

Falling for the Contract Bride Chapter 41

Chapter 41 Breakdown

Just as Mu Zhi was losing her mind, she watched from afar as Mu Xiaomu reached out to grab onto Lu Jinye's hand with her own.

It looked as if she was pulling Lu Jinye along.

Mu Zhi was anxious beyond belief. She frowned as she watched them.

But it was too late. She couldn't exactly run up and stop them. She watched as Mu Xiaomu tugged Lu Jinye out of the washroom and disappeared around the corner.

Mu Zhi rushed out of the washroom, ready to chase Mu Xiaomu down. Mu Xiaomu was holding onto the leg of Lu Jinye's pants. He continued to walk, not slowing nor rushing with Mu Xiaomu following with toddling after him.

That was it. From today onwards, she was going to instill upon Mu Xiaomu the dangers of speaking to strangers. Especially good-looking ones!

Mu Zhi called the babysitter and asked her where she was. To her astonishment, she replied her, "Miss Mu, you told me that you didn't need me to watch her because you've met up with her. I've just gotten home."

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"What's happened now?"

Mu Zhi had initially wanted her to save her from this predicament but when she heard that the babysitter had reached home, she couldn't bring herself to ask her. After all, she lived quite far, and her husband had been sick recently.

"Nothing. Nothing..."

Mu Zhi struggled to control her emotions, "I just... Wanted to check if you've gotten home safely."

"Oh. Thank you Miss Mu for your concern. Yes, I've just reached home."

The babysitter replied.

Mu Zhi hung up in a rush. She scrolled through her contact list but couldn't find anyone who could help her out of this.

Just when she thought she was at the end of her rope, her phone rang. It was Jian Xiaoning.

"Hello? Have they started? I've just gotten off the toll booth and will be there in a jiffy."

"They haven't started yet." Replied Mu Zhi.

"That's good then... I can still make it."

On the other end of the phone, Jian Xiaoning sighed.

"Where's Mu Xiaomu? I've missed her. Pass the phone to her," Jian Xiaoning requested. Mu Zhi sighed, "She's with Lu Jinye."

"Huh?"

Jian Xiaoning was flabbergasted. She pushed on the horn to urge the cars in front of her to hurry. She hung up without asking for the details and focused on getting to Mu Zhi as fast as she could.

Mu Zhi pocketed her phone and sighed. But she could not dally any longer. She rushed to the event hall and waited for Mu Xiaomu there.

When she finally reached the hall, Mu Zhi had already gone backstage to get ready. Lu Jinye, on the other hand, was sitting dead center watching the stage.

Mu Zhi's designated seat had 'Mu Xiaomu's parent' written on it. And unfortunately for her, it was directly behind Lu Jinye.

Mu Zhi did not dare to claim her seat. Instead, she stood at the entrance and watched the stage from there.

At that moment, Lu Yunxi turned. Mu Zhi did not have time to hide. She watched as Lu Yunxi leaned towards Lu Jinye to say something. In the next minute, the both of them were walking towards her direction.

Mu Zhi couldn't hide even if she wanted to. When they got near, she laughed gently, "I popped by because I heard that there was a performance here."

“Mu Zhi, I’ve just spoken to the organizer and he gave me two good seats. They are right in the middle. You’ll be sitting next to Jinye. I have to get going to check on how my own event is going.”

Lu Yunxi smiled at Mu Zhi.

“There’s no need... I...”

Before Mu Zhi could even finish what she had to say, Lu Yunxi had left.

Mu Zhi turned back towards her husband. She tried to pretend that everything was fine, but it came off as awkward.

She had never felt this unsettled... Her nerves were frayed beyond belief.

There was nothing else she could do but act as if everything was fine. “Honey, what are you doing here?” She asked.

“There’s a little girl who wanted to show me her dance.”

Lu Jinye replied softly. His gaze on her was assessing.

Mu Zhi tried to keep her expression natural. “A little girl?”

“I met her outside the toilets.”

While they had been talking, Mu Xiaomu and her peers took to the stage.

When Lu Jinye saw her, he grabbed Mu Zhi by the hand to pull her towards their seats.

Mu Zhi, realizing what he was about to do, she quickly retrieved her hands and held them to her chest. She could not let Lu Jinye find out how sweaty her palms were.

But she had no other choice but to follow Lu Jinye to the seats.

Mu Xiaomu slowly walked on stage. She was dressed in the ugly duckling’s costume.

It was starting... It was a musical play choreographed by the kindergarteners.

It told of when Mu Xiaomu was young. She found herself in a forest without her parents. She searched throughout the forest, trying to find them. During her journey, she met a big grey wolf, and almost became its dinner. She met a fox who wanted her to stay with him and a rabbit. Finally, at a lake in the center of the forest, she met a group of beautiful swans. She told the swans of her journey to find her parents.

Mu Zhi had never noticed how talented Mu Xiaomu was in acting before. In fact, these few years... She had never been able to spend much time observing Mu Xiaomu at all.

And now, Mu Zhi's heart broke as she watched Mu Xiaomu on stage in her little grey costume, wandering helplessly in the forest as she called out for her parents.

Mu Zhi tilted her head up to prevent her tears from dripping onto her face. She had to get herself back under control.

She could not let Lu Jinye find out.

But Lu Jinye chose this exact moment to turn to look at her.

He stared and raised his eyebrow at her. "Are you really that moved just from a kindergarten play?" He asked.

"I get moved easily."

Mu Zhi hurriedly tried to disguise her response.

At that moment, a song started to play and on stage. Mu Xiaomu started to dance. Mu Zhi pointed at her urgently, "Look! The little girl that invited you has started to dance."

Lu Jinye turned his attention towards the stage, but he placed his hand silently atop hers.

Instead of withdrawing her hand like she should have, she left it there. His hand was warm whereas hers was like ice.

Mu Xiaomu was beautiful as she danced. She was considered among her peers to be adorable and now with the spotlight on her, Mu Xiaomu was stunning.

Her little wings struggled to fly, her lost, confused expression and her large eyes, tearfully calling for her parents... Mu Zhi could not bear to keep watching.

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Chapter 42 Daddy?

She was afraid that she would start sobbing. She stood up and told Lu Jinye, "My stomach doesn't feel that great. I'm going to the washroom."

Lu Jinye nodded, and Mu Zhi left in a hurry.

She returned after she had gotten her emotions under control. However, the scene she returned to was one in which Mu Xiaomu was celebrating having found her parents.

Mu Xiaomu ran towards a white swan. Her small face flushed with happiness. She called out in her little girl's voice, "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!"

She added, "I always knew I had a father!"

Mu Zhi could not handle it! All the guilt and regrets she kept hidden exploded out of her! She knew that she owed Mu Xiaomu, but now she understood that she owed Mu Xiaomu far more than she realized!

And now!



Now her daughter was dancing her heart out on stage, and she was going to pretend that she did not know her...

How cruel could she be?

Mu Zhi decided! She was going to tell Lu Jinye that Mu Xiaomu was her daughter. She had married him for the sake of her daughter and her mother's medical bills! And she could no longer stay separated from her daughter.

They would divorce earlier than planned.

Mu Zhi turned, her expression serious, and studied Lu Jinye. "Honey, I need to tell you something."

Mu Zhi took a deep breath.

Lu Jinye turned to her, "What is it?"

"..."

Mu Zhi was about to spill everything when from behind them came a voice, "Excuse me. Sorry, I was late. Excuse me, my seat is in there."

It was Jian Xiaoning's voice. Mu Zhi turned to look at her only for Jian Xiaoning to shoot a smile back at her. She sat on the seat reserved for Mu Xiaomu's parent.

She then looked at Mu Zhi and greeted her, "Hey. What a coincidence."

Mu Zhi nodded and turned her attention towards the stage. Her emotions were finally in order.

She could not divorce Lu Jinye now. She still needed money. She still did not have enough... Everything she had said before about wanting to divorce was her being irrational.

Once they divorce, Mu Xiaomu would no longer be able to attend a good kindergarten and her mother may never be healed.

“What were you going to say?”

On stage, the song slowly ended followed by the dance performance. Lu Jinye’s voice was low and harmonious. Accompanied by the slowly softening melody of the song, it was especially captivating.

However, Mu Zhi only smiled and shook her head. She pointed to Mu Xiaomu and said, “Honey, I was going to tell you that that little swan is my best friend’s Jian Xiaoning’s daughter.”

“You’re talking about Mu Xiaomu?”

Lu Jinye frowned as he watched Mu Xiaomu on stage. He seemed to be deep in thought before turning back to Mu Zhi.

“...”

Mu Zhi’s heart was all out of place.

Mu Xiaomu had apparently told Lu Jinye her name!

How was she going to cover this up?

Mu Zhi smiled awkwardly before she cleared her throat, “Yes, Mu Xiaomu.”

“Why does Jian Xiaoning’s daughter have your surname?”

Lu Jinye studied her. His eyes were dark and bottomless.

“Did you have a daughter with your best friend behind my back?”

Mu Zhi was exasperated with him... She did not know how to respond to him!

How could she explain the story behind her little one?

Mu Zhi gritted her teeth. She glanced back at Jian Xiaoning. Jian Xiaoning, I’m sorry for this.

She laughed, "You're such a jokester! She's not mine. Mu Xiaomu is Jian Xiaoning and my cousin's daughter."

"My cousin is a Mu, so naturally, Xiaomu is also a Mu."

"I didn't even know that you have a cousin."

Lu Jinye said as he studied both Mu Xiaomu's and Mu Zhi's features.

Mu Zhi web of lies widened, "My... My cousin has passed! He died from a car accident! What a tragedy it was! Xiaoning and my cousin were just about to get married before the accident happened. Xiaoning is a single mother."

Thankfully... Mu Zhi did not have a cousin.

Otherwise, how else could she easily speak about car accidents and death?

Lu Jinye stared at Mu Zhi for a few seconds but did not question further.

Mu Zhi slowly stood up and whispered to Lu Jinye, "Honey, I don't know what's wrong with me today. My stomach keeps bothering me. I have to use the washroom again."

Mu Zhi slipped away.

Mu Xiaomu started looking for Mu Zhi after she was finished with the curtain call, only to realize that Mu Zhi had left... But that was fine because mister had not left yet.

She hurried up to Lu Jinye and called out to him adorably, "Mister."

Lu Jinye looked down at her and hummed.

"Your mother is here. I have to leave. Your performance was great," Lu Jinye said his goodbyes.

This was undoubtedly the greatest praise a child could receive from Lu Jinye!

Before Lu Jinye could take a step, Mu Xiaomu had stepped forwards on her short little legs to stop him. She tilted her innocent little face up at him.

"Mister, I haven't finished what I had to say."

"Speak."

Lu Jinye could not understand why he was being so extraordinarily patient towards this little girl.

“Mister, can you marry my mommy and be my daddy?”

“Your mommy?”

Lu Jinye frowned. He turned to look at Jian Xiaoning who was wearing baggy pants, a T-shirt and had on a pair of black-rimmed glasses. She was dressed stereotypically like a doctor.

She was not his type.

Besides, he did not make it a habit to help out helpless mothers and daughters.

“Little girl, I can’t marry your mommy. I have a wife.”

“Mister! Don’t you like me? Don’t you think I’m cute? Or pretty?”

Mu Xiaomu paid no mind about what Lu Jinye had to say. She tilted her chin up towards him and blinked at him.

Mu Xiaomu was confident in her looks. She had received many snacks from boys in her kindergarten.

“You are cute and pretty.”

Mu Xiaomu’s eyebrows looked similar to Mu Zhi’s. Therefore, it was only natural that he found her cute and pretty.

“My mommy is cute and pretty too. Mister, how about you marry my mommy? I don’t have a daddy. My daddy likes to stay in the forest and never comes home. I want another daddy.”

Mu Xiaomu pouted but she meant what she said.

Lu Jinye unintentionally raised his eyebrow at her, “So, how many daddies do you want?”

“I have two mommies at the moment, so I should be alright to get two daddies too!”

Mu Xiaomu counted carefully. She was sure that there were only two.

Jian Xiaoning could not seem to find a good time to jump in. She watched anxiously as Lu Jinye and Mu Xiaomu spoke.

Finally, she rushed towards Lu Jinye.

She nodded at him before picking Mu Xiaomu up, “Let’s go Xiaomu. You danced really well today. Mommy will take you to go eat something yummy.”

Jian Xiaoning was about to carry Mu Xiaomu off.

But Mu Xiaomu started to struggle in her arms, “Wait! I want daddy to come as well.”

Daddy?

Jian Xiaoning was stunned. She turned to see Lu Jinye!

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Chapter 43 I Want to Know More About You

Jian Xiaoning panicked. She looked towards the exit. Thankfully, Mu Zhi was not there.

“Be good Xiaomu. Don’t go around looking for daddies for your mommy.”

Jian Xiaoning phrased her sentence to deliberately mislead Lu Jinye. It implied that she was Xiaomu’s mommy.

Jian Xiaoning nodded apologetically at Lu Jinye and hastily carried Mu Xiaomu towards the exit.

She quickly left to avoid any suspicions Lu Jinye may have.

Mu Zhi who used a stomachache as an excuse to leave earlier was circling the venue. After many laps, she finally saw Jian Xiaoning speed walking out with Mu Xiaomu in her arms.

She checked for Lu Jinye’s presence and had a quick word with Jian Xiaoning before leaving with Mu Xiaomu.

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Mu Xiaomu on the other hand, was looking at Mu Zhi and smiling from ear to ear.

“Mommy, I’ve found a new daddy.”

“What daddy?”

Mu Zhi frowned as she glanced at Mu Xiaomu. Her attention split between Mu Xiaomu and surveying the environment around them.

“It’s that mister.”

“Lu Jinye! Lu Jinye!”

Jian Xiaoning warned her, “The new daddy that Xiaomu is talking about is Lu Jinye. I had to bring her out in a hurry.”

Jian Xiaoning did not want to trouble Mu Zhi any further... The less she said, the better.

Mu Xiaomu was old enough to catch onto what they were talking about if they said too much.

Mu Zhi understood and nodded back. She had Jian Xiaoning leave with Mu Xiaomu.

She let out a sigh of relief when they were finally out of sight. What a fright that was!

Just when she started looking around, behind her came a man’s voice, “What are you looking for?”

Mu Zhi quickly turned around to see Lu Jinye standing behind her. How long had he been there?

Mu Zhi’s mind was in a mess but she kept all her emotions off her face. She smiled instead. “Honey, you’re here.”

“What’s wrong? What were you looking at?”

Lu Jinye looked at the direction she was looking at. If he squinted, he might still be able to make out Mu Xiaomu trying to turn back to look at them.

“Nothing much. I was just looking at Mu Xiaomu.”

“You really like children, huh?”

Lu Jinye studied Mu Zhi. Previously, whenever he and Mu Zhi would talk about kids, it would always be in a joking manner. He did not know that Mu Zhi liked kids. Besides, they rarely came across kids in their line of work.

“Yes, children are so adorable.”

Mu Zhi turned away from Mu Xiaomu's retreating figure. She hooked her arm onto Lu Jinye's and gently smiled up at him. "Honey, let's go."

Lu Jinye lowered his gaze to meet hers. His gaze wavered slightly. This woman... How was he supposed to define their marriage?

Mu Zhi was an intelligent woman. These few years together, she played the role of the perfect wife; she was an excellent secretary... But after all the time they've spent together, Lu Jinye realized that he did not know her.

For instance, even though she liked kids, she had no intention of bearing one for him.

"Honey?"

Lu Jinye looked at the time. It was almost noon. He started the car while asking, "Where do you want to go for lunch?"

"I'm fine with anywhere. What about you, honey? Do you have anywhere particular in mind?"

Mu Zhi was used to being Lu Jinye's secretary, which was why she would always clarify his needs before giving him options.

Lu Jinye frowned and thought about it before saying, "Find some place you'd like to eat. Particularly, somewhere you've eaten at before and have liked. I would like to get to know you more."

Mu Zhi looked up restaurants in the area. "Honey, there's a place nearby that makes really good Korean bibimbap. How about we try that?"

"It's really affordable but delicious!"

Mu Zhi suggested. But feeling that something was off, she hurriedly added, "Or we can go to wherever you feel like going?"

"Sure."

Lu Jinye softly agreed, "Let's go to the one that you've suggested. Lead the way."

The children's activity center was located at a main road surrounded by publishing houses and canteens. It was the 1st June, Parents Day, and the canteens were filled with people. To get to the place Mu Zhi mentioned, they had to turn at two intersections and go a little ways further.

With Mu Zhi navigating, they reached the entrance to an older part of town.

Mu Zhi looked around and made sure it was the right place before releasing her seatbelt. "Honey, if we park here, we don't need to pay for parking. We need to go through the small alley next to it."

Mu Zhi pointed at the small alley on the right.

Lu Jinye silently followed Mu Zhi out of the car. He followed behind Mu Zhi as they made their way through the alley.

It was quite a narrow alley. Only one person could pass at a time. One would have to follow behind. Mu Zhi had to lead the way therefore she went ahead. Lu Jinye, who was following her, stared at her back as they walked.

Today, Mu Zhi was wearing a brighter colored sweater and sneakers. It was a big difference from her usual work attire and made her look more youthful and cheerful.

Her footsteps quickened. Maybe she just really wanted some bibimbap.

Lu Jinye had never walked behind Mu Zhi like this before. Today would be the first. She seemed so distant from him.

"Honey, we've reached! It's so close. And the store sign looks so old!"

Mu Zhi excitedly pointed it out to Lu Jinye. Lu Jinye exited the alley and looked around at the street they found themselves in. While his face was expressionless, inside, he felt a little strange...

From the winding street they were at, they walked through a small alley and arrived at a food street. At the end of the food street was a medical university.

Seeing as Mu Zhi was able to find her way around easily, it meant that she was very familiar with the surrounding area.

There were two possibilities. The first was that she went to school here. The other was that this was her lover's school when they were in university.

Mu Zhi had a one track mind. She was only thinking about her bibimbap and did not notice Lu Jinye studying her. She pulled Lu Jinye into the restaurant.

It was lunch time, and the small restaurant was filled with students. Lu Jinye and Mu Zhi's arrival had many female students turning to look at them.

"Sir, can we order two signature bibimbaps?"

Mu Zhi was famished. And she must really be out of it to forget to hide her past. It was a ghost, her past self, that brought him here.

This was not a place she should have brought Lu Jinye...

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Chapter 44 You Are Unforgettable

“Sure.” The boss answered from the kitchen when he heard the order.

Mu Zhi sat and to pass the time, she looked at the wishes that people had written on post-it notes and stuck onto the wall.

Next to them, there were some female students whispering among themselves.

“That man... Is so hot!”

“Yeah! He’s just the type I’d marry! I love older men!”

“He looks to be in his early thirties. Just right.”

“Look, the lady standing with him is so pretty as well. Did she used to go to our school?”

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Mu Zhi chuckled under her breath as she heard bits of their conversation.

When she was still single, she would check out men whenever she was out eating.

Lu Jinye on the other hand was observing the little restaurant and the surrounding area.

He did not go to a local university. In any case, he did most of his learning at home with private tutors. They were both from the same cultural background, but he had never experienced university life.

It was all a bit strange for him.

“Honey, you’re too ostentatious.”

Mu Zhi chuckled as she looked at Lu Jinye. The sound of her laughter brought him back to the present. He raised his eyebrow slightly at her.

“Is it because of what I’m wearing?”

Lu Jinye had just finished their quarterly seminar before Lu Yunxi dragged him to the event, which was why he was wearing an Armani suit. Paired with his shaped eyebrows and clear eyes, along with the air of arrogance clung onto him, he was as out of place as a fish on land.

“Nope, it’s because you’re handsome.”

Mu Zhi quietly explained to him.

Lu Jinye grinned at Mu Zhi. “Was this why you brought me here? So you could flaunt your handsome husband?”

This was the first time Mu Zhi and Lu Jinye had gone out for an actual date.

Previously, when they would go to expensive French restaurants, they would have to behave with utmost propriety and there would be a sense of distance between them.

But now, due to the environment, they seemed to be growing closer.

“You wish.”

Mu Zhi continued to say, “I’ve always liked bibimbap. Besides, I’ve been coming here since university. It’s delicious and also cheap! I’m not lying but this restaurant has the best bibimbap around here. I’ve compared it with other places, and there was no match!”

“You went to university around here?”

Lu Jinye caught onto Mu Zhi’s slip of tongue.

With that question, Mu Zhi realized that she should not have brought Lu Jinye here.

Lu Jinye knew of Lu Junnian.

And her university years were filled with Lu Junnian. She was afraid that Lu Jinye would ask further.

“Honey, if you don’t like it here, we can change restaurants. I think it’s a bit cramped.”

Mu Zhi quickly explained as she pretended to look around.

“Here’s fine.”

Lu Jinye warmly replied.

He did not mention how she had not answered his question.

Just at this moment, the boss came from the kitchen and walked towards Mu Zhi and Lu Jinye with two steaming bowls of bibimbap.

After placing their bowls on the table, he looked up at Mu Zhi. He chuckled, "Hey, young lady. I haven't seen you in a while."

Mu Zhi smiled widely back at him. The restaurant owner was someone she was quite familiar with. She used to come every day after all.

The owner was an elderly man. His eyesight was failing him. After he spoke to Mu Zhi, he turned to Lu Jinye.

Lu Jinye and Lu Junnian were related and shared similar features. The owner wasn't as familiar with Lu Junnian, and it had been a few years, which was why he mistook Lu Jinye for Lu Junnian.

"You haven't been here for quite a while too. Didn't expect the both of you to still be together. I guess you're married now."

"What bliss! You two have always been such a cute couple since university."

He looked around and sighed, "Since university, whenever this young man would come, all the girls would be in a flutter. And it looks like things have gotten worse."

Mu Zhi laughed, "Sir, aren't you busy? We can chat when you're free."

Mu Zhi could not allow him to carry on speaking. The more he spoke, the deeper her grave was.

And now, she could not bring herself to look up at Lu Jinye.

She regretted nothing more than bringing Lu Jinye here.

The owner was happy to see Mu Zhi after such a long time. It was as if he was meeting an old friend.

He continued on, "It's not too busy. I have people helping me out in the kitchen. I'm so happy to see you. You haven't changed at all, besides growing prettier. You don't look a day older from when I last saw you! This young man on the other hand..."

He turned to study Lu Jinye.

"Yes. You have matured so much it looks like you're so much older than this young lady here!"

“!”

Mu Zhi’s heart was racing!

Lu Junnian was a genius. He attended university at the young age of sixteen. Now, he was only twenty-six years old. Lu Jinye, on the other hand, was thirty-two! They were far from similar!

“Sir, I’m sure you are busy.”

Mu Zhi urged the owner.

Thankfully, new customers had just walked in and wanted to order. The owner chuckled jovially and left Lu Jinye and Mu Zhi’s table.

Now, she was more afraid than before to lift her head to meet Lu Jinye’s gaze.

But no matter how afraid she was, she had to do it.

She had to explain everything to him.

“Erm... About that, honey.”

Mu Zhi raised her head and tried to act coy.

However, Lu Jinye’s gaze on her was cold and unforgiving.

“Did you come here often with Lu Junnian?”

Mu Zhi nodded.

“So, you were blissed out during your university years?”

Mu Zhi hurriedly shook her head, “It wasn’t blissful at all! Meeting you was the happiest moment of my life!!”

Mu Zhi did not care whether it was lie or truth, her only worry was to calm Lu Jinye down.

However, Lu Jinye just sat there studying her as he stroked his chin. He smirked.

Mu Zhi got goosebumps.

“Did you leave any notes on the wall?”

The walls of the small restaurant were filled with notes left by couples. The contents were all lovey-dovey couple quotes.

Such as, 'the best of my years was spent with you.' 'I had you during the longest years of my life.'

'Let's grow old together.'

'Hui loves Meng and Meng loves Hui.'

'It's been so many years, but I still can't forget you.'

And then a whole bunch of signatures left by couples.

Mu Zhi watched Lu Jinye's observant gaze and wanted to punch herself for bringing him here!

Why? Why did she not think before bringing him here?

Great!

She could not lie with him staring at her like this.

Lu Jinye was smart enough to tell when she was lying. He could definitely pick up on it. If he does... She was dead!

Falling for the Contract Bride Chapter 45

Chapter 45 Someone She Used to Love

Mu Zhi panicked as looked at the notes on the walls.

She did not know how to answer Lu Jinye.

Should she tell the truth?

Or lie?

Mu Zhi clenched her teeth before replying, "I didn't."

Lu Jinye arched his eyebrow and stared her down, "Oh? Really?"

He was testing her. The hairs stood up at the back of her neck, but she stubbornly stuck to her statement.

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She didn't write a note. That was the story she was sticking to. She would never admit to having written one.

But Lu Jinye did not let up his stare.

His deep gaze was filled with emotions that Mu Zhi could not fathom. For a moment, she thought that maybe there were something more between them.

If there wasn't, he would not be concerned with her past relationships.

So, maybe there was something more...

Just as this was running through her head, Lu Jinye smirked. He withdrew his gaze and pointed to a post-it note hanging in a corner.

It was obvious that that one had been there for a while. It was significantly faded from being exposed to the sun. But the words were still legible. Written on it was her name.

And the contents were, 'Marry Mr. Lu!!!'

The Mr. Lu of her university years could not possibly be Lu Jinye. She had not met him then.

Lu Jinye was aware of that too.

Mu Zhi's face flushed red.

She did not know how to explain herself. At that moment, Lu Jinye's phone rang.

His phone was on the table. When it rang, Mu Zhi easily saw the name that flashed on the phone's screen.

It was Xiao Qingqing.

She pretended not to see it. She lowered her head and continued eating her bibimbap.

Lu Jinye slowly lifted the phone to his ear and answered it. His undertone was cold and distant, "Yes?"

"Jinye..." Xiao Qingqing's voice was filled with hesitation. But she still had to know. "Have you spoken with Miss Mu?"

Hearing this, Lu Jinye looked up at Mu Zhi. His gaze seemed to deepen.

Mu Zhi overheard Xiao Qingqing. She was troubled, especially when she heard her name.

But she kept her head down and pretended not to hear. She mixed the bibimbap evenly with her spoon before bringing a spoonful to her mouth.

Lu Jinye looked away, stood and headed out the door.

Mu Zhi only raised her head to look at him when she was sure that he was far enough.

Before this, he had always been open with his phone calls around her. She had heard her name. What kind of call was it that he had to hide it from her?

As Mu Zhi was contemplating this, Lu Jinye had finished with his phone call and was on his way back. Mu Zhi lowered her head back towards her bowl and took a couple of mouthfuls.

Lu Jinye reached in and gently told her, "Something's happened at the company. I need to leave. I'll get the chauffeur to come pick you up."

"There's no need. I'd like to walk around a bit before heading home."

Lu Jinye did not insist. He paid the bill and left.

All the girls in the restaurant stirred when Lu Jinye left. Their whisperings intensified when they saw that he had left on his own.

But Mu Zhi's attention was not on them, it was on the bowl of bibimbap meant for Lu Jinye. It was untouched. He had not taken a single bite, nor did he stir it.

Just as Mu Zhi lowered her head, the girls in the restaurant all gasped.

It was the kind of sound that could only be made when a hottie walked by.

Mu Zhi kept her head low, only for a shadow to fall onto her table.

She raised her face up, but the man beat her to it, "Is anyone sitting here?"

It was Lu Junnian.

Mu Zhi looked at him but did not answer.

Lu Junnian was in his casual clothes. The Versace hoodie, jeans and canvas shoes look made him appear youthful. Those who did not know him could mistake him for a graduate student from the university.

“No one.”

At that moment, the owner came out of the kitchen with a bowl and placed it on their table. He spoke when he saw Lu Junnian.

He was surprised to see Lu Junnian. Only then, he realized that he had mistaken the previous man for this one.

“This bowl has not been touched. The previous gentleman had just left... What do you think?”

The owner did not want to waste his ingredients.

“Take this away and please make me another one.”

The owner glanced at Lu Junnian’s stoic stance and did not dare argue with him.

Besides, anyone watching could tell that it was complicated.

Mu Zhi did not leave. She had only eaten a few mouths and did not want to waste the food.

Her emotions were already in a mess. If she left because of Lu Junnian, then this day would be unsalvageable.

Mu Zhi lowered her head and took a large bite.

The owner was quick. Within a few minutes, Lu Junnian food had arrived.

Lu Junnian picked up the hot sauce and drizzled some onto the rice before starting to eat.

Mu Zhi realized what he was doing, and her hand couldn’t help but stop in its movement.

The Lu Junnian she knew could not have spicy food. When Mu Zhi had first brought him here, she had him try the hot sauce. It was made in house and was delicious.

Lu Junnian had only had a bite before his face flushed red.

At that time, Mu Zhi had encouraged him to take a few more bites.

She had reasoned that the spice would go away after a bit.

Lu Junnian could not refuse her. Or maybe he wanted to spoil her. He had eaten way more than he had wanted to and agreed with how delicious it was.

Nothing seemed out of place until that night when they stayed up all night conducting experiments. Lu Junnian stomach began to burn.

Xu Changshu was their mentor and would often come to check on them. Mu Zhi was afraid that she would find out about her relationship with Lu Junnian and did not dare say anything. Lu Junnian held it in until Xu Changshu finally left before fainting.

Mu Zhi was scared silly. She rushed him to the hospital.

He had acute gastroenteritis. The doctor scolded them for delaying their visit to the hospital.

Xu Changshu knew Lu Junnian. Ever since he was young, he could not eat anything spicy. How could he have eaten so many hot peppers to the extent of giving himself gastroenteritis?

Xu Changshu came to the conclusion that someone had instigated Lu Junnian.

And that instigator was Mu Zhi.