The Growth 26

Chapter 26 - 3: Hope You Won’t Regret It

Actually, Meng Yao’s home is not far from Li Hao’s apartment.

Or rather, students who choose to study in this special senior third-year class, even if their homes are far away, will find temporary accommodation locally.

Accompanying study, accompanying exams, accompanying living...

This seems to be a perfectly normal choice for the parents of a senior high school student.

On the contrary, Li Hao, who lives alone in an apartment, is the unusual one among them.

Of course, speaking of unusual, Meng Yao’s situation is not much different.

As mentioned earlier, Meng Yao is a top student.

However, due to being a girl, she isn’t valued by her parents.

It was Meng Yao’s grandmother who insisted on letting her continue her studies, which led to who she is now.

Even with her grandmother’s firm support, Meng Yao still dropped out and was held back several times, barely making it to high school.

Otherwise, given Meng Yao’s demonstrated top student attributes, she should have been admitted to a top university at the age of fourteen or fifteen.

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"So, is this the reason you live here?"

Standing at the entrance of the street, Li Hao looked at the gloomy low-rise buildings, feeling like he had stepped into another side of the city.

Here, there were no tall buildings or exquisite streets, just boundless darkness and dampness.

Vaguely, Li Hao could even smell the bursts of stench emanating from the sewers.

To be honest, Li Hao initially thought the apartment he rented was already quite shabby.

But it wasn’t until he saw this alley composed entirely of low houses that he realized he was still somewhat "aloof."

Even in the twenty-first century...

Even in this top-tier second-tier city in the province...

This dark side that he had never seen before still existed, a city’s backside that should have disappeared with the tide of times.

"It’s quite surprising, isn’t it?"

With a faint smile on her face, not exactly sorrowful, Meng Yao spoke in a calm tone.

"When I first came here, I was quite surprised too."

"Who would have thought that in the big cities of everyone’s impression, there are such dark corners where the sun doesn’t shine!"

Her voice paused briefly, and Meng Yao’s feigned surprised attitude made it impossible to read her true thoughts.

"However, for us foreigners who can’t assimilate into this city..."

"This is the most suitable place for us to live and settle."

"Cheap rent, convenient meals, with no extra interactions among neighbors..."

Before Meng Yao could continue, Li Hao interrupted her.

"In front of me, there’s no need for such unnecessary disguises."

"Because if you really thought this place was good, you wouldn’t have come to find me last night."

Seeing Meng Yao somewhat in a daze, Li Hao sighed in a slightly deep tone.

"Having little interaction among neighbors, is that really a good thing?"

"If your grandmother had been found in time yesterday, perhaps she wouldn’t have died at home, right?"

Slowly shifting his gaze, Li Hao’s eyes finally rested on a slightly chaotic residential building not far away.

"That should be your family, right!"

Although phrased as a question, Li Hao spoke with a tone of affirmation.

Because in this alley where everyone almost goes out to work or study during the day, that group of grieving, crying people stood out so vividly.

"..."

Following Li Hao’s gaze, Meng Yao fell into a speechless silence.

"Go ahead! Go back to your family!"

"Your grandmother just passed away, and you suddenly disappeared for a night. I think your family must be very worried about you."

Li Hao could understand Meng Yao’s resentment towards her parents, but he also knew that Meng Yao currently lacked the ability to live independently.

Regardless of her willingness, she had to return to her family now.

This isn’t just a matter of living, but a matter of survival.

"Your parents may indeed favor sons over daughters, but your brother cares about you."

As he said this, Li Hao kept his eyes on a little boy across the street.

Judging by age, that must be Meng Yao’s brother.

Unlike the adults who were crying and arguing, the bewildered little boy seemed completely unaware of what had happened.

Perhaps because of this, the little boy was the first to notice Meng Yao and Li Hao.

As soon as he saw Meng Yao, the boy immediately grinned and happily waved his arms at her.

"Next time, when you feel like you have nowhere to go, think of your brother."

"Besides your grandmother, he might be the only one who cares about you in this world."

Slowly turning away, Li Hao had no intention of getting involved in Meng Yao’s family matters, and he planned to leave the area.

"Thank you!"

At that moment, Meng Yao, who had been silent, suddenly spoke up.

"Thanks?"

Li Hao’s footsteps involuntarily paused, and he smiled out of Meng Yao’s sight.

"Thank me for what?"

"Thank me for taking you in?"

"Or thank me for skipping class with you today?"

After another brief pause, Li Hao spoke again.

"Moreover, don’t misunderstand, I helped you for a ’price.’"

"Maybe today you don’t think so."

"But trust me, one day you will realize just how heavy that ’price’ is."

Raising his right hand with his back to Meng Yao,

A card shimmering with golden light had appeared in Li Hao’s hand at some point.

"I just hope that when that day comes, you won’t regret seeking my help."

Due to the angle, Meng Yao couldn’t clearly see the true form of the golden card.

But the moment she saw the golden card, Meng Yao suddenly felt as if a piece of her heart was missing, feeling as if she had lost something important.

Her intuition told her that she had lost something more precious than her life at this moment.

"Regret?"

Staring blankly at the golden card, Meng Yao took a long time to come to her senses.

"Haha, is there anything in this world worth regretting for me?"

"No matter why you chose to help me, and no matter what you took from me."

"I, Meng Yao, will never regret what happened yesterday, nor will I regret seeking your help."

"Because... besides my grandmother, you’re the only one willing to listen to my heart!"