

I Want a Lifetime with You

Chapter 21

Fu Yuqing's expression changed after hearing Shi Nuan's words. His sharp glare landed on her. But Shi Nuan merely straightened her back, completely unafraid of Fu Yuqing's gaze.

No matter how furious Fu Yuqing was, he couldn't berate Shi Nuan. He could only let out an awkward chuckle and say, "You haven't seen your grandpa for so long. Don't you miss him?"

Shi Nuan frowned. If there was still someone in the Shi family that she truly cared about, it would be the old man. Fu Yuqing clearly wanted her to return as soon as possible so she could say a few nice words to her grandpa and persuade him to agree to Fu Xicheng's and Shi Wei's marriage.

These guys surely have it planned well. They're the ones who screwed me over, yet I'm being forced to cover for them.

Seeing Shi Nuan remain silent, Fu Yuqing continued, "It'll be the old man's birthday in a few days, Nuan. No matter what Xicheng and Wei did, the Shi family is still your family, and the old man is still your grandpa."

"Don't worry, Mr. Fu. I'll definitely return for grandpa's birthday. Is there anything else? If not, I'll be heading back to work!"

"Think carefully about what I've just told you, Nuan. There's nothing in it for you if you keep carrying on like this. Why can't you let go? If you could just say a few nice things to the old man, then I promise you that the sales manager position will be yours."

Shi Nuan raised her head in shock and stared at Fu Yuqing with a very complicated expression. Then, she finally let out a soft chuckle and asked, “Do you not know how to keep your public and private interests separate, Mr. Fu?”

“You...”

“I still have work to do, so I’ll take my leave if there’s nothing else you have to tell me regarding work.”

Fu Yuqing was aghast when Shi Nuan did not give him any form of respect. “You should know your place!” he said ruthlessly while staring at Shi Nuan’s back.

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A week later, Shi Nuan received a phone call from the old man. “Come back and visit, Nuan. You can count on your grandpa if you need anything.”

Shi Nuan knew she couldn’t avoid her problems forever. She was still a Shi family member, even if they didn’t like her.

Shi Nuan gripped her phone tightly before answering, “Of course, grandpa. You’re my support. Besides, how can I not drop by on your birthday? Since I couldn’t make it during your last birthday, I’ll prepare you an extra gift this year.” She tried her best to sound more natural.

But there was no way Shi Yunsheng wouldn’t notice. “Just come back. I don’t need any of that nonsense,” he said, sounding resigned.

“Come on, I’ll surely bring you a gift you’ll be happy with.”

After hanging up, Shi Nuan froze for a moment as she saw Fu Xicheng walking towards her.

For the past week, Shi Nuan would evade Fu Xicheng as much as she could. But now Fu Xicheng seemed determined to not let her escape. The moment Shi Nuan got up to leave, he quickly grabbed her by the hand and said, "Let's talk, Nuan."

Shi Nuan pushed Fu Xicheng aside and stared coldly at him.

"There's nothing to talk about between us." No matter how much she used to like him, she could only view him with hatred now. "I still have work to do."

"Why must you be like this, Nuan? Why can't you accept the fact that nothing good would ever come out of our relationship!?"

Fu Xicheng looked at Shi Nuan in frustration, feeling as though the once kind and caring Shi Nuan was now gone. Just a year was enough to change a person this much. "Can't we continue to be friends?"

"Friends?" Shi Nuan scoffed. "No, we can't. Also, it's over between us. I'm not clinging to you anymore, so please stop your nonsense in public."

"Nuan," Fu Xicheng called out to her. "Grandpa's birthday is in two days. Wei and I really hope you can come home!"

Shi Nuan froze. She could feel her blood boiling, but she tried her best to control her anger. She clutched her purse tightly, straightened her back and declared, "I will go back, but it won't be because of you!"

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Chapter 22

Shi Nuan dropped by an antique shop. Old Man Shi had no other hobbies aside from collecting antiques. He had many calligraphy paintings and other ornaments on display in his house. Word on the street was, the old man was even an antique appraiser back then, but had to give up his hobby to continue the family business.

The moment Shi Nuan entered the antique shop, a staff immediately went over to assist her. “Are you looking for something in particular, miss?”

Shi Nuan honestly was not well-versed with antiques. She just wanted to make the old man happy. After all, Shi Yunsheng was the only person in the Shi family who treated her kindly, and Shi Nuan didn’t wish for him to feel upset for her.

“I’ll take a look on my own for now!” Shi Nuan dismissed the staff politely and looked around. Yet, she had no idea what she should be looking for.

“A batch of Ming and Qing dynasty antiques just came in, Mr. Fu. We’ve reserved whatever you had requested of us that day.”

Shi Nuan turned to see three men entering the store, and the first in line was Fu Chengyan, who she hadn’t seen in a few days. He remained silent, nodding at whatever the middle-aged man in a Tang suit had to say.

Fu Chengyan was looking around absent-mindedly, but his gaze honed in on Shi Nuan the moment they stepped into the store.

As his gaze landed on her, Shi Nuan too just happened to turn towards him and their eyes met. Shi Nuan saw Fu Chengyan's lips curl into a smile. His gorgeous eyes also looked like they were smiling.

Before the middle-aged man could continue, Zhou Zheng cut him off, hinting at the former not to speak anymore.

With a raise of Fu Chengyan's arm, Zhou Zheng and the middle-aged man quickly went into the lounge.

Fu Chengyan pondered for a moment before walking towards Shi Nuan in large steps. Shi Nuan's heart began to race uncontrollably.

Evening sun rays flooded into the store. The man walking over was backlit, and the light created a halo around him, making him look like he was covered in a layer of gold. It was a dazzling sight to see.

Shi Nuan could appreciate Fu Chengyan's attractive features. That face could be described as out of this world. How amazing did one's genes have to be to give birth to such a good-looking man?

"Long time no see, Ms. Shi!"

While Shi Nuan was spacing out, Fu Chengyan had already reached her side. He held the cufflinks of his suit with his slender fingers and rubbed them gently, looking inscrutable.

Shi Nuan came back to her senses and flushed red. "Long time no see, Mr. Fu!" she smiled. Feeling a slightly awkward atmosphere between them, she spoke again, "Are you into antiques too, Mr. Fu?"

"I only know a thing or two!" Fu Chengyan smiled and responded casually.

He wore a dark grey suit today. His body was well-proportioned and his legs were long and straight. At this moment, he was leaning against a pillar. He looked somewhat relaxed, which was very different from his usual coldness.

He had left three buttons undone on the shirt he wore inside. "Are you interested in antiques too, Ms. Shi?" he asked as he fiddled with the third button.

Shi Nuan squinted her eyes and looked at Fu Chengyan. There was no denying that this man really was blessed with such good features. Just that simple movement he did was a world of difference from anyone else who attempted to do the same.

Shi Nuan had to admit that Fu Chengyan had the ability to seduce anyone, even if they didn't harbor any indecent thoughts about him.

Shi Nuan shook her head and said, "No, not at all!" She pondered for a quick moment before turning to Fu Chengyan to ask, "Do you think you can lend me a hand, Mr. Fu?"

"Oh?" Fu Chengyan raised his brow. "Do elaborate."

Shi Nuan pursed her lips. "The thing is, it's my grandpa's birthday in two days. He's really into antiques, so..."

"So you'd like me to help pick a gift, Ms. Shi?"

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Chapter 23

Shi Nuan nodded, “I don’t know much about antiques, so there’s no way I can pick out something good. Since you have some knowledge on this, could you help me out?”

“It’d be my honor!” Fu Chengyan said with a squint. “What are you thinking of getting Old Man Shi?”

“Hmm... Maybe a calligraphy painting. Anything else will do too. My grandpa is good at calligraphy. Oh, his interests are roughly similar to my maternal grandfather’s.”

Shi Nuan figured that saying this would give Fu Chengyan a better idea of her grandfather’s preferences.

As expected, Fu Chengyan nodded. “Zhou Zheng,” he summoned his assistant.

Very quickly, Zhou Zheng walked out and headed towards them, trying his best not to look at Shi Nuan. “How can I help, sir?”

“Have Mr. Qin bring out those antiques.”

“Sir...” Zhou Zheng looked at Fu Chengyan in surprise, then couldn’t help but glance over at Shi Nuan. Shi Nuan didn’t know what they were talking about, so she just gave Zhou Zheng a friendly smile.

The moment Fu Chengyan frowned, Zhou Zheng was so scared that he straightened up and shifted his gaze from Shi Nuan. “Alright, I’ll do it now!”

Zhou Zheng mumbled in his heart, These antiques had been kept for so long under his orders. They're all pretty much the collections of famous artists! Yet, he's asking for them to be shown to her now...

Zhou Zheng dared not make his boss wait. He immediately informed Mr. Qin and the staff about this. When he came back out, he saw Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan casually leaning against the wall. "The preparations are complete, sir," he said with a nervous look on his face.

Fu Chengyan nodded and beckoned Shi Nuan to follow him inside. "Come on in!"

Shi Nuan quickly followed, looking around in surprise as they entered an antique room.

She had thought that all the antiques outside already looked incredible, but these items were on another level.

Fu Chengyan naturally noticed Shi Nuan's expression and smiled. He raised his hand, asking Zhou Zheng and Mr. Qin to leave the room. Zhou Zheng and Mr. Qin glanced at each other, then immediately went outside, carefully closing the door behind them.

Shi Nuan was so absorbed by the antiques in here that she didn't notice them leave.

Fu Chengyan smiled lightly as he leaned against a table. With one hand on the table to support him, he stared deeply at Shi Nuan's side profile with his dark-colored eyes.

Shi Nuan looked around the room. Seeing a piece of calligraphy by Zhang Xu, she turned to Fu Chengyan and said suspiciously, "My grandpa has this piece by Zhang Xu." As she spoke, she looked into Fu Chengyan's deep eyes and couldn't help but quiver inside. She averted her gaze as her face burned slightly. "Huh? Where did the assistant and shopkeeper go?"

“See something you like?” Fu Chengyan evaded her question.

Shi Nuan bit her lip, seeing that she failed to change the topic. There was a look of embarrassment in her face, but she shook her head. “No. I don’t understand these things very much. Why don’t you suggest something, Mr. Fu?”

Fu Chengyan’s lips formed a smile. It was just a small curl of his lips, but Shi Nuan caught sight of it. Astonishment flashed across Shi Nuan’s eyes, but she quickly suppressed it. “Mr. Fu?”

“Sure!” There was but a very slight hint of emotion in Fu Chengyan’s low voice.

Fu Chengyan looked around and his gaze finally settled on a chessboard on the table. Unlike any other chessboard, this one was made of clear jade.

Touching the chessboard and tracing the marks on it with his slender fingers, he asked, “Does the old gentleman like playing chess?”

Shi Nuan followed Fu Chengyan’s fingers and caught side of the chessboard. Her eyes widened in awe, but it wasn’t long until she said, “Maybe something else.” She liked it, but surely it was extremely expensive, especially since it was an antique.

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A sharp glint flashed across Fu Chengyan's eyes as his gaze landed on Shi Nuan's face. Shi Nuan clearly looked overjoyed, yet she was saying the complete opposite of how she felt!

His eyes scanned her face as he continued, "Alright, then how about this Zhang Daqian painting? Or maybe this brush?"

As Fu Chengyan introduced several items to Shi Nuan, she took a look at each of them before eventually deciding on the brush. Shi Yunsheng enjoyed calligraphy and was good at it himself.

Giving him this calligraphy brush as a gift was perfect. Moreover, this brush was probably not as expensive as some other antiques here.

Shi Nuan was a director in Fucheng, but she was still young and had many expenses to cover ever since she moved out. Furthermore, thanks to her fight with Fu Xicheng, Shi Nuan could rely on nobody else but herself at the moment.

She had to save up to buy a car and house. Even if she didn't have a man, she could at least still rely on herself!

Fu Chengyan saw through Shi Nuan's thoughts. After she chose her gift, Fu Chengyan called Zhou Zheng and Mr. Qin back in. "Wrap this up for Ms. Shi!"

Mr. Qin looked towards the direction in which Fu Chengyan had pointed and froze. "This..."

“Is there a problem?” Shi Nuan asked when she saw how stumped Mr. Qin looked. “Money isn’t a problem.”

Mr. Qin took a deep breath and said with a pained look on his face, “Not at all, Ms. Shi. If this is what you want, I’ll have it packed immediately for you.” He then gave Fu Chengyan another glance.

Yet, Fu Chengyan didn’t even notice the man looking at him. His eyes were fixated on Shi Nuan. Mr. Qin had no choice but to pick up the brush and have his staff pack it up.

Shi Nuan just realized that she hadn’t inquired the price of the brush. “Erm... How much for the brush, Mr. Qin?”

Just as Mr. Qin was about to speak, he saw Fu Chengyan staring coldly at him. He chest tightened and he quickly let out a nervous laugh, “Don’t worry! It doesn’t cost much!”

Fu Chengyan retracted his gaze then looked at Shi Nuan from above, giving her a slight sense of oppression. “Let Zhou Zheng take care of the bill,” he said with a clear voice. “Since I’ve just helped you a great deal, do you not intend to return the favor, Ms. Shi?”

“...” Shi Nuan looked up towards Fu Chengyan and noticed how seriously he was gazing at her, as though he wasn’t joking at all. She suddenly felt pressured. “Then shall I treat you to a meal?”

Fu Chengyan smiled again. “Since you insist, then I’ll graciously accept,” he said and walked outside.

Shi Nuan froze for a moment, feeling like something wasn’t right. Was I insisting? “I haven’t paid yet, Mr. Fu!”

“Go on ahead with him, Ms. Shi. I’ll take care of things here since I still have to stay behind and help him look around!” Zhou Zheng said thoughtfully.

“Then...” Shi Nuan still looked hesitant.

“I’ll come over with your gift later!”

Since Zhou Zheng had said it, there was nothing else Shi Nuan could do. So she followed Fu Chengyan out in a daze.

Only after Shi Nuan had left did Zhou Zheng turn to Mr. Qin and say, “Please keep whatever Mr. Fu had asked for. As for Shi Nuan’s item, just name any price and put it on Mr. Fu’s tab.”

Zhou Zheng felt like he had given his all to do his job well as Fu Chengyan’s assistant. He was even clear about his boss’ thoughts.

“But...” Mr. Qin still hesitated. “That brush is...” He thought for a moment and looked at Zhou Zheng. “How is this Ms. Shi related to Mr. Fu?” That brush was extremely pricy!

Keeping his expressions in check, Zhou Zheng said with a smile, “It’s better if you don’t ask about things you shouldn’t know. Are you intending to pry into Mr. Fu’s private life? Alright, hurry up and pack the brush!”

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Shi Nuan realized she had just been set up only after leaving the antique shop. She was supposed to buy a gift, so how did she end up having to buy Fu Chengyan a meal!? Moreover, she hadn't even received the gift!

"What are you thinking about?"

Fu Chengyan was walking in front, but he stopped after noticing how absent-minded the woman behind him was.

Shi Nuan was so surprised by Fu Chengyan's sudden halt that she nearly bumped into him. She shook her head in shock and asked, "Where would you like to go, Mr. Fu?"

Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes and cast a glance on Shi Nuan, smiling faintly. "Since it's your treat, it should naturally be your decision!"

Shi Nuan hesitated for a moment before saying, "As long as you don't mind, Mr. Fu!"

Her status was different from Fu Chengyan's. Fu Chengyan was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. Everything he wore and ate was superior to that of the average person. She was different from him.

She may have been born into the Shi family, but she was never treated like a Shi family princess. Shi Nuan had to be strong and independent. She was no different from a commoner.

The gap between Fu Chengyan and her was so wide that when Fu Chengyan made such a suggestion, Shi Nuan wondered if he had gone mad.

“I think you misunderstand me, Ms. Shi. I’m not that difficult to please!” Fu Chengyan said with a smile. “After you, Ms. Shi!”

Fu Chengyan drove a different car today. It was much more low-profile. Seeing Fu Chengyan open the door to the passenger seat for her, she hesitated before entering the car.

Fu Chengyan closed the door then circled around the car to get in the driver’s seat. He looked at Shi Nuan after putting on his seatbelt and said, “Show me the way then, Ms. Shi!”

“Wenchang Road. Thank you!”

Fu Chengyan opened up the navigation app and drummed the steering wheel with his slender fingers. “Not far from Jing University?”

Shi Nuan was surprised and turned to look at Fu Chengyan. Fu Chengyan merely smiled and stroked his chin. “Have you forgotten, Ms. Shi? I also graduated from Jing University!”

It suddenly dawned upon Shi Nuan. Her maternal grandfather used to talk about how Fu Chengyan was his best student for so many years. It appeared that this was true.

“But I haven’t gone back there for so long, so I don’t know what Jing University is like now!”

“Have you never gone back to visit, Mr. Fu?” Shi Nuan was the kind of person who took her feelings seriously, whether it was about people or objects.

She was also a Jing University graduate. She would drop by every year and also visit the little shops nearby to reminisce her youth.

But for a huge figure like Fu Chengyan, he would attract attention everywhere he went. He probably didn't like crowded places.

Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes slightly and replied, "Yeah. Work gets really busy. Besides, I'm not one to look back at the past." Fu Chengyan gave Shi Nuan a meaningful glance as he spoke.

Shi Nuan stiffened for a moment and turned away wordlessly. It took her a while before she finally responded, "It's impossible for someone to not have a past."

"But isn't it counterproductive if you keep immersing yourself in the past and letting it affect your present?"

Shi Nuan fell silent again. She didn't understand why someone like Fu Chengyan would say such things. She observed Fu Chengyan then said, "I think you should be a lawyer, Mr. Fu. Or maybe a psychiatrist."

"Oh?" Fu Chengyan raised his brow. "What brought you to this conclusion, Ms. Shi?"

"Do you always comfort other people like this?" Shi Nuan couldn't help but wonder how a person like Fu Chengyan would comfort others.

Fu Chengyan's index finger tapped the steering wheel. He didn't look stern, but he looked very earnest. "No one else," he said.

Shi Nuan froze for moment, but Fu Chengyan continued on, "No one else but you."