

The Growth 379

Chapter 379 - 1: A Bitter Love Affair

The time flow between [Fallen Area] and [Ascension Area] is not completely consistent.

Moreover, with Li Hao's ability to wield the power of the "God of Time," even he himself is unsure of his current biological age.

The only thing certain is that Li Hao's mentality remains very young.

Because after becoming a god, Li Hao's body and mind are both fixed in their most peak state.

As long as he learns, he makes progress, and if he progresses, he cannot regress.

This scenario doesn't only reflect in Li Hao's abilities; his emotions and mindset are equally approaching perfection.

If one were to use a word to describe Li Hao's mindset, it would perhaps be best described with "Innocent Heart."

Forever curious, forever humble, forever yearning, forever perceptive...

One holding this mindset, even if not exceptionally intelligent, is certain to become a top expert in some field.

After all, writing out the words "open-minded and modest" and "willing to learn" is easy, but to truly achieve them is extraordinarily difficult.

Perhaps for exactly these reasons.

When Xiang Chong entered the store, Li Hao, operating a 3D printer in the back, immediately sensed a change in his mood.

"You... have you been crying?"

With a touch of surprise, Li Hao raised his head and looked at Xiang Chong at the front.

Having spent quite some time with Xiang Chong, Li Hao long understood his carefree and unrestrained nature.

For someone like him, it's not just crying; even a sorrowful mood is unlikely to linger for long.

"Don't look at me that way."

"I'm human too; what's so strange about crying?"

Unlike his usual excitement, Xiang Chong merely shot a glance of low spirits at Li Hao and sat idly on a chair beside him, silent for a long time.

Seeing this, Li Hao rarely put down his work and sat opposite Xiang Chong.

"Mind telling me what happened?"

Li Hao wasn't merely curious.

It was that he could feel the suppressed, accumulating negative emotions within Xiang Chong.

Whether as an employee or a friend, Li Hao hoped Xiang Chong wouldn't develop any psychological issues.

"Talk about it?"

Looking blankly at Li Hao, Xiang Chong suddenly revealed a bitter smile.

"I never thought you'd be the first to comfort me."

Because Xiang Chong habitually exuded nonchalance, his family and friends rarely noticed his emotional anomalies.

Conversely, it was Li Hao, whom he hadn't spent that much time with, who first sensed his emotions.

This made Xiang Chong, amidst feeling touched, also experience some helplessness.

"Li Hao, what kind of person do you think I am?"

Displaying a rare serious and solemn demeanor, Xiang Chong uncertainly asked.

"A wealthy heir without a place to spend?"

"Naïve spendthrift?"

"Generous boss?"

"Hmm, that's probably it for now!"

It's undeniable, Li Hao's tease successfully amused Xiang Chong, easing his previously tense nerves.

"Boss, I think your impression of me is wrong!"

Taking a deep breath, Xiang Chong finally began to share the reasons for his melancholy and sadness.

"Boss, you know what?"

"The reason I returned to this city after graduation wasn't merely to escape the high-pressure life of a major city."

As Xiang Chong explained bit by bit, a genuine yet bitter love story gradually surfaced.

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As a wealthy heir, Xiang Chong's college life was typical of someone ignorant of societal perils, living a privileged tower lifestyle.

To Xiang Chong at the time, as long as his finals didn't tank, nothing else was worth worrying about.

Under such circumstances, love became an essential element for a young man at eighteen or nineteen.

To fulfill his romantic dreams, Xiang Chong whimsically tried to flirt with older or younger female students at school, attempting to use money to calm and settle his inner stirrings.

Until one day, Xiang Chong met his "destined one."

It was a girl who, at first glance, appeared very impoverished.

She always ate at the school cafeteria and wore particularly plain clothes.

While other students were still living privileged lives, this girl had already begun working to support herself, often appearing at various part-time opportunities inside and outside the school.

Even so, her life was far from prosperous.

At least to someone like Xiang Chong, a wealthy heir, the girl's life seemed remarkably harsh.

But perhaps it was precisely this hardship that shaped the girl's determined and aloof character, drawing Xiang Chong's attention.

From that day, Xiang Chong began to pursue this girl.

From an initial money-driven approach to genuine emotional expression...

Xiang Chong gradually fell deeper within, yet the girl always maintained her distance.

His roommates would say Xiang Chong had encountered a "fish-farming queen," warning him not to become a fish in her fishpond.

Yet only Xiang Chong knew the girl refused all his gifts.

Even a simple offer to dine off-campus was straightforwardly rejected.

Her reason being off-campus food was too expensive; she couldn't afford it.

Hence, Xiang Chong began to change his approach.

Eating together in the cafeteria, visiting the library, and then heading off-campus for side jobs.

Initially, Xiang Chong claimed a girl going alone for a side job was too dangerous, with his company ensuring safety was less of a concern.

Xiang Chong noticed it was after an extended period of hesitance and contemplation that the girl finally agreed to his proposal.

He initially believed he'd gradually enter the girl's heart until he completely opened it up.

Unfortunately, reality is rarely like a drama.

Near graduation, the girl agreed for the first time to dine off-campus at a not-so-fancy restaurant.

Just as Xiang Chong fervently thought this might be the perfect chance to confess...

The girl, always determined, cold, independent, seemingly unbreakable, suddenly started crying.

—Sorry, we are not suitable.

—So let's end this "love game" here!

After tearfully finishing these words, the girl left the restaurant.

Before leaving, she even voluntarily paid the bill, leaving behind a Xiang Chong frozen in place.

"It was from that day I realized some go to college just to study."