

## Chapter 24: You Are a Nice Man

From then on, nowhere felt like home for her. The Lu family was no longer her home and she didn't even feel that she belonged to the Jiang family anymore. For nearly a decade, she had always felt like a dandelion that drifted in the wind wherever it took her. Her whole life was a bottomless pit of loneliness and desolation.

Did it sound ironic and ridiculous now? She was the main reason for her loneliness. She had built a glass room and isolated herself from the world. She was stubborn and selfish to reject the love and care of her loved ones and resentful to those who loved her dearly.

She reaped what she sowed, and she deserved every last bit of it.

"Jiang Yao, do you still blame your parents?" Lu Xingzhi parked his bicycle on the side of the road and turned to look at the girl behind him. He sounded serious and solemn. "Your mom and dad love you very much."

Jiang Yao nodded. "Of course not. They are right, actually. You are a good man. Marrying you is the best thing I've ever done in my life."

She said it in an overly submissive and timid tone that was nothing like the Jiang Yao he knew previously. Hence, he couldn't distinguish the genuine honesty and sincerity in her remark.

In other words, perhaps the pleasant remarks were nothing but her sarcastic compliment and flattery?

"It's very hot, do you want to tan yourself right now? Let's go home already!" Jiang Yao knew Lu Xingzhi was skeptical over her remark. She wasn't eager to explain anything right now, but she couldn't stand the heat, so she nudged Lu Xingzhi to hurry up and start riding again. Next, she pouted at the ice cream in her hand and whined, "The ice cream is gone!"

"Leave it. You're not supposed to have it anyway, you haven't fully recovered." Lu Xingzhi grabbed the ice cream from her hand and dropped it onto the side of the road. When they left the house, he had absent-mindedly bought her the ice cream as he saw her sweating like a dog. He regretted it as soon as he bought it but it was too late since Jiang Yao was smiling and shaking her legs like a happy girl on the back seat of the bicycle while eating the ice cream.

Half an hour later, they arrived at the gate of the Jiang family house in Jiang Village.

At this moment, Jiang Yao's father, Jiang Mingwei, and Jiang Yao's mother, Wang Huilan, were inside the house. As Jiang Yao and Lu Xingzhi entered the yard, her parents stared at them in disbelief and confusion.

"Dad, Mom," Lu Xingzhi greeted them as he saw them. He looked around and asked as he didn't see Jiang Jie and Jiang Lei, "Is it only the two of you at home? Where are the brothers?"

"Jiang Jie is always busy with his supply and marketing business, he's rarely home. Jiang Lei was around, but he went out after lunch. I'm not sure where he's gone to." Mrs. Jiang welcomed them into the house and poured them a glass of water. "It's so hot out there, I bet you are toasted while coming here."

A stark contrast from the Lu family's well-to-do background, the husband and wife of the Jiang family were modest farmers who worked on their own property. The Jiang family's house was a common wooden house in the countryside that had just been renovated recently.

"Xingzhi, when did you come back?" Mr. Jiang was happy to see his son-in-law. Jiang Yao was the only daughter and also the youngest in the Jiang family. Their adoration to their daughter extended to their one and only son-in-law.

"I arrived in the morning. By the way, Jiang Yao has received a letter of admission. She has been accepted to Nanjiang Medical School." Lu Xingzhi skipped the pleasantries and immediately told his parents-in-law the good news as he wanted to share the excitement.

Unlike his expectations, not only did it not bring joy to Jiang Yao's parents, but Mrs. Jiang had also nearly smashed the glass.

"Didn't we talk this through? I thought you were applying for Jindo! How do you end up in Nanjiang?" Mr. Lu demanded furiously. "Nanjiang Medical School is very far from your base. How did this happen?"

### **Chapter 25: It Is My Decision**

Mr. and Mrs. Jiang glared directly at Jiang Yao. They knew their daughter like the back of their hands. Jiang Yao hardly came home after the wedding because she resented her parents for arranging the marriage. They heard some rumors about what had happened after Jiang Yao moved into the Lu family. The distance and hostility between Jiang Yao and Lu Xingzhi made them realize that Jiang Yao found the marriage and her husband repulsive.

As a result, Mr. and Mrs. Jiang were convinced that Jiang Yao had secretly applied to Nanjiang Medical School!

"Jiang Yao, it's you, isn't it?" Mr. Jiang jumped up from his chair and roared. "Did you lie to us about your application? Didn't you say that you were going to Jindo? Since when did it become Nanjiang? Argh! Jiang Yao, why are you so immature and stubborn? How old do you think you are? You're already nineteen, you are not a child anymore! You're married! Why do you apply for Nanjiang? It's so far away from your husband's base. What were you thinking?"

The scene replayed in front of her exactly as how it happened in her previous life. Her parents rebuked her in anger when they learned about her acceptance to Nanjiang Medical School.

Jiang Yao tried to remember her response at the time.

She had raised her voice at her parents, claiming that she had always wanted to go to Nanjiang Medical School. The promise of applying for Jindo Medical School was just her smokescreen.

Then, her dad, who had always been a gentle and kind father to her, slapped her in the face and kicked her out of the house.

However, now that she was born again and facing the same situation, Jiang Yao didn't know how to react to this.

The excuses that she had used on the Lu family wouldn't work here. She couldn't say that she had done it on purpose because Lu Xingzhi had offended her. If she said it here in her house, it would only make her parents angrier. They would chide her for her waywardness and selfishness. Maybe it was because her parents knew her better than her in-laws that they would not buy that excuse.

Jiang Yao could only hang her head downcast without saying a word as her father scolded her. It was the truth anyway—she was really ignorant, her father hadn't wronged her.

"Dad, I made the decision." Lu Xingzhi somewhat understood his father-in-law's temperament. Jiang Yao's decision caught him off-guard, but he couldn't bear seeing her being scolded by her father.

"Dad, it is my decision to allow Jiang Yao to go to Nanjiang. She's still young and I'm afraid she'll be homesick when she's away from home. The climate and eating habits of the north are very different from the south. I'm afraid that nobody can take care of her and she can't take care of herself if she goes to Jindo."

Lu Xingzhi fabricated the excuse like it was the truth. "Nanjiang Medical School is a key university and it is comparable to Jindo Medical School. Another thing is that it's closer to home. It will be convenient for Jiang Yao to come home whenever she wants to and she wouldn't have trouble adapting to new living habits. She called me to ask for my opinion during the application phase and I asked her to apply to Nanjiang."

Lu Xingzhi was the only one who could make a lie sound plausible.

Surprisingly, Mr. Jiang bought it. He sighed in defeat. "You spoil her rotten. She's already nineteen, she has no problem taking care of herself. You guys are already in a long-distance relationship, and if she really goes to Nanjiang, that will be four years! What will you do? Wait another four years? If she goes to Jindo, she can at least meet you at the base every weekend or holiday, and you guys can see each other more often."

## **Chapter 26: His Deception**

"Dad, it's okay, it's only four years. Jiang Yao's well-being is my priority," Lu Xingzhi said in a matter-of-fact way, as if confirming that it was really his decision to let Jiang Yao apply for Nanjiang Medical School and he had not been particularly surprised when he heard the news.

Mrs. Jiang heaved a sigh of relief. She took Jiang Yao's hand into hers and gently stroked it. "Yaoyao, you should be grateful that Xingzhi loves you so much. Since you guys have talked this through, we as parents won't stick our noses in this anymore. Anyway, you must remember to open your heart as spouses no matter what lies in the future. Yaoyao, you are stubborn at times, you have to learn and develop a new attitude."

"Alright Mom, I know," Jiang Yao answered timidly and glanced at Lu Xingzhi.

She felt a thousand feelings tossing and turning inside her.

It was all her fault, but he helped cover up her lies.

She kept him in the dark about her application to Nanjiang Medical School.

When the news erupted, he took her side and vouched for her with the Lu family. Even in her own house, he took her side and vouched for her.

Jiang Yao wondered if such a silly man like Lu Xingzhi was the one and only in this world.

In her previous life, Jiang Yao had not returned to her house in these two days. She had a fight with Lu Xingzhi and she didn't even send him off when he returned to the base. She went back home by herself, had a heated quarrel with her parents, and was kicked out of the house.

After her rebirth, he kept her company and came home, taking responsibility for everything.

"Alright then. Take a seat. I'll go to the farm with your mom and pick some watermelons and vegetables. Bring some to your parents," Mr. Jiang said with a laugh. Regardless, he was delighted that his daughter had been admitted to a key university. "Oh yes, will you guys have dinner here?"

"Sure!" Lu Xingzhi prompted.

Mrs. Jiang was overjoyed with the answer. She slapped her legs and stood up as she exclaimed, "Then, make yourself at home or take a stroll outside. Let Yaoyao's dad pick some melons and I'll pick some vegetables. We'll catch a chicken and make a stew!"

Mrs. Jiang murmured while thinking about the menu for dinner that night, "Ever since Yaoyao has married and moved to your house, she rarely comes home, she's always busy studying. Now, she's been accepted to college and will be going to another province soon. She'll have lesser time to come back."

"Mom, I'll visit you more often whenever I'm able to," Jiang Yao said. Mrs. Jiang's soft whisper made Jiang Yao's eyes reddish that she almost cried.

"Hey, focus on your studies, that is the most important. You can make your trips home more often after you graduate and begin working," Mrs. Jiang answered with a cheerful smile, then went out with her husband with a hoe.

It was obvious that Mr. and Mrs. Jiang was genuinely happy about the news. At this point, it was certain that they would start bragging about their daughter's admission whenever they stumbled upon anyone.

Although the Jiang family was not as loaded as the Lu family and they lived in the modest small farmhouse, Mrs. Jiang kept the house tidy and clean even if they had poultry by the house.

After her parents went out, Jiang Yao took Lu Xingzhi to tour her house and her room. She still kept a set of keys to this house. The house was still the same as it had been before she got married. Her old books and clothes were stacked neatly in the room. Her room was spotlessly clean despite her lack of visits, and even her quilt was warm with the smell of sun. Apparently, her mom must have taken her quilt to dry outside the house, expecting her visit and stay over.

## **Chapter 27: It's Not Weird**

After Lu Xingzhi stepped into her room, he stood in the center and scanned around without touching anything.

This was his second time entering this room. The first time was when he came to pick up his bride on their wedding day. On that day, he was overjoyed by the occasion and Jiang Yao that he didn't see her room properly.

The interior of Jiang Yao's room was similar to the rooms of young girls nowadays. There were posters of famous movie stars and singers on the wall of the room. On the desk was a glass jar filled with colorful origami straw stars. The glass jar became a unique decoration on the bright desk.

Lu Xingzhi picked the glass jar up and poured the stars onto his palm. He took a closer look, and then put the jar down but stuffed the stars in his pocket.

"What are you doing?" Jiang Yao asked, confused.

"Did you fold these stars?" Lu Xingzhi asked instead, ignoring her question. He put both hands in his pockets and stood casually without the feeling of embarrassment after taking another person's belonging.

Jiang Yao nodded and managed a flustered smile. "These things were popular back in my sophomore year. Stars, cranes, all these origami stuff. I learned to fold it until it filled this jar." She giggled upon reminiscing at the naivety of the time.

Lu Xingzhi nodded and continued after her, "I heard your mom saying that you even folded 1001 paper cranes for your friend as a birthday present, and that it took you half a month."

Jiang Yao had forgotten about this. Now that she thought about it, it did happen. Her classmate was about to transfer in the next semester and Jiang Yao had quite a good friendship with her, so she made her a special birthday present. After the classmate transferred, Jiang Yao lost contact with her.

Seeing that Jiang Yao didn't pester him about the stars he had taken, Lu Xingzhi turned around and muffled a grin. His dear wife was so easily fooled—her interrogation went out the window after just a couple of questions.

He had taken the stars with a purpose. He could look and touch the stars when he returned to the base and missed her.

"Huh, it's too bad that I don't know where she is now," Jiang Yao sighed and then glanced curiously toward Lu Xingzhi. "You seem to know a lot about me."

"Is it weird?" Lu Xingzhi arched an eyebrow and asked. He had invested a lot of effort in trying to marry her. He made frequent trips to the Jiang family too because of this. After all, Jiang Yao was too young at the time and her parents were reluctant to marry their daughter in the first place. He had successfully persuaded his parents-in-law after countless attempts. In between the persuasion, he learned a lot about Jiang Yao from his in-laws.

Listening to Lu Xingzhi's rhetorical question, Jiang Yao shook her head and smiled gently at him.

She was curious about her classmate's current whereabouts, but she did not find it weird that he knew so much about her, simply because he loved her. It was normal to get to know someone better by all means when you liked them, wasn't it?

“Thank you for what you did earlier,” Jiang Yao said after hesitating for a while. “If it wasn’t for you, my dad would have kicked me out of the house.”

“It’s nothing.” Lu Xingzhi pondered for a while and said, “If you really want to thank me, grow your hair for me.”

Jiang Yao touched her short hair and pouted. “I promised you that I’ll let it grow back at home. You don’t have to keep reminding me about this. Do I look like someone who will go back on my words?”

## **Chapter 28: Whoa! D\*mn!**

Lu Xingzhi snorted at Jiang Yao’s remark without saying a word.

Jiang Yao looked askance at Lu Xingzhi and frowned. Meanwhile, Lu Xingzhi turned his back on her and flipped through the books she had placed on her desk with a contented smile on his face. Some of the books were the masterpieces and some were the in-class tutor books her brother had brought to her from the town bookstore.

Lu Xingzhi was a man with a very masculine and gallant figure. Perhaps because of his profession, he stood upright and sturdy like a soldier even if he was just standing and flipping through the books casually.

Jiang Yao stood behind him, staring at his back in a daze. All she thought about in her mind was him.

Jiang Yao heard from Mrs. Lu that Lu Xingzhi had been an excellent student throughout his academic life. After the college entrance examination, he was successfully accepted by the Jindo Military Academy as he had wanted and subsequently, his favorite program. After graduation, he went to join the military and become an official National Guard.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Lu said that Lu Xingzhi had been an independent and assertive person since young. He was so magnificent and had such a wonderful family background. Jiang Yao wondered why he had fallen for her. What did he see in her?

This man, who was such a charmer—why would he draw and redraw his limits to accommodate her? Eventually, he followed her to stay in the remote mountainous village.

He was a man who could lead a proud and noble life, yet he gave it all up just for her.

Lu Xingzhi flipped through Jiang Yao’s books. Her answers were written crammed in between the spaces, which were all correct without exception. As he had always expected, she was outstanding academically.

Her handwriting was neat and immaculate. Although the pages were full of handwritten words, not only it was legible, but it was also rather pleasing to the eye. She was probably the kind of student the teachers liked most, smart and clean.

He was looking at the books on the desk, but it did not affect him from noticing that the person behind him was staring at him.

Lu Xingzhi pondered for a moment. Was she upset because he had touched her personal belongings without permission? Was that why she was staring at him?

He imagined her look when she stared at him to be very interesting.

Just as Lu Xingzhi intended to turn to look at her, the person behind him suddenly called out his full name, sounding a little awkward and timid.

He put down the book when he heard her call and slowly turned around, but out of the blue, the person bumped directly into him and curled her arms around his waist.

He lowered his head curiously. The floral scent of her hair wafted into his nose. It was the smell of the shampoo he bought at home.

This was the second time Jiang Yao had hugged him, and both happened within the same day.

Lu Xingzhi was not a dimwit. On the contrary, he was quick and alert. Therefore, he did not miss to notice that there was something peculiar with Jiang Yao today.

“What’s the matter with you today?” Lu Xingzhi pressed his hands against the table, not daring to touch the person who was hugging him as he was clueless as to what was happening to Jiang Yao today. He thought about her previous repulsive and abominable attitude against him, and he didn’t dare to put his hands on her and embrace her back.

Jiang Yao shook her head gently in the embrace. Before she could speak, there was the sound of footsteps coming toward her room. Right after that, the person approaching recoiled in surprise and shock, perhaps upon seeing the two people hugging in the room the minute he glanced through the opened door.

“Whoa! D\*mn! You...” The man approaching the room was Jiang Lei. He stood at the door, covering his face comically but revealing his eyes. “Dad and Mom said you’re back, so I rushed home.”

## **Chapter 29: Her Second Oldest Brother Jiang Lei**

Jiang Lei literally explained the reason he was home at this moment. Then, Jiang Lei motioned to Jiang Yao with his eyes, gesturing at her to follow him out.

Jiang Yao abruptly let go of Lu Xingzhi the moment Jiang Lei appeared and shrieked. Although the man was her own brother, she felt her face flush with embarrassment. After seeing the hint from Jiang Lei’s eyes, Jiang Yao couldn’t ignore him.

“Make yourself at home, rest in my room if you like. Excuse me,” Jiang Yao said to Lu Xingzhi while pointing at her bed before exiting her room.

Once she stepped out of the door, Jiang Lei tugged at her and ran to the yard.

“Jiang Yao, I see that you and your hubby are really intimate now. Do you not have enough time hugging at the Lu family home? You still want to hug each other here! Aren’t you tired?” Jiang Lei curled his arm around Jiang Yao’s shoulder, grinning like a loafer. “I didn’t know that you guys got so passionate. Now

that I think about it, it's fortunate that our parents had found out when I was about to take you away. Otherwise, I'd be a sinner who has broken up a happy couple!"

"Lu Xingzhi and I are officially married with a marriage certificate and whatnot, what's wrong with us hugging for a bit?" Jiang Yao kicked Jiang Lei in the calf and threw his arm off her shoulder.

Jiang Lei was not bluffing though. Before the wedding, Jiang Yao was in a mess, resisting her family. When Jiang Lei learned about this, he came back and stayed at home for two days. Witnessing his sister unhappy and dispirited by the whole event, he decided to take Jiang Yao away and send her back right before the new semester began. It was also intended to let her avoid the wedding—a literal runaway bride.

However, before he could initiate his plan, their parents discovered the shenanigans and kept a close watch on him. He lost his chance to rescue his sister, but that didn't stop his determination. He gave Jiang Yao some money and his friend's contact details. He asked her to take the money, go to the city, call his friend, and stay there for two days.

Later, Mr. Lu confiscated the money.

"Okay, alright, nothing's wrong, my concern is thrown out the window." Jiang Lei shook his arm and glared at Jiang Yao sadly. "You forget about your brother as soon as you have a husband. Tell me, how many times have you come home ever since you got married? If I hadn't visited you at the school from time to time, I think you would've forgotten that your name is Jiang Yao, not Lu Yao."

After teasing and mocking Jiang Yao, Jiang Lei regained his seriousness and caught up with her. "How is Lu Xingzhi treating you after getting married? Is he good? Does the Lu family bully you? Mom and Dad told me that you've been accepted by Nanjiang Medical School. That's great news! They also said that it was Lu Xingzhi's decision to allow you to apply for Nanjiang instead of Jindo. Is it true?"

Jiang Lei was positively skeptical of the answer. He and Jiang Yao had been a pair of troublemakers since young—how could he not tell her scheming mind behind her cute and lovely look?

"He's very nice to me and the Lu family members treat me well too," Jiang Yao said with a comforting smile. "Don't you worry, we've decided on the college admission. I'm going to Nanjiang Medical School."

"It's better that you stay closer to us. If I happen to go to Nanjiang, I can make a detour to visit you. I didn't even manage to care for you and you're married into another family. When I think about you going to another province to study, I'm worried sick about you," Jiang Lei said solemnly and heaved a sigh of dismay.

"Brother, I'm not used to you being all sentimental." Jiang Yao squinted at Jiang Lei, she was a little startled. "It is more likely for our eldest brother to say such a sentimental statement."

### **Chapter 30: Don't Hold Back**

"Hey, I'm worried about you too, alright? Ungrateful b\*stard!" Jiang Lei glared at Jiang Yao in dismay. He gave her a second thought and asked again with concern, "Be honest with me, are you really doing fine



in the Lu family? Does Lu Xingzhi ever bully you? How about the Lu family? Do they ever bully you? Why are you getting thinner every time I see you?”

“I’m doing fine! Really! Lu Xingzhi treats me like a princess, my in-laws are wonderful. It’s just emotional pressure from the heavy schoolwork, that’s all.” Jiang Yao exclaimed. She wondered if a swear would work better.

However, Jiang Lei’s overwhelming concern and nagging made Jiang Yao felt sad and apologetic.

The Lu family was lenient with her. The Jiang family adored her to bits.

She was so selfish in her previous life that she was oblivious to the kindness of both families.

Jiang Lei heaved a sigh of relief after hearing Jiang Yao’s reassurance. He added, “Anyway if you are unhappy staying with the Lu family, don’t hold back. Just come home and let me know. Know I’m always here for you, okay?”

Jiang Yao nodded halfheartedly before she spoke again, “Will our eldest brother come home later? Xingzhi and I are staying for dinner tonight.”

“I called him when I passed by the store on my way back. He said that he’ll be home an hour early for dinner. The statement earlier really is from him, didn’t you guess it all?” Jiang Lei said.

“Alright, got it. I’ll go back in then.” Jiang Yao nodded, turning to go back and leaving Jiang Lei in the yard.

Just as she turned around, the view caught her by surprise. She saw a figure leaning against the wall not far from her. The figure was Lu Xingzhi. She wasn’t sure when he had come out of the room. It seemed that he was standing there admiring the scenery as a front for eavesdropping on her conversation with Jiang Lei.

She walked toward the person directly.

“When did you come out?” Jiang Yao asked casually.

“It’s been a while,” Lu Xingzhi answered frankly. That was to say that he heard everything.

Lu Xingzhi observed Jiang Yao’s expression after he answered her. He smiled chicly as Jiang Yao simply huffed and raised his hand to stroke her short hair ever so gently and in adoration.

Soon after, Jiang Yao’s parents came back. Mr. Jiang held three large watermelons in a basket and Mrs. Jiang carried a basket of freshly picked vegetables.

After Mr. Jiang returned, he dropped one of the watermelons into their large water tank and kept it soaked. The Jiang family’s source of water was spring water drawn from the mountain. The water remained chilled and refreshing even during the hot summer. Hence, the water tank functioned like a refrigerator.

“I’ll go to the village to buy some green grass porridge. It is great to quench your thirst in this hot summer. I’ll be back soon.” Mr. Jiang put the watermelon down and hurried out again.

On the other hand, Mrs. Jiang carried the vegetables into the kitchen and then asked Jiang Lei to help her catch a chicken. Suddenly, the sound of chickens clucking and Mrs. Jiang and Jiang Lei's laughters resonated across the yard.

"Xiao Lei, hurry, catch the flower one! It is the biggest among the others, I've been feeding it for eight months now. It looks so plump, it must be very delicious!" Mrs. Jiang instructed Jiang Lei to catch the chicken while Jiang Lei was in the middle of the flock, chasing after the chicken.

When Jiang Yao came to watch, she laughed as she saw a few chicken feathers stuck on Jiang Lei's head. "Hey, catch them quickly! Otherwise, they'll start attacking you!"