

Pill Maker 141

Chapter 141: Third Older Brother's Certificates Of Honor

Huo Yao went upstairs with her stuff and opened her brother's room next door.

Huo Yao turned on the light switch on the wall. A room containing a single bed and a table came to sight. It had a modern and minimalistic interior design and was done up in a cool color scheme. Two certificates of honor hung from the wall.

Huo Yao put her things down on the table. She walked over to the wall with the certificates of honor. A look of surprise emerged on her face when she saw what awards they were.

One of them was a Knowles medical biology award given out by the most recognized medical institution in Country M. This appraisal took place once every three years, and all its candidates were medical geniuses.

The other one was a Lasker medical award. Similar to the previous one, it was a highly renowned recognition in the medical field.

Both awards were given to people who contributed greatly to medicine.

Huo Yao did not expect her third older brother, whom she had yet to lay eyes on, was a medical genius. Also, she noticed that these were awarded five years ago.

Wasn't her third older brother barely 20 years old at that time?

Huo Yao crossed her arms. She felt extremely curious about her third older brother, Huo Yulin. It was a pity he was abroad, or else they could have had a good chat.

She was rather interested in western medicine.

Huo Yao veered her eyes away from the awards and turned to shut the curtains. She turned on the air conditioner and adjusted it to the required temperature. Then she started to fiddle with the pile of Chinese medicine on the table.

Incense sticks were easy to make in general. The tough part was adding Chinese medicine to the sandalwood in powder form as she had to determine its quantity and ratio accurately.

Although Huo Yao was not a professional incense maker, she was highly gifted at incense and medicine making.

She was able to incorporate strong medicine without causing the slightest side effects. Her Chinese medicine knowledge and accuracy were incredible.

So it was child's play for her to make nerve-soothing incense.

Two hours later, Huo Yao finally put down her tools. Her eyes landed on the incense sticks lying on the chopping board, which she had created using molds. She exhaled deeply and stretched her limbs.

After the incense sticks dried out completely in two hours, she would be done.

Huo Yao rotated her tired neck. There was still some incense mud on her fingers, so she went to the bathroom to wash her hands.

Huo Yao stayed in the room for about 30 minutes more and left after she was certain that everything was in order.

The moment she opened the door, she spotted Huo Tingrui standing at the staircase. He seemed to be staggering.

Huo Yao hurried over when she saw him. The intense smell of alcohol wafted into her nose. She frowned and quickly supported him.

Although Huo Tingrui was drunk, he was still conscious. He beamed brightly the moment he spotted Huo Yao and asked her. "Baby Girl, are you waiting up for me?"

Huo Yao hastily let go of him when she heard, 'Baby Girl'. Huo Tingrui was caught by surprise, and his shoulder bumped into the wall.

Huo Tingrui winced in pain. In order to avoid falling, he instinctively held onto the wall. He turned around to look at Huo Yao with his crooked glasses, which seemed as if they were about to slide off his face. Then he said, "Yao..."

Huo Yao put his spectacles back on him properly and said in a calm voice, "Sorry. I'm not that strong and didn't manage to hold onto you."

Huo Tingrui's mind was genuinely processing slower than usual due to the alcohol. He replied a few seconds later in a slurring voice. "Oh oh. It's okay. It was my bad."

Chapter 142: Did He Fly Into A Drunken Rage?

Huo Tingrui held himself against the wall and straightened his body slowly. He flung his head sideways before turning to look at Huo Yao. He gave her a silly smile and said, "I'm not drunk."

Huo Yao shook her head. She reached out to support him from the shoulder and replied patronizingly. "Yes, I'm the one who's drunk."

"Oh, do you drink?" asked Huo Tingrui with a silly look on his face as he leaned his head towards Huo Yao.

Huo Yao inhaled deeply and suppressed her urge to slap Huo Tingrui. She pushed his head aside and dragged him into his room.

The entire process was rather effortless.

"Wait a minute. I'll get you some water," said Huo Yao after she tossed him onto the bed.

Before long, Huo Yao came back with some dark coloured water. Huo Tingrui had already rolled off the bed onto the ground and was muttering unintelligibly.

Huo Yao pressed her forehead as her face turned dark. She yanked him back onto the bed.

“Drink this,” said Huo Yao and placed the cup near Huo Tingrui’s mouth.

Huo Tingrui went into a daze, looking at her without drinking the water. He kept smiling as he said, “Yao...”

Huo Yao fed him the water forcibly. She was deft enough that not a drop was wasted.

After all, she did not feed medicine to all those stray cats and dogs for nothing.

Huo Tingrui started to recover shortly after taking her medicine. Soon enough, he fell asleep.

Huo Yao sat in the room for 30 minutes and only left when she was certain that he would not make any more trouble.

It was Saturday the next day. Huo Tingrui expected a bad hangover to hit him when he woke up, but he was not feeling sick at the moment. It felt as though he did not drink last night.

This was strange!

Huo Tingrui quickly took a shower and changed. After he checked his breath for any smell of alcohol, he left the room and went downstairs.

Song Ning had already left the house because she was meeting the interior designer in the morning. Huo Yao and Huo Jinyan were having breakfast downstairs.

Huo Tingrui went down and pulled out a chair to sit. He looked at Huo Yao as he rubbed his shoulder and said, “Thanks for taking care of me last night, Yao.”

He recalled seeing his little sister standing at the door when he got upstairs. She had hurried over to help him.

But Huo Tingrui had a fragmented memory of the rest of the episode.

Huo Tingrui asked her in an uneasy voice. “Erm... did I go into a drunken rage last night?”

Huo Yao raised her head to look at him. She pursed her lips and smiled.

“I guess not.”

Huo Tingrui pursed his lips. What did Huo Yao mean by this?

Did he or did he not?

“Drink less from now on. Otherwise, your younger sister has to take care of you. Look at how petite she is. Can you bear to let her do it?” interrupted Huo Jinyan angrily.

He had yet to enjoy such attention from his daughter!

Huo Tingrui adjusted his spectacles and scrutinized Huo Yao. Although she was skinny, she was almost 173 centimeters in height. Was that considered petite?

What on earth was his father’s definition of small?

"What's up with your shoulder? Why do you keep rubbing it?" asked Huo Jinyan as he glanced at him.

The spoon in Huo Yao's hand instantly froze in mid-air.

"Oh. I might have bumped into something after I had too many drinks last night. It hurts a little," said Huo Tingrui without taking it to heart.

Chapter 143: Do You Know How To Make Incense?

Huo Yao raised her brow questioningly and turned to look at him. "Do you not remember what happened?"

Huo Tingrui was stunned. He asked her in a hesitant manner. "Are you trying to tell me something?"

Huo Yao smiled ambiguously. "Nope. But Dad's right. You should drink less from now on."

Post that, she lowered her eyes and ate her breakfast quietly.

Huo Tingrui scratched his head. He had a nagging feeling that something happened last night and had something to do with his shoulder ache.

Huo Yao went upstairs after breakfast. She went into the room adjacent to hers and started making incense.

Huo Tingrui did not have to go to the office today, so he followed his younger sister upstairs. He became curious when he spotted her entering Huo Yulin's room.

He could smell a light sandalwood scent upon entering the room.

Huo Yao was cutting the incense with a cutting tool. She did not try to hide anything when she spotted Huo Tingrui entering the room.

"Yao, are you..." asked Huo Tingrui as he picked up an incense stick and smelled it, "...Is this sandalwood incense?"

Huo Yao nodded without stopping her work.

Huo Tingrui glanced at the tools on the table and exclaimed. "Do you know how to make incense?"

Although Huo Tingrui knew very little about incense, his friend knew quite a bit, so he was slightly more informed about the topic.

He did not expect his little sister, who had grown up in a small town, would know how to make incense. Also, her actions looked highly skilled. It all came as a huge surprise to him.

People who dabbled in incense generally had a faintly refined air. No wonder his sister had such an excellent aura and did not seem like a girl from the countryside.

"A little," replied Huo Yao in a soft voice, with her head lowered. She quickly finished cutting up the incense and packed them into a box.

Huo Tingrui touched his chin thoughtfully. These incense sticks did not look as if they were made by an inexperienced hand. In a casual tone, he continued to grill her. "Did you get professional training for this when you were staying with your grandmother?"

Huo Yao raised her head and looked at him with confidence in her eyes. "No, I learned it on my own."

She was the only person who dared to add Chinese medicine to sandalwood incense.

Huo Tingrui was about to applaud Old Madam Yang for grooming Huo Yao so well. But the next instant, his self-esteem suffered a severe blow when he heard her say that she had learned it independently.

Ever since his sister came home, he was proudly relegated as mere decoration to help bring out her intelligence.

Huo Yao failed to notice the look on Huo Tingrui's face. Instead, she took her phone from her pocket and opened her WeChat to send Min Yu a text: [Are you there? The incense I told you about, is here. Can we pick a place to meet so that I can hand it over to you?]

Although Min Yu rejected her offer, she had to return the favor.

Huo Yao had a deep look in her eyes as some unknown thoughts crossed her mind. Her phone beeped quickly. She read the message and put her phone back in her pocket.

She said to her brother, "I have to go out."

Then she took the box of nerve-soothing incense and headed out.

Huo Tingrui was quietly waiting for his younger sister to give him some incense, but she took off with all of it.

In an instant, he trailed behind her and asked her shamelessly in a somewhat begrudging tone. "Yaoyao, didn't you make any incense for me?"

Huo Yao halted and turned to glance at him. "There's nothing wrong with you, so you don't need it."

Huo Tingrui's throat choked. His point was, should she not have made it for everyone?

Moreover, he was her biological second older brother!

Chapter 144: He Must Help

30 minutes later at a teahouse in the city.

The moment Huo Yao got to the private room, she could smell the light scent of sandalwood incense. It reminded her of the scent that she had inhaled at the Imperial Medicine Store yesterday.

"Come in," said Min Yu. He was elegantly pouring tea out of a teapot kept on a table in front of him. Fumes were slowly drifting from an incense burner nearby and curling up into the air.

Huo Yao narrowed her eyes. She nodded politely to Zhuo Yun beside him and walked over. Pulling out a redwood chair, she sat down.

Zhuo Yun glanced at Huo Yao cautiously. For reasons unknown, each time he met this young lady, she gave off a mature vibe beyond her tender age. He just could not see through her.

Min Yu placed a warm teacup before Huo Yao. His fair, slender fingers held up the teapot and slowly filled her cup with dark green tea. "Mingqian Longjing. Try it."

Huo Yao picked up the cup and the light fragrant scent wafted into her nose. She took a small sip and instantly raised her brows to commend him. "The tea tastes full-bodied, and its sweetness lingers in the mouth for a long time. Not bad."

Min Yu put down the teapot. Warmth exuded from his face. He looked uninhibited and said, "I heard you joined an international contest."

Huo Yao paused for a moment before she leaned back lazily into the backrest. She raised her eyes to look at Min Yu and asked him instead. "Did Granny chat with you?"

Min Yu smiled gently and replied in a cheeky manner. "After all, I'm your tuition teacher, so I must help."

Huo Yao touched her chin and said, "Oh! No need for your contribution. Just help me keep Granny happy."

Zhuo Yun seemed to be suddenly choked by something the moment she finished speaking. He hastily cleared his throat, "COUGH COUGH..."

Huo Yao raised her head to look at him oddly.

Min Yu glanced at Zhuo Yun too. But then he shifted his gaze back at her and said indifferently, "That goes without saying."

Zhuo Yun had just calmed himself after hearing Huo Yao's request, but his master's response left him completely petrified.

He happily agreed to all her bold requests... Was he missing something today, or did he have an auditory hallucination? Was this master before him a fake?

"Do you need me to get you professional tuition teachers?" asked Min Yu as he refilled Huo Yao's cup.

Huo Yao tapped her fingertips on the table gently and replied. "No, thanks."

Min Yu did not continue with this subject. He picked up his teacup and drained its contents.

In an instant, the private room became quiet, but it was not an awkward silence.

Before long, Huo Yao checked her watch for the time and picked up the bag beside her. She handed it to Min Yu and said, "This incense would be useful to you."

Huo Yao picked up the teacup to finish her tea and stood up. "The tea's pretty good. Thanks for hosting me. I'm off."

"I'll give you a ride."

"No need for the trouble. I can get a cab," said Huo Yao and rejected Min Yu's offer. Then she turned to leave without speaking any further.

Min Yu watched Huo Yao proceeding to leave the room and said, "Wait a minute."

Huo Yao looked at him questioningly. "Hmm?"

Min Yu smiled and picked up a tea box beside him before he walked over and said, "Take the tea. I can get you more after you're through with it."

Zhuo Yun stared hard at them. Huo Yao gave Min Yu an ordinary box of incense, but his master gave her a box of limited edition tea... Oh no. Oh no. He felt as though something must be wrong with his eyes again.

Chapter 145:

This Is Authentic Nerve-Soothing Incense

Huo Yao failed to notice Zhuo Yun's expression. She accepted the tea from Min Yu easily and said, "Then, thanks."

She recalled that her old man loved green tea, and he ought to like this one.

Huo Yao left the private room quickly.

After Huo Yao left, Zhuo Yun asked his master in a plaintive voice. "Yu, what's so interesting about this young lady? She looks like an ordinary middle school student to me."

Min Yu was lost in his thoughts. He turned to glance at Zhuo Yun before he said calmly, "She was the one who saved me a year ago."

A look of surprise surfaced in Zhuo Yun's eyes. Min Yu had never brought up this topic before. Zhuo Yun was puzzled. "She's just a little girl. How could she save you?"

Min Yu picked up his cup and took a small sip. His handsome face turned a little more solemn as he reminisced about the past events for a few seconds. He said in a serious tone, "To this day, I haven't figured it out."

Zhuo Yun was stunned.

Min Yu removed the long wooden box from the paper bag. It was a simple box, looking to be of poor quality. It was at a completely different level from the box she had given her grandmother.

Min Yu looked sad. For the first time, he learned firsthand what differential treatment meant.

Zhuo Yun wanted to ask about the incident further but his gaze stopped at the long wooden box in Min Yu's hands. Right after, he saw the strange expression on Min Yu's face. Suddenly making the connection between the box's shoddy appearance, and Min Yu's expressions, his lips twitched.

“We made a loss,” muttered Zhuo Yun softly.

They could probably buy over 1000 such boxes with a box of his master’s tea.

Zhuo Yun could not bear to look at it any longer and covered his face. Then he coughed and said, “Miss Huo was kind in her intention. Why don’t you continue using the incense Old Mr. Pei gave you... and give this box to me instead?”

The quality of its external packaging did not look good, so the incense... Zhou Yun could not even begin to imagine how bad the incense would be.

Min Yu glanced at Zhuo Yun indifferently and said, “Since she gave it to me out of the kindness of her heart. Is it right to give it to you?”

Then he lowered his eyes and pushed the clasp of the box.

Zhuo Yun touched the tip of his nose and muttered. “I don’t see why it’s inappropriate. Moreover, how can you use such low-quality incense at a time like this? If you give it to me, it can at least be put to some use...”

For instance, he could use it at home to get rid of bad odor.

A strong scent of sandalwood incense wafted into Min Yu’s nose the moment he opened the box. After smelling it, he could even detect a slight scent of Chinese medicine.

Min Yu’s eyes narrowed. He turned to look at the fumes curling up from the incense burner. After a few seconds, he put out the half-burnt incense.

Zhuo Yun was startled and asked him. “Master, what are you doing?”

Min Yu said nothing. He only waited for the sandalwood incense scent in the room to clear before he retrieved a lighter and lit the incense stick which Huo Yao had given him.

A starkly different and unusual sandalwood incense scent filled the room. Although it was intense, it was not stifling. Instead, it gradually transformed into a fragrant medicine scent.

The look on Zhuo Yun’s face altered when he smelled it. He said, “This smells like sandalwood... but not exactly.”

“This is an authentic nerve-soothing incense,” came Min Yu’s soft reply after a long time.

Chapter 146: Priceless

Zhuo Yun instantly froze. He stared at Min Yu and said, “Real nerve-soothing incense? How can that be...”

Min Yu put out the incense and placed it back into the box carefully as he replied. “That’s what it smells like.”

The look of shock on Zhuo Yun's face swiftly transformed into joy. He said, "If it's authentic nerve-soothing incense, then it might help to improve your health."

Min Yu contemplated for a couple of seconds and continued. "No. It's much more special than the nerve-soothing incense I used earlier."

Zhuo Yun was speechless because authentic nerve-soothing incense was far too rare and was considered priceless. If Huo Yao's incense were better than that, then it would cost... Zhuo Yun gulped back his saliva. He did not dare imagine how much it was worth.

Zhuo Yun recalled how he had shockingly called it poor quality incense and shamelessly asked his master for it. Furthermore, he had wanted to use it to remove odor at home... In an instant, Zhuo Yun wanted to dig a hole and hide underneath.

Fortunately, his master did not get fooled by him. If his master really gave it to him, that would have made him a sinner.

But Zhuo Yun's eyes landed on the box of incense once again. He thought hard about it before he said, "Why don't we get Old Mr. Pei to authenticate it?"

He trusted Min Yu's words, but if this incense was indeed more special than the average nerve-soothing incense, then he had to confirm whether it was good for his master's health.

Zhuo Yun did not recall Huo Yao's previously spoken words to Min Yu telling him that the incense would be useful to him.

30 minutes later, at the Imperial Medicine Store.

Old Mr. Pei lit a stick of the nerve-soothing incense. His expression altered when he smelled it. His hands trembled as he pointed at the incense and said, "It's genuinely nerve-soothing incense. The incense maker is a genius. He added a lot of Chinese medicine to the incense. The sandalwood in the top note is good for nerve soothing, while the Chinese herbs in the back note can help with organ recovery. No one would dare to make such an incense without decades of medical experience."

"Brilliant! Just brilliant!" applauded Old Mr. Pei.

Then he raised his head to look at Min Yu and said, "This nerve-soothing incense was probably custom made."

Min Yu looked at Old Mr. Pei with a frown and asked him. "Why do you say so?"

"It's because all the Chinese medicine added to it, were targeted towards your physical condition. Five flavor concentrate and formosan gum are strong medicines. If you consume them orally, they might harm your body, so I didn't dare add them to your medication."

Old Mr. Pei smiled bitterly as he shook his head before he continued to speak. "But now these medicines have been grinded into powder form and mixed with sandalwood. By using them externally, it will maximize their efficacy. That's why I said the incense was probably custom made for you."

Min Yu mulled over his words with a profound look in his eyes.

Old Mr. Pei looked at him with anticipation and said, “Young Master Min, could you introduce the incense maker to me?”

Min Yu shook his head and laughed. “Honestly, someone gave this incense to me, but I am sure that she doesn’t know anything about medicine.”

A look of disappointment surfaced in Old Mr. Pei’s eyes, but he did not continue to probe any longer.

Heng stood next to Old Mr. Pei. He was the middle-aged man who had sold the medicine to Huo Yao. When he heard the medicines which his master mentioned, he suddenly recalled the young lady who came by to buy the same ones yesterday. She had also asked about sandalwood before she left.

But he quickly shook his head. How could there be something as coincidental as that?

“Old Mr. Pei, do you mean that if Master continued using this incense, he would be cured?” asked Zhuo Yun.

Chapter 147: How Can Master’s Tea Compare To Miss Huo’s Incense Box?

Old Mr. Pei shook his head and said, “Although this incense is good, it can only be used for conditioning his body to ensure that his organs are stable. If he wants to recover, we still have to tackle the problem at its roots.”

Despite Zhuo Yun’s disappointment, he knew they were fortunate enough to make even this much progress.

“Young Master Min’s incense can last for half a year. I will do my best to find a way to treat the main problem by then,” said Old Mr. Pei moments later.

“Thanks,” said Min Yu as he stood up and bowed slightly to Old Mr. Pei.

“In that case, we won’t hold you up. Good bye.”

Min Yu and Zhuo Yun left the Imperial Medicine Store post that.

Zhuo Yun’s mood soared uncontrollably after he got into the car.

“I wonder where Miss Huo bought the incense from. She gave it to you at the perfect time!” sighed Zhuo Yun.

Although Huo Yao gave it to Min Yu, Zhuo Yun instinctively believed she was not the one who had made it. After all, Old Mr. Pei said that it took decades of medical experience to make this incense.

Huo Yao was so young. Probably no one would believe this teenager was an apothecary. Even the Apothecary Association’s genius, He Shu, made a name for himself when he was well past his 30s.

Min Yu sat in the backseat and stared at the box of incense. He suddenly recalled the online store that Huo Yao once recommended, and his eyes gleamed warmly. He replied to Zhuo Yun indifferently after a long time. “It might be someone she knows.”

Zhuo Yun glanced in the rearview mirror and said, "If she knows someone so incredible, she can't be too bad herself."

No wonder his master treated Huo Yao differently. He sure had the foresight.

Min Yu raised his head and glanced at Zhuo Yun. Then he smiled ambiguously and asked him. "Do you still think we made a huge loss?"

Zhuo Yun clutched the steering wheel tightly. He glanced at the nerve-soothing incense box and could sense his face burning up in shame as he recalled the comments he had made.

How could he have assumed that his master's tea was worthier than 1000 pieces of the incense sticks?

His master's tea clearly could not compare to even its box!

How could a box used for storing authentic nerve-soothing incense be considered ordinary at all?

"Yu, don't you still have a Da Hong Pao, which is out of production? Why don't you send it to Miss Huo?" asked Zhuo Yun seriously.

Min Yu, "..."

Get lost.

After Huo Yao got home, she stuffed Min Yu's tea into her father's hands.

Huo Jinyan held the box and eyed its packaging. He stared wide-eyed and said, "Yao, where did you get this tea from?"

It was Mingqian Longjing, and was produced in the most famous tea village of City Z. Although it was not as expensive as Tie Guan Yin and Da Hong Pao, its production had been low this year due to unforeseen weather conditions. He had been really upset about not managing to snatch up the tea previously.

"A friend gave it to me," said Huo Yao casually.

Huo Jinyan opened the box and took a whiff of the tea. It was the type he had been pining for. In an instant, he was so touched that he broke into tears.

He overlooked Huo Yao's words and said, "Oh! My daughter is the best. You especially got this tea for me because you knew I liked it. You're so thoughtful."

Huo Yao, "..."

"Daughters are the best. They are more adorable and filial than boys!" said Huo Jinyan.

Huo Tingrui came downstairs just in time to hear his father's accusation, "???"

Now his status in the family had gone into freefall?

Chapter 148: Topping The Monthly Test

The weekend went by swiftly, and soon it was Monday.

Results of the monthly test were due today. First thing in the morning, they were already pasted on the school noticeboard.

This time the monthly tests were exceptionally difficult. Since they were conducted in a hurry, most of the students fared a lot worse than usual.

More importantly, everyone was waiting to see Huo Yao's grades. After all, there were rumors about her poor language result since last week.

The school noticeboard was surrounded by students.

But everyone got a shock when they saw the combined rankings.

1st – Huo Yao – 692 marks.

2nd – Yi Lianfan – 691 marks.

3rd – Cheng Jie – 683 marks.

...

[Oh my! Who said Huo Yao did terribly in her language paper? She bloody stood first. How is that bad?]

[I also want to know which jealous prick purposely spread these lies to mislead us?]

[Yi Lianfan has come in first for two years in a row. This time, he shockingly suffered such a defeat. He narrowly lost to Huo Yao by one mark and fell down the altar. This new transfer student is too scary.]

[Might I say, Huo Yao's language grades were genuinely poor. The class advisor even invited her for a chat, and all of us saw it.]

[So... she claimed the top level even though she had poor language grades? Did she score full marks in everything except language???]

[I can suddenly understand why the school placed Huo Yao in the final exam hall and why they treated her differently.]

[Who said she had bad grades, took the back door, and cheated in the contest? This is a real tight slap to the fella's face.]

...

Lu Xia stood among the students and stared in shock at the test ranking on the noticeboard. The sight of Huo Yao's name in the first place made Lu Xia really angry. She clenched her fists tightly and her eyes turned into ice shards.

It was her again!

Why did everything change after Huo Yao came here?

"Xiaxia, are you... okay?" asked Chang Yingying. She turned to look at Lu Xia after checking out the results and got startled by her expression.

Lu Xia composed herself and released her fingers. Her eyes became gentle again as she looked at Chang Yingying nonchalantly. "How did you fare?"

Chang Yingying was taken aback. Her eyes must have been playing tricks on her. Or else why would Lu Xia have such a terrifying look in her eyes?

She touched her nose tip and said morosely, "The test was too hard this time, so I only scored 615 marks. I've already slipped below the top 50. I'm so sad. I wonder if I will get kicked out of the Rocket Class."

Lu Xia calmly consoled her. "No, you won't."

"I sure hope not," replied Chang Yingying. She glanced at Huo Yao's name at the top of the list but had the brains not to mention her in front of Lu Xia this time.

She continued to speak in a gentle voice. "Xiaxia, your grades for this term are still very stable. I see you scored 670 marks. You got 20 marks more than the final exam last year."

Chang Yingying did not know what else to say. She heard that Huo Yao did very badly for her language paper and had thought that she was bound to disgrace herself this time. She was waiting for her to become a laughing stock. In the end... sigh!

Lu Xia's lips curled up in self-deprecation. What was the point of scoring 20 more marks? In comparison to Huo Yao, her grades were miles away.

Chapter 149: Become Number One Foe

Lu Xia glanced at the results on the noticeboard for the last time and turned to leave without saying a word.

Chang Yingying gazed at Lu Xia from behind and exhaled deeply.

Although Lu Xia said nothing, she must be feeling awful. After all, she had been spending all her free time studying. Her unprecedented determination made Chang Yingying feel sorry for her.

But sadly... Lu Xia was still surpassed by her foster sister from the countryside. Chang Yingying shook her head before she went chasing after Lu Xia.

*

Huo Yao did not go to the noticeboard to see the results. She had managed to estimate her total score after Chen Yu called her into the office last week to discuss her language grades.

Before Huo Yao entered No.1 Middle School, she had checked the school's grading system. Considering her grades, she would probably come second, if not first.

After all, Huo Yao could not help perform badly in language.

Meng Ying came back to the class after checking out the grades. She saw Huo Yao sitting quietly and felt particularly upset.

Ever since she learned that Huo Yao was bad at language, she had been secretly gloating. After all, she was the one suffering from rude shocks all the time, so by the laws of nature, she deserved a win too. If she could see Huo Yao suffer defeat, it would be lovely.

In the end, hehehe, she realized she was such a rookie.

It was impossible for Huo Yao to have bad grades in her life.

She had stood first across the level!

Perhaps Huo Yao detected the begrudging look Meng Ying was casting at her, so she turned sideways to glance at Meng Ying. She took the initiative to ask her. "Are you done checking the marks? How much?"

"You scored 692 points and stood first in the entire grade," said Meng Ying without bringing up her own marks. Then she paused for two seconds before she muttered. "Didn't you say you suck at language? You must have been kidding!"

"If I didn't suck at language, I probably wouldn't have got just 692 marks," said Huo Yao with a shrug.

Meng Ying's lips twitched. The blow always came so unexpectedly. Fortunately, she was accustomed to it by now.

Meng Ying shook her head and said, "Let me tell you, Yi Lianfan from the Rocket Class has always been the topper before you got transferred. He only scored one mark less than you this time."

Meng Ying raised her hand and made the sign of one. "Do you know what one mark is? He might just beat you the next time! Especially since you are bad at language."

Huo Yao had a vague impression of this name. He had participated in the National Quiz Contest and stood second both times. He was right behind her.

"Yi Lianfan is a proud person. You parachuted out of nowhere and stole his title, so he's probably going to treat you like his number one foe," said Meng Ying as she leaned her chin into her hand.

"But Yi Lianfan is very handsome, so it's not a loss even if you win his attention!"

Huo Yao glanced at Meng Ying's starry-eyed look. She said with a snort, "Are you drooling?"

Meng Ying instinctively rubbed the corners of her lips and realized that Huo Yao was teasing her. She turned to glare at her angrily and retorted. "Sister Big Shot, you're becoming more and more mean."

Huo Yao tilted her head and raised her brow. A languid and evil aura emanated from Huo Yao's face. She had such exquisite features that Meng Ying ended up swallowing her saliva.

Go to hell, Yi Lianfan! Huo Yao was clearly the coolest person on earth!

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In a single morning, all suspicion surrounding Huo Yao's grades dissipated after the monthly test results came out.

And Lu Xia was in a foul mood all day because of these results.

Chapter 150: Can't Be Easily Instigated

It was finally the last period of the day, and it was self-study time. Lu Xia asked for a leave from her class advisor, Wei Mingzhe, telling him that she had to go for practice.

Wei Mingzhe disapproved of students leaving early, but considering the improvement in Lu Xia's grades, he allowed it.

Lu Xia stepped out of the school gates and felt a lot better after suppressing her feelings for the whole day. She put on her mask and shades and stood at the road. She retrieved her phone and looked for Huo Tingrui's number.

Her fingertips hovered over it before she dialed the number.

Huo Tingrui was in court, so he had handed his phone to his assistant for safekeeping. Since his assistant knew how much Huo Tingrui valued privacy, he did not answer the phone when Lu Xia's non-work-related call came in.

Lu Xia called twice in a row, but no one answered, so she stopped trying any further. Hidden behind the sunglasses, her eyes turned dark.

They had lived together for ten years, but she had been defeated by his newly found biological sister. Had it come to the stage where he even stopped answering her calls?

Huo Yao seemed to be pretty good at tearing them apart.

Lu Xia smiled in self-ridicule. She turned to flag a cab and gave the address to the driver.

Half an hour later.

"Why did you suddenly come over? Don't you have classes in the afternoon?" asked Huo Yanxi after he told the secretary to pour some water for Lu Xia.

Lu Xia took the proffered glass and thanked the secretary. She had already removed her shades and mask.

She replied in a warm voice. "My last period was self-study. Since there's nothing much to do, I asked the teacher for leave. I wanted to ask you out for lunch, but you didn't pick up when I called, so I didn't know you were busy."

Lu Xia even acted puzzled as she spoke.

Huo Yanxi narrowed his eyes. He checked his watch and said, "I still have some work to finish. You will have to wait for a bit."

"It's ok. We haven't hung out in so long. Why don't you call Brother Tingrui and ask him along as well?" asked Lu Xia gently with the glass in her hand. Looking at ease, she took a sip.

Huo Yanxi could not help recalling the things Huo Tingrui said the other day. He went quiet for a couple of seconds before he continued. "He's going to be quite busy for a while, so let's forget it. We can discuss it when he's free."

Lu Xia tightened her grip on the glass. She acted nonchalantly and said, "Sure. Works for me."

After a pause, she said, "I'm just worried that Brother Tingrui might have misunderstood me."

"Misunderstood?" asked Huo Yanxi with a frown. He did not seem to get what she was driving at.

Lu Xia bit her lip and said softly, "Yaoyao doesn't talk to me much because of what happened. I called Brother Tingrui, but he wouldn't answer, so I can't help feeling anxious. I'm worried that Brother Tingrui might have gotten the wrong idea."

Huo Yanxi frowned even harder. After some time, he said calmly, "You're overthinking it. Tingrui isn't the type who gets easily instigated."

Lu Xia's expression froze instantly. She swiftly strived for normalcy in her voice and said, "Then... then that's good."

"Wait here till I settle my work," said Huo Yanxi before he turned to go back to his office table.

The office quickly went silent.

Lu Xia sat and watched as Huo Yanxi read the documents before him. For the first time, they had fallen into an awkward silence.

It felt as though it was a momentous day, where everything and everyone seemed to be changing.

Lu Xia felt annoyed by this loss of control.