li said goodbye to Xue Langlang.

“I’m going to the library.”

...

Xijing University had the largest library in the country.

Shen Li swiped her card and entered.

It was near the end of the semester, and there were obviously many more students coming to the library.

Many people noticed her and looked over at her.

Shen Li was already used to such gazes. She went straight to the sixth floor and found a remote seat to sit down.

Ever since she had entered the academy, the teachers of the Institute of Physics had been especially fond of her. Therefore, the teachers running those specialized courses in her own institute had basically turned a blind eye to her comings and goings.

Therefore, the number of times she had read the specialized books was indeed not many.

She took out an ordinary astronomy book and started reading it.

Time flew by.

It was not until evening, when the sky gradually darkened, that she finally packed up her things, got up, and prepared to leave.

Just as she walked out of the library, she received a call from Lu Huaiyu.

“Second Brother?”

A low and languid voice entered her ears.

“Still in the library?”

Shen Li spoke as she walked.

“No, I just came out. What’s the matter?”

Lu Huaiyu laughed.

“Raise your head.”

“Huh?”

Shen Li was stunned. Subconsciously, she raised her head and saw a tall and straight figure walking toward them from the square outside the library.

It was Lu Huaiyu.

She walked forward until she was in front of him. Then, she finally ended the phone call.

“Why didn’t Second Brother come without saying anything?”

Lu Huaiyu smiled and said, “The child is studying so seriously. It’s not appropriate to disturb her.”

As he spoke, he handed over an exquisite box.

“Ah Li, Happy Christmas Eve.”

Shen Li blinked and took the gift box. Then, she remembered something.

“Ah, the gift I have for you is still at home.”

The two of them had arranged to have dinner together. She had planned to return to Skyleaf City before going out.

She had not expected him to come early and even come straight to the library to pick her up.

Lu Huaiyu held her hand, and the warmth of the ironing reached her fingertips. He smiled and said, “Is that so? Then... will you accompany me to go and get it?”

..

The Capital airport.

Shen Zhijin and his group got off the plane.

A fellow teacher asked, "Teacher Shen, are you really not coming with us?"

Shen Zhijin smiled.

"Yes, I'm going home."

Chapter 706: Lu Huaiyu VS Shen Zhijin

Shen Li and Lu Huaiyu headed towards Skyleaf City together.

They did not need to go far, and the black Bentley soon arrived downstairs.

Shen Li opened the car door and was about to get out with her gift when she said, "Second Brother, wait for me, I'll be down soon."

The tips of Lu Huaiyu's brows raised slightly.

"Since it's for me, I think it's better if I go up and get it personally. What do you think?"

Shen Li glanced at him and knew that he had already made up his mind. She nodded.

"Okay."

As she spoke, she took a step back and Lu Huaiyu followed her out of the car.

The two of them walked towards the lobby.

"Ah Li, are you cold?"

Lu Huaiyu asked in a low voice.

Shen Li shook her head. "I'm not cold."

Although the temperature was very low today, they had been sitting in the car the whole time. How could she be cold?

Lu Huaiyu bent his head and leaned in closer, his voice carrying a lazy smile as he spoke.

"But I'm cold, what should I do?"

Shen Li, "..."

It was only a short distance...

She stretched her hand out to hold his warm fingers.

"Liar."

She whispered.

The temperature of his palm was clearly higher than hers.

The corners of Lu Huaiyu's lips curved slightly as he pretended that he had not heard her words. He held her hand even tighter and whispered in her ear, "Thank you, Ah Li."

Shen Li pretended to ignore him and pulled his hand to walk towards the elevator.

...

The two of them entered the elevator and Lu Huaiyu pressed the button for the ninth floor.

A moment later.

Ding-

The elevator door opened.

When Shen Li came to the front door, she pulled her hand away.

Lu Huaiyu was forced to reluctantly let go of her hand and let her input the password.

The palm of his hand suddenly felt empty, as if even a certain part of his heart was empty.

His slender fingers curled up slightly before he followed Shen Li into the room.

The gift had been placed in the bedroom. Shen Li walked in and took out... a painting.

Lu Huaiyu's gaze focused slightly.

The painting was not big. The size was about 25cm × 25cm.

However, the main thing was that it was a painting that had been produced by her own hands.

Shen Li handed the painting over.

"Second Brother."

Lu Huaiyu took it and looked at the painting, his eyes darkening.

It was an oil painting, and the theme was Christmas Eve.

Outside the window, the night air looked dense, and the crescent moon hung high in the sky. The streets were decorated with lanterns and colored lights, giving off a strong festive atmosphere.

The Christmas tree in front of the store was decorated with all kinds of small gifts and colored lights, shining brilliantly.

An intricate and gorgeous Christmas wreath could be seen hanging on the main door, and one could even see the faint glow on the small golden bells.

Even through the thin layer of the drawing paper, one could still feel the excitement and joy.

However, this was not the most important thing.

Lu Huaiyu's gaze fell upon the transparent glass window.

It was extremely light and thin, but on it, there was a side profile.

The appearance of the face could not be clearly seen, but the black hair that hung down, the smooth lines from the brow to the bridge of the nose, the sharp and smooth jawline...

It was him.

Lu Huaiyu stared at the painting for a long time before he asked in a low voice, "Ah Li, is this... a painting of me?"

Shen Li answered softly, "Yes."

Lu Huaiyu's Adam's apple rolled. "This was from last year's Christmas."

It was not a question, but a confirmation.

That was because he had also seen a faint, rich color in the corner. It was the small cake balloon that he had given her that day.

1

Shen Li looked at him and blinked.

Everything that she had thought had been put into this painting.

That day at the movie, she had not actually paid attention to it.

All she had thought about was the person in the painting.

Lu Huaiyu was silent for a long time before he finally smiled.

"Ah Li, come here."

He said.

Shen Li heard him and moved forward.

He held her hand and gently kissed her delicate and precious fingers.

His voice was deep and slightly hoarse.

“Why are you so obedient, hmm?”

Shen Li allowed him to kiss her, and a subtle tickle spread from her hand.

Sensing that his eyes were getting darker, she finally said, “Second Brother, we should go. If we stay here any longer, we’ll be late.”

It was difficult to make a reservation at a restaurant on Christmas Eve, even though this was not generally a problem for Lu Huaiyu.

However, her intuition told her that it would be really dangerous if she continued to stay here.

Just like last time—

Lu Huaiyu understood what she meant and could not help but laugh.

“Okay.”

...

Shen Zhijin went upstairs and entered the password to open the door.

Then, he spotted a pair of men’s shoes at the entrance that should not have been there.

He paused and looked up.

There was no one in the living room, and there was no one in the kitchen and dining room.

On his handsome and cold face, his expression remained calm.

Just then, Shen Li and Lu Huaiyu happened to walk out of the bedroom.

Due to the angle, the two of them did not notice Shen Zhijin standing at the door.

Lu Huaiyu was holding a painting in one hand as he held Shen Li's hand in the other.

After she closed the door, he lowered his head and approached her, speaking in a slight flirtatious tone, "Ah Li, are you that scared? The last time that I came, didn't you return—"

1

He suddenly stopped talking.

That was because he felt a substantial gaze that seemed to fall on his shoulder.

At the same time, Shen Li also sensed something and turned her head to look in the same direction.

When she saw Shen Zhijin, she paused for a while before calling out dryly, "Dad."

The corners of Lu Huaiyu's eyes twitched.

Then, he quietly straightened up and looked back at the man.

Shen Zhijin was standing at the door with a black suitcase next to him. It looked travel-worn, and it should be...

He had just... just returned.

The space seemed to freeze, and the surroundings had gone silent.

Lu Huaiyu greeted him with a smile.

“Teacher Shen.”

Shen Zhijin did not say anything.

Shen Li coughed lightly. “Dad, didn’t you say that your flight would be tomorrow?”

“It’s Christmas Eve today, so I wanted to come back and spend it with you.”

1

In order to end his trip ahead of schedule, he had been working overtime over the past two days.

As he spoke, he finally looked at Lu Huaiyu.

After exchanging glances for a moment, Lu Huaiyu said sincerely, “Teacher Shen, I came here to pick Ah Li up for dinner. I also came up to pick up the Christmas present that Ah Li gave me.”

“Okay.”

Shen Zhijin’s gaze swept past the painting in his hand, the tone of his voice remaining calm.

“Then, what about last time?”

Chapter 707: Around 10pm

The large room instantly went silent, and the air was filled with a subtle air of awkwardness.

Lu Huaiyu's eyebrows twitched.

It seemed that he had heard that sentence clearly...

However, in the next moment, his smile remained unchanged, and his tone was extremely calm as he said,

"Previously, Ah Li still had some things that she had left at Rongyue Mansion. I noticed that she had been quite busy recently, so I helped her by bringing them over for her."

Shen Zhijin listened to him, his expression remaining unperturbed.

Bringing things, taking things.

This house was so big. Could those things only be placed in the bedroom?

Probably knowing that his words did not have much credibility, Lu Huaiyu took the initiative to help him carry his luggage.

"Teacher Shen, you must be very tired from your journey. Shall I help you?"

Shen Zhijin's hand slowly tightened around the handle of the luggage, and he said calmly, "There's no need. This luggage is not meant to be sent to Tangtang's bedroom."

1

Lu Huaihe, "..."

Shen Li, "..."

Shen Zhijin pulled the suitcase along as he walked towards the living room.

"Dad, have you eaten?"

Shen Li walked over.

Shen Zhijin paused for a moment.

"No."

He had rushed back in a hurry and mostly been resting on the plane.

Shen Li looked at him hesitantly, then at Lu Huaiyu.

She had already agreed to have dinner with Lu Huaiyu, so it was not good to miss the appointment. On the other hand, Shen Zhijin had just returned.

He had been on a 3-day business trip and his schedule had already been very tight. However, he had managed to squeeze it down to two days. He had returned a night earlier just to spend Christmas Eve with her.

This—

Lu Huaiyu suddenly spoke.

"Ah Li, Teacher Shen specially flew back early just for you and today is also your first Christmas Eve together, so—"

Shen Li looked at him in surprise.

Lu Huaiyu was taking the initiative to back down?

With his temperament, it was really rare—

“So,” Lu Huaiyu said with sincerity, “Let’s stay at home and accompany Teacher Shen.”

3

Shen Li, “...”

Shen Zhijin raised his eyes slightly, and his clear gaze fell on Lu Huaiyu again.

“Your man seems to be waiting downstairs.”

When he had returned earlier, his only thought had been to go home as soon as possible. Thus, he had not paid too much attention to his surroundings.

However, now that he thought about it, beneath the dim shadow of the trees by the roadside, it seemed that a black Bentley had been parked there.

It went without saying who that car belonged to.

Lu Huaiyu considered it seriously for a moment before obediently nodding.

“You’re right. I’ll let him go back first.”

As he spoke, he took his phone out and called Yi Bin, who was still waiting downstairs.

“Please cancel the reservation at the restaurant. I won’t be going there today.”

As he spoke, he glanced over.

“Teacher Shen is back. Ah Li and I will stay at home and spend some time with Teacher Shen.”

1

Ah Li and Shen Zhijin were speechless.

1

Stay with Teacher Shen...

Whose house was this?!

Shen Li’s breathing stopped. She could clearly feel a chill spreading from Shen Zhijin’s body, causing the surrounding temperature to drop greatly.

She turned her head and looked at Shen Zhijin, blinking.

“Dad, what would you like to eat today?”

If Shen Zhijin had still been thinking about what to eat with her before he had pushed open the door, now, he really did not have the slightest appetite.

However, since his daughter asked this question, he obviously could not bear to refuse her.

“I’ll go with whatever you suggest, Tangtang.”

“Teacher Shen.” After Lu Huaiyu ended the phone call and overheard the conversation between the father and daughter, he added, “You must have had a long, tiring journey back. What would you like to eat? Ah Li and I can make it.”

Shen Li instantly felt even colder.

Lu Huaiyu placed the painting on the coffee table in the living room, his movements especially natural and smooth.

Because the painting had been placed in a box, Shen Zhijin could not see the contents.

Shen Li could not be bothered to deal with him. Instead, she walked towards the refrigerator and scanned the interior.

These past few days, because Shen Zhijin was on a business trip and she had been the only one at home, she had not bought any extra ingredients.

Originally, she had planned to shop for groceries tomorrow, but she had not expected Shen Zhijin to return early.

Moreover, today was a special day so it was too easy to just say that.

“Dad, I’ll just go to the supermarket to buy some more vegetables, alright?”

It was not far from here anyway. Besides, she had often accompanied Shen Zhijin to the supermarket recently and was already very familiar with it.

Lu Huaiyu came behind her and looked into the fridge. Hearing her say so, he said, “I’ll go with you. Since Teacher Shen has only just come back, why don’t we—”

“There’s no rule about allowing guests to go shopping with us,” Shen Zhijin interrupted Lu Huaiyu in a flat tone.

As he spoke, he walked towards the entrance.

Lu Huaiyu did not seem to understand the rejection in his words. Instead, he smiled and said sincerely, “Teacher Shen, you’re too polite. I’m Ah Li’s boyfriend. These small things are what I should do.”

1

“I’ll help you and Ah Li carry your things.”

...

Five minutes later, the three of them went downstairs together.

Shen Li followed beside Shen Zhijin, while Lu Huaiyu was half a step behind her.

They had only just walked some distance when they bumped into Bi Zhitong and his wife.

“Hey, Zhijin, you’re back?”

Bi Zhitong was a little surprised to see Shen Zhijin, and he was even more surprised when he saw Lu Huaiyu behind him.

“Huaiyu is here too?”

His wife’s gaze swept over the three of them and smiled gently.

“Are you all going out together?”

Shen Li’s eyes curved in a smile.

“No, Auntie Bi. My dad just came back, so we’re going shopping together.”

“Oh, I see.”

Bi Zhitong and his wife smiled in understanding.

They had known Shen Zhijin for so many years, and he had always been alone. Finally, he had more people around him now. It was a rare sight.

They looked on at him, they felt happy for him.

Bi Zhitong smiled.

“Zhijin, Huaiyu is very protective of Ah Li. The last time I saw him, it was around 10pm. He was so worried that it wouldn’t be safe for her to come back alone, so he personally sent her home.”

Shen Zhijin paused for a moment and asked, “Around 10 pm?”

Shen Li tugged at his sleeve.

“Dad, remember that Mian sent two tickets to the premiere of “Hibiscus” previously?”

1

It had been a night event, so it had indeed been quite late when they had come back from watching it.

Shen Zhijin nodded his head and said goodbye to Bi Zhitong and his wife before he continued walking forward.

On the way, he met several familiar faces, many of whom were teachers and staff of Xijing University.

When these people saw the three of them together, they were all quite surprised.

Everyone at Xijing University knew that Lu Huaiyu was Shen Li's boyfriend.

However, they had not expected that his relationship with both the father and daughter had become so close?

Previously, he had accompanied them to the staff canteen. This time, he had come directly to the house and was accompanying them to buy vegetables.

Tsk.

Surely, that meant that Shen Zhijin was quite satisfied with Lu Huaiyu?

That's right. After all, it was Lu Huaiyu.

Therefore, after a short moment of surprise, everyone looked over with envy and blessings in tacit understanding.

The three of them entered the supermarket. Shen Li and Shen Zhijin picked out the items, while Lu Huaiyu helped to carry them from behind.

While they were checking out, they happened to bump into Zhang Yao at the checkout counter.

“Hey, Zhijin?”

Zhang Yao had turned around and spotted the three of them. He was amused.

“Huaiyu, are you here to freeload?”

Lu Huaiyu nodded with a smile. “Yes.”

“I thought you were here to send Ah Li back again! But it’s still early, not like the last time when it had been almost ten o’clock—”

Shen Zhijin paused and narrowed his eyes. He asked slowly, “Almost 10 o’clock?”

Lu Huaiyu’s eyebrows twitched as he immediately tried to stop him.

“Zhang—”

He could not stop Zhang Yao’s hearty laughter.

“Hahahaha, that’s right! It was snowing that day. When I came back, I happened to meet them downstairs!”

Chapter 708: Entrance Guard

Zhang Yao was still smiling happily. However, after a while, he realized that the reactions of the people in front of him were a little strange.

Shen Li had her head lowered, as if she was staring at the ground in a daze.

Lu Huaiyu wanted to say something, but stopped himself.

Shen Zhijin's expression was especially indifferent. The corners of his eyes and brows seemed to be covered with a thin layer of frost.

Then, he spoke calmly, his voice exceptionally clear.

"Is that so?"

Zhang Yao finally sensed that something was a little off, and his laughter awkwardly stopped.

Wait... What was going on?

Was it not a very normal thing for someone to send his girlfriend home? He felt that Lu Huaiyu had done a pretty good job with this, and that there was nothing to pick on!

Lu Huaiyu paused for a moment before giving a slight smile.

"Vice-Principal Zhang, you must have remembered wrongly. After the movie ended that day, I had sent Ah Li back. The traffic was quite heavy, and it should have been very late—"

"Eh? That can't be." Zhang Yao was stunned. "I go to the gym three days a week, and the time I come back is the same every time. It must have been less than ten o'clock!"

Their surroundings became quiet again.

Zhang Yao did not understand what was going on. However, it just so happened that he had just paid his bill, so he picked his bag up.

"Then... Zhijin, I'll take my leave first, alright?"

Shen Zhijin responded with a "Hmm" and moved forward to put all the things he wanted to buy on the counter.

The cashier scanned each item one by one before finally filling two bags.

“Hello, the total is 217.50 Yuan.”

Lu Huaiyu moved over to pay the bill, but Shen Zhijin had already taken out his phone to scan the code.

He paused for a moment and walked to the front again.

“Teacher Shen, please allow me to take care of it.”

Before his hand could touch the bag, his eyes met Shen Zhijin’s gaze.

“There’s no need.” Shen Zhijin took the bag down. There was no emotion in the tone of his voice. “It’s quite far from here to the ninth floor. It won’t be efficient to ask for your help to deliver something.”

Lu Huaiyu, “...”

Shen Zhijin turned around.

“Tangtang, let’s go home.”

“Ah? Oh.”

Shen Li responded and quickly followed behind. She quickly exchanged glances with Lu Huaiyu.

Who could they blame for this?!

That day, before he had gone upstairs, he had bumped into Zhang Yao. Who would have known that when he went downstairs, he would then bump into Bi Zhitong as well?

Both people had given different explanations. With the time difference between both stories, how could they possibly hide it?

Lu Huaiyu coughed lightly and rubbed his nose.

He had not expected such a coincidence to have occurred.

Not only had he bumped into those two people, but they had also happened to mention the same matter in front of Shen Zhijin.

Previously, he had only thought that by coming here a few more times, he would be able to get the recognition and acknowledgment of the people around him as soon as possible.

If that were the case, he would be able to ingratiate himself with Shen Zhijin more smoothly.

As a result—

Shen Li walked beside Shen Zhijin.

“Dad, can I help you take it?”

Shen Zhijin looked at her and asked another question.

“Was the movie good?”

Shen Li silently withdrew her hand. “It was pretty good.”

Shen Zhijin nodded but did not ask any more questions.

He did not speak, so Shen Li and Lu Huaiyu also kept quiet.

The three of them went back in the same way.

When they reached home, Shen Li took some of the ingredients into the kitchen. Lu Huaiyu rolled up his sleeve and went over to help.

Shen Li took out the tomatoes. He took them from her and placed them in a colander. Then, very naturally, he began to wash them.

There was no need for words and it was clear that they worked well together.

No matter who looked at them, they would be able to see that it was definitely not their first time doing this.

Shen Zhijin stared at them as he took off his coat, and walked over.

Shen Li saw him and asked, "Dad, aren't you going to rest first?"

He was indeed extremely tired after all this running around.

Shen Zhijin's eyelids drooped slightly.

"I'm not tired."

No matter how tired he was, he was no longer sleepy now.

There was an indescribable subtle aura in the air.

Shen Li changed the topic.

“Dad, we’re about to take the final exam. I plan to apply for exemptions from certain courses in the next semester after this exam.”

This was the first time she had officially mentioned this to Shen Zhijin.

Shen Zhijin paused and turned his head to look at her. His gaze swept over her face carefully.

“Have you thought it over carefully?”

Shen Li nodded.

Shen Zhijin knew that she would usually consider her options carefully. Since this was what she had said, it meant that she must have already made up her mind.

Of course, he would not object.

Whether she wanted to be like the other students and complete four years of school normally or graduate early with credits, he respected her decision.

He nodded.

“If that’s what you want, I’ll go with your decision.”

With her talent, she would be able to successfully complete the application without his intervention.

Shen Li's lips curled into a smile of joy.

"Thank you, Dad."

Shen Zhijin suddenly thought of something.

"For the courses in the Institute of Physics, the application for exemption should be the easiest to pass. As for the rest..." he paused for a moment, "It's good that you want to graduate earlier. However, don't fall behind in the courses that should be taken properly. For example, Professor Fang's course."

Lu Huaiyu's movements as he washed the lettuce slowed down a little.

Shen Li, "... Hmm, don't worry. I know."

She was the class representative of the Advanced Mathematics class. She could handle the other courses as she pleased, but not this course.

Shen Zhijin lowered his chin slightly.

"Next semester, the physics department and the mathematics department will strengthen their teaching communication. There will be a lot more interaction between them."

Communication, interaction.

Wouldn't that mean that they would be listening in on each other's lessons?

Shen Li was silent.

"Oh."

...

An hour later, the five dishes and one soup were finally completed.

Shen Zhijin sat at the head of the table, while Shen Li and Lu Huaiyu sat facing each other.

Shen Li picked up a piece of sweet and sour pork ribs and gave it to him.

“Dad, please try this.”

Lu Huaiyu tried to help by serving the soup, but Shen Zhijin’s hand had already landed on the spoon.

Lu Huaiyu coughed lightly and tactfully withdrew his hand.

Shen Zhijin placed the bowl of soup beside Shen Li’s hand. Then, he raised his head and looked at the clock on the wall. He tapped his finger lightly on the table and said softly, “Although it’s the end of the semester and revision is stressful, you still have to ensure that you sleep well.”

Shen Li looked up.

“Huh?”

Shen Zhi was concise and to the point.

“In future, try to get home before ten o’clock.”

Chapter 709: Presents

Even though he had said “Try your best”, everyone could hear the unnegotiable tone in his words.

Shen Li blinked her eyes and took a sip of the soup.

“Oh, okay.”

The tip of Lu Huaiyu’s brows raised slightly, and he nodded as well.

“Ah Li, Teacher Shen is right. Even if you have a lot of homework, it’s best not to stay up late. It’s good for your body to sleep early.”

Lu Huaiyu appeared to agree with Shen Zhijin’s suggestion.

Shen Zhijin glanced at him.

Lu Huaiyu met his gaze and said seriously, “Teacher Shen, don’t worry. I will definitely keep an eye on Ah Li and bring her back home as early as possible in the future.”

Shen Li tightened the grip on her spoon and quietly moved back.

It was not easy to finish the meal.

However, Lu Huaiyu was tactful. After the meal, he did not stay any longer. He took the painting and stood up to leave.

“Teacher Shen, Ah Li, goodbye.”

Shen Li sent him to the door. After seeing him enter the elevator, she closed the door and returned to her room.

...

Lu Huaiyu took the painting home.

He then walked into the collection room again.

In the pure white room, several paintings could be seen hanging on the wall.

He sat down on the sofa that was in the middle of the room. In front of him was the painting that Shen Li had just given him.

He stared at it intensely, as if he wanted to deeply imprint it into his heart.

After a long time, his thin lips twitched slightly. He took his phone out and sent a message to Shen Li.

[Ah Li, this is the best Christmas gift I've ever received.]

1

...

The next day was Christmas Day.

Shen Li spent another day in the library and did not return to the dormitory until after dinner.

As soon as she entered the room, she saw Xue Langlang sobbing in her seat.

She was crying as she frantically typed on her phone.

Shen Li saw that her eyes were red and swollen. She asked, "Langlang, what's wrong?"

Xue Langlang looked up at her with teary eyes.

“Sob, sob, sob!”

Shen Li, “...”

Ding Yu helplessly handed her a packet of tissue paper.

“She just came back from watching “Hibiscus”.”

She had been crying for half an hour and still had not stopped yet.

Shen Li finally understood. She thought for a moment and asked, “Are you alright?”

Xue Langlang wiped her tears and finally found her voice. She whimpered as she spoke.

“No, I’m not good! The aftermath of “Hibiscus” is just too strong. Sob, sob, sob, sob, sob, sob, sob, sob, sob, sob! I’m so uncomfortable... Sob, sob, sob, sob, sob, sob, sob, sob!”

1

Previously, she had seen the movie critics on Weibo saying that the movie was good. After hearing Shen Li say that it was not bad, she had felt relieved enough to book a ticket and had happily gone to watch it.

Who knew that she would cry like a dog in the movie theater!

She had even borrowed tissue paper from the girl sitting next to her!

Even after she left the movie theater, she still could not regain her senses for a long time. Her heart seemed to be soaked in tears, bitter and soft.

Shen Li looked at her red eyes and was silent for a while.

She had not expected Xue Langlang's crying threshold to be so low.

"I forgot to warn you... However, since it's so uncomfortable, perhaps you shouldn't think about it for now. Why don't you go read a book--"

Xue Langlang whimpered.

"Tomorrow, I'm going to take my friend from the neighboring dorm room to watch it a second time! I can't be the only one crying!"

2

Shen Li, "..."

Xue Langlang, on the other hand, seemed to have already made up her mind. She lowered her head again and began to send messages.

As she typed, she did not forget to sob and mutter, "Now I finally know why those bloggers said what they said... Sob, sob, sob, sob! Ah Li, I bet that "Hibiscus" will definitely become the dark horse at the box office this time!"

Shen Li took out her phone and clicked into Weibo.

Today was the first day of the official release of 'Hibiscus', and four other movies had also been scheduled to be released at the same time.

Generally speaking, the box office and word of mouth on the first day of the movie were very important.

Especially the latter. Only when the movie became famous could it attract more passers-by to watch it.

Therefore, any promotion through word of mouth on the first day of release was particularly crucial.

At this time, the Weibo trending list was indeed occupied by the relevant entries of these films.

In third and fifth places were the promotion positions, each with a film name.

However, in first place on the trending list, out of everyone's expectations, was actually "Hibiscus" which had been the most underrated.

hibiscus

With a red "Hot" logo on the back, the search volume reached an astonishing 11 million.

Below that, there were a few related entries.

Hibiscus is so good it will make you cry

I'll still love you ten years from now

Ge

She clicked into the trending topic square, at the top of which was the film review posted by the former film and television blogger "Third Uncle Watches Movies".

When this Weibo post had first been posted a few days ago, it had already caused quite a bit of discussion.

However, currently, it had once again been pushed to the top. The number of reposts and comments had already exceeded 50,000.

Shen Li had seen this Weibo post before. At that time, the first few hot comments had all been filled with ridicule.

But now, the number one hot comment had changed.

[I was wrong! I was really wrong! “Hibiscus” was really good!]

This post had been posted in the afternoon. At this time, there were already more than 1,000 replies.

[Good movie + 1!]

[Previously, Third Uncle had said that this movie was good, but I wasn’t convinced, so I specially booked a ticket to watch it this morning. I just wanted to see what kind of lousy movie Ge had made, but in the end, I cried uncontrollably in the theater!]

[I’ve seen it, it’s definitely worth the ticket price! Ge is indeed amazing!]

[This has to be the best movie of the year, right?]

[Ahhhh! Why is everyone saying that it’s good? There’s no screening in a small city! I want to see it!]

[The theme song! The theme song is also unique!]! I heard that Lin Fengmian wrote and sang it himself. When the hibiscus flowers are in bloom, the music will break through your defenses! Ahhhhhhh! It’s no wonder that younger brother Fengmian chose to work with this movie! His taste is really superb!]

...

Previously, only a few bloggers had recommended this movie. Most people had not liked this opinion and had even ridiculed it.

However, now that the movie had officially been released, passers-by had given real feedback. Everyone said that it was good, so the credibility of the movie increased a lot.

Shen Li observed this for a while until a message suddenly popped up.

[Zhongda Cinema, Guangming Cinema, Tonglian Cinema, and the other seven cinema chains have decided to adjust their movie schedules from tomorrow onwards.]

Chapter 710: Invigilation

Shen Li stared at this line of words.

[Only seven theaters?]

The other party obviously understood what she meant by this question and immediately replied.

[Yes. There are a total of thirty theaters in the country. These seven theaters may not seem like many, but they are actually quite rare. Some theaters already have scheduled collaborations with other movies, so they won't change these easily. In addition, today is the first day of screening, so many theaters are still keeping a wait-and-see attitude. Once the box office and word-of-mouth increased later, they would naturally follow.]

There had to be a gradual process.

[Yes.]

Shen Li held her breath, picked up her backpack, and went home.

...

“Hibiscus” grossed 13 million at the box office on its first day.

Compared to the other films, this box office was very inconspicuous and very humble.

However, it had the highest attendance and the highest rating.

On its first day of screening, “Hibiscus” received a lot of praise.

Many people began to spontaneously watch it, even going for a second and third time.

After the increase in the number of screenings, the box office of “Hibiscus” broke through 50 million on the second day.

On the third day, it broke through 100 million.

At just this box office alone, investors could already cover the cost.

Anything above that was almost pure profit.

As time passed, more and more people recommended “Hibiscus”. Some people called it the purest and sincerest love movie in a decade.

Word of mouth spread, and the box office sales of “Hibiscus” began to rise.

On the fifth day, the single-day box office sales smoothly exceeded 100 million.

At this point, everyone knew that Hibiscus would definitely be the final winner of this box office battle.

...

The Internet was full of reports about “Hibiscus” which could be seen almost everywhere.

Also, in their private lives, many people were discussing the movie enthusiastically.

Sometimes when Shen Li walked on campus, she could hear many people talking about it from time to time.

However, she did not care much about it. From the moment the earnings at the box office for “Hibiscus” had successfully covered the cost, she did not bother much about it anymore.

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At the end of December, exams for her various courses arrived, one after another.

Shen Li had 13 courses to complete in a week, so her schedule was quite tight.

The afternoon of December 31st was the day of Shen Li’s last exam— theoretical mechanics.

The exam started at 2:30 pm. At 2:10 pm, Shen Li came to the classroom.

Her seat was in the second-to-last position in the middle row.

Some people had already come to the classroom, while some of them were still doing some last-minute revision.

Shen Li went to her seat and pulled out her chair to sit down.

She only had her student ID and pencil case in her hand.

Compared to the nervousness of the others, her expression was exceptionally calm.

Outside the classroom, two invigilators walked over with papers in their hands.

Just as they raised their heads, they saw a tall and straight figure standing outside the examination hall.

The two invigilators exchanged glances before walking over together to the person with a respectful and polite attitude.

“Dean Shen—”

Shen Zhijin turned his head and said calmly, “You guys go ahead with the exams. I’m just here to take a look.”

Hearing what he said, the two invigilators looked into the classroom and smiled.

It looked like he was here because of Shen Li again.

In the past few days, there had been private rumors among the teachers in the academy that Shen Zhijin had gone to every exam that Shen Li took.

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He was not patrolling, nor was he invigilating.

Every time he went over, he was extremely low-key. He would arrive a few minutes before the start of the exam and leave before the end of the exam.

Not to mention the students, even many teachers did not know that he would wait for such a long time outside the exam hall.

–Shen Li had already taken a few exams, and he had gone to accompany her on every one of them.

It was clear as to why he had come today.

When the two teachers heard what he said, they did not say anything. They merely nodded slightly in agreement and entered the exam hall one after the other.

When the students saw the invigilator arrive, the atmosphere in the entire classroom instantly changed subtly.

One of the invigilators clapped his hands.

“Alright, now everyone, pack up your things and prepare for the exam.”

The students rustled around and placed their phones, books, and other things on the podium one by one.

Through the glass window, Shen Zhijin looked at the examination hall.

Many people were going back and forth as they tidied up their things. Their expressions were either worried or nervous.

Shen Li was the only one who remained in her seat.

When she entered the classroom, she had already handed over her phone to the front, so at this moment, she had nothing to put away at all.

She only leaned against the back of the chair with her head tilted slightly, looking a little lazy.

From this angle, Shen Zhijin could only see the side of her face.

Even so, it was not difficult to imagine the expression on her face at this time.

After observing her during so many exams, Shen Zhijin could already feel her current state of mind.

She was feeling bored as she waited for the exam to start.

It was pretty similar to how he had used to be, except for one difference.

Whether it was while reading, sitting for exams, or handling work, he had always remained straight-shouldered, rigorous, and upright.

On the other hand, Yin Yin had never been able to sit still. Whenever she felt bored, she would not sit properly. She was always looking for something to do as her whole body exuded a lazy energy.

1

However, it was also in those moments that the more bored she felt, the heavier she would seem to become.

Shen Li was resting her chin on one hand as half of her body was almost leaning on the table. She picked up a pen and held it between her slender, white fingers to rotate.

Shen Zhijin could not help but laugh.

The bell rang and the invigilator finally began to hand out the papers.

Only then did she sit up again and accept the papers from the front. She took one for herself and handed the rest to the person in the seat behind her.

The examination room became quiet.

She lowered her head and began to answer the questions.

The only sound in her ears was the rustling sound of the tip of the pen brushing across the paper.

Shen Zhijin watched quietly with a focused expression.

He had looked at Shen Li's transcripts over the years. At the beginning of the first and second grades, she had gotten full marks for every class. However, the column for the teacher's notes contained comments of criticism and admonishment.

It was about her fighting, causing trouble, and so on.

Later on, as she had gotten older, her grades had gradually fallen and eventually settled in the middle and lower grades.

The teachers also seemed to know that no matter what they said, they could not control her. So, they simply said nothing and wrote nothing further.

People like that were the most easily ignored invisible people in every class.

That was until she had transferred to Yunzhou.

In less than a year, so many things had happened to her there.

Shen Zhijin took a light breath, and the cold wind entered his lungs.

Just then, Shen Li closed the pen cover, folded the papers, and lay on the table to go to sleep.

The examination papers for the specialized courses were not allowed to be handed in early.

At this time, the exam had only just started twenty-seven minutes ago.

She still had a lot of time left.

She pressed her arm down, revealing half of her face.

Shen Zhijin stood in the empty and quiet corridor, quietly watching.

After more than an hour, the bell rang. She finally got up and handed in her papers with the others.

This time, Shen Zhijin did not leave early.

Just as Shen Li walked out of the classroom, she heard the person in front of her call "Dean Shen."

She looked up and indeed saw Shen Zhijin standing not far away.

She walked over.

"Dad, why are you here?"

Before Shen Zhijin could speak, Shen Li's phone rang.

She glanced at it and looked at Shen Zhijin.

“Grandfather is calling.”