

Pill Maker 111

Chapter 111: Anyone With Conscience Wouldn't Be Able To Do It

Huo Yao failed to detect the strange look on the old lady's face. Her phone rang at that moment and she retrieved it from her pocket to see that it was her second older brother calling.

Huo Yao looked at her grandmother and said, "Oh yes, Grandma. My second older brother is here to visit you and is waiting downstairs now."

The moment the old lady heard Huo Yao, the sad look on her face was swiftly replaced with shock.

Then she composed herself and said, "Is it your biological second older brother? Hurry up and bring him over."

"Mhm," replied Huo Yao. Huo Yao noticed how flustered the old lady was looking.

She patted and straightened her short hair. Huo Yao saw this and could not help teasing her. "Grandma, there's no need to be nervous. He's family."

The moment her grandmother heard this, she put down her hand somewhat shyly as she said, "It's the first time I'm seeing him, so I want to leave a good impression."

Huo Yao laughed. Then she helped her straighten out some of the white hair on her forehead and said, "You're perfect as always."

Huo Yao brought Huo Tingrui up to the ward very quickly.

"Grandma, this is my second older brother, Huo Tingrui," said Huo Yao as she introduced him. She took the supplements which he had bought, and placed them on the cabinet.

Huo Tingrui's eyes landed on the old lady. Her complexion was wan due to ill-health, but she seemed high spirited. There was a kindly look about her, so it was no wonder that Huo Yao missed her.

Huo Tingrui gathered his thoughts and bowed politely to the old lady.

He smiled and said, "Old Madam Yang, how do you do? Sorry about visiting at the last minute and disturbing your rest."

The old lady smiled as she shook her head and replied. "No no. I'm happy you could come, Tingrui. Don't keep standing there. Come over and sit down."

"Mhm," said Huo Tingrui before sitting down on a chair.

He glanced at Huo Yao before he said, "Thank you for taking such good care of my little sister all these years. She couldn't have turned out so well without your guidance."

A look of guilt appeared on the old woman's face when she replied. "I barely did anything since she was so intelligent to begin with. She was the one who ended up suffering because of me."

Huo Yao also pulled a chair and sat down by the old lady's bedside. She raised her brow and said rather arrogantly, "I admit that I'm brilliant, but I wouldn't say I have suffered. After all, have you seen anyone else ending up as bright as me after suffering?"

"You... Can't you be a little more modest?" asked her grandmother, who was completely tickled.

"I am modest when I have to be," said Huo Yao as she winked cheekily at her grandmother.

The old lady laughed as she shook her head while she held Huo Yao's hand.

Huo Tingrui could not help lament in his heart when he saw how natural and affectionate his younger sister and her grandmother's interactions were. It was completely different from the atmosphere back home when she was with her biological family.

No wonder Huo Yao had turned their parents down and put off coming back for a year when they initially had gone to pick her up.

Huo Yao's grandmother was her closest kin who had raised her for over ten years, so it was impossible for her to forsake the family ties suddenly. Anyone with conscience wouldn't be able to do it.

Huo Tingrui could not help recalling how his foster sister reacted after the baby swapping incident came to light. The Huo family had always been kind to her.

But she left the Huo family without any hesitation and even changed her surname to her biological father's at lightning speed.

Although Lu Xia had tried to justify by saying that her biological parents forced her to do this and that she was helpless, her actions had left them... bitterly disappointed.

Huo Tingrui pursed his lips. The moment comparison was made, many underlying issues came to the surface.

Chapter 112: The Best Granddaughter

Huo Tingrui retracted his thoughts and started chatting with the old lady in an animated manner.

Yang Qiuhua discovered how well-behaved Huo Tingrui was. He was definitely not as bad as how her daughter had made him out to be. She suddenly felt chatty and talked nonstop without realising the passage of time.

Of course, most of the conversation revolved around Huo Yao. They talked about her growing years with gusto.

The topic of the conversation, Huo Yao, could not help putting her hand on her forehead when she saw how enthralled they both were. She stood up and excused herself. "I'm going to the bathroom."

Shortly after Huo Yao left the room, her grandmother looked at Huo Tingrui and said with a solemn look in her eyes, "Please take care of Yaoyao from now on. The kid never got love from her foster parents, but I can tell she's doing well now that she has returned to her biological parents."

There was a faint sense of comfort in the old lady's voice and a little bit of sadness. Sorrow had enshrouded her face.

Huo Tingrui instinctively frowned. He had a nagging feeling that the old lady sounded odd. It was as though... She was bidding farewell.

After brooding on her words for a couple of seconds, Huo Tingrui replied. "Yaoyao loves you a lot. Even after she returned to us, you are the closest person in her heart."

A warm look filled her eyes when the old lady heard Huo Tingrui. Huo Yao was the best granddaughter on earth.

"Take care and don't overthink," comforted Huo Tingrui.

The old lady smiled in agreement.

Huo Yao returned before long.

The old lady looked out of the window to see that the sky had turned dark, so she told them to leave. "It's getting late. Why don't you two go now? Since there are doctors and nurses here to take care of me, there's no need for you to stay. You're a senior now, so you have to go back and study hard."

Huo Yao raised her hand to check her watch before she said, "Why don't I hang out with you for a while longer?"

The old lady lay back on the bed and covered herself with the blanket as she said, "No no. Go on and leave. I'm tired and want to take a nap."

Since the old lady genuinely closed her eyes to sleep, Huo Yao sighed helplessly in the end. She gently tucked in her grandmother before she said, "Then rest well. I'll come by after school tomorrow."

The old lady gently said, "Mhm."

Huo Yao suddenly turned around and continued speaking after taking a couple of steps. "I forgot to tell you that I took part in another competition. I'll bring you the trophy for the International Quiz Contest once it's over."

"Okay okay. I know how bright you are. Go on. Stop being wishy washy. You nag even more than I do," said the old lady with a stifled voice before she deliberately turned her body to the other side.

It was the first time she had chased Huo Yao away. Huo Yao rubbed her nose helplessly before quietly leaving the room.

After the door clicked shut, the old lady hastily turned back to gaze at the door with her eyes which had turned red. Her eyes were filled with reluctance and sadness.

After a long time, she sniffled before slowly taking her phone out from under her pillow. Her hand was trembling.

**

Lu Xia got the chauffeur to follow Huo Tingrui's car and ended up at the hospital. When Lu Xia saw Huo Tingrui get off the car, her mood sank to the bottom of the abyss.

The man, who used to be Lu Xia's second older brother, had lied to her blatantly yesterday. She had tried to convince herself that his attitude towards her changed because of Huo Yao.

But when Huo Tingrui came to the hospital with Huo Yao to visit her grandmother today, Lu Xia could no longer remain calm looking at them now.

Chapter 113: Incapable Of Seeing Through Her Second Older Brother

Although Huo Tingrui was the most refined and well-tempered one amongst all the Huo brothers, he was also the hardest to get along with, not to mention, the sharpest.

Huo Tingrui might have been pleasant to Lu Xia, but she could never truly figure out what was on his mind. Even after being his younger sister for years, Lu Xia could never see through him.

But judging from his attitude towards Huo Yao, he was already far closer to Huo Yao than he ever had been to Lu Xia.

Lu Xia found it unfathomable. She had spent years with Huo Tingrui but still fell short in making the relationship strong. On the other hand, Huo Yao had barely been with the family for a month and seemed to have a warm bond with Huo Tingrui already.

Although Lu Xia felt awful, she persisted in wanting to confirm her doubt and did not tell the driver to leave. She ended up sitting quietly in the car.

Lu Xia kept gazing at the hospital entrance through the car's window until her limbs turned numb and cold. She waited until Huo Yao and Huo Tingrui walked out of the hospital, and left in his car.

"Miss Lu, the car already left. Should we keep following it?" asked the chauffeur as he turned to look at Lu Xia in the backseat.

Lu Xia closed her sore eyes with barely any expression on her face. A while later, she replied calmly. "It's fine. Let's go home."

In the car.

"What international contest were you talking about? What's going on?" asked Huo Tingrui as he adjusted his spectacles and looked quizzically at his younger sister, who was in the front passenger seat.

Huo Yao leaned lazily against the window pane. She gazed at him with her bright eyes and replied. "The top five finalists of the National Quiz Contest will represent the country at the international level."

Huo Tingrui fell into a deep silence after he heard her.

Was his baby sister so brilliant that she could make it to the international level?

Huo Tingrui looked at her with a complicated expression. He composed himself and asked her in a quiet voice. "Are you that confident?"

Huo Yao tilted her head and said, "Is it that hard? Isn't it just some quiz?"

Her answer was simply... too asphyxiating.

Huo Tingrui choked on his words. He felt his intelligence was being severely overshadowed.

Moments later, he awkwardly said, "Good luck! Let me have a feel of the trophy when you win."

Huo Yao pursed her lips and said gently, "Mhm."

A thought crossed Huo Tingrui's mind, so he added. "Oh yes! I went and checked your quiz results today. You stood first! Tell me, what do you feel like having for dinner. It's on me. We should definitely celebrate tonight!"

Huo Yao shook her head. Just as she was about to turn Huo Tingrui down, his phone rang, so she shut her mouth.

Since the phone was connected to the car's bluetooth, Huo Tingrui glanced at the caller ID before quickly pressing the hands-free button on the steering wheel to answer it. "Hello, Brother Yanxi! What's up?"

Huo Yao could hear Huo Yanxi's voice since the speaker mode was on.

"I heard you're back from your business trip. Where are you now? Want to grab a few drinks?" asked Huo Yanxi in a mild tone.

Huo Tingrui lowered his head and checked the traffic on both sides of the road before he replied. "I'm out with our baby sister, and we're trying to choose a place for dinner. Want to join us?"

"Are you with Xiaxia?" Huo Yanxi asked almost instinctively.

Huo Tingrui frowned. Had Huo Yanxi forgotten that Lu Xia was not their biological sister?

All this while, Huo Yao had her gaze fixed on the outside scenery. She gave no reaction to Huo Yanxi's words.

Huo Tingrui paused for a moment and said, "No."

Then Huo Tingrui raised his eyes and glanced at Huo Yao before adding in a deep tone. "I'm with Yaoyao."

Chapter 114: Must Outshine Huo Yao In Every Aspect

After a two-seconds silence, Huo Yanxi eventually said calmly, "I'm with some friends, and we might be doing something later. Since it's a bunch of guys, it might be unsuitable for Huo Yao to come along. Why don't I take a rain check today?"

Huo Tingrui replied in a casual tone. "Sure thing. I'm driving now. Talk again."

"Mhm."

Huo Tingrui gathered his thoughts and turned to look at Huo Yao. He said somewhat impishly, "Baby Girl, have you decided where to eat?"

Baby Girl?

Huo Yao's lips twitched. There was a complicated expression on her face. Her second older brother seemed to be quite the rascal.

But he hadn't brought up the topic of their older brother post the telephonic conversation.

"Forget it. Why don't we go home? Mom and Dad must be waiting," replied Huo Yao with a shake of her head.

Huo Tingrui contemplated her reply for a moment. Since they could celebrate any day, he did not insist any further.

It was almost 7:00 pm by the time Lu Xia made it home.

He Xiaoman had just gotten home as well. She looked quizzically at her daughter with a glass of water in her hand and asked. "Why are you so late today?"

"I was held up at school," replied Lu Xia.

Since she was in a bad mood, she even sounded distracted when she spoke and did not tell her mother about her hospital trip.

He Xiaoman bought her words readily. After she sat on the couch, she suddenly recalled something and said, "Were your quiz results released today?"

Lu Xia had just put her bag down when He Xiaoman asked that. Lu Xia's eyes turned a little dim before she replied to her mother. "Mhm, they're out. I got 186 marks and am ranked 10th in the country."

He Xiaoman frowned and turned sideways to look at her. She asked in a slightly annoyed tone. "Wasn't your ranking 6th the last time? Why did you end up being the 10th now?"

Lu Xia had anticipated that He Xiaoman would ask her this question, so she replied calmly. "The prelims and official quiz are different, and the actual quiz is even tougher. Also, many other participants stood 6th during the prelims. Over 120 students participated, so coming 10th means, I have a high chance of qualifying for the national finals."

Although He Xiaoman was somewhat unclear about the quiz mechanics, she understood that Lu Xia had performed rather well by achieving the 10th position amongst 120 students.

After all, these quiz participants were top students from all over the country.

He Xiaoman's expression instantly turned gentler when she spoke next. "I didn't understand it at first and thought your score slided downwards. Now that you mention it, I think your marks are great."

Lu Xia hung her head without saying anything further. She walked to the couch on the side and sat down before rubbing her forehead with her hand.

"Oh yes. How did Huo Yao do?" asked He Xiaoman casually after she placed her glass down on the table.

Lu Xia's hands paused before she said instinctively, "I'm not sure. I didn't pay attention to her score."

He Xiaoman recalled how she had embarrassed herself in front of the hospital president and the other doctor because of Huo Yao. Her eyes turned cold.

She said stonily, "Xiaxia, you are my pride and joy, so you must outshine Huo Yao in every aspect. Do you understand?"

An awkward expression swept across Lu Xia's eyes. The country bumpkin came in first, twice! How could she outshine that girl? From where would she get the ability to crush her?

Lu Xia pursed her lips in self-deprecation without saying a word.

She merely hummed in response. "Mhm."

He Xiaoman failed to detect Lu Xia's strange expression and offered her help. "Shall I hire a private tutor to aid you in your revision?"

Chapter 115: Clear Differential Treatment

Lu Xia pondered over it for a few seconds before she looked at He Xiaoman and asked. "Mom, doesn't Dad know someone in the Education Association?"

He Xiaoman was surprised by her question. But she nodded and replied confidently. "Yes, he does. He often has tea with the Education Association's chairman. I told your father about you participating in the quiz, but I'm not sure if he told the Chairman about it."

She took her phone from the coffee table and said, "Hang on. Let me call your father and ask him about it."

Lu Xia nodded with a smile on her face while she kept squeezing her knees every now and then, trying to suppress her nervousness.

Soon, He Xiaoman finished the call and raised her head to look up at Lu Xia. She said, "Your father says that you can go ahead with your exams with a peaceful mind. He mentioned this matter to his friend and told him that your strength lay in the field of science. The chairman will find an appropriate chance soon to recommend you to a renowned teacher in the capital."

A huge wave of joy swept through Lu Xia's eyes. Since there were talented people aplenty in the capital, if she found herself a famous teacher, she could both disregard Huo Yao and even the Lu family's support.

The gloominess which had been hovering over Lu Xia all night, dissipated and she exhaled subtly. She sat down next to He Xiaoman and held her arm affectionately.

"Thanks, Mom. You and Dad are the best. I'll be diligent and definitely won't let you down."

He Xiaoman looked at her lovely daughter with a completely different expression from how she used to see her foster daughter. She could not help feeling fortunate.

She patted Lu Xia's arm and said, "I'm so glad you are my biological daughter."

Lu Xia rubbed her head on He Xiaoman's shoulder and concealed the dark expression on her face without speaking any further.

**

The seniors at No.1 Middle School welcomed their first monthly quiz for the term the next day.

Everyone in the class was nervous and fearful about the test except for Huo Yao. Most of the students were still doing last-minute revision right before they entered the exam hall.

The school had multiple exam halls and was particularly strict about the monthly test this time. Each exam hall was equipped with cheating detection equipment. Some students who had secretly brought in their phones and notes were all singled out one by one. It was impossible to cheat.

Although Huo Yao signed up for the National Quiz Contest and stood first in both tests, she was a new transfer, and the test seating was based on last term's grades, so for the sake of fairness, she was assigned to the last exam hall.

The 30 students whose performance was the worst, were the ones assigned to the last exam hall.

The moment Huo Yao entered the hall, all the other students who were already seated turned to look at her curiously.

Almost all the batchmates knew about her quiz results. Although only a minority had questioned her results, they existed nonetheless.

Some of the students had even speculated that the school suddenly conducted the monthly test in such a hurry to help quieten down those rumors about Huo Yao entering the school through a backdoor. Or else, Huo Yao would never have gotten assigned to the worst exam hall.

Huo Yao was unaware of all this. She was assigned to the last table in the exam hall without any other students on her sides. It seemed as though she was deliberately isolated from the other students.

It was clearly a differential treatment.

Chapter 116: Stressed Over Her Language Test

The invigilator came in before long and handed out the test paper.

The language test was conducted in the morning.

Huo Yao felt stressed as she held the language test paper in her hand.

Huo Yao hated language most out of all the subjects. She could not help recalling how those old geezers from her clan had tortured her in her young age. The room full of ancient Sanskrit books was a recurring childhood nightmare for her.

Ever since she took over this body, she instinctively disliked language and tended to do poorly in the subject. She got goosebumps the moment she looked at the densely packed words on the test paper.

Huo Yao quietly sighed. Despite her resistance, she picked up her pen and started writing slowly.

Although it appeared as though she finished the entire test, she was... uncertain of her accuracy.

The Mathematics test was conducted in the afternoon, and it was a subject that best displayed Huo Yao's talents.

It was a complete breeze for her.

Since she had committed the mistake of answering beyond the scope once, she paid extra attention not to let history repeat itself.

After the test ended, she returned to the class, where everyone was flipping through their textbooks, trying to figure out how they had performed on the test.

"Sister Big Shot, don't you think that the Math test was exceptionally hard today?" asked Meng Ying with a dejected look on her face after she estimated that she would barely scrape through.

But after she looked at Huo Yao, Meng Ying immediately regretted saying this. Since Huo Yao came in first during the National Quiz Contest, she was seeking insult for herself by asking her such a question.

Huo Yao tilted her head as she looked at Meng Ying. Then she unexpectedly sighed and said, "I think the language test was super hard."

"PFFFT..." went Meng Ying when she heard Huo Yao.

She was utterly stunned as she continued. "Did I just hear things? Did I hear you say the test was hard?"

Huo Yao had used the words 'super' hard.

"I might be brilliant, but it doesn't mean I am good at everything," replied Huo Yao airily and made Meng Ying want to spank her.

Meng Ying covered her chest from the shock. She had lost count of the number of blows Huo Yao had dealt her ever since she first got to know her.

"Wasn't the language test the easiest?" asked Meng Ying as she hurriedly got back to the conversation.

Huo Yao quickly shook her head and replied vexedly. "It was the toughest for me."

Huo Yao did not appear to be trying to sound humble, so Meng Ying felt as though she had just caught wind of something big.

Meng Ying couldn't help but ask her next. "How many marks do you think you'll score for the language test?"

"I finished everything, but how well I performed, depends on my luck," said Huo Yao with her chin resting in her hand.

She looked sadder by the minute.

Huo Yao infinitely preferred the National Quiz Contest, which combined both arts and sciences, so she did not have to fret over pure language questions.

Meng Ying was so shocked that her eyes nearly popped out of their sockets. She said, "Sister Big Shot, don't tell me you are poor in languages?!"

Huo Yao glanced at her and said, "Don't most students only do well in certain subjects?"

"That's true, but are you a normal student?" asked Meng Ying blatantly.

Huo Yao had scored the highest marks, twice during the National Quiz Contest already. How could she be considered a normal student?

Huo Yao lazily pulled out a textbook from her desk and replied. "I know how envious you are of my brilliance."

Meng Ying's lips twitched and her eyes rolled up.

She suddenly laughed nefariously and said in a sinister tone, "If you fail your language test, then your grades for the monthly test will end up... Heheh!"

Huo Yao raised her brows and said, "You seem to be really relishing my predicament."

Meng Ying coughed awkwardly and stopped gloating. Then she said seriously, "That's not true. I just want the monthly test to be over soon, so I can see your grades."

Huo Yao smiled ambiguously.

Meng Ying rubbed the tip of her nose and changed the subject. "Umm, shall we go shopping after class?"

Huo Yao shook her head and rejected her calmly. "No thanks. I'm busy."

Meng Ying did not push her and went back to her desk.

Chapter 117: Granny Went Missing

Before Huo Yao left home in the morning, she had told Huo Tingrui about her plans to visit her grandmother at the hospital today and politely rejected his offer to pick her up from school.

Huo Yao hailed a cab for herself and headed to the hospital right after school.

But the moment she opened the hospital ward door, she found the room to be empty. Even the blankets were neatly folded on the bed. Her expression instantly altered.

Huo Yao was stunned. She recalled the old lady's odd behavior yesterday before she left and felt anxious. She quickly retrieved her phone from her pocket and dialed a number.

[Sorry, the number you have dialed is unreachable...]

Huo Yao inhaled deeply. She hung up and put her phone away before walking out.

At the nurses' station.

"Excuse me. Where has Yang Qiuhua from room 503 gone?" asked Huo Yao as she looked at the nurse.

Huo Yao sounded calm and did not seem too anxious.

The nurse on duty was startled by Huo Yao's beauty. But she gathered her thoughts and hurriedly flipped through the patient records before replying. "Oh, Old Madam Yang completed her discharge formalities this morning."

Huo Yao's brows furrowed even more tightly. She thanked the nurse before striding towards the lift without hesitation.

The nurse shook her head while she looked at Huo Yao's receding back as she walked away.

Huo Yao was the prettiest girl the nurse had ever seen in her life and was far more stunning than many female celebrities.

"Cui, what are you looking at?" asked another nurse who had just returned to the nurses' station, only to see her colleague blanking out.

Huo Yao had already gotten into the lift, so the other nurse failed to see her.

Cui was still reveling in Huo Yao's beauty but veered her eyes away finally to lament. "I just saw a gorgeous young lady. Her stunning good looks left my heart palpitating."

"PFFFT. Are you for real? Is she that pretty?" asked the other nurse as she laughed.

She slowly picked up a glass of water and took a couple of sips.

But a thought crossed her mind, and she continued. "Speaking of good looks, Old Madam Yang from room 503, who got discharged this morning, has a gorgeous granddaughter. You might not have seen her since you work the dayshift. Now that you mention it, I recall I have her picture. Let me show you..."

The nurse swiped her phone. She found a photo she had secretly taken and continued. "See, isn't she beautiful? Although it's just her profile, doesn't she look absolutely photogenic?"

This nurse had met Huo Yao before. Huo Yao was gorgeous, had a cool charm, and a polite demeanor, so she secretly took pictures of her each time she visited and even paid Old Madam Yang extra attention, because of this.

Cui glanced at the photo and said, "Yes, that's the lady I just bumped into."

The nurse's expression instantly turned dark as she anxiously asked. "Oh, where is she?"

Cui was startled. She subconsciously raised her hand and pointed to the lift door and replied. "She just got into the lift when you came back."

"Oh no! Why didn't you tell me? Old Madam Yang told me to pass something to her," said the nurse in a nervous tone as she slapped her forehead.

Cui touched the tip of her nose and replied, "You didn't tell me about it... But she couldn't have gone far. Hurry up and go after her."

The nurse nodded. She swiftly put her phone back into her pocket before taking a letter from inside a drawer and running towards the lift anxiously.

Chapter 118: Didn't Come Home

It was not very crowded in the hospital since it was evening.

The nurse went all the way down and searched for Huo Yao in the hospital lobby but to no avail. She hurried to the hospital entrance, yet there was still no sign of Huo Yao. After standing at the entrance for a while, she walked back upstairs with her shoulders slumped.

**

Huo Yao had already gotten onto a taxi and was heading towards her grandmother's apartment.

She was gazing out of the car's window. Her usually calm and expressionless face had disappeared and was replaced by a mature look beyond her tender age.

Huo Yao took out her phone and called her grandmother's phone again, but all she got was the same cold automated reply that her phone was off.

She should have noticed that something was amiss with her grandmother yesterday.

Huo Yao's expression turned even darker as she rubbed her fingers against her forehead.

Twenty minutes later, the cab pulled over at the estate's entrance. Huo Yao walked briskly into the estate after she paid the cab fare. When she arrived upstairs, she pressed the doorbell.

Before long, an unacquainted middle-aged woman opened the door.

"Who are you looking for?" asked the middle-aged woman as she looked at Huo Yao quizzically.

She was the nanny whom He Xiaoman hired to take care of Yang Qiuhua and had never laid eyes on Huo Yao before.

Huo Yao frowned and asked her. "Is Old Madam Yang home?"

The nanny instantly asked her in return. "Are you looking for Old Madam Yang?"

"Yes. Is she at home?" asked Huo Yao patiently.

The nanny scrutinized Huo Yao. Although she did not know who Huo Yao was, she replied courteously. "Old Madam Yang was hospitalized recently. But... who are you? Why are you looking for her?"

Huo Yao did not bother to answer her question. Instead, she quizzed the nanny again. "Is she really not at home?"

"Eh... why would I lie? I already told you that Old Madam Yang is hospitalized. Why don't you call her and check with her?" said the nanny with a puzzled look on her face.

Huo Yao's heart sank since the nanny did not seem to be lying. Without uttering another word, she turned to leave.

The nanny was stunned. After Huo Yao disappeared into the lift, she gathered her thoughts and shut the door as she muttered. "Who on earth was that?"

Moments later, the nanny remained bewildered. The more she thought about it, the more she found it odd. Then she hurried into the living room to pick up the landline and made a call.

At the Lu family villa.

Shortly after He Xiaoman answered the nanny's call, she repeated what the nanny said, "Did a young woman come looking for Mom?"

"Yes, Madam. She wouldn't tell me who she was, but she seemed rather anxious, and I wonder if something has happened," said the nanny after she described the situation in detail.

He Xiaoman frowned and continued. "Was she very tall, pretty, and appeared like a student?"

"Yes, Madam."

He Xiaoman's eyes slightly narrowed and she said, "Sure. Okay."

After hanging up the phone, He Xiaoman crossed her arms across her chest and thought about it.

He Xiaoman was certain that the person, whom the nanny was talking about, was Huo Yao. The problem was, why did she suddenly go to the apartment looking for Old Madam Yang?

Did she not already know Old Madam Yang was hospitalized?

Lu Xia came downstairs after changing into homewear. When she saw the strange expression on her mother's face, she went over to sit beside her and asked her gently. "Mom, what's wrong?"

He Xiaoman told Lu Xia right away without any preamble. "The nanny who takes care of your grandmother called to say that Huo Yao went to her apartment."

Chapter 119: A Thief Shouting "Thief"

The moment Lu Xia heard Huo Yao's name, her eyes subconsciously froze for a moment.

But without a change in her voice, she said, "Doesn't she know that Granny is hospitalized? Why would she turn up at the apartment? Did she go there to fetch something for Granny?"

He Xiaoman shook her head and replied with a frown. "She wasn't there to pick up anything. The nanny said Huo Yao asked her whether your grandmother was home. When the nanny told her that she wasn't there, Huo Yao left immediately."

A quizzical look surfaced on Lu Xia's face as well. "What is she up to?"

After contemplating for a few seconds, Lu Xia said, "Mom, it seems awfully strange. Why don't we call Granny and find out?"

"I was also thinking the same," said He Xiaoman with a nod. She retrieved her phone and quickly dialed the old lady's number.

But soon, He Xiaoman's confused expression changed into a frown as she hung up and said, "Her phone is off."

"Erm... Is her phone off? Could something have happened to her?" asked Lu Xia in a worried tone suddenly.

He Xiaoman's eyelids twitched. She stood up and said, "Let me find the hospital's number to call them and ask about it."

She walked over to a cabinet and found a doctor's name card. She dialed the number without hesitation.

"Hello... What? My Mom has already been discharged?" said He Xiaoman in utter shock.

Lu Xia had already walked up to He Xiaoman. She heard her speak on the phone and asked. "Did Granny get discharged? Didn't she tell you about it?"

He Xiaoman's mind was starting to go blank as she said, "No, she hasn't. I was so angry with her last night that I didn't visit her at the hospital today."

Lu Xia's expression became even more grave. She said, "Why would she discharge herself without saying a word to anyone? She's an elderly woman in an unfamiliar environment. She didn't even go back to the apartment. Where else could she have gone?"

He Xiaoman pressed her throbbing temples. Then a thought crossed her mind, and her face sank. She gritted her teeth and said, "You're right. Your Granny doesn't know better. So why would she discharge herself unless someone convinced her to?"

After pausing for a couple of seconds, He Xiaoman continued speaking with a look of confidence. "It must be Huo Yao who took your Granny. It could only be her!"

Lu Xia lowered her gaze. She shook her head and said, "It probably wasn't Huo Yao. Didn't the nanny just say she's looking for Granny as well?"

He Xiaoman laughed coldly and scoffed. "She's just a thief shouting 'thief'. How can you believe her?"

"But..." continued Lu Xia, only to be cut off by He Xiaoman.

She said, "Enough. Don't be stupid. I don't want to hear my daughter defend an outsider."

Then He Xiaoman picked up her phone to locate Huo Yao's number angrily before dialling her.

**

After Huo Yao reached down the building, she did not leave her grandmother's estate right away and sat on a public bench in the garden instead.

The old lady's phone remained off.

The nanny did not appear to be putting up an act. Also, judging from Huo Yao's understanding of He Xiaoman, it was unlikely that she took away the old lady without a word. So the only possibility was that her grandmother left on her own accord.

Huo Yao pressed her forehead with her fingers. She held her phone and briefly thought about the possibilities before she tapped on an unknown app icon on her phone. Just as she was about to sign in, an unfamiliar number appeared on her phone screen.

Huo Yao paused momentarily before answering the phone.

"Hello... Okay. I'll be there in twenty minutes. Thanks."

After hanging up the phone, Huo Yao stood up. Right then, her phone rang once again. When she lowered her eyes to glance at the screen, she rejected the call without any hesitation.

She put her phone in her pocket before quickly walking out of the estate.

Chapter 120: Grandma's Letter

The call she had received was from none other than the nurse who did not manage to catch up with Huo Yao earlier at the hospital.

Huo Yao hailed a cab and hurried back to the hospital. On her way there, He Xiaoman called her countless times, but she did not answer. In the end, Huo Yao simply blacklisted her number.

"I'm sorry, Miss Huo. I should have called you earlier to come and collect this, but I got held up," apologized the nurse as she looked at Huo Yao.

Then she handed a letter to Huo Yao.

Huo Yao took the letter and replied politely. "It's okay. Thanks."

"You're welcome," said the nurse with a smile.

Huo Yao took the letter and walked away. Then she turned to look at the nurse and asked her. "Can I ask if my grandmother completed the discharge paperwork on her own?"

The nurse shook her head and answered honestly. "I don't know. I was working the night shift and wasn't around that morning."

But then she paused and continued after a moment. "Shall I check with my colleagues?"

A look of disappointment swept across Huo Yao's eyes. She shook her head and said, "It's okay."

She turned back and left.

There were public benches in the garden placed outside the in-patient department. Huo Yao went over and sat down before opening the letter.

[Yaoyao, I've gone back to my hometown. Look after yourself and don't worry about me. I will take care of myself too. I'm waiting for you to come home with the trophy for the International Quiz Contest.]

It was a brief letter, written in an untidy handwriting. She could even detect how hesitant and stiff the writer had been, after seeing each stroke. There was also a watermark on the corner where she signed off.

A sense of poignance arose in Huo Yao's heart. She could almost imagine how the old lady had felt when she wrote this letter.

Memories of the time she spent with the old lady flashed back in her mind like a movie. Although she only spent a short year with her grandmother, it was the most peaceful time of her life.

Huo Yao raised her head. Her eyes flickered and the dim roadside lamp's rays scattered on her face. It was a face tinged with a hint of solitude and fondness.

"That's such a rare expression you have on your face right now."

A mocking voice suddenly flitted past her and shattered the silence.

Huo Yao slowly looked to the side, and Min Yu's exquisite face emerged in her sight. His slender body seemed taller as he stood before her with his arms across his chest. There was a languid look about him and he seemed to have been standing there for an unknown length of time.

Huo Yao frowned slightly before folding the letter in an unhurried manner. She asked him quizzically. "What are you doing here?"

Min Yu raised his brow and said, "If I didn't come here today, wouldn't I have missed this helpless and pitiful side of you?"

Huo Yao stood up. She slowly walked up to Min Yu and stared at him with her bright eyes. Then said rather coldly, "Since your eyes are bad, I will come closer so you can have a better look."

Min Yu's lips twitched. He stared at the girl standing right in front of him with an arrogant look on her face. The peaceful air about her, from a few moments ago, was all gone. He raised his hands and laughed. "Okay. It seems that I misspoke."

Huo Yao sneered and looked away, but a thought flashed across her mind suddenly.

Her eyes landed on Min Yu's face swiftly and she asked him. "Did you help Granny get discharged?"

Since Huo Yao's grandmother had gotten this guy to send her to the hospital when she suffered a heart attack, it made sense for her to look him up when she wanted to leave quietly.